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Ethical Issues in Multiple-Authored and Mentor-Supervised Publications

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Description

Published in 2012 in the *Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice*, this paper explores the ethical issues related to publication, authorship, and mentoring with the goal of better defining coauthorship standards and encouraging research ethics discussion and education within the academic civil engineering research community.

Abstract

Graduate students, junior and tenured faculty, technicians, administrators, and field practitioners in the civil engineering research community need to address the evolving ethical issues in multiple-authored and mentor-supervised publications. By using a five-step interrelated research methodology, the authors examine the current factors affecting the academic research environment and describe some of the unspoken but ethically questionable practices in the academic community. Most tangible rewards are on the basis of a faculty member's or researcher's publication record, and the increasing pressure to produce publications earlier and more often in the academic's career exacerbate the problem of a lack of clarity in ethical standards for multiauthored publications.

The timing and frequency standards associated with publications for tenure, promotion, and continuing research funding opportunities result in academics' maximization of the number of research efforts taken to publication, with the number of authors per scientific publication steadily increasing. Further, as the number of authors has increased, the level of contribution of each coauthor to the research project and publication decreases. This paper proposes a threefold ethical framework for evaluating and analyzing the ethical norms for authorship status. It is hoped that this thought-paper stirs the waters of this important issue to maintain the solidarity and integrity of engineering research activities and publications.

ExternalURL

[http://dx.doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)EI.1943-5541.0000087](http://dx.doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)EI.1943-5541.0000087)

Notes

Jennings, M. and El-adaway, I. (2012). "Ethical Issues in Multiple-Authored and Mentor-Supervised Publications." *J. Prof. Issues Eng. Educ. Pract.*, 10.1061/(ASCE)EI.1943-5541.0000087, 37-47.

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Resource Type

Published Work

Discipline(s)

Research Ethics

Publisher

Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice