

*** UPDATE *** This letter was sent to Cornell on October 31, 2018. It is available for viewing but is no longer open for new signatures.

Dear colleague,

We have written an open letter to Cornell University to ask for the release of the full report of their inquiry that found that Dr Brian Wansink had committed a number of forms of academic misconduct. We hope to obtain the support of as many researchers and other interested parties as possible for our request.

The text of the open letter can be read on the next page of this document. If you are happy to sign it, please add your name and academic affiliation (if appropriate; if not, we suggest putting your home town, e.g. "Ithaca, NY" or "Frankfurt, Germany") on a new line at the end of the signature list. It will appear as a "suggestion", which we will "accept" rapidly. Signatures (other than those of the five principal authors of the letter) will be put in alphabetical order before the letter is submitted.

If you spot a typo or other obvious flaw in the letter, please let Nick Brown know (nicholasjlbrown@gmail.com). However, please don't request changes on the basis of "I would sign it if you could just add/remove X", as to make those changes would be unfair to people who have signed before you.

Please feel free to share this document with other colleagues who you think might wish to sign it. It will be available for signature through 2018-10-29.

Thanks!

Nick, Jordan, Tim, James, and Chris.

October 31, 2018

Dear Professor Kotlikoff,

We are writing to you in your capacity as Provost of Cornell University to request that you make public the detailed findings of Cornell's investigation into the academic misconduct of Dr Brian Wansink. A few of us were directly involved in analyzing Dr Wansink's work; the rest of us are concerned scientists or laypersons who believe that the practice of science requires the highest levels of transparency.

We welcome [your statement of September 20, 2018](#), in which you noted that your inquiry found that Dr Wansink's misconduct included "misreporting of research data, problematic statistical techniques, failure to properly document and preserve research results, and inappropriate authorship," and stated that he "will be obligated to spend his time cooperating with the university" in dealing with the problems that his misconduct has caused for the scientific record.

However, it seems that Dr Wansink does not accept that any misconduct took place, or that he made more than trivial mistakes. For example, [here](#) he portrays the problems as "mistakenly reporting the wrong ages for preschool children" and "some typos, transposition errors, and some statistical mistakes."

It is clear that these two accounts are incompatible. Either Dr Wansink's description of your findings is inaccurate, and severely minimizes the nature of the problems uncovered, or the investigation at Cornell has reached a conclusion that is unjustified by the nature of the evidence uncovered. Either of these would be a poor outcome from a procedure designed to promote honesty and transparency in the research process.

We believe that the best way to settle this question would be for Cornell to release the full text of its inquiry into Dr Wansink's misconduct, as was done by the affected universities in a number of recent cases of misconduct in the Netherlands (e.g., the cases of [Diederik Stapel](#), [Dirk Smeesters](#), and [Jens Förster](#)). Likewise, when researchers are under sanction following investigation, the US Office of Research Integrity makes case summary findings and related court documents available [on a central website](#).

Our concern is that, if the full extent of the evidence against Dr Wansink is not made available for public inspection, the story could easily be reduced, in the minds of neutral observers, to one of "A said—B said." We know from a number of recent examples in science and wider society, in the United States and other countries, that such framings often allow unequivocal truths to be reduced to rhetorical debating points. We therefore ask you to release the full report into Dr Wansink's research and publication practices as a matter of urgency for the reputation of Cornell and for the integrity of scientific research. As a practical point, this would also allow scholars who may have questions about a particular aspect of Dr Wansink's research output to see the extent to which those questions were addressed by the inquiry.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. L. Brown, University of Groningen
Jordan Anaya, Omnes Res
Tim van der Zee, Leiden University
James A. J. Heathers, Northeastern University
Chris Chambers, Cardiff University

Casper J. Albers, University of Groningen
Andrew D. Althouse, PhD, University of Pittsburgh
Thom Baguley, Nottingham Trent University
Boris Barbour, CNRS/ENS, Paris
Michał Białek, University of Waterloo
Cameron Brick, University of Cambridge
Aaron R. Caldwell, University of Arkansas
Rickard Carlsson, Linnaeus University
James C. Coyne, University of Pennsylvania (emeritus)
Marcus Crede, Iowa State University
Maarten Derksen, University of Groningen
Peter A. Edelsbrunner, ETH Zürich
Malte Elson, Ruhr University Bochum
Patrick S. Forscher, University of Arkansas
Scott Goldstein, Appalachian State University
Erik Gahner Larsen, University of Kent
Matti T. J. Heino, University of Helsinki
Sabine Hossenfelder, Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies
Anders Huitfeldt, Norwegian Institute of Public Health
Billy Jansson, Mid Sweden University
Benjamin K. Johnson, University of Florida
Åse Innes-Ker, Lund University
Kirsikka Kaipainen, Tampere University of Technology
Todd B. Kashdan, George Mason University (B.S., Cornell 1996)
Robin N. Kok, University of Southern Denmark
Kymberly Louise, Flinders University
Patrick Markey, Villanova University
Richard D. Morey, Cardiff University
Joshua Nicholson, scite, Inc.
Brendan O'Connor, University of Leicester
Vencislav Popov, Carnegie Mellon University
Eric Rasmusen, Kelley School of Business, Indiana University
Stuart J. Ritchie, King's College London
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Jordan R. Wagge, Avila University
Russell T. Warne, Utah Valley University