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To: All Graduate Students
From: Christine Ortiz (Dean for Graduate Education)
Date: September 16, 2011
Subject: Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training and Academic Integrity Standards at MIT

Dear graduate students,

I hope your semester is off to a great start! As your coursework and research gets underway, it is important to understand the standards and expectations that constitute academic integrity at MIT. While graduate students funded by NSF and NIH grants and fellowships are required to take Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training and selected graduate programs offer additional RCR training, I would strongly encourage all of you to complete the online RCR course offered by MIT.

The link can be found here: <http://osp.mit.edu/compliance/rcr>

I guarantee taking the RCR course will be worth your time, both if you are new to MIT and as a refresher. I have taken the course myself and find it an invaluable resource in my own research. Example topics include; data acquisition and management, responsible authorship and allocation of credit, peer review, mentoring, conflicts of interest and collaborative research. There are great case studies that will prepare you to deal with situations that may arise during your graduate school career.

Some sample questions discussed include: *Are enhancements to photographic evidence dishonest? Who owns the data I collect during my graduate research? What does the difference between the first and last author on a publication signify? What is a "ghost author"? What are the responsibilities of my faculty mentor? Is an "honest error" considered research misconduct? What are best practices for scientific collaboration? How do I cite the literature properly in an oral presentation at a national conference? Can I get involved in commercialization activities before I graduate?*

In order to go back and view the course anytime after completion, just re-enter the CITI Main Menu page at the link above and go to the "Massachusetts Institute of Technology Learner Utilities" below the My Courses Section and click on the "Optional Modules" link.

Another excellent resource is the National Academy of Sciences publication, video, and podcast, "On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research" (http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12192). Please also check out the MIT Academic Integrity Handbook (<http://web.mit.edu/academicintegrity/>) which details how to properly cite materials, paraphrase and quote.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly (cortiz@mit.edu) or the Office of the Dean for Graduate Education (odge@mit.edu) if you have any questions or situations dealing with academic integrity. Michelle Christy (mchristy@MIT.EDU), Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is also available to answer questions about conflicts of interest related to sponsored projects. The MIT Ombuds Office (<http://web.mit.edu/ombud/>) can provide assistance in resolving disputes and managing conflicts as well.

I wish you a wonderful semester ahead and look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Warm Regards,



Christine Ortiz, Dean for Graduate Education