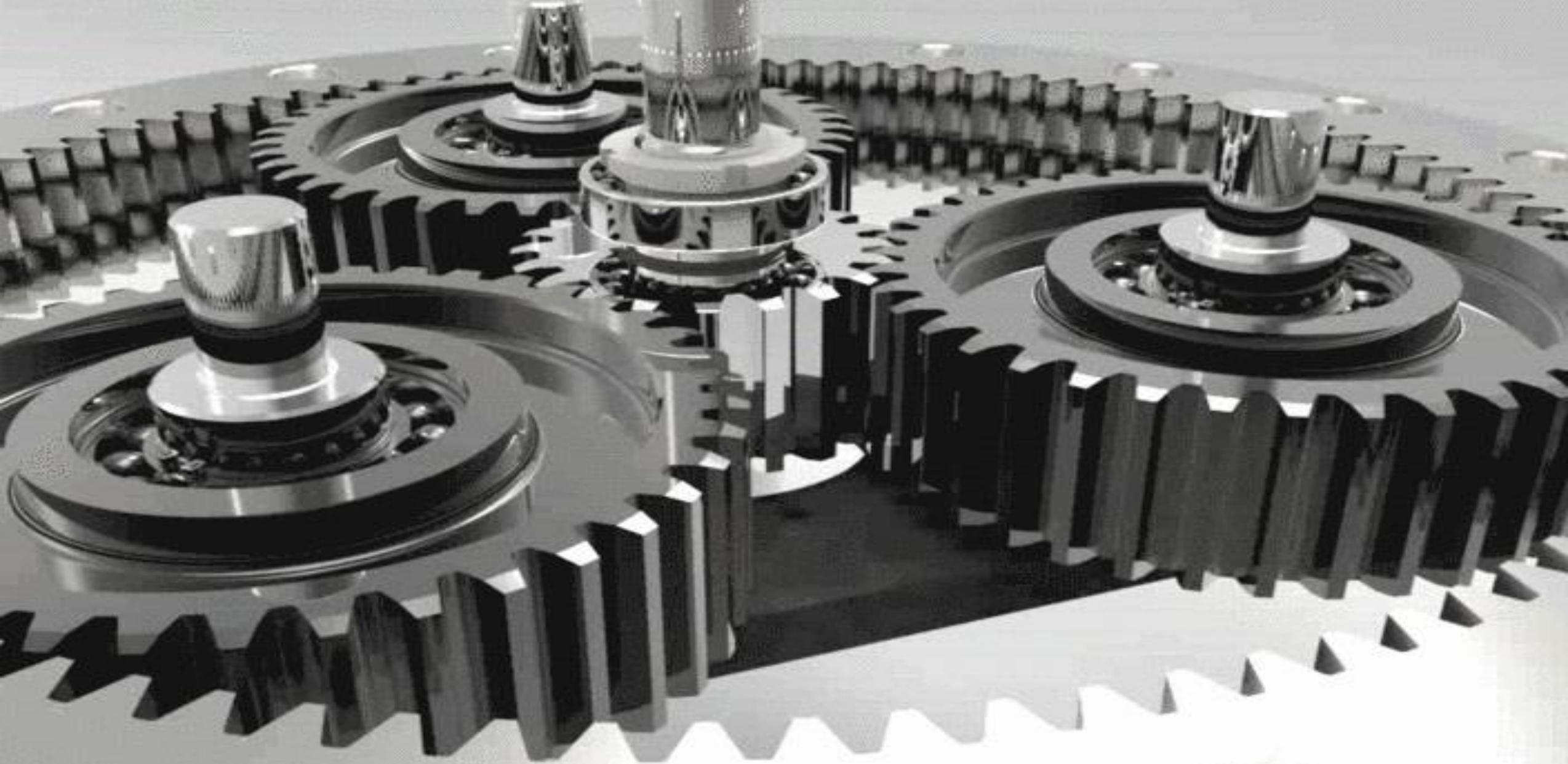




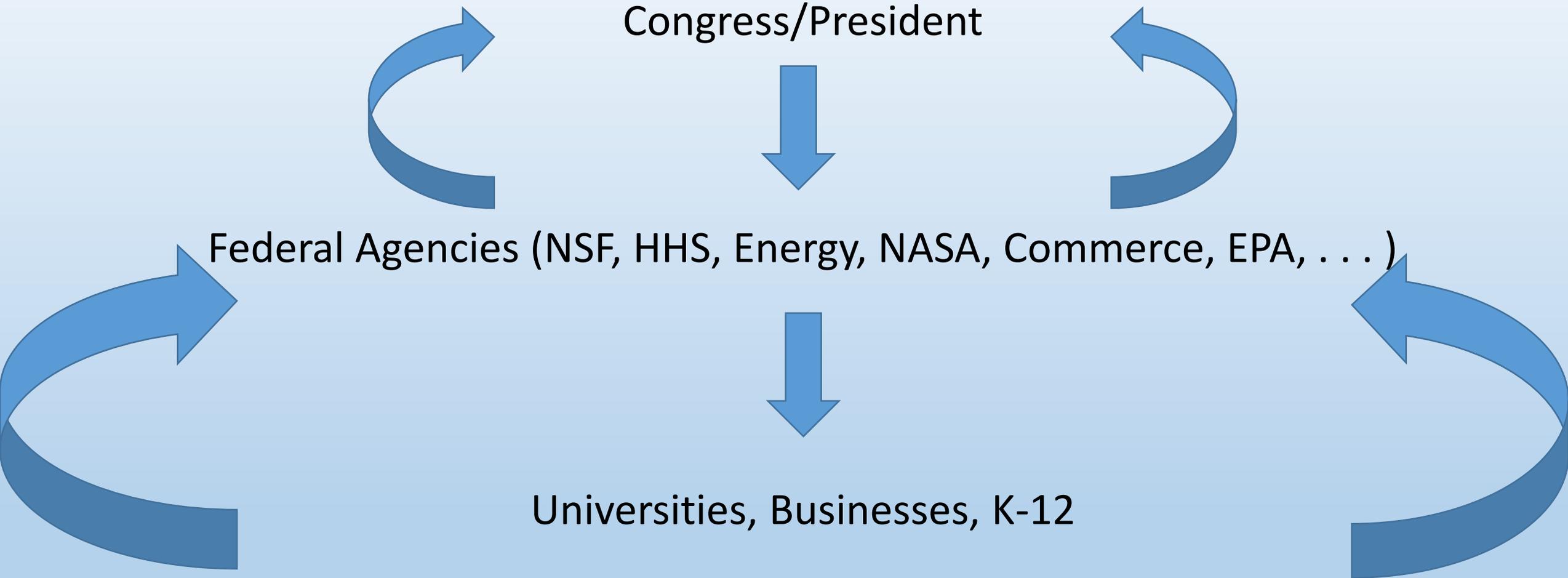
# Efforts and Challenges in Ensuring Research Integrity in the United States

Allison Lerner  
Inspector General  
National Science Foundation



**U.S. Research Enterprise System**

# Federal Funding/Accountability



# Research Integrity Accountability

## Government Roles

- OSTP – Dec 6, 2000 overarching Research Misconduct (RM) policy
  - Establishes definitions, elements of a finding, phases (inquiry, investigation, adjudication)
  - Agencies and institution share responsibility for process
  - Institutions bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection
- Regulatory
  - Each Agency Policy Structured after OSTP policy to fit within that agency
    - All have FFP, preponderance, intent, significant departure
    - Agencies will coordinate where joint funding exists
  - Joint Agency RM Working Group
  - OHRP (human research), OLAW (laboratory animals), OSHA(biohazards)
- Statutory
  - Criminal and/or civil statutes: Fraud, COI, False Statements, Embezzlement, Conversion
- Potential outcomes range from reprimand to suspension of research to incarceration
- Audits – Includes reviews of award expenditures, assessments of award processes

# Research Integrity Accountability

## Non-Governmental Roles

- National Academy of Sciences
  - New publication on Fostering Integrity in Research
- Private Monitoring Sites (e.g. Retraction Watch, PubPeer)
- Universities
  - Investigation Committees
  - RCR training
  - Fostering overall ethical climate
- Professional Societies and Journals
  - Policies on Research Integrity
  - Data Review
  - COPE
- Private funding sources

# Research Integrity and Transparency

- Civil/Criminal prosecutions are a matter of public record
- RM and other integrity investigations are often administrative
  - Privacy Act limits – balance between public need to know and personal privacy
  - Routine Use
- NSF – RM cases discussed in OIG's Semiannual Reports to Congress; case closeouts posted on OIG's website: <https://www.nsf.gov/oig/office-inv/administrative.jsp>
- ORI – Results of RM cases often published in Federal Register and newsletters
- Policy on release of info will vary with each agency
- Universities: Public vs Private
- Private Sector: Internal policy/practice
- PubPeer and RetractionWatch

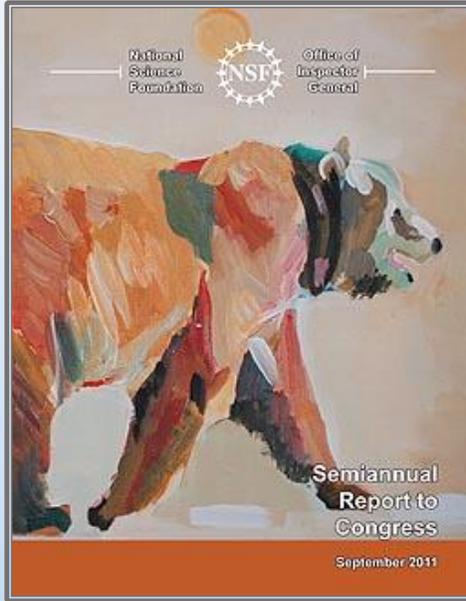
# Harmonization

- US system has overarching guidance for federally funded research
  - Decentralization of research and the RM process can result in disparate conclusions for similar cases
  - Research institutions have RM process in place to address federally funded research but can use that process to address private funding
  - No need to notify federal agencies about RM resulting from private funding
- International harmonization can be enhanced by:
  - Establishing policies and procedures to address research integrity violations within the existing legal structure
  - Working collaboratively in cases of violations that involve multiple international organizations
- OECD
  - <https://www.oecd.org/sti/sci-tech/40188303.pdf>  
Best practices for ensuring scientific integrity and preventing misconduct

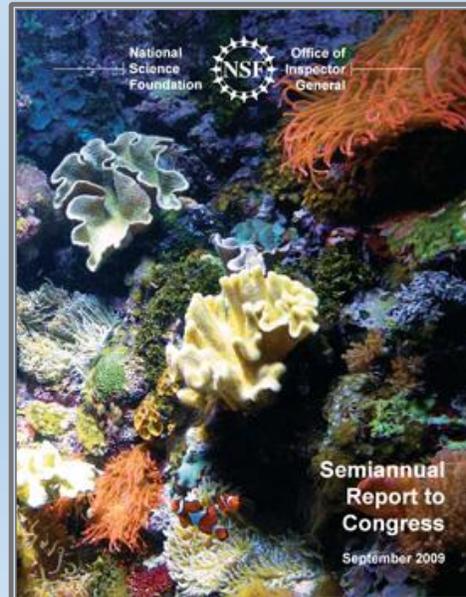
# Case Study

- University scientist submits proposal with text and intellectual property belonging to European scientists
- Subject served as peer reviewer for European agency
- University determines that subject committed both verbatim plagiarism and intellectual theft
- OIG finds plagiarism, intellectual theft and violation of peer review process
- NSF Concurrs
- Subject debarred for one year

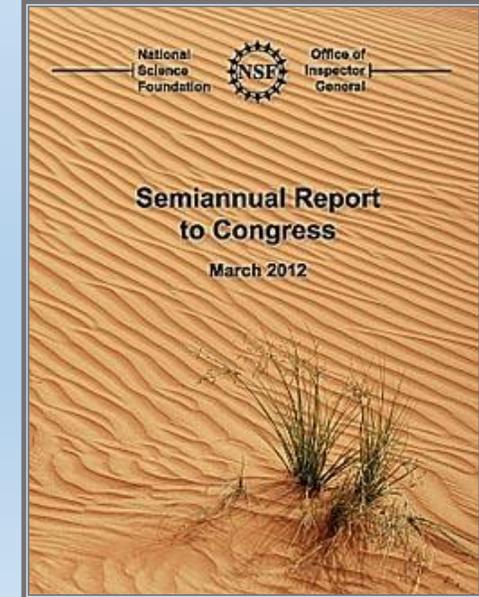
# Contact Information



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Questions?

