Responsible Conduct of Research

Peer Review
Peer Review

• Critical Part of Publishing/Granting Process
  – Quality of science
    • Personal observation – many reviewers confuse being an editor with being a reviewer. Comments on the quality of the writing are important, but reviews should first and foremost focus on quality of science
  – Significance of science
  – Alignment with journal or funding source goals

Footnote: much of this work is derived and synthesized from materials provided at the UNH RCR site:
https://rit_sr.unh.edu/training/rcr-training/peer-review.html
Peer Review

• We can talk about process if you like, but one element to be aware of with regards to RCR is anonymity
  – Single blind
  – Double blind
Being a Peer Reviewer

• Need to be evaluative or judgmental – clear yes or no to question of whether to publish or fund
• Need to provide constructive criticism for improvement
• Need to maintain submission as privileged information (i.e., not to share or use yourself)

• Potential Problems
  – Conflict of interest
  – Personal conflict
  – Unqualified reviewers
  – Timeliness of process
  – Who is chosen as a review (“Good old boys network”)
Handling Negative Reviews

• Be professional – try not to take it personally!
• Recognize that some critiques are valid, and others may not be, so use the reviews constructively
• In my experience, how you respond in the cover letter or point by point recounting of your revision can be as important as what you actually do in the revision
  – You can (and should) argue for no change when you think it is most appropriate, but state your case clearly
Peer Review