

misconduct took place must be supported by Public Health Service (PHS) funds or involve an application for PHS funds.

2) The alleged misconduct must fall within the definition of scientific misconduct set forth in the PHS regulation.

3) There must be adequate information to proceed with an inquiry.

Contrary to the opinion expressed by McCutchen, the failure of an allegation to meet these criteria does not brand "the complainants, rightly or wrongly, as having made charges that were obviously false or frivolous." If these criteria are not met, the allegation does not fall under ORI jurisdiction or cannot be pursued until additional information is provided. In most cases, an ORI decision not to open an inquiry or investigation is totally unrelated to the merits of the allegation.

A decision by ORI that it does not have jurisdiction does not make a whistleblower "defenseless against retaliation" as McCutchen states. ORI holds confidential the names of all individuals who submit queries. In addition, many individuals contact ORI anonymously or before they file an allegation at their institution and, therefore, do not run a high risk of retaliation. An individual who is known as a whistleblower within the institution may

seek protection against retaliation under any available state whistleblower protection laws or grievance procedures.

Lawrence J. Rhoades

Director,
Division of Policy and Education,
Office of Research Integrity,
Public Health Service,
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services,
5515 Security Lane, Suite 700,
Rockville, MD 20852, USA



Too Soon to Dance?

I was pleasantly surprised by M. R. C. Greenwood's 29 March Editorial (p. 1787); however, after attending a seminar where a representative group of about 15 white male and two female graduate students and professors in our department discussed grant-writing, I had to reexamine the reality of the situation. A well-intentioned professor who had recently received a large grant (and would probably fall into Greenwood's "enlightened male colleague" category) asserted that if you were female or had any minority blood, you would be at an advantage. I wondered

why he told us this when he knew that all the National Science Foundation grant recipients in the room were white males and that there were only two people in the room who fell into this "advantaged" category. While I agree with Greenwood that "unqualified women and minorities" are not taking over, it remains a common misconception and gives white males the psychological advantage (which leads to power) of feeling that they must be even better because they won out over the masses of advantaged women and minorities.

Michelle Bowe

Department of Biology,
Vanderbilt University,
Nashville, TN 37235, USA

Greenwood is correct when she(?) observes that the wolves are circling. Their dance is dangerous for the weak, the unprepared, and the noncompetitive in a performance-based society. The process is called "survival of the fittest" and inures to the benefit of the species, if not to the instant gratification of all participants.

Individuals possess or acquire different talents. They should be encouraged to become "fittest" in whatever activity they choose. Not all are destined to become scientists.

Do you always get a reaction when converting RNA into single-stranded cDNA templates for RT-PCR? Patrik does—thanks to a revolutionary polymeric bead that makes these critical conversions for him in new Ready-To-Go™ Kits.

The kits utilize the new Ready-To-Go bead that avoids many potential errors common to handling aqueous reagents.

That's because the "bead" is a complete,

pre-formulated, single-dose reaction—so there's little chance of your PCR templates becoming contaminated.

Just add your sample to the ambient-stable bead and watch it dissolve—that's all the pipetting required. In under a minute, you can begin full-length first-strand cDNA synthesis. This new approach to producing cDNA is only available from Pharmacia Biotech.

Just call us at 1 (800) 526 3593 in the United States, or +46 18 16 5011 from the rest of the world, for more information. Ask about the bead that never fails to give you a reaction.



Uppsala, Sweden. (And the rest of the world)

Circle No. 29 on Readers' Service Card
See Electronic Marketplace: www.aaas.org

James R. Thomen
Modern Management Associates, Inc.,
Post Office Box 3754,
Wilmington, DE 19807, USA

Greenwood's use of the condemnatory term "wolf" is an insult. I am one of the individuals to whom she refers, and I certainly do discriminate, but only on the basis of merit!

Whatever the merits of Greenwood's case, the first principle of free scientific inquiry has been violated by the use of prejudicial language in making an argument.

Sheldon Bryman
Aesthetic and Neuronal Research Institute,
590 Waterview Road,
Oceanside, NY 11572, USA

While I agree with most of Greenwood's editorial, I was taken aback by the use of the same preachy, aggressive, and polarizing rhetoric that is described in the editorial as deplorable when used by those opposed to affirmative action. This mode does not facilitate open discussion or engender feelings of goodwill. I would feel uncomfortable discussing my views and concerns regarding affirmative action with Greenwood. Like many (moderate?) people, I agree with the goals but am ambivalent about the implementation and use of "diversity tools."

Among other things, I believe affirmative action should be based primarily on economic need. Humans have good reason to fear hungry, circling wolves. However, wolves do not act out of malice, but practicality. They would probably find Greenwood's characterization naïve (not unlike some Rousseau paintings). I thought Greenwood's grandmother's observation about the nature of manners more keen and appropriate to the discussion and would rather hash these issues out with her—maybe over tea.

Matt Lewin
6431 Fannin Street,
Houston, TX 77030, USA

Confident Females?

The article "Computer culture deflects women and minorities" by Virginia Morell ("Maintaining diversity in science: Women and minorities '96," News, 29 Mar., p. 1915) states that preliminary results from our ongoing study of computer science majors at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) find female students who recently immigrated to the United States "reveal no lack of confidence... even though American-

born women in the same classes are filled with self-doubts." This needs to be clarified. We have heard from female CMU students who have recently immigrated to the United States that not until they came to America did they begin to hear about math and science being a "boy thing." These women are strong in math and science; their minds are not cluttered with notions of females being out of place in these fields. But it does not follow that they reveal no lack of confidence. It is hard to be a female with little previous computing experience, thrown into a pool of top computer science students (who are predominately male), and not experience some lack of confidence.

Jane Margolis
Computer Science Department,
Carnegie Mellon University,
Pittsburgh, PA 15213, USA

Ph.D.'s as K-12 Teachers

I agree with much of the letter by Shoumen Datta (29 Mar., p. 1789), who had a good view of the "real 'action'" from the superintendent's office in the San Francisco Unified School District, especially as to the emphasis on content, presumably of subject

Anything that's frozen is never the same again.



WESCOR®

If you need to measure osmolality, basically you have two choices. You can measure osmolality using the older freezing point method, or you can use the modern-day vapor pressure osmometer from Wescor. Now available in a new, easier-to-use menu-driven version, the VAPRO™ osmometer accepts all biological samples, including the highly viscous and tissue specimens. *All without cryoscopic artifacts!* And it can be calibrated for samples as small as 2μL.

The Wescor vapor pressure osmometer is ideally suited for all areas of biological research. It's widely used in marine biology, tissue culture, soil and plant physiology, and lab animal studies. You'll also find it performing Q.C. work in the food, pharmaceutical, beverage, and ophthalmology industries.

Contact us for more details or to arrange a demonstration. Wescor, Inc., 459 South Main Street, Logan UT, 84321 USA. Phone 1-800-453-2725. FAX 801-752-4127.