

Physics 596 – Fall 2020

Scientific Ethics Case Study #1*

“At my previous postdoc position I worked on a research project inspired by a discussion with a senior collaborator, and then was carried out exclusively by myself. I presented the work at a conference, with myself, the senior collaborator, and another collaborator as authors. After the conference I wrote a proceeding paper, which my collaborators reviewed. Months later, while by browsing the internet, I discovered that my senior collaborator had submitted an abstract that was nearly identical to the one published earlier, only five sentences were different out of seven pages. I contacted my collaborator and asked him to either withdraw the paper or remove my name. The paper has not been withdrawn. I am not sure if my name has been removed.”

***Before discussing the case:** Identify people in the group for the following presentation duties: (i) A person to present the ‘case’ in their own words to the rest of the class; (ii) a person to present one point of view in this study; (iii) a person to present the opposing point of view; and (iv) a person to lead a class discussion of the case. Feel free to take notes as necessary to present your discussions to the class.

Discuss this case study with your team and prepare to relate your discussions to the rest of the class. Among the topics you might consider: Should the publication of the manuscript be stopped completely? After all it is a copy of a different paper. If this paper is inappropriate, how should this person respond?