

Case Study 2- Farshad and the Added Author
V 1.0

After coming to the US for graduate school, Farshad was pleased to have been awarded an excellent postdoctoral position, the University Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellowship, that gave him complete independence to work on whatever topic he found the most interesting. Farshad had teamed up with Professor Smith's condensed matter experimental group, since Farshad's theoretical expertise had a direct bearing on their new experimental results.

The partnership was successful, and Farshad worked closely with Professor Smith and her graduate student Ken on interpreting the experimental results. They had worked out in advance who was going to work on what aspect of the paper, and that Ken would be designated as first author. Farshad thought that was entirely appropriate, and was working on this project in addition to three others. He did his part, and Ken put together a draft of the paper.

When he received the draft from Ken, Farshad was surprised to see Professor Geezer listed as an author on the paper. Professor Geezer was a famous member of the Department's faculty, but had made absolutely no contribution to the work. When Farshad discreetly asked Ken about this, the graduate student said that Professor Smith had told him to add Professor Geezer's name to the paper. Farshad knew that Professor Geezer's opinion would carry great weight in Professor Smith's upcoming tenure decision.

1) What are Farshad's options?

2) What considerations should he weigh in deciding what action to take?

3) What are your own criteria for authorship inclusion? Do you apply them fairly and evenhandedly?

4) If Farshad came to you as a friend, asking for advice, what would you recommend?