“GETTING TO MAYBE”

Confidential Information for the Assistant Professor

You are an Assistant Professor at a top medical school. One of your job requirements is to publish books and articles in your field of expertise, which is patient-healthcare provider negotiation around prescription pain-killers. As a result, you have written a research article on negotiation styles called “Getting to Maybe: A Machine Learning Approach.” You wrote this article with the help of a PhD post-doctoral student at your medical school. It was the first time you worked together. The research data took two years for you to collect and the data analysis/article took an additional year for the PhD post doc to complete and is now ready to be published, but a dispute has arisen between you and the PhD post doc. Each of you believes that their name should go first on the authorship list. As a result, submission of the article has been delayed until this issue is resolved.

You believe strongly that you should get the first author position because you have seniority and you are the study PI (your team collected the research study data and you came up with the idea and obtained funding for the research). You never put anything in writing regarding this issue because you thought it was obvious. You would agree that the PhD post doc did all the research data analysis using their expertise in machine learning methodologies and subsequently wrote the article. In summary, you feel that the post doc’s contribution is not nearly as significant as yours. Without your original idea and data there would literally be no article.

Your medical school has no written guidelines regarding whose name should go first. You did ask other professors in your department and they all said that in the past it has been done both ways depending on the professor and student. However, it has been your own experience that when you have published short articles based on your data with other PhD post docs your name has always gone first no matter how much you wrote because you had seniority and provided the dataset. The evaluation of your tenure application (conducted by a committee of tenured professors at the end of this semester) will clearly be impacted by whose name goes first on this article. You feel strongly that you are in the right and don’t want the article submitted unless/until this issue is resolved.

You had hoped that this article would spawn a series of additional articles on the same dataset. However, you realize that without collaborating with the PhD post doc again that writing subsequent articles will be difficult given the unique content area. He/she did a great job analyzing and writing the article and has unique knowledge of the subject. You would need his/her assistance on a second article. In addition, if you publish this article soon it will greatly enhance your chances of getting tenure. You have both agreed to sit down together and try to negotiate a resolution to the matter.
“GETTING TO MAYBE”

Confidential Information for the PhD Student

You are a PhD post-doctoral student at a top medical school. One of your degree requirements is to publish articles in your field of expertise, which is negotiation styles, using your scientific expertise in machine learning techniques when applied to qualitative data. As a result, you have written the next great article on negotiation styles called “Getting to Maybe: A Machine Learning Approach” (it is about patient-healthcare provider negotiation around prescription pain-killers). You wrote this article with the help of an Assistant Professor at your medical school. It was the first time you worked together. The research data took two years for the Assistant Professor to collect and the data analysis/article took an additional year for you to analyze and write up; it is now ready to be published, but a dispute has arisen between you and the professor. Each of you believes that their name should go first on the authorship list. As a result, submission of the article has been delayed until this issue is resolved.

You believe strongly that you should get the first author position because you did all of the research data analysis and writing. You never put anything in writing regarding this issue because you thought it was obvious. It took you a year to conduct the complicated machine learning analyses and write the article and you should receive credit for it. You would agree that the Assistant Professor came up with the original idea, obtained funding and his/her team collected the dataset. In summary, the professor’s contribution to the book is clearly not as significant as yours. Without your data analysis skills and writing there would literally be no article.

Your medical school has no written guidelines regarding whose name should go first. You did ask other PhD post docs in your department and they all said that in the past it has been done both ways depending on the professor and the post doc. However, it has been your own experience that when you have published short articles with other professors your name has always gone first when you did all of the research data analyses and writing. The evaluation of your PhD post doc period (conducted by a mentorship committee of other professors at the end of this semester) will clearly be impacted by whose name goes first on this article. You feel strongly that you are in the right and don’t want the article submitted unless/until this issue is resolved.

You had hoped that this article would spawn a series of additional articles from the same dataset. However, you realize that without collaborating with the professor again writing subsequent articles will be impossible. He/she did a great job coming up with the idea for this article, obtaining funding and collecting the data. The professor also has unique knowledge of the subject. You would need his/her assistance on a second article. In addition, if you publish this article soon it will greatly enhance your chances of completing your PhD post doc (which you hope to complete by the end of the year), and getting a job teaching at a top medical school. You have both agreed to sit down and try to negotiate a resolution on the matter.

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