Ethical Considerations for Software Engineering Faculty

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Membership in a Community Requires Obeying its Rules

- What communities are you joining?
- What are the penalties for not obeying its rules?
- What are the rules?
  - Ignorance is no excuse
Plagiarism

- Putting your name on someone else’s work
- This is theft of intellectual property
  - Intellectual property is all academics have
- Plagiarism is grounds for summary dismissal
- Situation may not be clear
  - Rights of individuals in multiple authorship
  - Better safe than sorry
Authorship

- Your name on a paper asserts that you were a substantial contributor
- All authors should agree on this
  - Discuss beforehand
  - Discuss again at the end
- You are responsible for all of it
  - If it is wrong, you are to blame (even if a coauthor made the errors)
- Never put someone’s name on a paper until and unless they agree
Conflict of Interest

- In reviewing papers, proposals, etc.
- Reviewer advantage must not be unfairly exploited
  - Money, other valuable considerations
  - Backscratching
  - Stealing of ideas, results
  - Giving advantage to your students
- Written rules (eg. NSF’s) on when COI exists
  - Here too there are gray areas
- Rules on unfair advantage are much harder
Duplicate Submission

• Having “the same” paper under review in more than one place at the same time
• A serious insult to the community
• Software Engineering journals and conferences are particularly sensitive to this
Fairness to students

• Don’t stand in the way of a student
• Push and support students
• Show respect for student ideas
  – Even if they aren’t great
• Be sure your assessments (e.g. in letters) are fair
  – To the student
  – To the recipient
Being a good colleague

• Support the communities you are in
  – Committees
  – Energy
  – Sharing opinions

• Don’t place inappropriate burdens on colleagues