

FACT SHEET
University of Colorado at Boulder

Research Misconduct Investigative Process
May 16, 2006

The 12-member Standing Committee on Research Misconduct, following a review in summer 2005 by its inquiry subcommittee, announced in September 2005 that seven of nine allegations related to Professor Ward Churchill warranted a full investigation.

The seven allegations of research misconduct referred for further investigation included alleged instances of plagiarism, misuse of others' work, falsification and fabrication of authority.

Two allegations – regarding misrepresentation of ethnicity and copyright infringement – were not regarded as appropriate for further investigation under the definition of research misconduct.

Also not included in the investigative committee's review were Churchill's written and spoken remarks about 9-11 victims. Those written and spoken remarks were not included because those statements concerned Professor Churchill's opinions concerning United States' policies and global affairs and thus are constitutionally protected against government sanction by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The Standing Committee appointed the five-member investigative committee in fall 2005 to conduct the investigation into the seven allegations. The investigative committee convened in January 2006. Based on the Operating Rules and Procedures of the Standing Committee on Research Misconduct, the investigative committee must reach one of the following three conclusions with respect to the allegations: a finding of misconduct; a finding of no culpable conduct, but serious research error; or a finding of no misconduct and no serious research error.

The investigative committee completed its report within 120 calendar days of the date of initiation and forwarded its report to the Standing Committee on May 9. The Standing Committee reviewed the report before accepting it for release on May 16.

The Standing Committee on Research Misconduct will consider the findings of the investigative committee in making its recommendations to Interim Provost Susan Avery and Arts and Sciences Dean Todd Gleeson. If warranted, the Dean and the Provost will make any disciplinary determinations. Depending on the seriousness of misconduct found, potential sanctions could range from a warning to dismissal. Other examples of disciplinary actions include reprimand, reduction in pay or suspension.

If research misconduct is found, the Provost's Office will determine and take appropriate action within university rules and procedures for faculty.

If any form of discipline is imposed, Professor Churchill may choose to pursue a hearing before the system-wide Committee on Privilege and Tenure.

Additional information about the campus's research misconduct investigative process is available online at www.colorado.edu/Academics/research_misconduct_rules.html.

For more information contact Barrie Hartman, interim CU-Boulder spokesperson, at (303) 735-6183 or (303) 818-7493.