

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research

350 Albert Street / 350 rue Albert, OTTAWA ON K1A 1H5

Dear [REDACTED]

October 31, 2014

Re: Breaches of Agency Policies by Queen's University

Please consider the allegation of institutional non-compliance set out below:

On September 03, 2014, I sent my allegation of redundant publication to Queen's University (attachment – a). An exact copy of the allegation was also sent to SRCR and NSERC. The allegation pertained to the following journal papers:

1- [REDACTED]

2- [REDACTED]

I have now received a letter (attachment -b) which shows that the University did not comply with the agency policies in addressing the allegation.

[REDACTED]

Sufficient information was provided in my letter of September 03, 2014 to substantiate the allegation of redundant publication concerning this paper. The University dismissed the allegation without (a) determining whether it was a responsible allegation and (b) without determining whether the breach was substantiated based on the information that was provided. According to the Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research (PRCR), it is the institution's responsibility to review the allegation during the inquiry phase to determine whether the allegations are responsible. It is also the responsibility of the institution to determine whether an investigation is warranted based on the information provided in the allegation.

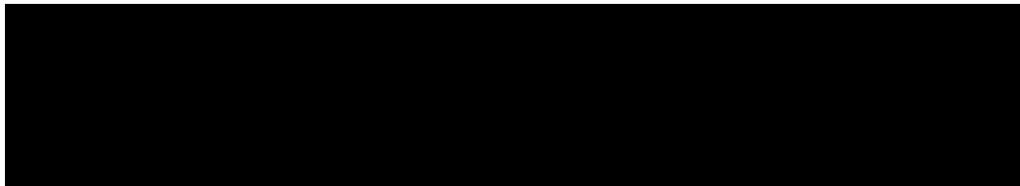
The University ignored the clear evidence in support of the allegation of redundant publication (appendix1, below). Instead, the University erroneously claims that "Given that the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] paper contains a reference to the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] paper, this represents full disclosure."

This claim is not valid: The paper which was submitted to the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] did not and could not have contained a reference to the paper published in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] because in [REDACTED] this paper had not yet been published!

The reviewers therefore had no access to the paper during their review process in [REDACTED] to note the extensive overlap. The University ignores the fact that the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] paper was published [REDACTED]. Regardless of this, the allegation of redundant publication is substantiated because nowhere in the [REDACTED] paper have the authors acknowledged that the re-published materials are coming from the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] paper that was published online on [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sufficient information was provided in my letter of September 03, 2014 to substantiate the allegation of redundant publication concerning this paper. According to the official records, this paper was received by the journal office on [REDACTED]. The University claims that there is an e-mail dated [REDACTED] confirming that this paper was submitted before [REDACTED]. It is not possible to verify the validity of the e-mail that the University is using now as evidence. But, if valid, this e-mail further confirms that the authors were aware in [REDACTED] that the paper submitted to the [REDACTED] contained extensive materials copied from the [REDACTED] paper without acknowledgement. This information was apparently not disclosed to the editor.

Contrary to what the University claims, the editor and peer -reviewers of the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] paper did not have access to the necessary information. Had the authors informed the editor of the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] about the earlier submission, the editor could have seen the extensive degree of overlap between two papers and would have rejected the paper in accordance with the publication ethics guidelines that are printed in the [REDACTED]



In fact it appears there was a period after [REDACTED] when both papers were simultaneously under review and apparently the authors did not disclose this information to the editors and peer-reviewers.

There is clearly sufficient evidence to indicate a situation may exist that constitute misconduct and a full investigation is warranted in accordance with the institution's own research integrity policy.

Sincerely,

Mort Shirkhanzadeh

Appendix A:

Nowhere in the [REDACTED] have the authors acknowledged the source of the recycled materials. Quite the opposite: the authors give the impression that the materials presented are all original and have not been published previously. For example, the authors use large amounts of data in Fig. 4 which were published in the [REDACTED] and yet they refer to them as the 'present' data rather than previous data. This problem is also evident in other parts of the paper where over 20 formulas are reused and text (including big pieces of conclusions) is recycled without acknowledgement of republication or justification.

The framework defines 'redundant publication' as: "*re-publication of one's own previously published work or part thereof, or data, in the same or another language, without adequate acknowledgment of the source, or justification. (Emphasis added)*