

**Address by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of
Iceland, on the occasion of Dr Maura Hiney's lecture and workshop
on scientific ethics.**

Held at Litla torg, 5 June 2018

Dr Maura Hiney, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the University of Iceland, I would like to welcome you all to Dr Maura Hiney's lecture and workshop on scientific ethics, entitled "Research integrity: What it means, why it is important and how we might protect it."

Let me start by introducing our speaker, Dr Maura Hiney. Dr. Hiney has a PhD in Molecular Diagnostics and Epizootology from the National University of Ireland Galway or NIU Galway and is also a qualified nurse. She is currently Head of the Post-Award and Evaluation Unit at the Health Research Board Ireland, which manages and evaluates a funding portfolio of approximately € 200 M, and develops appropriate policies for health research. From 1990 to 1999 she worked as a senior researcher and managed a disease diagnostics service for the Irish fisheries industry and from 2000 to 2007 was Director of Research Support Services for NUI Galway.

Maura has a particular interest in research integrity and has been influential in raising awareness of research integrity issues in Ireland since 2007. She was instrumental in establishing the National Research Integrity Forum for key stakeholders and developing a national research integrity framework for widespread adoption. On the international stage, Maura chaired a Working Group of the European Science Foundation Forum on Research Integrity and has chaired the Science Europe Working Group on Research Integrity which issues a number of key publications in this area. She was a key contributor to the European Competitiveness Council Conclusions on Research Integrity in 2015 on behalf of the Luxembourg Presidency. She is currently the Royal Irish Academy nominee on the All European Academies Permanent Working Group on Science and Ethics, with whom she coordinated a revision of the European Code of Conduct on Research Integrity, which was launched by Commissioner Moedas in March 2017. She also sits on the Policy Advisory Boards of several EU-funded projects which conduct research on the research integrity climate.

Dr Maura Hiney, it is our great honour to welcome you to the University of Iceland. We are very grateful to have you here and look forward to hearing your presentation on research integrity. Thank you for taking the time to discuss this important topic with us here today.

The importance of scientific ethics cannot be overstated. Indeed, ethics are a vital consideration in all areas of academia, whether that be research, teaching or relations between teachers, students and other staff. In this respect, it is crucial that we understand that scientific ethics are not something we can deal with once and for all simply by establishing codes of ethics or appointing ethics committees. Although these are certainly important, what is more important is that we carefully consider scientific ethics, familiarise ourselves with the principles involved and use them in our approach. Ethical awareness is therefore key for all scientists, because it is based on defending those values which are closest to all our hearts: integrity, honour and respect for the truth.

Although temptation and risk of misconduct are all too common in academia, not least when funding, publication, promotion and reputation are at stake, science is currently under a threat from those who systematically seek to undermine it by preaching scepticism about the truth or spreading so-called 'alternative facts'. We must respond to this threat not only by cultivating academic integrity, but also by showing courage and speaking out wherever attempts are made to suppress science and the pursuit of truth.

Dr Maura Hiney, the floor is yours.