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By Theresa Defino

Three-Year Exclusion Follows Misconduct Finding for Former Auburn TA

Sarah Elizabeth Martin, a former graduate teaching assistant (TA) in the Department of Biological Sciences at Auburn University, engaged in research misconduct by “intentionally or knowingly falsifying and/or fabricating experimental data and results obtained under different experimental conditions” as part of a published paper, a submitted manuscript, a funded grant application and six presentations, according to the HHS Office of Research Integrity (ORI).

Martin agreed to exclude herself from any involvement in government-funded research and other projects for three years, according to ORI. The exclusion period began Nov. 3. When such exclusion is not agreed to, it is referred to as debarment; it has the same impact on the individual. Martin also agreed to have her work supervised for two years, should she be involved in any Public Health Service-funded research following the exclusion period. Martin’s paper, published with other coauthors in *RNA* in 2021 and retracted a year later, purported to represent “the first comprehensive overview of the dynamic interplay that takes place between the cellular epitranscriptomic machinery and a specific viral RNA in the context of [Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpesvirus] infected cells.” According to a notice in the publication, the paper was retracted “because the authors have lost confidence in the validity of some of the data and conclusions drawn from them.”

[Link to ORI announcement](#)

[Link to retracted paper](#)

[Link to retraction notice](#)

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