

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
GRADUATE COUNCIL
and the
RESEARCH COUNCIL
concerning
POLICY STATEMENT ON JOINT AUTHORSHIP
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Presented at the
654th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
May 18, 2006

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**POLICY STATEMENT ON JOINT AUTHORSHIP
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST**

May 5, 2006

A modification of a policy adopted by the Graduate Council, April 2, 1990, which is available at <http://www.umass.edu/research/ogca/policies/jntauth.htm>

The authorship of any published scholarly work must reflect the contribution of all who deserve to be included. It is the responsibility of the faculty member or other person in charge to guarantee that fairness and accuracy are exercised in listing the authors.

The research process includes conception, design (procedures, method), data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. The relative importance of each facet of research can vary among projects and among disciplines. The determination of who is listed as an author, in what order, should be based on the magnitude of contribution made to each facet of the research and on the relative importance of each facet. All authors should have made some significant contribution to the research, and their responsibilities should determine the way they are listed in any resulting manuscript. All parties involved in the research should jointly determine authorship when it is clear that a decision about eventual authorship will need to be made. When appropriate, the nature of each author's contribution can be described in the publication.

At the University of Massachusetts, much research involves a professor-student relationship with varying contributions possible from each. Publication or circulation of scholarly work is integral to graduate education. Therefore, graduate students should be vigorously encouraged to participate in the research process. Some general guidelines should prevail. If the student is given and accepts primary responsibility for all areas of a research project, the student should be first author of manuscripts, or sole author if the professor has not made substantial contributions to the study. If the professor conceives and designs a project and is instrumental in other areas of research, the professor should be first author. It is generally inappropriate for a professor to be sole author of the primary report of original research conducted by a student as part of the requirements of a degree.

These are general conditions, but special ones may also obtain. 1. Directors of research units or laboratories should not automatically be authors on research publications from their research organization, nor should authorship be automatically tied to providing funding for research. 2. Simply executing a job for which pay is taken (e.g., performing routine duties under the direction of an advisor/PI) does not automatically convey the right to authorship. Significant contributions to the research must be made. 3. Student papers written as part of course requirements should not be co-authored by the professor unless the professor has made a significant contribution to the paper at some phase of the project, including revising the manuscript after it was submitted to fulfill course requirements.

Since each scholarly work has its unique features and history, no set of objective criteria can address every conceivable type of joint authorship circumstance. The proper and fair acknowledgment of the actual contributions of colleagues, students, and staff remains the duty of the person circulating the work or submitting it for publication. In making the decision on authorship only professional considerations should be taken into account. Under no circumstances should authorship be used for a purpose other than to reflect on the contribution of the collaborators to the work in question. In cases of doubt about proper credit, consultation

among the collaborators and with colleagues, the Department Head, and/or the Dean is encouraged. In such discussions, the following specific guidelines may be useful, although they are not intended to be in any way binding:

1. If a contribution is of a clearly technical nature (such as performing routine chemical analyses, transcribing interview records, or tabulating raw data), an acknowledgment could be sufficient. The same applies to professional help such as material preparation and instrument construction, drafting, statistical or computer assistance, and so forth.
2. If, however, the central topic of the publication is the presentation or evaluation of a technique (including computer software), then a technical contribution may be of sufficient importance to merit authorship.
3. If an individual suggested an idea that had an impact on the work development but did not actively participate in its implementation, acknowledgment of the contribution will be sufficient.
4. If an individual contributed a key idea or ideas, and/or made other substantial creative contribution to the work in its design, execution, interpretation, and/or summary, then (s)he is entitled to authorship.
5. A graduate student whose thesis work is used as the major source of material for a publication is entitled to authorship. However, (s)he is not automatically entitled to authorship if some material from the thesis is used in a review paper, proposal, progress or final report written by the advisor or project director. In such a case, a reference to the material's origin is sufficient.
6. And finally, administrative or financial responsibility by itself does not merit authorship.

Despite these guidelines, co-authorship is often difficult to allocate. In the case of professor and student, it should be allocated generously to the student in doubtful cases. In every case, however, it is essential to discuss co-authorship with all possible collaborators before and at each step during the project so that misunderstandings will be less likely to arise at the time of publication.

On occasion, authorship credit may be disputed. In such a situation, any or all of the involved parties are entitled to use the services of the University Ombudsperson, without threat or fear of reprisal. Of course, if any party believes that an instance of misconduct has occurred, the University's policy regarding Charges of Misconduct in Research and Scholarly Activities may be invoked.

The Graduate Council and Research Council therefore recommend to the Faculty Senate a motion as follows:

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate adopt the foregoing statement as the Joint Authorship Policy
45-06 of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 06-040A.