



## Purdue Reallocates Research Ethics Responsibilities

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by Steven B. Krivit

Editor, [New Energy Times](#)

On Friday, Purdue University announced [a major change](#) in personnel responsible for pursuing research misconduct.

Beginning Monday, Alysa Christmas Rollock, vice president for human relations at Purdue University, will take on new responsibilities that include ethics training, compliance standards and procedures, and development and revision of university policies.

Rollock will be responsible for the university's systemwide ethics and compliance programs. Her new title will be vice president for ethics and compliance.

These responsibilities were held by Peter E. Dunn, Purdue's research integrity officer, associate vice president for research, and director of university research administration.

In August, Purdue, under Dunn's leadership, completed a research integrity investigation into the work of Rusi Taleyarkhan, professor of nuclear engineering in Purdue's School of Nuclear Engineering.

The committee charged Taleyarkhan with two counts of research misconduct. Purdue subsequently issued multiple sanctions against Taleyarkhan including a cut in his salary, a suspension of his named professorship and a reduction in some of his privileges. Purdue also distributed a press release and provided to the media confidential documents from the investigation.

According to the [Journal & Courier](#), the local newspaper in West Lafayette, Indiana, Rollock said that the change in her duties "wasn't necessarily related to that situation."

On Oct. 14, *New Energy Times* described the process by which the Purdue investigation committee, which was managed by Dunn, had [fabricated the two "guilty" charges](#) against Taleyarkhan.

Within hours after the Oct. 14 article appeared, Dunn initiated another investigation - the sixth - into Taleyarkhan's research. Despite the repeated attempts to find evidence for fraud or misconduct, and the more than 50 initial allegations, Taleyarkhan has come out clean, aside from the two fabricated allegations from the investigation that concluded this summer.

Some observers are beginning to question the credibility of the accusations against Taleyarkhan and the motives of his accusers.

The latest investigation targets Taleyarkhan's participation in an attempt to replicate his research. The attempt, sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, took place at UCLA in 2005. Taleyarkhan is considering requesting an investigation of UCLA because that university's researchers intentionally used noncondensable gasses in the experiment, a known factor that would guarantee failure.

On Oct. 15, the *Purdue Exponent*, a campus student newspaper, wrote that *New Energy Times* Editor Steven B. Krivit "accused Purdue officials of fabricating charges" against Taleyarkhan.

Five days later, *New Energy Times* reported that, under Dunn's direction, Purdue had recently [changed its policy](#) on research misconduct. It was formerly called the [Policy on Integrity in Research \(C-22\)](#).

Dunn's new [Policy on Research Misconduct \(VIII.3.1\)](#) allows future research misconduct committees to make their own allegations as well as adjudicate them.

However, the new policy does not apply retroactively to the Taleyarkhan investigation that concluded this summer.

As *New Energy Times* wrote Oct. 20, "Now, both the inquiry and allegation committees can make new allegations as well as charge them. All are the same: accuser, judge and jury."

Today, the *Journal & Courier* wrote, "Rollock said many of the [university's policies](#) are difficult for faculty and staff to find, and others are outdated. She cited the example of updating Purdue's policies on research conduct as one that would receive some effort to ensure faculty understand it."

The Purdue policy on research integrity was updated Oct. 1.

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