Aligning Incentives with Institutional Values

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Interested in reforming your promotion policies?

Resources for reform available on OSF: https://osf.io/pfwtx/
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Incentives Matter

When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure – Goodhart’s Law

Faculty will learn how to game the system, whether they do so implicitly or explicitly. The goal then is to create measures and incentives such that ‘gaming’ becomes a pro-social behavior.

Promotion & Tenure policies codify the incentives!
Why did we reform our policies?

• A need to build a more trustworthy and reproducible science. Need to incentivize research practices that support trust, transparency, and reproducibility.

• Misalignment between what universities say they value and rewards

• Commonly used metrics are problematic
Many scientific studies can’t be replicated. That’s a problem.

Did a Star Researcher Fabricate Data in a Study About Dishonesty?

About 40% of economics experiments fail replication survey

Final Report: Stapel Affair Points to Bigger Problems in Social Psychology

Questionable Research Practices Surprisingly Common

More social science studies just failed to replicate. Here’s why this is good.

What scientists learn from failed replications: how to do better science.
What did we do?

Multiyear effort to overhaul our entire evaluation system.

These are available online: https://psyc.umd.edu/landingtopic/resources
What did we do?

Developed a more modern, inclusive, and fair approach.

- Inclusiveness
- High quality **reproducible science**
- **Societal** benefit
- **Engagement** with community
- **Enhanced accessibility** of our science **to the communities** we serve
- **Improved accessibility** of diverse communities to the scientific community
- **Acceleration of science** through better sharing and communication

*What if researchers were enticed to game these?*
Example Criteria and Values

Quality and potential for impact

- Application of basic science for addressing real-world problem and/or societal needs. (Community)
- Research that addresses gaps in the literature as they pertain to historically under-represented groups. (Diversity/Inclusion)
- Commitment to providing equitable access to scholarly research through open access (Access/Openness)
- Development of research tools, code, data, and open sharing of those resources (Openness/Transparency)
- Evidence of adhering to standards for conducting transparent, ethically sound, and reproducible research (Rigor/Integrity)
Summary: What did I learn?

• Faculty want to do the right thing
  
  Faculty were already making prosocial decisions (where to publish; use of OER)
  Some were excited to be able to pursue new projects with the community
  Others just thanked me

• **We’ve been doing it one way for so long**, its hard to imagining something different

• **It takes time** to socialize and educate

• Passing a policy like this requires **intentionality** and **persistence**

• **Administrators are totally open** to new ways of doing things – this was the easy part!
Role of Professional Societies

Societies play an important role in socializing and educating

Faculty look to colleagues within their institution and *subdiscipline* for norm setting

Socialization and norm setting takes time and repetition
Ongoing Efforts

• **Working with** the *Open Science Research Funders Group* to run workshops
  • **Online** information sharing ‘workshops’ with Psychology Department chairs
  • **Hands-on** activities based workshops
    • Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology (COGDOP)
    • Association for Psychological Science
  • **Open Invitation** to anyone who wants us to run a workshop

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