CASE I | Created by: Samantha King

Patricia is preparing a research proposal to obtain funding for her dissertation. Her faculty advisor provided input on the experimental design and reviewed and commented on the proposal prior to submission.

Six months after graduation, Patricia comes across an article written by her faculty advisor that uses ideas and text taken from her proposal. Patricia is given a general acknowledgement at the end of the article.

Did the faculty advisor behave ethically?

What should Patricia do now?

CASE II | Created by: Samantha King

Jay’s mentor gives him a copy of a manuscript that he has been asked to review for a journal and asks Jay to produce a written commentary of the work. Jay reads the manuscript and finds it very interesting. In fact, the paper describes an innovative technique that Jay would like to use in his current research project. Jay forwards a copy of the manuscript to his collaborator and asks for his opinion on the usefulness of the technique.

Who has behaved inappropriately?

Is it ethical for Jay to use the technique described in the manuscript in his current research project?
Mentor-Trainee Relationships

CASE I  | Created by: Linda Larson-Prior, PhD, Samantha King, Linda Cottler, PhD

Dr. White has a strong reputation as an academic researcher in his field. Melissa arrived several weeks ago to start her postdoctoral fellowship and Dr. White has been assigned as her mentor. From Dr. White’s reputation, Melissa thought it would be a good fit for her, considering the goals she has outlined in her development plan.

Upon arrival, she was surprised to learn that Dr. White’s graduate students and his senior postdoc have recently left for new positions and Dr. White is extremely busy and frequently traveling. Since arriving, Melissa has only spoken with him once concerning her responsibilities, which include preparing materials for and teaching Dr. White’s undergraduate classes when he is traveling. She has received no direction or guidance to help acclimate to the university or continue her own research.

What could Melissa have done to prevent this situation?

How can Melissa ensure that she receives appropriate mentoring?

CASE II  | Created by: Linda Larson-Prior, PhD, Samantha King, Linda Cottler, PhD

Peter has been working to perfect a new technique that he is certain will improve his chances of getting novel and exciting results. He has been in the lab 7 days a week, generally 14 hours a day and has been so busy that he has cancelled many progress meetings with his mentor. After 7 months of hard work, Peter decides to talk to his mentor about presenting his data at an international meeting. When he takes his results to the mentor, he is told that the progress he has made is not significant enough to present. In addition, the mentor believes that continuing to work on the project would be a waste of Peter’s time. Peter is completely shocked and frustrated.

What should Peter do now?

What aspect of mentoring could have best prevented this situation?

Did Peter receive good mentoring in this situation?
You start a new research project based upon some experiments conducted by a graduate student who has recently left the group. The project is quite interesting and, because of your work, the research is expanded. The new experiments include transgenic mice (provided by another group) and some novel pharmacological agents (obtained by your advisor through his contacts with industry).

By the time you write the paper, none of the original data from the student's work (which is unpublished) are included. Your manuscript does describe the student’s results in the Introduction, and the student also reviews and corrects some of the Methods section and provides copy editing for the entire document.

How should you acknowledge the contributions of the graduate student?

Which one of the following should be listed as an author on the paper?