New Approaches to Long-standing Issues
NCURA’s Traveling Workshops head to Houston
December 8-10, 2014

Expand and enhance your job knowledge! Learn from well-respected senior research administrators and meet others who share similar job challenges. Choose from:

**Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop**
- For the newcomer (less than 2 years experience) or for the individual who has worked primarily in only one area of sponsored projects administration
- Provides participants with a broad overview of the various aspects involved in sponsored projects administration
- Compliance Issues
- Preparation and review of proposals
- Negotiation and acceptance of awards
- Financial and administrative management
- Close-out and audit

**Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop – Critical Issues in Research Administration**
- For more experienced research administrators
- Institutional compliance responsibilities
- Proposal creation, budgeting and award administration
- Contract and subaward review
- Export controls
- Post award financial administration

**Departmental Research Administration Workshop**
- Best practices for a department administrator’s day-to-day activities
- Discussion of OMB Circulars A-21, A-110, and A-133
- Tools for successful department administration
- Pre-Award administration
- Management of the award
- Compliance Challenges
- Close-out and audit

**Financial Research Administration Workshop**
- The inter-relationship between pre and post-award financial research administration
- Costing elements in OMB Circular A-21
- Cash management issues
- Issues relating to service centers
- Close-out requirements
- Audits

Registration and hotel information is available at [www.ncura.edu](http://www.ncura.edu)
CONTENTS

FEATURES

Message from Your President By Vivian Holmes ......................3

Taking Back the Reins: Tips for Owning Your Next A-133 Audit By Adrienne Larmett, Ashley Deihr, and Kimberly Ginn ........4

New Approaches to Managing Your Demanding Role as a Research Administrator By Elizabeth Haney .....................6

The Final Guidance Series: Focus on Indirect (F&A) Cost Rates By Cynthia Hope .................................10

The Final Guidance Series: Focus on Effort Reporting By Julie Cole and Jim Luther .................................11


Getting to the Core - Strategic Investment in Research Facilities, Resources & Infrastructure By Cindy Kiel ................................................20

National Biosafety Stewardship Month By David Clark and Mike Kluzik ..................................................22

The Advantages of Using Fringe Benefit Rates By Jim Carter and Kari Kelly ..............................................24

Looking at Things Differently, Both Employee and Institutional Change By Twila Fisher Reighley ..................................................28

Thinking Outside the Box: Making a Move From a Central Office to a College By Robyn Remotigue ....................29

Seeding for Success By M. S. AtKisson and Kathy Cataneo ...32

The Human Investment: Mismatch and Tacit Knowledge in the Pre-Award Office By Nicole Derr ..................34

Book Review: The Girls of Atomic City By Andre Walker ......38

Research Administration in Canada - The Great Divide: A Journey Together By Susan Blum .................................40

Research Administration in Europe - The Foreign Organization System Review – a Tool for Managing Risks at Foreign Institutions By Eva Björndal, Tiina Berg and Olaf Svenningsen .....................44

Research Administration in Japan - Cherry Blossoms on the Bench: Working with Japanese Research Universities By David H. Kornhauser .....................46

Tackling the Administrative Burden: One Institution’s Plan By Gary Smith, Harry Orf and Alan Robinson ..................49

Behold the Turtle… and Other Leadership Lessons By Shannon Sutton ..................................................52

Designing and Implementing Service-Delivery Models in Research Administration By April Heyward .....................58

Audit Watch By Charlene Bleeves .....................62

eRA: Errors, Resolutions and Aaaaah By Terri Hall .....................64

Unique Legal and Practical Issues in International Contracting: The Sequel (Part 2) By Janet Simons and David Brady .....................66

IN THIS ISSUE

2014 Annual Meeting Recap ........................................14

What’s on My Desk ................................................26

Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award ..................................................27

What I Found on Twitter ...........................................30

NCURA by Pedantic ...........................................31

2015 FRA Conference ...........................................37

2015 PRA Conference ...........................................36

Collaborate Conversations ........................................39

Research Administration By the Numbers .................45

On The National Level .............................................51

WEBCAST - The OMB Uniform Guidance: Key Issues for Universities ........................................53

New NCURA Peer Reviewers ........................................55

NCURA Pathways ................................................55

NCURA On-Campus Workshops ................................56

Members ..........................................................68

NCURA YouTube Tuesdays .......................................69

Regional Corner ....................................................70

Research Administration Meme ....................................75

Calendar of Events ...........................................Back Cover

facebook.com/ncura1959  twitter.com/#!/NCURA  YouTube youtube.com/ncura1959
ON THE COVER  We have a great issue packed with articles and information from around the globe centered on the theme New Approaches to Long-Standing Issues. As the magazine team brainstormed themes this year, we talked, debated, and chuckled about common problems and issues. We also discussed how many long-standing issues are disguised as “new” issues. And, solutions are often at our fingertips and can be found through collaboration and creativity. So, we developed this issue to showcase new and different approaches, strategies, or ways of thinking about research administration.

Research administrators constantly reinvent, reimage, and develop new and creative solutions to problems. The term “thinking outside the box” became popular in the USA in the late 1960s and early 1970s with psychologists and management experts. J. P. Guilford (1967) was one of the first academic researchers to conduct a study of creativity. One of Guilford’s most famous studies used the nine-dot puzzle, or the box, which originally appeared in Sam Loyd’s 1914 Cyclopedia of Puzzles. The problem is to connect 9 dots (three evenly spaced rows of three) with four lines, without lifting your pencil from the paper. To a person who encounters it for the first time, it can be puzzling because the person becomes fixed on the box (See Image 1.) But, the problem is actually easily solved in a number of different ways (See Image 2).

I invite you inside this issue to learn more about new approaches and different ways of looking at things. For example, Nicole Derr encourages us to think about the role of tacit knowledge when hiring research administrators - something we think about every day. I am also personally excited to read an article written by Elizabeth Haney, my Region I Executive Shadow Program Mentee, on new approaches to managing your demanding role as a research administrator.

You can’t miss long-time NCURA members Twila Reighley and Robyn Remotigue’s companion pieces describing their experiences as they took on the challenges of moving to new institutions.

You’ll also find our Final Guidance Series regarding the implementation of the Uniform Guidance with a focused look at Indirect Cost Rates and Effort Reporting. Also, we have an article on Designing and Implementing Service Delivery Models in Research Administration from April Heyward, tips on tackling administrative burden, articles from Japan, Canada and Europe, and an NCURA Pathway sidebar from Jennifer Rosa of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

There are just so many great articles, tidbits, and pieces of information from around the world. You really don’t want to miss any of it. We hope you enjoy this issue and it spurs new approaches, new ideas, and new strategies for issues you are dealing with today. Take a peek. You won’t be disappointed!

Kris Monahan, PhD, Co-Editor

Kris Monahan is the Director of Sponsored Research & Programs at Providence College. She can be reached at kmonahan@providence.edu

The NCURA Magazine accepts advertisements for products and services pertinent to university research administration. In addition, display advertisements (including those for position openings) will also be published. The minimum rate is $500.

Advertisements and articles should not be construed as official endorsements by NCURA. For additional information on advertising or changes in address, please contact:

National Council of University Research Administrators
1015 18th Street, NW, Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036
www.ncura.edu

To request permission to reprint material from the NCURA Magazine, please send your inquiry to Kathleen Larmett at larmett@ncura.edu and include the issue, name of article and where you are looking to reprint it.

Message from Your President

By Vivian Holmes, NCURA President

It happens all the time. I’m willing to bet it occurs elsewhere and not just in sponsored research offices. A lengthy process, a fractured procedure, a useless routing, is casually questioned. The response — you’ve heard it a million times: “That’s the way we’ve always done it.”

The theme of this issue “New Approaches to Long-Standing Issues” is designed to inspire us to re-examine, reconsider, and possibly reorganize. Taking a fresh look at an old method takes time and to map out a long-standing workflow to see where it may break down or get lost is frequently above and beyond our normal duties but taking the “bull” by the horns is worth it and can be great for efficiency as well as morale. Whether or not a review of a procedure eventually determines the need for a change, taking a deep look at who is doing what and why, is a requirement not only for proficiency and security, it is a necessary function of active leadership.

NCURA’s Board of Directors establishes the direction of our organization by implementing a Strategic Plan and formally reviews the plan to determine our preparedness for the future. Over the years, conventions or summits gathering the Board of Directors along with Regional Chairs and Officers have sparked new ideas and initiatives for NCURA by looking together at the future. The Board of Directors and Regional Leaders met for a one-and-a-half-day Leadership Convention just prior to the Annual Meeting. Our theme for this Leadership Convention was “Leading Together: The Next Five Years.”

The agenda included four areas identified by the Board which we would examine together. Board-assigned working groups would be presenting data, sharing ideas and opening up breakout and brainstorming sessions. Although it was a packed agenda, we planned to include new topics and a sharing of ideas. The four areas were: our regional geographic boundaries; a meeting App demonstration; a look at membership and participation possibilities for our constituency of retiring or emeritus members; and, to revisit one of our newer initiatives, the Executive Leadership Program.

If you have ever wondered how NCURA’s regions were originally determined, it was in the early 1970s when our founders spread a AAA road map on Secretary Julia Jacobsen’s kitchen table and drew the boundaries for the first set of NCURA’s regions. Now, forty-plus years later the 2014 Board established a working group (Suzanne Rivera, Bruce Morgan, Jeremy Forsberg) to take a look at today’s NCURA — its current population, the demographics of the membership and the way in which they interact with the association and each other. Do our current regions still fulfill the purpose for which they were founded? After a thorough examination of the data related to overall member participation, committee representation and service at the national level, we learned that the boundaries did not prohibit or inhibit individuals from involvement and although regional representation ebbed and flowed along the way, it appeared balanced, fair and healthy. As we begin to incorporate our International Region activity into our data, we predict and encourage more joint regional meetings and more “local chapter” activities to meet the needs of members far and wide.

David Smelser, Region III Secretary, University of Tennessee, demonstrated the meeting App “Guidebook” which was used at this year’s Region II & III Spring Meeting. David’s excellent presentation was met with a positive reaction (as well as oohs and ahhs). Imagine the entire Program — schedules, sessions and room locations, descriptions, presenter bios, attendee rosters, and evaluations all on your phone, updated real time. We are moving along to determine NCURA’s use of this type of software for national meetings and conferences in the near future.

With so many NCURA baby-boomers looking forward to retirement, we hope to find ways to keep them “in the fold.” Board members Anne Albinak, Louise Griffin, and Dennis Paffrath, presented solid statistics and excellent ideas. Our Leadership Convention participants whole-heartedly agreed that this group — our mentors, our colleagues, our friends, our heroes — should continue to be part of the NCURA community. I’m happy to say that plans are underway to create an Alumni Club and current leadership will be reaching out to retired and soon-to-retire members for their input and ideas. In the meantime, we are looking into our current membership categories and getting some Alumni activities planned for 2015.

The Executive Leadership Program (ELP) has been described as the “graduate program” replacing and following the successful years of the Leadership Development Institute. Denise Wallen (NLDC Vice-Chair) provided an overview of the Program (now entering into its fourth year), including comments from participants which included their enthusiastic praise. The ELP relies on the invitation and recommendation of current leaders to identify those members who have already shown their leadership skills by having served as a regional officer or led a committee or major project. This Program has been successful and the Leadership Convention proved a perfect forum to encourage the Board and regional leaders to nominate active members with leadership qualities which they plan to develop further as NCURA’s future leaders.

The 2014 Leadership Convention also helped to raise awareness of the Education Scholarship Fund and set the tone for the generosity and regional competitiveness that followed throughout the Annual Meeting. Meeting our conference goal and surpassing it showed the true spirit of NCURA.

If any moment in time represents a golden opportunity for “new approaches to long-standing issues,” it is undoubtedly the imminent implementation of the Uniform Guidance. Already, it has generated a flurry of activity as NCURA member colleagues have been generously sharing their interpretations and assessments. Together, we prepare for the reality to begin anew, rewrite our policies and procedures and re-review each process. No problem, we’re all in it together.

Vivian Holmes is NCURA President and serves as the Director, Sponsored Research Operations at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. She can be reached at vholmes@broadinstitute.org
Taking Back the Reins: Tips for Owning Your Next A-133 Audit

By Adrienne Larmett, Ashley Deihr, and Kimberly Ginn

Introduction
Audit: a word synonymous with panic...dread...root canal.

Let’s face it; audits are not always the most pleasant of experiences. In fact, there are a number of other activities we would rather be focused on, such as managing high-risk subrecipients, memorizing export control regulations, or reading the new Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance cover to cover. However, if your institution expends more than $500,000 (increasing to $750,000 come December 26, 2014) in federal funds or awards per year, you must submit to a single audit, more commonly known as the OMB Circular A-133 audit (or “A-133 audit” for short), on an annual basis.

On a scale from “Internal Audit” to “Office of Inspector General Audit,” the A-133 audit falls somewhere in the middle in terms of the level of stress induced. Traditionally the A-133 audit has been the federal government’s way of obtaining reasonable assurance, via an independent third party auditor (i.e., a certified public accounting firm), that institutions are being good stewards of federal award funds and are in compliance with applicable federal, state, sponsor, and other award-specific regulations. Many view the A-133 audit as a “necessary evil” - something that has to be done in order for your institution to receive the funding to perform some really fantastic research.

Although the A-133 audit is routine and fairly standard from year to year, it has a way of turning even the most proactive managers into reactive participants. Even when you have a great relationship with your A-133 auditors, the process can sometimes feel like an advanced game of “fetch”. But it doesn’t have to be that way! Below we outline some tips for taking back control of your next A-133 audit.

Tips for owning the audit process

1. Designate a Dedicated Audit Liaison – Many institutions allocate relatively small portions of time from a number of their Post-Award and Grant Accounting Directors and Managers to the A-133 audit. Unfortunately, this takes research administrators away from their key functions and can hinder your day-to-day operations. One best practice is to assign a dedicated audit liaison whose sole responsibility during the A-133 audit is to interact with the external audit team and coordinate your institution’s response (e.g., meetings, document requests, logistics, etc.) By having a designated audit liaison, the audit process will go more smoothly, research administrators will be able to focus on their core job responsibilities (administering research!), and the audit will not detract from institutional operations. Depending on the size of your institution this person does not have to be full time, and may work on other compliance activities during other times of the year.

2. Make Logistics Work for You - Auditors often prefer that your institution use the audit firm’s technology (e.g., Sharepoint sites) for document uploads, which can be time-consuming and inconvenient for your institution. Discuss these logistics at the beginning of the audit process and agree upon a sharing mechanism that works for your institution as well as the audit team. This will ultimately enable you to meet document request deadlines and keep the audit timeline moving forward while not overburdening your institutional resources.
3. Hold Auditors to a Time Schedule – It can sometimes feel that auditors create a “one-way street” with deadlines. The auditors may set seemingly unreasonable timelines for your institution, or want to hold meetings according to their schedules. To avoid these timing challenges, develop and agree to a joint timeline upfront, and hold the team accountable to that schedule. In addition, encourage the participation of audit managers and partners throughout the audit so that they are informed of any issues in a timely manner. This may help prevent a last minute time crunch during audit manager or partner review.

4. Educate your A-133 audit team – You know your institution better than anyone. Consider sharing policies, processes, documented controls etc. with your audit team in advance; it can help save time (and frustration) on the tail-end.

5. Be Prepared and Responsive – Being prepared allows you to more easily and quickly respond to questions and requests. To prepare:
   - Review meeting agendas and understand the purpose of each meeting in advance.
   - Review and have all documentation readily available.
   - Anticipate questions related to the documentation requested.
   - Maintain documentation of your procedures, systems, and internal controls.
   - Re-familiarize yourself and your team with your protocols, controls, and records.
   - Know and understand relevant regulations and guidance.
   - Document appropriate approvals and maintain an audit trail of supporting documentation.
   - Establish a method to leverage lessons learned from past audits.

6. Listen Carefully – Listen carefully in order to understand the auditor’s questions before answering. Ask for clarification when you do not understand the auditors’ questions, assumptions, or conclusions. Rather than debating, try to clarify misunderstandings with positive rather than negative statements.

7. Answer the Question Being Asked –
   - Provide only the requested information. Don’t answer unasked questions.
   - Respond to questions with straightforward, honest, and complete answers.
   - Remember that it’s ok to say, “I don’t know, but I will get back to you with the answer.”
   - Limit your answers and comments to areas where you have first-hand knowledge and/or supporting documentation. If you don’t have the information, rather than speculating, bring in the correct person to provide the answer.
   - Politely decline to answer questions you don’t fully understand until a central administrative contact within your department or school is present.

8. Participate Actively – Don’t be a passive participant in meetings. Rather, make it a point to take notes (e.g., questions asked and answers given, documents requested and provided, discussions of complex issues), keep copies of documents provided, and ensure that all original records provided to the audit team are returned at the end of the audit. In addition, use meetings as an opportunity to learn from your auditors, including ways to improve the process for next time, or how to better document controls.

9. Don’t Wait for Reporting and Findings – If, in the course of the audit, you find inappropriate charges or inadequate procedures (e.g., untimely cost transfers, unallowable charges), resolve the issue immediately rather than waiting for the audit report to be finalized.

10. Don’t Always Accept Initial Findings – If findings are stated, work through them with the auditors. Provide additional documentation or back-up to support your position. This will enable the audit team to make a full evaluation of the situation and potentially come to a different conclusion. While your institution has the right to dispute findings, under certain circumstances it may be best to accept a finding gracefully and work to correct the error as soon as possible.

11. Be Professional at All Times – The audit team is most likely working in your office and may be listening to or observing your behavior and comments.

Conclusion

The A-133 audit process will always present complexities and unforeseen challenges. However, it does not have to perpetually invoke your “fight or flight response.” By taking ownership, planning, and adopting a proactive, positive attitude, your institution can take meaningful steps to make the process less stressful and mutually beneficial to all parties.
What is a typical work day like for you? Do you find yourself struggling to get out of bed? Do you skip the morning meal? Once you get to work, do you spend your time responding to crises while fighting distractions? Do you feel irritable or impatient during your work day? Do you find yourself driven by the demands of others, either at work or outside?

If you found yourself thinking “YES!” to one or more of these questions, then you are not alone. The Energy Project reports that 59% of us feel tired because we don’t sleep enough, 69% of us have trouble staying focused, and 58% of us aren’t living our lives in ways that line up with our values (1). The result of this is that the majority of workers in the U.S. — 70% — are actively disengaged from their jobs and are not reaching their full potential (2), which is not just bad for us, but for our employers and for the U.S. economy as a whole.

Tony Schwartz, the founder of the Energy Project, looked at these statistics and declared that we are in a crisis (3-5). Thanks to new technologies such as desktop computing, email, and smartphones, demands on us have grown and we have responded to these increasing demands by simply working longer hours. Anecdotally, we observe ourselves and our coworkers working late all week—either in the office or from home — to keep up with work and the data support this: 85.8% of men and 66.5% of women in the U.S. work more than 40 hours per week (6). Maybe you even have to come to work on weekends to stay on top of your workload. If so, you are not alone; 18.1% of us work more than 48 hours per week (6). This won’t work in the long term because time is a finite resource: there are only 24 hours in a day, and most of us don’t have any more hours to spare. Schwartz has proposed a solution to this crisis—we need to focus on our energy levels, not our time. In physics, energy is defined as the capacity to do work, and Schwartz says that our energy comes in 4 main forms: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, and that each type can be renewed and even expanded with rituals (3-5). To increase the likelihood of personal and professional success in today’s world, it is vital to understand your personal energy and develop rituals to manage it.

Are you in a Personal Energy Crisis?

To get started, perform your own personal assessment to find out how your demanding role is affecting you. To do this, you can take the quiz (left), adapted from the work of Tony Schwartz (3).
How did you do? If you scored excellent, you could stop reading now, but I hope you won’t. Even those of us who are managing our energy well can find new rituals to try. Rituals are simply behaviors—ones that are first scheduled, then practiced with intention, and eventually incorporated into our lives as unconscious and automatic (3). Let’s take a closer look at each type of energy. I’ll offer suggestions from experts for rituals to manage each type of energy as well as some personal anecdotes about how I manage them.

Managing Physical Energy
The body is our foundation, and managing our physical energy will help us with all the other types. According to the experts, to manage physical energy, we need to focus on nutrition, exercise, sleep, rest, and play (these are shown in order in the 5 rows of my assessment table). Avoid sugar and alcohol and eat more protein, vegetables, whole grains, and fruit (7). Eat every three hours (3). Take a multivitamin (7). Exercise at least 30 minutes, at least 3 times a week (3, 7). Take breaks away from your desk every 90 to 120 minutes (3). Reserve time to think and be creative (7). Create a workspace with things that make you happy (9). We all probably knew this stuff already—what we should do to manage our physical energy is simple; the tricky part is how to do these things. That’s where rituals come in.

Since our goal here is for you to create your own personalized rituals, instead of asking the experts about managing physical energy, I want you to task yourself with a personal assessment. You can do this same assessment for each of the energy types. To help you with these, I have filled the first one for myself as an example. There are some themes emerging here for me, and probably some for you too. A simple way to use these assessments is to take a look at the items in each column, and then do more of the things on the right that replenish our physical energy and fewer of the ones on the left that deplete it. I suggest starting with the left column, as stopping something is a single simple action that doesn’t even require a ritual. To create your own rituals for replenishing physical energy, take the things in the right column that you want to do more of, put them in your calendar, do them 300 times over the next year, and eventually they just become part of who you are. Here’s how this works for me. For nutrition, I use my Saturday nights or Sunday mornings to cook food for the week so I have healthy meals and snacks ready to go. For exercise, I go to the gym or yoga every morning before work, except Thursdays, and I track my steps with a gadget. For sleep, I have a timer on my gadget that goes off every night at the same time to remind me to start winding down and getting ready for bed. I also have a relaxation and meditation ritual that I practice each night to help me sleep. For rest and breaks, I have set up my work space so that the printer, trash can, and recycling bin are away from my desk so I have to get up and walk to use them. And for play, I make plans to do fun things and put them on my calendar—that way I can enjoy them twice as much by anticipating the fun I am going to have.

Managing Mental Energy
Even if you are not in a crisis of physical energy, you may still be feeling mentally tired. We all know intuitively that our busy multi-tasking jobs are zapping our mental energy, and the data support this too. Shifting your attention from one task to another—such as stopping to answer an email or take a phone call—increases the amount of time necessary to finish the primary task by as much as 25% (3). It’s far more efficient to fully focus for 90 to 120 minutes, take a true break, and then fully focus on the next activity (3). If you read the section above, you are

---

**Scoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide to Overall Score</th>
<th>Guide to Category Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–3: Excellent energy management skills</td>
<td>0: Excellent energy management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6: Reasonable energy management skills</td>
<td>1: Strong energy management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–10: Significant energy management deficits</td>
<td>2: Significant deficits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–16: A full-fledged energy management crisis</td>
<td>3: Poor energy management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17–20: A full-fledged energy crisis</td>
<td>4: A full-fledged energy crisis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Physical Energy Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What zaps your physical energy?</th>
<th>What recharges your physical energy?</th>
<th>What zaps Elizabeth’s physical energy?</th>
<th>What recharges Elizabeth’s physical energy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caffeine after 3pm, too much junk food</td>
<td>Eating regular healthy meals and snacks, taking a multivitamin daily</td>
<td>Sitting all day at a desk or on the couch</td>
<td>Moving my body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying up late</td>
<td>Getting enough sleep</td>
<td>Working for long hours at a stretch</td>
<td>Taking breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being so serious all the time</td>
<td>Being silly, trying something new</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Why 300 times a year? That’s every day, excluding one day off every week, as well as one additional day off every month, plus one more day off every year. You can do that, right?**
already working breaks into your day or practicing other rituals to manage your physical energy, so now what other rituals can you practice to manage your mental energy? As before, you can take the assessment and do more of the things that replenish and less of the things that deplete your mental energy.

**Rituals for Email.** One suggestion is not to check your email when you first sit down at your desk. Instead, concentrate the first hour of every day on the most important thing to be done. (Maybe you write this down for yourself before you leave your desk each day as part of the ritual.) If you do this consistently, by 10:00 am every day you’ll feel as if you’re already having a productive day and your mental energy will be high for the rest of the work that you discover you need to do once you open your email. If you are not a morning person, notice the time of day when you feel like you are performing at your peak, and save your most challenging work for those times. When you do interact with your email, take the approach described by David Allen in *Getting Things Done* (8). First, decide if the email requires an action. If so, then either do, delegate, or defer this action. Doing means you take the action required by the email and resolve the task. A good rule of thumb is that if you can do the task in less than 10 minutes, you should pretend it’s 1988, strap on your Nikes, and just do it. Delegating can mean assigning the task to someone else. A key to delegating is that you must have a reliable system for tracking the delegated tasks and following up. Deferring is similar, only you assign the task to your future self by putting it in your calendar or on a to-do list. If an email does not require an action, either trash it, file it for reference, or file it for incubating. Reference files should be organized in a way that makes it easy for you to find what you are looking for, and incubation files should be reviewed regularly and items therein should be either converted to actions, trashed, or filed for reference.

**Rituals for Calendars.** Now that we have your email under control, let’s talk about the other tool you use every day: your calendar. Stop treating your calendar like a Persian Gulf resort city! Too many of us fill up our calendars with reminders of when things are “due by” when it is far more effective to intentionally schedule time for our work by filling our calendar with “do on.” When we put the things we need to do on our calendars we avoid rushing through them at the last minute. It is especially important to schedule time for our most challenging work when we can be free of interruptions.

**Rituals for Tasks.** Slow down. Before you start typing an email, pause and take a deep breath. Do the same before you send the email. After you finish something, pause, do something else, and come back for a final review before considering the task complete. Say, “I’ll get back to you.” Almost nothing requires immediate action. Ask for help. When asking for help, be specific. Instead of saying, “Can you help me with reviewing purchases?” try saying, “I am really overwhelmed right now. There are a lot of purchases to review on this fund. Can you help with these two requisitions: getting original itemized receipts from the purchaser, Prof. Ligate, by next Wednesday?”

**Managing Emotional Energy**

Our emotions speak to the quality of our energy. When we are feeling positive emotions, like love, happiness, peace, and engagement, we are replenishing our emotional energy. When we are feeling negative emotions, like anger, irritability, impatience, anxiety, and insecurity, we are depleting our emotional energy. We can’t control our feelings, they simply are. But we can defuse negative emotions when they come and cultivate positive emotions through our actions. Use your results from the assessment to identify things that recharge your emotional energy and things that exhaust it, as well as try the tips below to refine the quality of your emotional energy.

**Defusing negative emotions.** Take a few deep breaths. Inhale slowly through your nose, allowing your belly to expand for a count of five. Pause briefly at the top of the inhale, then exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of seven. Opening your mouth helps make this a conscious activity rather than an unconscious one, and exhaling for longer than you inhale initiates a relaxation response via your vagus nerve that slows inflammatory activity and increases repair activity in your body (9, 10). Look at situations through different points of view. A reverse view asks, “What would the other person in this situation say, and how might s/he be right?” A long view asks, “How will I likely view this situation in six months?” A wide view asks, “How can I grow and learn from this situation?” The views from all of these angles tend to move our emotional responses away from the negative end of the spectrum. QTP: Quit Taking it Personally. If you are the type of person who wants to succeed and provide excellent customer service, you may find yourself internalizing and personalizing criticism that is meant to be situational and related to your actions. Accept feedback without allowing it to turn into a negative internal monologue about your worth as a person. Know that your colleagues and your organization are invested in your success.

**Cultivating positive emotions.** Give someone a compliment. We all have a need to feel appreciated. You’ll feel good when you give someone a compliment, and you will find that compliments tend to multiply. You can also give one to yourself to acknowledge your own accomplishments (11). Build affiliation. Another universal human need is to feel connected to others. A face to face conversation with someone you like at work can be incredibly invigorating. Just keep the tone positive—no complaining. Outside of work, make time to connect with those you love over a meal at least once a day. For me, that’s breakfast, and I love how it gets me off to a great start each morning.

**Managing Spiritual Energy**

The key to managing your spiritual energy is to know your purpose. To discover your deep internal motivation, ask yourself these two questions: 1) What do you want to be remembered for? 2) What are the qualities that you find most
off-putting when you see them in others? Answering these two questions respectively is a direct and indirect way to discover your values. The first question helps you see what you consciously value; the second, what you unconsciously value. If you find something annoying when someone else does it, you most likely value its opposite. For example, if you hate it when people are rude, you value respect for others. If you can’t stand it when people are rude, then you value kindness.

Once you know your purpose, you can create rituals that help you to live your core values in your daily actions. If you value respect for others, then live it. Show up for meetings on time or early and come prepared. If you value kindness, show it to others by giving them the benefit of the doubt. I think this is especially important in research administration because our interactions with Principal Investigators (PIs) tend to be concentrated at the most stressful times—deadlines. I try to assume that the PI who works on a proposal until the last minute is balancing research, teaching, and family as opposed to enacting a vendetta against research administrators and their red tape.

Another way to live your core values is to allocate your time and all your other types of energy to what feeds your spirit. At work, identify your “sweet spot” activities—those that give you feelings of effectiveness, effortless absorption, and fulfillment—and find ways to do more of these (3). Maybe your sweet spot is working with numbers in spreadsheets; maybe it is meeting face to face with PIs, maybe it is preparing policy or training documents. Make time outside of work for sweet spot activities as well. If what makes you feel effective is saving the environment, volunteer at the community garden. If you feel totally Zen when you are with animals, get involved with a dog rescue, take your pup for a walk, or visit the zoo. If where you find contentment is in your relationships, then use your time to be with your loved ones over a meal. Whatever you do, don’t judge yourself for what these activities are—do what is truly absorbing for you. These sweet spot activities are your wellspring, a bountiful source of energy that can continually supply you not just spiritually, but physically, mentally, and emotionally as well.

No matter what your purpose in life is or what makes you feel useful, engaged, and satisfied, you can try these suggestions for replenishing spiritual energy from Judith Hanson Lasater, a renowned yoga teacher and co-founder of Yoga Journal,(12). No more rushing. We all have to be places, and sometimes we have to hurry to get there. Don’t add to that the suffering of feeling rushed. No more waiting. You may find yourself sitting or standing somewhere before someone (your lunch companion) or something (a bus) arrives, but there is no need to be put out by it. Watch the people going by, take in the sounds around you, breathe it all in deeply—this is your life.

A New Approach

Imagine a day when you wake up refreshed after seven to eight hours of sleep and start your day with exercise and a healthy breakfast. Once you get to work, you focus on activities with long-term value and take time for reflection. You feel appreciation for your colleagues and pride in your accomplishments, and you find yourself driven by your own sense of purpose. With the rituals you develop to manage your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energy, this could be your new typical day. We’re at our best when we move between expending energy and intermittently renewing it. When we do this, we’re making ourselves happier, and that will affect our success in our demanding roles.

References

1. Results from the Energy Audit, taken by over 150,000 people worldwide. Retrieved from http://theenergyproject.com/key-ideas
Focus:

Indirect (F&A) Cost Rates

By Cynthia Hope

For those of you who never stopped using the term “Indirect Cost”, you are in luck! The Uniform Guidance (UG) has generally gone back to that terminology, using “Facilities and Administrative” only three times. There are, of course, more substantive changes affecting rate development and application. This article will focus on the proposal, rather than on the application, of Indirect Cost rates.

We first need to know the effective date of the UG in relation to Indirect Cost proposals. The UG fails to mention it but Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) released in August include clarification that “Non-Federal entities may begin to submit actual cost proposals based on the Uniform Guidance when they are due for fiscal years that begin on or after December 26, 2014.” As institutions generally negotiate predetermined rates applicable to future years, it seems logical that a proposal could be based on the UG if it will be used in setting rates for years in which the UG will be applicable, but clarification was needed. The language in the FAQ is not simple to follow but, “cost proposals… are due for” the fiscal years for which they will be used to set rates so, if the first year for which the cost proposal will be used to set rates begins on or after December 26th, 2014, the proposal may be based on the UG. An example is given that states that the proposal can be based on the UG when setting rates for FY 2016 (i.e. FY 2014 base years).

The effective date for application of the UG to indirect cost proposals is particularly important to us because of the change in allocation of utility costs. Under A-21, certain institutions that had used utility cost studies prior to those being disallowed were given a 1.3 percent addition to their research rates, called a Utility Cost Adjustment (UCA). Research space, of course, uses more utilities than other space but that 1.3 percent UCA was never granted more broadly under A-21. The UG now allows up to a 1.3 percent UCA but it must be supported by either submetering, which was previously disallowed below the building level, or application of a relative energy utilization index (REUI) to research space. While institutions not currently receiving the 1.3 percent UCA are anxious to apply the UG to their indirect cost proposals, those with the automatic 1.3 percent UCA may be concerned about the additional burden of documenting the UCA and, perhaps, whether it will reach 1.3 percent.

The FAQs posted in August also address a concern over depreciation on buildings constructed with partial federal funding. In substance, the language in the UG states that none of the depreciation on such a building can be included in an institution’s Indirect Cost rate. An earlier FAQ clarifies that this only applies in cases of cost sharing or matching but this is still a deviation from A-21 and potentially unfair. An August FAQ states that OMB will issue a technical clarification, as depreciation on the institutional contribution is allowable, even in cases of cost sharing or matching.

Another depreciation issue is related to equipment purchased with funds from sponsors other than the federal government. Rather than excluding this depreciation until the end of the sponsored agreement, it will be excluded only if the equipment is “acquired solely for the performance of a non-Federal award.” There is no additional guidance in the UG or the FAQs and we may find application of this change to be a topic of debate with our rate setting agencies.

Other UG changes directly impacting proposal preparation include:

- The availability of the one-time rate extension of up to four years, which is well explained in the August FAQs.
- Participant support costs are excluded from the Modified Total Direct Cost Base.
- Changes to interest allowability and categories of Library users.

Changes that will more indirectly impact the Indirect Cost rate proposal, such as cost sharing and the treatment of administrative salaries and computing devices will also need our attention so stay tuned.

Cynthia Hope is the Assistant Vice President for Research and the Director of the Office for Sponsored Programs at The University of Alabama. She is the Chair of the Federal Demonstration Partnership and a member of the Board of Directors for the Council on Governmental Relations.
Focus: Effort Reporting

By Julie Cole & Jim Luther

A long series of debates and discussions have culminated in the present language provided in the new Uniform Guidance (UG). Starting in 1967 with a revision to OMB Circular A-21 that introduced the concept of effort reporting to present day, the Office of Management and Budget and the national research community have debated the best method of ensuring that the costs of personnel charged to sponsored projects met the test of allowability, allocability and reasonableness. The new Uniform Guidance (UG) attempts to offer options for universities in managing and reporting effort.

Addressing the issue of compensation has been a considerable challenge, as the UG must apply to a wide range of recipients. The UG resolves this dilemma by including a special section applicable to Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) only. Compensation is discussed in Section 200.430, and contains broad language which refers to all recipients. Section 200.430 (h) directly addresses effort in Institutions of Higher education (IHEs).

Section 200.430 (h) states: It is recognized that teaching, research, service and administration are often inextricably intermingled in an academic setting. When recording salaries and wages charged to Federal awards for IHEs, a precise assessment of factors that contribute to costs is therefore not always feasible, nor is it expected. This acknowledgement of the unique nature of research in higher education is a positive step and helpful in bridging the divide between federal and institutional viewpoints of how effort is best assigned to sponsored activities.

Section 200.430 (h) (4) (ii) defines the concept of Institutional Base Salary (IBS), new to the Circular environment and definitely an acceptance on CFOAR’s part that universities are different. The non-Federal entity establishes a consistent written definition of work covered by institutional base salary (IBS) which is specific enough to determine when work beyond that level has occurred. This may be described in appointment letter or other documentation. It is interesting to note that additional language has been included that affirms the requirement for supporting documentation as represented in formal appointment letters, etc.

Another significant change is the recognition of certain activities in direct support of research that will impact the charging of personnel such as lab managers and other dedicated research support staff. The rewording of OMB A-21 Section J.10 to recognize support personnel functions associated with research endeavors is a major change, opening the door to directly charging individuals who support PIs, thus having the potential impact of reduction of administrative burden on researchers. This practice may have been common among institutions for some time, but generally carried the institutional concerns that auditors might challenge these costs. Clarification in the UG addresses this in a fairly straightforward manner. The specific UG language change is noted below:

• (i) Allowable activities. Charges to Federal awards may include reasonable amounts for activities contributing and directly related to work under an agreement, such as delivering special lectures about specific aspects of the ongoing activity, writing reports and articles, developing and maintaining protocols (human, animals, etc.), managing substances/chemicals, managing and securing project-specific data, coordinating research subjects, participating in appropriate seminars, consulting with colleagues and graduate students, and attending meetings and conferences.

A word of caution, however, is that the UG’s increased emphasis on internal controls strongly argues for the necessity of an internal verification as to the allocability of these personnel to individual projects.

In a similar vein, the UG addresses the issue of direct charging clerical and administrative staff in Section 200.413 (c) but establishes certain limitations that may cause institutions to re-examine how they review proposals and track requested categories of funds. IHEs may need to develop definitions of what is considered “integral” to sponsored projects and be able to anticipate the necessity of obtaining prior approval for these costs.

Much of the former prescriptive language for frequency, specific methodologies and other effort reporting requirements have been removed or modified. Periodic certifications of effort are no longer explicitly required and previously described acceptable methods of allocating payroll to sponsored projects have been removed. Instead, there is increased emphasis on internal controls as the desired mechanism for ensuring that effort is appropriately managed.
The UG’s emphasis on the application of internal controls is very clear. Eliminating specific reporting requirement methods and timelines certainly provides institutions with greater flexibility. The guidance removes the requirement that institutions develop extensive policies and procedures for effort reporting in order to comply with the guidance previously found in OMB Circular A-21. It is interesting to note that the phrases “suitable means of verification” and firsthand knowledge” are no longer in the regulations. Additionally the Examples of Acceptable Methods for Payroll Distribution have been eliminated as well. However, charges for non-exempt personnel must still be supported by records indicating total hours worked each day. Cost sharing or matching personnel charges must meet the same documentation and reporting standards as direct charges.

While the elimination of specific effort reporting requirements seems to provide more flexibility for entities to design and implement processes that best fit their own environments, the internal control requirements in the UG establish clear standards for acceptability of those controls. Internal control requirements are outlined in §200.303. The new language provides a blueprint for institutions when developing their internal controls processes or evaluating their current processes and policies. As a result, entities have more flexibility in devising their internal controls, provided they consistently apply and adhere to those controls to meet the standards and document accordingly in their policies and procedures. Valuable lessons may be learned from the ongoing “Payroll Certifications – A Proposed Alternative to Effort Reporting” initiative that is underway with the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP). Several institutions are working with their cognizant and applicable auditors to pilot a project focused process that would replace the traditional effort certification process. This model may hold significant promise for many institutions.

As institutions consider “where to go from here”, one might theorize that institutions will generally fall into three categories. Group One might be universities that have transitioned to an online effort system over the past 5 – 10 years, invested the financial, cultural, and personnel resources to make the change, and embraced or at least accepted the electronic process as an improvement over the previous paper process. This group may be less likely to change their internal system to adjust to the flexibility afforded by the UG until there is a clear value proposition and reduced risk due to the uncertain compliance environment. Group Two might be those institutions that have received internal or external audit effort findings, perhaps experienced grumbling from within with regard to their current legacy system - be that paper or electronic – and accepted the reality that they must change or revise their current practices. Group Three might be those institutions that are not at all clear on their next steps, and may not have a complete picture of their own internal processes sufficient to make informed decisions regarding change. For Group Two and Three, the questions are not only whether they decide to be early adopters of change, but what do they need to know about their current systems and practices and how aggressive they want to be in making changes.

On the continuum of options, the minimalist approach may be to ensure current systems meet the new guidance and consider reducing the frequency of certification from monthly or quarterly to semiannually /by semester or annually. There may be a decision to place a higher reliance on the inherent existing controls within their payroll distribution system and the day-to-day interactions between research administrators and the faculty they support. On the other side of the continuum is a complete replacement of their system from the ground up. Somewhere in the middle of this broad spectrum of choices is an essential component: each institution should review current internal controls, documentation levels, and process to ensure minimal compliance.

In both cases, the August 29, 2014 release of the FAQs does provide some guidance. It is clear that there is an expectation that effort management changes will require proactive coordination with your cognizant agency and documentation within your CASB DS-2. In some cases, institutions may want
to submit a CASB DS-2 change on 12/27/14 (the first day they are allowed for submission) and initiate conversations. The cognizant agency has 6 months to respond or it is assumed that the change is permissible.

What about the audit community? Certainly, the audit community will be required to assess the internal control structure based upon a much broader set of guidelines. The current audit approach is based upon years of experience with A-21 and rigid institutional effort reporting systems. It will be interesting to observe how audit processes are adjusted to the new guidance and how auditors will revise procedures and modify staff training to meet the new standards. It is unclear how auditors will determine what constitutes an auditable “system of internal control which provides reasonable assurance”. In the short term, the audit approach for this issue could vary among firms and Federal agencies. It will take auditors several years and iterative processes to establish consistent standards and institutions can likely expect an unsettled audit environment until this aspect of the UG is ultimately resolved.

Summary

The UG succeeds in addressing much of the debate over Effort and Effort Reporting. The recognition of the unique nature of IHEs is a major step forward. The acceptance of directly charging project support personnel is welcome, although these changes will require institutions to review and perhaps strengthen their own internal definitions and processes to ensure they meet the new guidance. Perhaps the most compelling change is the shift from prescriptive requirements to institutional decision-making in regard to internal controls. Here the UG offers both promise and concern. The stated expectation for internal controls very clearly places the burden on institutions to have well documented policies and procedures to ensure their effort reporting practices satisfy Federal requirements. The end result may be that good practices and systems will simply remain in place. However, those institutions that do not currently have good controls, policies and/or procedures will likely need to immediately address these needs. The UG’s less prescriptive approach to documenting salary charges should enable grantees to modify existing practices so that administrative burden is reduced. It is however, incumbent on grantee institutions to ensure that sufficient internal controls are maintained, and it is likely that all IHE’s will need to consider how compliant their current effort reporting processes are in light of the new UG language.

References

http://www.acura.edu – The OMB Uniform Guidance: Key Issues for Universities Webcast
Building Bridges: A Crosswalk To The New OMB Circular (Ozy/Cole)
https://cfo.gov/cofar/
http://www.huronconsultinggroup.com/Insights/Analysis/Education/OMB_Uniform_Guidance_Effort_Reporting
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/pgasite/documents/webpage/pga_088154.pdf
PAYROLL CERTIFICATIONS - A PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE TO EFFORT REPORTING
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/pgasite/documents/webpage/pga_055994.pdf

Julie Cole, MA., CRA, is the Director of Research Costing Compliance (RCC) at Duke University. She has served in similar capacities at Wake Forest University, the University of Florida and other higher educational venues. Julie directs Research Costing Compliance in developing and providing dedicated compliance training and in monitoring financial research compliance at Duke University.

James D. Luther, MA., Associate Vice President for Finance & Research Costing Compliance Officer at Duke University. His responsibilities include oversight of the post-award areas for the University and School of Medicine, management of fixed and moveable assets, negotiation of Duke’s indirect cost and fringe benefit rates, and the Research Costing Compliance (RCC) program. Jim is a regular presenter at NCURA, the Chair of the COGR Costing Committee, and the Co-Chair of the FDP Admin Burden Subgroup.
AM56 Recap

By Michelle Vazin, Cathy Snyder and Georgette Sakumoto

Well, everyone is now back at their institution and working hard to manage things in their own areas as students arrive back on campus and fall is soon approaching. AM56 was a wonderful success thanks in large part to all of you who came to fully participate and embraced the program we planned. “The Evolution of Research Administration - facing the future… together” came to life before our eyes in August and it was a very fruitful experience for all. It really delivered great benefits for our membership: from the workshops on Sunday to the concurrent sessions and discussion groups on Monday through Wednesday, there was an incredible amount of material and pertinent information shared with the attendees.

In addition to all the great information shared on a professional level, there were added bonus moments sprinkled throughout our stay in DC where we were entertained. Starting on Sunday night with Paul Begala and Tucker Carlson, we laughed and enjoyed thought-provoking conversations on current events. On Monday morning, we heard Dr. Sapolsky as he shared his witty insight on how to recognize and minimize stress and finally we capped off the entertainment with a lively Tuesday night under-the-sea event with great food, music and comradery. Who would have thought that face painting would be such a huge draw for research administrators?

The benefits of attending AM56 will keep on coming throughout the year for our members. The wonderful connections made and materials received just enhance everyone’s ability to oversee their sponsored programs at their own institution. The depth of resources that NCURA provides is invaluable and the annual meeting always highlights this aspect. Being able to come together and put faces with names of colleagues we deal with daily on agreements and programs is an added perk of attending the annual meeting. Whether you get to meet someone from NSF or from another institution you have been collaborating with for years, the opportunity to mingle with them and have meaningful face-to-face conversations is priceless. Add to that the opportunity to make new connections and it just sweetens the take away benefit of the annual meeting even more.

Finally, in recapitulating the events of AM56 we would be remiss if we did not thank everyone for their overwhelming support of the NCURA Education Scholarship fund. Thanks to all our enthusiastic members, the NCURA membership donated at a level that enabled us to reach the goal of $35,000 for the scholarship fund during AM56. We want to thank each and every one of our members that turned that goal into a reality - just proving once again that all things are possible when we collaborate as a group. Remember, NCURA – supporting research… together.
Honored guests from sister societies around the world

back row: Vivian Holmes, NCURA President; Martin Kirk, CAURA (Canada); Troels Jacobsen, NARMA (Norway); Simon Kerridge, ARMA (United Kingdom)  
front row: Jesse Szeto, Senior Manager, NCURA Global; Patricia Hawk, NCURA Immediate Past President; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director; Michelle Vazin, NCURA Vice President; David Lauder, EARMA (Europe)  
not pictured: Christine Tonui, ARAA (Africa) and Olaf Svenningsen, DARMA (Denmark).
NCURA Past Presidents seated: Patricia Hawk, Pam Whitlock
standing: Dave Richardson, Judy Fredenberg, Dan Nordquist, Denise Clark, David Mayo, Kim Moreland, Jane Youngers, John Case
NCURA Past Officers
seated: Nan Wells, Pamela Webb, Marjorie Forster
standing: Georgette Sakumoto, Barbara Gray, Denise Clark, John Case, Gunta Liders, Tommy Coggins, Cindy White, Kerry Peluso, Mario Medina

Program Co-Chairs with Political Pundits
Tucker Carlson, Cathy Snyder, Michelle Vazin, Georgette Sakumoto, Paul Begala
It was fall in our nation’s capital - one of those crisp, autumn days that energizes your step and your thoughts. As I made my way down Fifth Street toward the National Academy of Sciences for the October, 2013, “Research Universities and the Future of America: A National Convocation on Breakthrough Actions,” I was excited to join my higher education presidential colleagues for a meeting that marked the culmination of a series of nine regional workshops held throughout the country – including one hosted at Vanderbilt. These collaborative workshops were formed in response to the 2012 National Research Council report titled “Research Universities and the Future of America: Ten Breakthrough Actions Vital to Our Nation’s Prosperity and Security.” The report, requested by a bipartisan group of Senators, including Tennessee’s senior Senator, Lamar Alexander, identified the top 10 actions that Congress, federal and state governments, and research institutions can take to “assure the ability of the American research university to maintain the excellence in research and doctoral education needed to help the United States compete, prosper, and achieve national goals for health, energy, the environment, and security in the global community of the 21st century.” The recommendations revolved around three broad goals: revitalizing the partnership, strengthening institutions, and building talent.

The October conference at the National Academies provided an opportunity for further discussions on how best to implement the “Research Universities” report’s ten recommendations, with conversations centered around the three aforementioned goals. I was a participant in the Revitalizing Partnerships group, which focused on strengthening partnerships between universities, federal and state governments, philanthropy, and the business community. The members of this group agreed on the importance of creating strong local and state-level partnerships and the need for universities to raise awareness of the positive economic, entrepreneurial, and innovative impact that higher education institutions have on their communities and states.

This session built nicely on the conversations that came out of Vanderbilt’s regional workshop, which included stakeholders from Tennessee universities, Oak Ridge National Lab, the private sector, and state and federal government leaders - including Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and Senator Lamar Alexander. Speakers from state economic development offices in Tennessee, Ohio, North Carolina, and Georgia detailed strategies that their states employ to engage with research universities and attract private industry to local communities.

The Strengthening Institutions session discussed possible efforts to streamline and improve the productivity of research universities, while the Building Talent session discussed efforts to ensure the future of America’s pipeline of talent in science, engineering, and other research areas remains at the highest level.

Although the summary of this meeting has not been published as of the date of this article, activities stemming from the meeting continue. For example, a workshop where university leaders share successful streamlining and productivity strategies from their campus has been proposed. Multiple efforts are currently underway aimed at reducing regulatory burdens on college campuses. The National Science Board has recently released a report on the impact of governmental regulations on universities that has garnered significant attention. Efforts continue in Congress and stakeholders continue to press policymakers to prioritize investments in science and engineering research and education. As the economy slowly improves, we are beginning to see states more willing to reinvest in their public research institutions. Make no mistake, much remains to be done, and we are far from accomplishing all of the important recommendations laid out in the National Research Council’s report.

This national conversation holds great significance for the future of higher education. I encourage you to join in the discussions and to seek ways to implement the report’s recommendations within your own institution and state. Your voice and engagement will be vital in shaping the public discourse and in conveying to our legislators how excess regulations are impeding access and affordability for deserving students seeking to better themselves through higher education.

Nicholas S. Zeppos, J.D., Chancellor of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, is a distinguished legal scholar, teacher and executive. He currently serves on the National Security Higher Education Advisory Board, as co-chair of the Senate-appointed Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education; on the Newseum Institute, Inc. Board; and as President of the Southeastern Conference. He can be reached at chancellor@vanderbilt.edu
Attain is a clear path forward.

With a legacy of more than 30 years helping colleges, universities, and academic medical centers improve their strengths and capabilities and optimize operations, we’ve honed a successful approach and the proven solutions that enable progress.

In today’s new regulatory environment, we provide the expertise and perspective to help you navigate OMB Uniform Guidance and regulatory compliance matters for continued success.

In partnership with our clients, Attain delivers quality analyses, recommendations and research administration services that yield effective and accurate cost recovery, compliance performance, and the transformation to advance and achieve your mission.

To learn more about us, visit www.attain.com.
We’re eager to work with you.

NEW OFFERING! MASTER OF SCIENCE IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

Whether you are a current or aspiring research administrator, advance your career with this new, entirely online, interdisciplinary program at Johns Hopkins University:

> Earn a degree from the nation’s first research university, and the World’s leading academic institution in total research & development expenditures.
> Develop proficiency in the management of sponsored research programs, including policy development and compliance reporting.
> Customize your degree to become a subject matter specialist in two of three concentrations: administration and facilitation; financial management; and compliance, legal, and regulatory issues.
> Learn from the most renowned experts in the field.

Apply today: advanced.jhu.edu/researchadmin
Getting to the Core
Strategic Investment in Research Facilities, Resources & Infrastructure

By Cindy Kiel

Introduction
As all research universities recognize, faculty recruitments, retention and prosperous research programs often are tied directly to the facilities, equipment and research infrastructure that enable successful research outcomes. At many campuses, core research facilities have grown organically within disciplinary units and schools, resulting in pockets of excellence and technological enablement across the university. This organic growth likely is due to an eclectic mix of faculty needs, successful applications for individual grant and contract opportunities and awards, faculty start-up support and strategic initiatives by deans and university leadership over time. These various avenues all have merit but lack sufficient overall guidance for how a campus, as a whole, can invest more strategically in infrastructure and technologies in a manner that allows us to be more effective in an increasingly competitive funding environment.

These are not just campus issues, but regional and national issues as well. Due to economic constraints, sponsors are asking potential recipients to perform more substantive due diligence prior to applying for infrastructure and equipment grants to prevent redundant resourcing. For example, NIH has begun asking applicants to conduct this review prior to applying for its Shared Instrumentation Grant programs and NSF has similar redundancy criteria for those applying for its Major Research Instrumentation opportunities. There also are numerous CTSA (Clinical and Translational Science Awards) and other national initiatives engaged in obtaining and maintaining this information (See: “The Efficient Management and Utilization of Core Facilities” July 14-15, 2009 Workshop Report Sponsored by the National Center for Research Resources and the Office of Extramural Research, Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health). It is difficult, however, to engage in large-scale regional and national data and strategic projects if campuses don’t know where all of their own resources reside.

Case Study
At the University of California at Davis, leadership launched a full review of core facilities in 2012 with the goal of understanding the scale, proliferation and strategic effectiveness of our core facil-
ity investments. The review centered on five primary areas:

1. develop an inventory of identified cores across campus;
2. provide recommendations for strategic management and infrastructure support of cores to enable optimal use of resources;
3. identify a business methodology for keeping information about cores up-to-date and accurate;
4. identify methods to bolster transparency, visibility and marketing of campus cores, to enhance faculty recruitment and retention, and to enable development of stronger, more competitive proposals for sponsored funding; and
5. provide a flexible, dynamic governance infrastructure that will allow the campus to make strategic decisions for appropriate investments or changes in direction as technologies, funding resources and research trends change in the future (including an assessment of what metrics and reports would be necessary to make decisions for when sun-setting, regional engagement, geographic or administrative consolidation or increased investments might be necessary).

A Research Core Committee was formed which included individuals from multiple disciplines, college and department leadership, faculty, core managers and directors. This committee conducted faculty and core facility director surveys across campus and performed both web-based searches and benchmarking interviews of other universities to identify the primary action items recommended for research core governance, systems, policies and transparency.

For purposes of its review, the committee defined core research facilities and resources as “an organized shared resource that provides access to technologies, equipment, services, and expert consultation, often on a fee or reimbursement basis, to enable, facilitate, or enhance the research mission of the university.” After creating an inventory of cores that met this definition, the committee identified the top ten recommended strategies and priorities necessary to govern oversight and strategic investment decision making on campus. They are:

**Action Item #1:** Build the administrative backbone to keep core facility information up to date, informative, and accessible to researchers and leadership. The committee recommended providing resources for an IT project that adds a recharge creation module on the front end and a web-based ordering/marketing site where users can find up-to-date information and easy identification and ordering of UC Davis core resources in one web location.

**Action Item #2:** Establish the Research Core Governing Council and expert subcommittees for strategic oversight of core resources. Implement the recommended governance structure and hire an administrator within the Office of Research to support this governance structure. Identify where resources are necessary to allow the university to be competitive for large-scale funding opportunities and emerging areas of scientific excellence for the future. Provide informed coordinated decisions on requests for matching equipment funds and equipment replacement funds.

**Action Item #3:** Consolidate cores where possible and appropriate. Eliminate internal recharge rate inconsistencies between similar cores caused by internally heterogeneous subsidies. Identify and prepare consolidation space for cores without proximity barriers, sunset non-performing cores. Create shared administrative resources to manage core resources where physical consolidation is not possible. Provide ongoing recommendations for co-location/collaboration/centralization or decentralization of cores using identified principles.

**Action Item #4:** Establish best practices for strategic core facilities including establishment of faculty advisory panels for core facilities, annual reporting processes and implementation of five-year reviews of cores (especially those receiving financial subsidies).

**Action Item #5:** Identify source of funding for long-term sustainable resources for cores and investments identified as key strategic/interdisciplinary and emerging areas that require campus subsidies, new strategic equipment acquisition, equipment upgrading and/or facility co-location resources.

**Action Item #6:** Increase core flexibility and support: Modify policies as allowable by regulatory environments to provide more financial flexibility to cores, especially in their growth years, and provide a standardized approach to acceptance of external recharge customers’ contracts and purchase orders using contract templates and/or administrative online ordering systems that allow for credit card payments.

**Action Item #7:** Develop and fund a core facility voucher program to avoid purchases of redundant resources as part of faculty start-up packages and to promote core facility usage.

**Action Item #8:** Adopt a once-a-year call for proposals process for core facilities’ requests for inclusion in campus managed funds support and/or to request inclusion as a “centralized” core. The application should include sufficient detail to allow for evaluation of the metrics and business plan for the facility or service.

**Action Item #9:** Develop a Core Facility Professional Development Program. Given the high level of importance of expertise related to the success of a core research facility or service, the university must invest in its core professionals. A professional development program could provide travel support for participation in professional conferences and national core facility organizations, technical training on new equipment, develop sustainable career paths for non-tenured faculty and technical staff, and provide additional education programs on best practices in core management.

**Action Item #10:** Promote core facilities. This can be accomplished through a variety of mechanisms including support of an Annual Core Expo, provision of marketing materials, a centrally-maintained website that allows users to search for core resources by keyword, location, types of service, types of equipment or thematic area that links to the core facilities’ specific URLs, papers and symposium participation at professional conferences, and sponsor workshops.

Cindy Kiel is the Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of California at Davis. She has oversight for Research Administration and Research Compliance functions at the University and Chaired the Research Core Facility Committee resulting in a comprehensive inventory and strategic recommendation report for the University. Cindy can be reached at cmkiel@ucdavis.edu
National Biosafety Stewardship Month

By David Clark and Mike Kluzik

If you have access to any form of modern news outlet, you probably could not escape hearing about some of the highly publicized safety and procedure lapses at the National Institutes for Health (NIH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) laboratories in July 2014. The stories (there was more than one incident) were carried on all major television and cable news outlets as well as prominent newspapers and web-based news outlets. In laymen terms there appears to have been biological research materials that could be dangerous to humans that were thought to be “inactive”, when in fact they were still dangerous and also some materials that require specific and very strict registration requirements were present in (previously) unknown storage locations.

We believe that the reason these incidents received so much publicity, even though no members of the public were ever at risk, is because the CDC laboratories are considered the “gold standard” for infectious disease research. As a direct result of the incidents that occurred at the CDC in July, there have been a number of high profile communications from the federal government as well as responses from national organizations that support university research activities. Here is a brief summary of a few examples of the information disseminated:

- July 16, 2014; American Biological Safety Association (ABSA). July 16, 2014. Press Release. ABSA Response to Recent Events at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This press release highlights the need for the CDC to be held to a high standard.
- August 18, 2014; The White House Memorandum; Subject, Enhancing Biosafety and Security in the United States. This 5 page memo outlined immediate and long term action items the White House is promoting.
- August 25, 2014; American Society for Microbiology (ASM); Dear Colleague letter, “ASM Statement: What is in Your Laboratory Freezer?” This letter highlighted the importance of knowing all the microbes that exist in your lab.
- August 27, 2014; The Council on Governmental Relations (COGR); COGR Listserv e-mail, Government—wide Biosafety Stand-Down. This e-mail provided succinct and useable information to universities.
- August 28, 2014; Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) National Institutes of Health (NIH); Memorandum, Participating in National Biosafety Stewardship Month. This three page memo explains National Biosafety Stewardship Month and what NIH awardees should do.

We view what happened at the NIH and CDC laboratories as something that could have easily happened in any laboratory in a large research institution, including ours. At our institution we decided on a graded-approach based upon the culture. Here are some of the activities that we undertook:

- Posting the documents and information referenced above on our Institutional Biosafety Committee’s (IBC) website and will to use the University-wide daily communication system to announce National Biosafety Stewardship Month citing this posted information.
- Requesting that all research, teaching and diagnostic laboratories evaluate if they possess or use any biological materials considered potentially biohazardous by the IBC and if so, to ensure they have registered them with the IBC.
- Requesting that all laboratories maintain accurate inventories of biological materials located in their freezers, refrigerators, or other storage equipment. Colleges and Departments will be asked to verify any biological materials that are no longer needed will be deposited in an approved collection facility or destroyed following appropriate methods. They must also verify that any biological materials that cannot be documented should be destroyed as well.

We are viewing this as an educational opportunity that will extend beyond National Biosafety Stewardship Month. We hope to use our activities initiated this month as the beginning of an ongoing dialogue with our faculty and researchers. We are also planning to re-evaluate and re-emphasize our biosafety policies and procedures. All of this will be intertwined with additional education and training.

References


The Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), Carol Blum. August 27, 2014; ; COGR Listserv e-mail, Government—wide Biosafety Stand-Down


David R. Clark is the Director of the Office of Research Assurances at Washington State University. He has been in the field of research safety and compliance 18 years. He received a Bachelor of Science in Geology from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, a Masters of Science in Geology from The Florida State University, and an MBA from the Augusta State University. He can be reached at drclark@wsu.edu

Mike Kluzik is the Biosafety Officer at Washington State University. His 13 years at WSU include support of the animal care and use program and oversight of the University’s hazardous materials shipping program. He also has over 20 years of health and safety experience in private industry and previously held certifications as a CIH and CSP. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Health from Colorado State University and Master of Environmental Health Engineering degree from The Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health.
SPONSORED RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION:
A Guide to Effective Strategies & Recommended Practices

Leadership Development
Export Controls
Intellectual Property
Training & Education
Research Compliance
Pre-Award Administration
Policies, Procedures, Best Practices
Administering Research Contracts
Communication
Subawards and Subrecipient Monitoring
Post-Award Administration
Assessing Sponsored Research Operations
Interacting with Auditors

All this... and more!

With over 20 chapters written by recognized experts the two-volume compendium includes the essential principles and practices, features sample policies and procedures and extensive supplementary material.

For more information and to purchase the Guide visit
http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/SponsoredResearchSubscription.aspx

NCURA
supporting research...together
Introduction

Institutions have a choice of directly charging benefits by specific identification by individual or using a fringe benefit rate to charge grants and contracts for these costs – who knew? Applying and tracking fringe benefit costs on an individual basis can be one of the more frustrating and maddening activities a research administrator must deal with in budgeting and charging benefits accurately to projects.

Because the tracking of benefits for each individual employee is complicated, more institutions are establishing a fringe benefit rate system to better manage the process. While such rates have great potential for simplifying fringe rate application, reducing errors, and potentially increasing cost recovery, they are actually not suitable for all institutions.

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), as an example, recently implemented fringe benefit rates on its campus with assistance from the Huron Consulting Group. At EKU, the primary goal was to develop a more efficient methodology for the budgeting and charging of fringe benefits across campus. EKU had other requirements including the ability to create an annual budget using fringe benefit rates and eliminate the detailed processes required by charging benefits on an individual basis.

“EKU’s implementation of fringe benefit rates has helped us solve significant budgeting issues and allowed us to manage our grants more efficiently.”

– Brad Compton, Executive Director, University Accounting & Financial Services, EKU

The implementation of fringe benefit rates at EKU resulted in a decrease in administrative burden for the campus and the simplification of accounting for fringe benefits. However, no two institutions are the same. What questions does a university need to answer in deciding which type of method to use? First, let’s answer some of the basics.

What is the Difference between Direct Charging and Fringe Benefit Rates?

Fringe benefits are employee related costs typically including: pension plans, contributions to health and life insurance, employment taxes, and workman’s compensation. Institutions have two choices that can be used to apply fringe benefits to funding sources, including sponsored projects. The direct charging method allocates each individual’s specific benefits to each salary source while fringe benefit rates use an average rate (normally a percentage of salary) for groups of employees. The example below shows how benefits are charged under each method.

The direct charge methodology for fringe benefits is often used by institutions. This method charges each employee’s specific benefit costs

---

### Direct Charge

- Medicare 1.45% of salary
- FICA 6.2% of salary
- Retirement contribution 10% salary
- Health Care contribution $600 a month
- Unemployment $7 per thousand
- Workers Compensation allocated amounts

### Fringe Benefit Rate

- 26% of Salary
to the appropriate funding source. All benefit costs are tied to an individual and are budgeted using each individual’s benefit package. This results in continual fluctuation of fringe benefit costs by employee. One employee may have individual health insurance verses another employee with family coverage, for example.

When using the direct charge methodology, many institutions do not always charge restricted funds their share of benefit costs. This is because the tracking, budgeting and charging of these costs can be intrusive and complicated. Instead, many institutions choose to manage and pay these costs centrally.

Instead, many institutions choose to manage and pay these costs centrally.

When using the second methodology, a fringe benefit rate, the pooled benefit costs are divided by the total salaries in an assigned employee group. This results in a single rate for each employee group. These rates are then applied to the applicable employee salary to represent the associated benefits for that type of employee. The key components of a fringe benefit rate calculation are the fringe benefit costs, the salaries, and the defined rate structure (employee groups).

How do you Calculate a Fringe Benefit Rate?
The fringe benefit rate is an average cost of benefits for all employees within the defined employee group. The same benefits included under the direct charge methodology are included in the fringe benefit rate methodology. Also, one advantage to using a fringe benefit rate is the ability to include additional fringe benefits costs in the rate structure. Terminal leave, paid leave, graduate student insurance, sabbaticals, tuition remission, and other institutional specific benefit costs are often included in the rate structure. This allows the institution to allocate a fair share of these costs to all funding sources. It is important to analyze all employee benefit costs to determine whether they can be included in the rates.

An institution also needs to consider the types of salaries that should be included in the rate structure. In addition to employees’ regular salaries, the following costs should be considered when developing rates: perquisites, bonuses, student salaries, and salary caps.

The defined rate structure, often referred to as “employee groups,” can vary drastically across institutions. What works at one Institution may not work at others. Institutions may choose to calculate a single fringe rate or develop more than 10 rates. An institution should develop a rate structure that will group fringe benefit costs and align employees with the benefit costs they receive. If an institution chooses to develop multiple rates, then it defines an employee group for each rate. Each employee group will have an individual rate calculated and applied. Common criteria used to develop employee groups are employee type, staff categories, salary bands, and benefits received.

Before switching from direct charging to fringe benefit rates, the institution should fully understand the financial and budgeting impacts on the use of fringe rates across the campus. To determine the funding impacts, a comparative analysis should be completed to compare the differences by funding sources, departments, and other criteria. Completing this analysis will highlight the impact of benefits that were not being equitably charged and the funding sources that are paying for the benefits. The impacts to key stakeholders and the communication and transition plan should also be discussed by all decision makers.

Advantages of Fringe Benefit Rates
There are numerous reasons why large and small institutions are switching to fringe benefit rates. Some of the key reasons are described below.

1. Increased Efficiency
A fringe benefit rate will pool fringe benefit costs and distribute costs to the benefiting departments and sponsored projects. This will result in one charge for fringe benefits instead of multiple charges for individual benefits (FICA, retirement, health, etc.). The use of a fringe benefit will allow for easier recordkeeping and less maintenance of benefits and costs of programs for employees. A fringe benefit rate will simplify the following processes: the monitoring of fringe benefit charges to departments, grants, and contracts; billing for grants and contracts; and salary transfers. A fringe benefit rate will provide consistency in how benefits are negotiated and paid and significantly minimize the labor distribution programming. The number of transactions required for an individual employee will significantly decrease.

The table below demonstrates how many accounting transaction would be eliminated for an institution with 1,000 employees that each have 6 benefit categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Direct Charging</th>
<th>Fringe Benefit</th>
<th>Reduction in Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Sources</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Transactions per Month</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Transactions per Month</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Fringe Transactions</td>
<td>144,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutions that don’t use a fringe rate that includes terminal leave in the rate may no longer be able to recover those costs if they use a cash basis to charge accrued leave on termination as a result of the new Uniform Guidance.
istrative (F&A) indirect cost rates. Fringe benefit rates will allow an institution to further increase recovery by directly charging full fringe benefit rates to sponsored awards and auxiliary operations. Sponsored awards will be charged their “full” fair share of actual fringe benefit costs, increasing the recovery of fringe benefit costs.

3. Reduced Risk of Non-Compliance
Fringe benefit rates are negotiated annually with the institution’s cognizant federal agency (Department of Health and Human Services Cost Allocation Services or the Department of Defense Office of Naval Research). An institution will need to inform their cognizant agency of the change in methodology. The fringe benefit rate structure is required to be recalculated and negotiated on an annual basis. This decreases the opportunities for charging unallowable/unallocable fringe benefits. In addition, the fringe rates are adjusted annually for any overage/shortage that an institution may incur from prior base year benefit costs.

4. Easier Budgeting
A fringe benefit rate can be used to budget sponsored projects and departmental expenditures. A fringe benefit rate will result in consistency between budgeting and expense practices. The same fringe benefit rate will be used for both budgeting and charging purposes, which will improve the budgeting process for all the institution’s funds and standardize benefit costs across employee groups. A fringe benefit rate will also simplify budget negotiations with sponsors.

Reasons to Continue Using a Direct Charge Methodology
There are several practical reasons why a direct charge methodology is still a viable option. Switching to fringe benefit rates requires an affirmative action by an institution, and this may not be feasible because of budgeting rules. This is also a change that requires support campus-wide to be successful. Fringe benefit rates require predictability to avoid large rate swings on a year-to-year basis, and that information may not be available prior to rates being submitted. Many state-funded institutions receive direct funding for fringe benefits and spreading those benefits using fringe benefit rates may not be allowed under the state funding rules.

Conclusion
There are many advantages to implementing a fringe benefit rate structure. A fringe benefit rate will provide consistent accumulation and allocation for fringe benefit expenses to all functional activities. In addition, the rate structure will simplify the accounting for fringe benefit expenses and reduce the risk of noncompliance. Importantly, the rate structure will decrease the administrative burden to budget and manage sponsored awards and decrease the risk of under-recovering funds.

Jim Carter is a Managing Director at Huron Consulting Group. His experience includes working directly in universities and academic medical centers as well as serving in consultative roles. Jim specializes in partnering with institutions on the preparation and negotiation of F&A rates and fringe benefit rates in addition to strategically addressing financial and regulatory issues. Jim can be reached at jcarter@huronconsultinggroup.com

Kari Kelly is a Manager in Huron Consulting Group’s Education & Life Sciences practice, focusing on preparing and negotiating F&A rate calculations, structuring fringe benefit rates, and improving service center operations. Kari can be reached at kkelly@huronconsultinggroup.com

Katie Plum’s Desk

Because of the closure of a neighboring department, my office recently doubled in staffing—now there are two of us!—and I have received the mixed blessing that accompanies changes in office size and composition. Currently, I am addressing several related issues, such as the update of my office’s strategic plan, reallocation of workload, and training my new staff member. Because my time is limited, I’ve adopted a “train as you go” approach in addition to more formal professional development. For example, this month features the annual submission of significant financial interest disclosure forms. As we prepare the disclosure forms, send reminders, and evaluate the returned forms, we are reviewing federal and institutional regulations (including the new Uniform Guidance) and discussing the whys and wherefores of FCOI training and disclosure processes. Thus far, I’m finding this method of training saves time and provides valuable context for my new staff member. Next up: end of fiscal year reporting!

Katie Plum
Director of Sponsored Projects
Angelo State University
Jamie Caldwell received the Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award at the 56th Annual Meeting on Monday, August 10, 2014. This is NCURA’s most prestigious award given to a member who has made a significant contribution to the profession and demonstrated noteworthy service to NCURA. The following is his acceptance speech:

I am truly honored to have been nominated and the recipient of this prestigious award. It came as a surprise when I learned I was nominated. NCURA has been such an important part of my personal and professional career for the past twenty-six years of my thirty-one years in Research Administration and thirty-six years working in Higher Ed.

I have enjoyed every opportunity to share the knowledge I have received through my NCURA experiences with colleagues from across the country whether teaching fundamentals, serving as a peer reviewer or presenting at Regional and National Conferences or serving as a Moderator for NCURA TV and better your resident Blues Brother for many years. I am glad you-tube was not as popular back then or even around.

The names are too long to list, but there are a few people I must thank:

To Vivian Holmes, NCURA President, the National Board of Directors, Kathleen Larmett, Tara Bishop and Marc Schiffman, Latasha, Kati, James, Emily and the entire staff at the National Office.

Catherine Core
John McAteer — former Region IV member (John was the first person who encouraged me to get involved with NCURA)
Karen Mitchell
Derek Humphrey
Beverly Morehouse
You know how special you are to me.
To my entire Region IV Family

To the persons who nominated me:
David Lynch, Richard Kennedy & my friend and colleague Tesheia Johnson!
I simply say thank you!

To Loyola University and my team:
(the Office of Research Services for the Health Sciences) for their support in allowing me to be away from the Office on many occasions.

Most Important of all:
My family - My lovely wife of 29 years Daphne, my son Steven and my daughter Jessica, Thank you for allowing me to be away from home to share the gifts that God has given me. I love you.

Finally:
Tesheia can appreciate this. One of the most valuable lessons I learned and have tried to pass on is the Four Aces of effective teaching and presenting.

- Clarity
- Engagement
- Outcomes
- Enthusiasm

Walls, 1995

I hope to continue as an Ambassador to NCURA and the Research Administration Profession.

Jamie serves as the Director, Office of Research Services for the Health Sciences at Loyola University Chicago.
Looking at Things Differently, 
Both Employee and Institutional Change

By Twila Fisher Reighley

Although I found much that was familiar when I moved to Michigan State University (MSU), I discovered many differences from my previous institution. There were new names, acronyms, titles, and terminology to learn, differences in department and college structures, and in administrative and electronic systems.

As I began my exploration, I was thankful for web resources. While there is a great deal of information available on-line, some things still have to be learned through experience. Normally, I am one to follow the rules, but sometimes I didn’t find out about a rule until action had already been taken. I found that building relationships and creating partnerships with individuals and groups on campus (research deans, research administrators, staff within the office, and colleagues within the research area) was not just enjoyable, but beneficial. I met many delightful, committed people both within the office and across campus. One exceptional opportunity to get more perspective came when two colleagues provided introductions for me that opened the door for individual meetings with ten deans/department chairs. Those meetings provided me with invaluable information about my new institution.

One of the things I really appreciated was the support shown by the Vice President for Research (VPR). I developed a preliminary plan for my first year and shared it with him. The VPR was encouraging and arranged for me to present the plan to MSU’s President. The President provided additional insight that helped improve the plan. The revised plan was useful, particularly when the VPR later retired.

I had several opportunities to consider support to faculty, staff and research administration at MSU in unique ways. I was also able to help people consider other options. Here are a few examples:

- We had the chance to co-locate pre- and post-award by moving to new space. During that process, the first renovation plan, a traditional space design, was rejected and we were encouraged to create an office environment that invited collaboration and new ways of working. As a result, we have more outside light throughout the office space (even though we are on the garden level), fewer walls, ergonomically-correct furniture and sound-
We have been able to implement a home-grown software tool that tracks activity on each proposal and award and provides work management information and key metrics. Although metrics do not tell the whole story, being able to measure and filter information in many ways helps with discovery, provides focus and promotes process improvements.

We have conducted six focus group sessions facilitated by an expert consultant. Faculty, research administrators, and research deans provided thoughtful feedback on how things were working and provided input into a key process change. It was a great opportunity to understand the impact of practices on the clients served. The input provided indicators of where communication, processes, and resources could be improved and resulted in six areas to focus our improvement efforts. Input also highlighted that there were variations in implementation by different colleges and departments and some practices that worked better than others. That insight reinforced the significance of having similar discussions with other units, which we have started.

The responses also pointed out differences in expectations associated with individual roles. For instance, one faculty member commented: “I thought I was the only one.” In other words, the faculty member thought her central office proposal coordinator would deal with her exclusively.

We have also implemented a point-of-service survey which is collected when a proposal is completed. We have seven months of data from the first survey. The feedback has been very positive and being able to share the data with staff has been a morale booster. We began a second survey related to award negotiation and account set up in July and we expect to review results in the near future.

Thinking about feedback, one observation that came to mind a few times was the old adage: “don’t shoot the messenger.” I was reminded of the challenge of bringing together the requirements associated with sponsored funding and the practical aspects of running a lab and doing research. How can we best support the faculty and the institution in implementing congressional laws, agency regulations, and auditors’ enforcement? If we are not thorough, consequences could harm the faculty member and the institution’s mission and reputation. Over the years, there have been examples of negative consequences (audit disallowances, fines, penalties, suspension of human subject research, termination of employment, damage to reputations and worse) from across the nation that we want to avoid.

Here are some questions to think about when facing institutional change or trying to improve systems:

- What are the strengths and challenges of the organization?
- What changes and results will make a difference?
- What is a sustainable path?
- What should be the relative time investment for leadership, management, transactional work, project work, gaining and retaining expertise in sponsored programs administration, and in developing collegial relationships?

One final observation comes from the last two questions. There never seems to be quite enough time and making improvements has to be balanced with ongoing tasks. Using an analogy to the common household chore of doing laundry, we have to keep “getting the wash out” and I’m very appreciative of the upgrades in laundry (and work) technology.

Twila Fisher Reighley, MBA, is the Assistant Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies at Michigan State University. Prior to joining MSU in 2012, she developed sponsored program administration expertise through more than 30 years in positions of increasing responsibility involving either or both pre- and post-award administration at three state universities. She may be reached at: reighley@osp.msu.edu.

Thinking Outside the Box: Making a Move From a Central Office to a College

By Robyn Remotigue

After more than a decade in research administration, the idea of changing institutions or transitioning into a new role can be both exciting and daunting. While you might welcome the change of pace, there is still some comfort in knowing what is expected of you each day. Over a year ago, I was faced with the opportunity to make a move due to a change in my spouse’s career. The move presented me with the opportunity to be creative and think outside the box. My entire career had been devoted to central administration. So, it was beneficial for me to spend time reflecting on my skills and how to best market them. My expertise includes grants development, IRB/regulatory compliance, contract negotiations and subrecipient monitoring, skills and knowledge easily transferable to many roles within research administration.

A little over a year ago, I accepted a new position as Research Manager in the School of Public Health (SPH) at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. The move from a predominantly agricultural and engineering-oriented land grant school to a health science center was a big change for me! Until now, I was most familiar with Department of Defense contract negotiations and less with National Institutes of Health. Also I was far more familiar with negotiating contracts than with researching funding opportunities.

The Research Manager is a new position created in response to requests made by faculty for assistance in research administration. In the beginning, I was tasked with using the first three months as a discovery and data gathering phase. Time was spent taking an inventory of SPH resources available to assist in faculty research. Other University departments were also surveyed to better understand campus-wide resources ac-
able to define how SPH could be more helpful to them in the grant proposal process.

As a result of the discovery phase, the Office of Research Services (ORS) in the SPH was created in April of this year. ORS is led by a manager supervised by an associate director of the office of grant and contract management, and will consist of various training modules covering the life cycle of an award. In addition, ORS staff will have opportunities to participate in continuing education provided by the National Council of Research Administrators (NCURA). The overall goal is to have credible, resourceful ORS staff that possesses the necessary tools to achieve their Certified Research Administrator credentials.

An interesting and creative side to my new position has been the opportunity to engage faculty in research and to get them excited about collaborating. More important, opportunities have emerged for SPH faculty to learn about each other’s research. We produce a quarterly publication called Research Insight highlighting SPH research events, promoting funding opportunities, and featuring proposal submission. We have also collaborated with University Marketing & Communications to produce video clips in which faculty showcase their research projects. We’ve hosted grant writing workshops and networked with community partners to collaborate on research projects. We’ve even developed an exciting program called Research Schmooze.

If you’re contemplating a move, or if you find yourself making one unexpectedly, take the time to think outside the box. Change can be rewarding and requires effort, especially when you step out of your comfort zone. Change can be eased due in large part to your NCURA membership. I have made countless connections with NCURA colleagues who have gone through changes and have shared their experiences, and you can too.

Robyn Remotigue is Research Manager, Dean of the School of Public Health at University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. She has been in the field of research administration since 1994 and a member of NCURA since 2002. She is a graduate of the 2012 NCURA Executive Leadership Program and 2010 NCURA Leadership Development Institute. She has been actively involved with NCURA at the national level and currently serves as Preaward Contributing Editor for the magazine. In addition, she has volunteered in various capacities at the regional level.
The academic community [was] “virtually unanimous” in the belief that time-and-effort reporting was impossible to do in a meaningful way; burdensome, in that it took valuable professional time; and meaningless, in that faculty members generally fudged their reports to agree with previous budget estimates of the time they would spend.

When would you guess that the above quote was written? Earlier this year? Five years ago? How about 10? Do I hear 20? Any takers? Well, my friends, the sad fact of the matter is that Philip M. Boffey wrote those words in 1968 – over 46 years ago – in a Science article entitled, “Effort Reporting: Government Drops Much-Criticized Paperwork.”

Don’t we wish we could read such a headline today? Heavens! Can you imagine the unbridled glee that would be unleashed? Pre-awarders overturning cars in riotous late night celebrations. Post-awarders joyously dancing in the streets. DRA’s singing double-dutch jump rope songs with verses from the Uniform Guidance while including Gil Tran’s infamous “Same same, but different” mantra. Why, even auditors might be inclined to loosen their neckties. One shudders to think of the raucous jubilation.

Don’t hold your breath, of course. Like effort reporting, the field of research administration is full of “long standing issues” that never seem to go away: cost sharing, F&A recovery, internal deadlines, cost transfers greater than 90 days, A-133 audit concerns, late project reports, rogue PIs, close-out issues. The list is lengthy and well known. Like dandelions and crab grass, or perhaps one’s mother-in-law, these problems just keep showing up.

The truth is, if one has been in the profession long enough, one will eventually get to the point where the early-in-the-career conversations circle round. Rest assured, this is normal. It is not a sign of early onset Alzheimer’s. Rather, youthful optimism and hope for progress become slowly replaced by a world-weary lack of enthusiasm for fighting battles that have already been lost before. That, plus a few extra pounds, more grey hair, and a growing reliance on a circle of fifths which, unlike that of music theory, may involve a penchant for single-malt scotch over Pabst Blue Ribbon.

George Santayana famously said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” I would posit that it is probably closer to the truth – in research administration anyway – to say, “Those who can remember the past are condemned. More wine?”

Cynical as it may sound, I have found that the keys to happiness are low expectations and poor memory. Don’t laugh; it works. You’ll rest more easily if you don’t secretly harbor hopes of fixing intractable challenges (or your mother-in-law). In fact, if you can’t remember the last time you tried to resolve a recurring problem (or saw your mother-in-law), the better off you’ll be.

If unable to do either, I suggest you find a happy place to retreat, even if only mentally. Consider finding yourself a beachside seat with ocean waves and sea breezes washing over you, umbrella drink in hand, or a comfy recliner in a winter wonderland locale, a gripping suspense novel and 15-year old Glenfiddich close at hand. Of course, if these scenarios don’t take you to your “happy place,” all is not lost. The research administration community is always happy to share best practices. Thus, a great conversation starter at the next professional gathering may well be, “So, where is your happy place where long standing issues cease to stand?”

Regards,
Ty M. Neffert

P.S. I actually like my mother-in-law!

NCURAbly Pedantic is written by long-standing NCURA members, all under pseudonym protection.
One of the oldest challenges for research development professionals is to help faculty develop their competitiveness to win research funding. One of the most popular solutions (certainly for the faculty members) is to provide seed funding. The structures and outcomes of these seed programs vary wildly, but they seem to fall into four families that we identified during discussions at a NORDP-Northeast. Some of these may spark new ideas for how your institution provides pilot support.

1) “Medici” model. This is similar to the NSF EAGER program, where seed or pilot funding is given at the discretion of the patron in the way that artists were once supported by wealthy families such as the Medicis. That patron may be the provost, dean, or center director. Sometimes the process of funding is entirely informal, but often the recipient will have prepared some form of white paper so that the person giving the funds can justify the expense. (Credit for “Medici model” to Alan Paul of Giant Angstrom Partners.)

2) Internal review model. This kind of model can operate at the university or unit level. Proposals are reviewed by a formal internal process, either by a standing group or through solicitation of reviews from un-connected faculty peers performing a service to the university (i.e., not reimbursed for the service). Review criteria can include scientific merit, potential for growth, and institutional priorities.

3) External review model. External review is often associated with university-wide pilot funds, and it takes some infrastructure to run these competitions effectively. Faculty are expected to submit formal proposals, which are evaluated by external reviewers, either by mail or panel review. The reviewers are often paid a stipend to serve.

4) Faculty development model. Some seed money is associated with the required participation of the faculty in a development program. Most often the development centers on strategic grant development and writing. Attendance at seminars or participation in workshops is a requirement for the seed funding. Faculty can be chosen on the basis of competitive applications, selected via internal or external review, or they may be appointed by their chair or other unit director.

Of course, there are always variations on the theme, shaped by a specific institution’s needs and internal culture, seed funds available, etc. Such twists include:

- Requirement that an application for external support be submitted at the end of the pilot program (“Commit to Submit”)

This is very difficult to enforce. One extreme version is that the department chair is responsible for refunding the pilot support if the PI does not carry through with the obligation to submit.

- Restrictions on level of faculty who can apply, such as pre-tenure only

This approach helps direct funds to early-stage faculty, who may need it the most, and may provide a higher return on the investment.

- Support given as access to resources, or time, rather than funds directly controlled by the recipient.

Some universities will provide access to personnel time, such as a biostatistician, or to a resource, such as a fee-for-service core facility or instrument as an in-kind contribution to research effort. (This support can also be given on a competitive basis.) Other universities may supply a course release, or fund faculty visits to program officers, attendance at sponsor workshops (e.g., NIH Regional Seminars). Some even pay for external grant writing consultants to edit proposal drafts, or honoraria for peer review ahead of submission.

We hope these models provide a useful lens for thinking about what kinds of support for pilot work might be effective within your organization, whether starting a program or ‘tuning up’ an existing one.
Can we get the job done? Take our clients’ word for it

Hurón partners with academic medical centers, hospitals, and clinical research organizations to improve regulatory compliance, increase efficiencies, and achieve financial and operational objectives. We have a balanced perspective and unparalleled experience with identifying issues and developing comprehensive solutions that incorporate people, process and technology. Our approach serves the best interests of the entire enterprise, freeing you to focus on your mission.

“The team has made our priorities their priority, throughout.”
– Top 20 research institution client

“I believe Hurón’s work product provided the framework needed to optimize our research processes.”
– Major Cancer Center

Click
a Hurón solution

1-800-590-5400
huronconsultinggroup.com/click

© 2014 Huron Consulting Group Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Huron Education

1-866-229-8700
huronconsultinggroup.com/highereducation
The Human Investment: Mismatch and Tacit Knowledge in the Pre-Award Office

By Nicole Derr

A perpetuated mythos surrounds pre-award personnel: Only a certain type of person can handle pre-award; the wrong type will fail. I overheard an iteration of this mythology several days ago. Although it often is said with a sort of congratulatory fatalism—"you passed muster!"—the meaning should be considered for the benefit of pre-award offices.

**The Fit**

Hiring the right person to staff a pre-award office is integral to the success of the entire office. Despite a hiring manager's best intentions, mismatches do occur and “result from the interplay between some combination of people’s needs, interests, values, and expectations on the one hand and the characteristics and rewards associated with their jobs and organizations on the other” (Kalleberg, 2008, p. 25). Although Kalleberg (2008) explores several types of mismatch that may occur between an employee and a job, the skills mismatch is of particular concern for hiring pre-award staff that pass muster. Some candidates do not have the skills to handle propos al development under minimal supervision. Yet how can the ideal candidate know if there is a skills-job match when the job description isn’t accurate? Think about it: half of the employee-job mismatch equation is the institution/job requirements. The hiring manager should spend time considering the job requirements and institutional or office culture, and be honest.

The responsibilities of a pre-award employee depend on the level of the position, what type of research is conducted at the university and/or department, and whether the employee works within a departmental or central office. In most cases, the employee will assist in the preparation of proposals. Proposal preparation, as we know, includes everything from identifying the funding opportunity to submitting to the sponsor. Problem-solving skills commensurate with the level of the position are necessary, because, as we also know, no two proposals are identical. Someone who can solve problems will be more likely to approach difficult proposals and multiple deadlines with confidence, rather than suffering from panic-stricken ineffectualness (not passing muster).

The importance of managing deadlines means the employee needs project management skills—real project management skills, unless you’re keen on micromanaging. Such skills can be developed from courses and internships or employment requiring the successful balancing and prioritizing of multiple projects simultaneously. Because skills can be developed from a wide variety of education and experience, for “entry and mid-level staff, general aptitude and values are more important than specific experience in the area” (Landen & McCallister, 2006, p. 79). For these mid-level positions, consider the whole package and hire long-term and for potential. (Like Warren Buffett, you should go long with your investment!) Such consideration, no doubt, will lengthen the candidate review process for those formerly relying on specific résumé keywords, phrases, and years of experience, but the time is well spent. A successful applicant will “absorb, retain and effectively utilize tacit knowledge over time” (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 148).

But what is tacit knowledge? Tacit knowledge cannot simply be picked up by a new hire, and it is not left behind when someone leaves. Instead, it is the knowledge built over years of experience, adopting institutional values and culture, and developing valuable networks. A promising new employee will grow and use this knowledge effectively.

**The Migration & Cost**

Hiring the right people for the right pre-award jobs is only half the battle; the other half is keeping them. Employee retention can seem a down-right Sisyphean undertaking. Think of the administrator respected by faculty, who seems to know everyone and have all the answers, and who nurtures institutional values in new employees. What happens when this administrator moves away to a different institution? The tacit knowledge is lost. Although institutions are improving efforts to develop career ladders in research administration, Landen and McCallister acknowledge that without them research administrators are motivated enough to “migrat[e] to other opportunities” (2006, p. 78). In order to cultivate tacit knowledge, your employee must be there long enough to assimilate into the institution. Common sense, right?

The loss of tacit knowledge is important, not only because its loss will disrupt an office—which it will—but because tacit knowledge is a source of competitive advantage (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Remarkably, human capital is more difficult for competitors to imitate than other sources of competitive advantage (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Everyone knows that human capital is important to the institution, but this means that it might be even more important to your institution than you thought. Employee retention (retention of tacit knowledge) is one potential strategy for leveraging human capital to further an institution’s competitive advantage.

Tacit knowledge is “organization-specific and built over time as members become socialized into the organization” (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 146). How does tacit knowledge disengage from an institution? Pre-award staff learn on the job, by networking, and by attending workshops or conferences often housed outside the institution. There is a sense that we are masters of our own professional destiny and are willing to help each other, especially via professional organizations like NCURA. While it is a testament to the competent independence of many research ad-
ministrators that they can take charge of their own professional development, there is also the danger of disconnecting research administrators from their institutions.

An institution as a whole can actively cultivate and develop tacit knowledge “to create the necessary quantity and quality of exposure” (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 148). Placing the entire burden on an individual office or department could promote the development of tacit knowledge that does not align with the values of the institution. In the dusty recesses of many institutions hide those departments or offices with high turnover, unable to get it right. Institutions should try to establish the seat of professional development at the institution with the right balance between internal and external development, to strengthen human capital across all departments and offices.

Several mechanisms are available for internal programs—too many to delve into here. Landen and McCallister discuss in detail the uniqueness of institutions and the responsibility of institutions to train and develop their administrators professionally: the “institutionalization of professional development” (2006, p. 79). Internal mentoring and job rotations, just two examples of internal programs, are beneficial for the development of tacit knowledge (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Job rotation programs may be logistically tricky to implement, but new pre-award staff in a central office could benefit from spending some time in the departmental trenches (and vice versa) assembling an R01. Remember that training does not end with the actual training session: equally important is tying the new training to the job, so employees can use their new skills (Pfeffer, 1995).

Train and retain! The right pre-award employee—the right fit—is an investment that grows in value over time. After all, the incentive for developing and retaining tacit knowledge is the success of your office and your institution as a whole.

References

Making the Case for Reform of Federal Regulations Impacting Research

NCURA member, Dr. Susan Sedwick, Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects in her capacity as chair of the Federal Demonstration Project (FDP) and president of the FDP Foundation, testified on June 12 at a joint hearing of the Oversight and Research & Technology Subcommittees of the House Committee on Science, Science and Technology on “Reducing the Administrative Workload for Faculty Funded Research.” The FDP conducted surveys in 2005 and 2012 that resulted in reports issued in 2007 and 2014 that documented that federally-funded principal investigators spend 42 percent of their research time allocated to those projects on administrative workload.

Also testifying were Dr. Arthur Bienenstock, Dr. Gina Lee-Glauser and Ms. Allison Lerner. Dr. Bienenstock is Professor emeritus of Photon Science, Special Assistant to the President for Federal Research Policy and Director of the Wallenberg Research Link at Stanford University. Dr. Lee-Glauser is Vice President for Research at Syracuse University. Ms. Lerner is Inspector General of the National Science Foundation. Information on the hearing can be accessed at http://science.house.gov/hearing/subcommittee-oversight-and-subcommittee-research-and-technology-joint-hearing-reducing

Subsequent to the hearing, Rep. Larry Buschon (R-IN), chair of the Subcommittee on Science and Technology introduced HR5056 as the *Research and Development Efficiency Act* aimed at improving the efficiency of Federal research and development. The act was unanimously passed by the House on July 15 and if passed by the Senate will direct the Office of Science and Technology Policy to establish a working group under the authority of the National Science and Technology Council to include the Office of Management and Budget to review Federal regulations affecting research and research universities and make recommendations on how to harmonize, streamline and eliminate duplicative Federal regulations and reporting requirements and minimize the regulatory burden on US institutions of higher education performing federally funded research without sacrificing accountability for Federal tax dollars. The bill calls for stakeholder input to include federally and non-federally funded researchers.

The Federal Demonstration Partnership is a cooperative initiative among 10 federal agencies and 119 institutional recipients of federal funds for Phase V sponsored by the Government, University, Industry Research Roundtable of the National Academies. Its purpose is to reduce the administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts. Dr. Sedwick has served as chair for the entire six years of Phase V which began in 2008. Phase VI begins in October.
Mark your calendars! We are thrilled to invite you to the 9th Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA) Conference to be held on March 2 – 4, 2015 in beautiful Lake Buena Vista, Florida at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort. The theme of the meeting, Guiding Pre-Award Research Administration: From Theory to Practice, could not be more timely. The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards will have been in effect for just over two months, and we all will be in the throes of reconciling the various federal awarding agencies’ implementations and turning the theoretical requirements of the Uniform Guidance into practical policies and procedures!

The journey from theory to practice draws upon a pre-award research administrator’s every skill — including subject knowledge, critical thinking, and consensus building to policy development, effective communication and the delivery of training materials. Often overlooked in this journey, however, is the important role that creativity plays. The best research administrators understand the requirements that serve as their starting point (e.g., the proposal guidelines) and unerringly focus on the desired end point (e.g., a funded proposal), but their path is never predetermined. Through the application of creative thinking, alternatives are entertained, some are discarded and others are pursued. And in the end, the final result is the best result (we hope)!

And what better location to get those creative juices flowing than the heart of Walt Disney World, with the gate to EPCOT and a world of innovation just a few short steps away! To that end, we are very excited to announce that the keynote address will be given by C. McNair Wilson, a former Disney Imagineer and author of the book Hatch: Brainstorming Secrets of a Theme Park Designer. In a departure from previous meetings, McNair will be spending the entire day with us, not only giving the keynote, but also leading a concurrent session entitled “Seven Agreements of Brainstorming,” which is based on his book.

Rest assured that the program committee is hard at work finalizing sessions that will both stimulate your creative processes (helping you to make things happen) and increase your knowledge base. There will be some novel (dare we say “creative”) formatting of program tracks this year, including sessions that will cross multiple tracks. In addition, there will be numerous opportunities to network and connect with colleagues and friends. So we cordially invite you to join us at the 9th PRA Conference in Disney World. Where theory, practice and creativity meet!
Dear Colleagues,

Sun, fun and Mickey here we come! We are excited to tell you about next year’s Financial Research Administration conference in sunny Orlando, Florida at Walt Disney World. In June, the Program Committee kicked off the planning for FRA 2015, pausing only briefly for NCURA’s highly successful 56th Annual Meeting. Thanks to the Committee’s hard work, we are excited to present a robust and informative 2015 program.

The theme for FRA 2015 is Guiding FRA from Theory to Practice. Many of us are currently immersed in taking the Uniform Guidance regulations issued by OMB and COFAR from “theoretical” to “practical,” by promulgating policies and procedures at our institutions. But recognizing that 2 CFR 200 is not our ENTIRE world, others are making sure that they are being attentive to the practical matters of their myriad other responsibilities. Regardless of which group you are in, FRA 2015 will have something for you.

We have a new approach for the program this year: our Program Committee Members focused on large topic areas, with specific members of the teams filling slots with sessions focused on the needs and interests of the diverse FRA 2015 attendees, based on both type of organization and organizational role. We have four tracks: Costing/F&A, Audit/Compliance, Post Award/Operations, and Medical/Clinical Issues. Within each of these broad tracks, we will have sessions covering topics from several perspectives: Research Institutions, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions, Departments, and International Organizations, as well as additional tracks for Communications/Human Capital and Federal Update. In all, we will offer over 130 sessions, including the popular discussion groups and spark sessions.

FRA 2015 will be held March 5-7, 2015 at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in Orlando, FL, the site of our 2012 meeting. The conference will immediately follow the Pre-award Research Administration conference, to be held March 2-4, 2015. Special registration discounts are available for those who wish to attend both PRA and FRA 2015.

Co-Chairs
Charlene Blevens, University of Miami
Jeffrey Silber, Cornell University

Program Committee
Audit/Compliance – Kay Ellis, University of Arizona; Scott Erwin, Texas State University – San Marcos; Pat Fitzgerald, Harvard University; Ann Holmes, University of Maryland, College Park; Missy Peloso, University of Pennsylvania

Communications/Human Capital – Joan Kanner, University of Maryland, Baltimore; Roseann Luongo, Harvard University

Costing/F&A – Andres Chan, University of Southern California; Scott Erwin, Texas State University – San Marcos; Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan Medical School

Federal Updates – Pat Hawk, Oregon State University

Medical/Clinical Issues – John Case, Morehouse School of Medicine; Randi Wasik, University of Washington

Post-Award/Operations – Joe Gindhart, Washington University in St Louis; Norm Hebert, Brown University; Rosemary Madnick, University of Alaska Fairbanks; Kris Monahan, Providence College; Beth Seaton, Northwestern University

Workshops – Lisa Mosley, Arizona State University; Kerry Peluso, Emory University; Cathy Snyder, Vanderbilt University

We look forward to having you join us in sunny Orlando!

Charlene Blevens and Jeff Silber
Book Review:

THE GIRLS OF ATOMIC CITY

By Andre Walker

Stories of the Second World War and of the so-called Greatest Generation, which recount some of America’s finest hours, are perennially popular. However, the number of eyewitnesses to that history is dwindling. As evidenced by the recent 50th Anniversary commemoration of the Normandy Invasion on D-Day, many of the remaining veterans are quite frail and will not live to see another commemoration. As a result, there is a race against time to capture the first-person accounts of those who were there. In “The Girls of Atomic City” (Touchstone Press, 2014), author and journalist Denise Kiernan captures the stories of little-known women who contributed at all levels to the “Manhattan Project” or “Project,” America’s secret effort to develop an atomic bomb.

The Manhattan Project is, of course, well-known for ushering the world into the nuclear age. It also marked the intersection of government funding, university research, and industrial collaboration, “an unprecedented alliance of military, industrial, and scientific forces” in Kiernan’s own words, that came to be known as “big science.” It was a union which produced far-reaching effects in American society.

Kiernan’s goal is not simply to record vanishing stories. She also argues that her subjects and female workers in general were not mere participants on the Project; rather, they were instrumental in its success. She weaves countless details into an interesting narrative account, illustrating her three key points: 1) women worked as hard and as well as men; 2) women on the project were ordinary folks: mothers, wives, and daughters, who rose to the wartime challenge in the same way as fathers, husbands, and sons; and 3) women built community. Indeed, she suggests that, without women, the outcome of the Project may have been far different, and she asserts that, until now, the role of women in this key wartime effort has been under-appreciated and under-acknowledged.

The central aspect of the Project, and the focus of most of Kiernan’s writing, is the Clinton Engineer Works (CEW), the secret facility built in Tennessee to manufacture and refine uranium fuel for a bomb. It didn’t acquire the moniker “Atomic City” until after the war when its secret had been revealed. The CEW operation required thousands of workers, so the secret city of Oak Ridge grew alongside the covert manufacturing operations. With practically all able-bodied young men fighting overseas, it is not surprising that the CEW planners actively recruited young women from the surrounding Tennessee area and nationwide to staff the facility. However, it was a radical idea for the time. While not a planned social experiment, CEW nevertheless became one.

Kiernan tells the story by profiling several women and following them throughout. These women worked at CEW in a variety of roles, and their...
Kiernan develops her cast of characters based on 7 years of research and oral history collection. She divides the story among fifteen chapters, supplemented by an introduction, epilogue, and copious notes. Her narrative does not proceed in a linear fashion; rather, she presents it as a series of vignettes, each focusing on a particular time period, work process, or living conditions. The scattered chapters follow the ‘compartmentalization’ of the CEW and the Project itself; everyone knows only what they need to do their job, and nothing more. Further, through use of fonts as visual cues to the security clearance of various workers, Kiernan gives readers a sense of how disconcerting work at CEW must have been. Each person knew their work was vital to the war effort, but few had a clue as to how. And, all understood that it was a forbidden topic of discussion.

Where Kiernan succeeds, and makes her book an infectious read, is in recounting the strange environment of CEW. Its residents worked endlessly repetitive jobs, endured challenging living conditions, and grew accustomed to the ever-present secrecy and life-and-death stakes of wartime. She successfully makes the point that, without women, CEW might have ended up as just another man-camp, a purpose-built community destined to become a ghost-town after the war had ended. Instead, the greatest feat of the women of the future Atomic City was making CEW into a real community that outlived its original wartime mission and that continues today.

Its status as a New York Times bestseller attests to the fact that Kiernan’s book is a well-researched, well-written, and captivating account. It is great non-fiction for the general reader, and it offers conversation guides for reading groups and book clubs (to help spread awareness of its principal characters, the women working at all levels within the Manhattan Project). Kiernan offers readers the opportunity to observe not only the birth of big science, but also the first large-scale movement of women into the paid labor force. For those readers in research administration, it offers a glimpse into the roots of the profession. Research administration welcomes women at all levels, and research administrators facilitate the big science that takes place on campuses across the country. Administrators should feel a special kinship with the Girls of Atomic City, and today’s administrators are their heirs in many ways.
The Great Divide Trail traverses the continental divide between Alberta and British Columbia, Canada. The journey takes you wandering through the vast wilderness of the Canadian Rocky Mountains for more than 1200 kilometers (750 miles). It is one of the most spectacular, demanding, and challenging long distance journeys on the planet, as well as an inspirational and satisfying experience. What a beautiful metaphor for us in the realm of research administration; to equate our world with that of nature and the natural environment.

A Continental Divide

At times, it seems there is a huge division between researchers and administrators. Research and the administration of that research is a long journey that can take you wandering through many processes. Often unbeknownst to each other, both the researcher and the administrator are travelling this same path, striving to achieve research success. Knowing there is a common path along this divide, the key aspect to consider is how to work better together and gain an understanding of each others’ worlds. The key is to build a relationship and partnership between researchers and administrators. There are many ways one can achieve this goal, and some key initiatives could include the following:

- Support your core activities by having enough people resources to ensure minimal turnaround times and no bottlenecks. This decreases frustration for the researcher and prevents staff burn-out. People have to be in a good mental frame in order to develop partnerships.
- Emphasize all aspects of the administrative office to be client-focused; the goal is to provide support for the researcher.
- Ensure that there is a broad and stable research administrative support system; administration is a professional practice that requires a range of talents and expertise; this is an important key to supporting the researcher.
- Hire staff with a research background; staff will better relate to researchers through their common connection.

Wilderness

The main feature of wilderness is that it is a vast environment that restricts human activity significantly. Similarly, research administration can feel restrictive to researchers—vast and unknown, involving many complex systems, and often chartering new territory. Most often, the researcher does not have the research and administrative skills or tools to survive in this wilderness. Researchers need to have direct contact and confidence with staff who have those skillsets. Some key initiatives that can assist in this journey are:

- Develop administrative teams with designated staff who support specific colleges: this provides researchers with a name and direct contact information, eliminating the frustrating process of writing a generic email with no person to speak to directly. Faculty want a name, someone they can trust and build a relationship with. Administrative staff will also find this kind of structure and relationship to be beneficial in their work.
- Implement a research facilitation model: this role is one of service to the researcher that establishes a partnership; it is a joint effort (50/50 split) between the colleges and the central office. Facilitators provide direct support to the researcher on-site and improve communication between the college and central office.

Challenging, Inspirational, Satisfying

The Great Divide Trail, conducting research and working in research administration, both are challenging, inspirational, and satisfying. We need to see each other as individuals, both dealing with demanding roles but also being highly passionate about our work. We are on the journey together, a partnership towards the same goal of ensuring research success. Some ideas that have been useful include:

- Have meetings with researchers in their offices.
- Give informal presentations on research administration in colleges during regular gatherings, eg. research coffees.
- Provide opportunities for staff to visit research labs, facilities, and centers: staff can connect with researchers and actually see the product of their efforts, and researchers love to talk about their work.

The Great Divide will likely always be there, but by taking advantage of the many opportunities to build solid partnerships and relationships, we can travel that challenging and satisfying journey together.

Susan Blum, PhD, is the Director, Research Services, in the Office of the Vice-President Research, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK Canada S7N 4J8. She can be reached at susan.blum@usask.ca
ESSENTIAL NEW PUBLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE!

CONTENTS INCLUDE:
Institutional Considerations
Organization of Research Administration
Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships
Pre-Award Services
Award Negotiation and Acceptance
Award Review
Post-Award Services
Compliance
Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer
More!

~

Selecting and Monitoring Subawards
Writing the Subaward
International Subawards
Negotiating the Subaward
More!

~

Pre-Award Services
Post-Award Services
Ethical Compliance
Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer and Export Control
More!

Enhance your professional development with these easily readable, brief and affordable offerings from NCURA!

The Role of Research Administration
Third Edition, 42 pages
Provides a comprehensive overview of the many functions and varied roles and responsibilities of research administrators.

Writing and Negotiating Subawards Under Federal Prime Awards
A practical guide to understanding and improving subaward practices.

Establishing and Managing an Office of Sponsored Programs at Non-Research Intensive Colleges and Universities
Third Edition, 32 pages
Reviews the basic functions & strategies of organizing and managing an office of sponsored programs at a PUI.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE NCURA STORE:
✓ A Primer on Clinical Trials
✓ Cost Sharing: An Overview
✓ Effort Reporting: An Overview
✓ A Primer on Intellectual Property
✓ Facilities and Administrative Costs in Higher Education
✓ Cost Accounting Standards
✓ OMB Circular A-21 Mini Guide
✓ OMB Circular A-110 Mini Guide
✓ OMB Circular A-133 Mini Guide

http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore.aspx
When you think of a leader, what words to describe her come to your mind? Visionary? Strategic? Confident? Take-charge? Decisive? All of the above? If you chose “All of the above,” I agree. A leader needs to have a vision, think strategically, be confident, take charge when the situation calls for it, and make decisions. In addition to these prerequisites for the job of a leader, she needs to think outside the box, come up with new approaches to getting the job done.

Think of a leader and consider for a moment whether he thought outside the box. Arguably the business leader most known for his ingenuity in the 21st century is the late Steve Jobs. Did he think outside the box? Many would say yes— he thought of new ways for consumers to use technology, or improved existing products to the point where the Apple name became synonymous with the genre – iPods, iPads, and iPhones to name just three revolutionary products. iPod became synonymous with MP3 players, iPad with tablets, and iPhone with smart phones. Even Apple’s unveiling of new products was done in an outside the box fashion, with Jobs on stage in his trademark black mock/turtleneck and jeans.

Fortune Magazine had an article on the World’s 50 Greatest Leaders. (Fortune Editors, 2014, March 20) Number 1 on the list is Pope Francis. Why? He is different. Pope Francis has challenged Catholics in many ways since he was elected Pope. He has adopted new approaches to deal with the long-standing issue of the Catholic Church becoming irrelevant to many of the faithful. Here is a Pope who chose to eschew living in the Vatican’s traditional papal apartment, opting instead to continue to live in the lodgings he occupied at the Vatican guesthouse where he feels “part of a family.” “I’m visible to people and I lead a normal life – a public Mass in the morning, eat in the refectory with everyone else, et cetera. All this is good for me and prevents me from being isolated.” (Squires, Nick, 2013, May 29) He has adopted a “more open posture on gay issues” and, while not condoning homosexuality or gay marriage, he has stated, “If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?” (Hale, Christopher J, 2014, September 8). The Pope has spoken out against the Catholic Church’s focus on abortion, contraception, and gay marriage to the exclusion of social justice issues, (Ball, Deborah and Levitz, Jennifer, 2013, September 19) reminding the Church of its mission to care for the poor, and railing against economic inequality, “savage capitalism (that) has taught the logic of profit at all cost.” (Winters, Michael Sean, 2013, June 1) His outside-the-box thinking has generated much discussion among Catholics, many of them fallen-away Catholics, and he has succeeded in making the Church relevant again.

Number eight on the list, three places behind Bill Clinton and one ahead of the Dalai Lama, is Bono, U2’s muse. Before Bono, had a rock star ever transformed himself or herself into a statesman who meets with world leaders, attends world economic forums, and whose words and actions are followed by many of the world’s political leaders? Bono has used his fame to fight for social justice worldwide, and particularly in Africa. He co-founded DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa) in 2002, and this later became the organization ONE, whose millions of members work to empower the poorest people on Earth. His bio on Ted.com (TED Speaker: Bono, n.d.) says, “Bono has proven himself stunningly effective in encouraging and cajoling the world’s most powerful leaders to take seriously the challenge of
disease and hunger and seize the historic opportunity we now have to beat extreme poverty, especially in Africa, through technological innovation, smart aid, transparency and investments which put citizens in charge.” Now it seems like every celebrity has their own foundation or cause they support. Bono is a leader in the fight for social justice worldwide and he took a very unconventional route to get there.

Number 12 on Fortune’s list is Geoffrey Canada, former CEO of Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ). While Canada was CEO of HCZ in the 1990s, he launched the HCZ Project, a one-block pilot to tackle the long-standing issue of poverty in Harlem. His outside-the-box thinking led to a social services experiment that sought to tackle all of an area’s problems at once, but the geographical area was limited, in order to “create a ‘tipping point’ and . . . shift the culture of the community.” What started as a one-block project grew into a 97-block project. Rather than address one issue at a time across a city or even neighborhood, the HCZ Project focused on addressing all the issues faced by families in a one-block neighborhood, including drug use, failing schools, violent crime, substandard housing, and health problems. (The Beginning of the Children’s Zone, n.d.) Fortune credits Canada’s leadership as a key factor in the success of the project.

Number 17 is one of the few women on the list, Maria Klawe, the President of Harvey Mudd College. Klawe is a mathematician and computer scientist and under her leadership, the percentage of women at Harvey Mudd majoring in computer science has risen to 40%, the highest in the nation. Klawe thinks of Harvey Mudd as an “innovation lab” and her next goal is to increase the diversity of students majoring in science. (Aghajanian, Liana, 2014, May 14) One of the things that attracted her to the position when she was approached (while she was dean of the engineering school at Princeton) was the chance to make a difference in science and engineering education. Harvey Mudd has 800 students and emphasizes teaching and Klawe believed that the school could serve as a laboratory. (Cornish, Audie and Block, Melissa, 2013, May 1) Harvey Mudd has taken specific actions to get women interested in computer science, such as introductory classes for students who have never attended computer camp and attendance at a conference for women in computing. Students say that computer science classes focus on the application of computer science to real-life challenges and that they are fun. Instead of math, the students work on real-life problems. (Burrows, Peter, 2014, August 7).

What these four leaders have in common, as do many other successful leaders, is that they tried new approaches to long-standing problems. Faced with a problem, they thought outside the box to come up with a solution. People think the Church has lost touch with its core? Check – here comes a pope who understands the problem and reaches out to his congregation by listening to what is important to them and putting these concerns at the forefront of his mission. Need the world’s attention on issues afflicting the poorest among us? Check – a rock star makes these issues his own, becomes informed about the issues, and rallies millions to the causes because of his huge celebrity status. Have deep-seated poverty in Harlem? Check – a visionary leader sees a new way of overcoming systemic poverty and launches an experimental project that grows exponentially. Not enough women in computer science? Check – a female mathematician and computer scientist sees an opportunity to use a college as a laboratory where innovative ideas can be implemented to increase female participation in computer science.

The people of an organization, a group, or a community look to their leader to provide guidance, innovation, and strategic direction. Leaders can’t be afraid to take chances and try new things. While not every situation will call for a new approach, when the old approaches aren’t working, a good leader will recognize that a change in approach may be necessary. She needs to be able to step outside of her comfort zone and look at the problem from a different angle, talk to new people, and think outside the box to resolve the issue.

References
The Beginning of the Children’s Zone, n.d.) Fortune credits Canada’s leadership as a key factor in the success of the project.

Carolyn Elliott-Farino, MA, CRA, is the Executive Director of the Office of Research at Kennesaw State University. She is a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute (LDI) and Executive Leadership Program (ELP). Carolyn oversees preaward, postaward non-financial, and KSU Research and Service Foundation operations. Contact her at cellio12@kennesaw.edu.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2014 43
International research collaborations are important, exciting and necessary for the progress of science. However, the many substantial differences in national research systems and legislations, as well as differences in traditions and mindsets create challenges entailing substantial risks that research administrators need to deal with efficiently.

The authors of this article have experience in managing many US Federal research grants, mainly from the NIH, in Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. Here we share our knowledge and experience of the Foreign Organization Systems (FOS) review that has been helpful for us to understand the expectations of both US funders and US prime awardees. At the 56th NCURA Annual Meeting this summer, we discovered that the FOS Review is largely unknown to our American colleagues, so we take this opportunity to briefly introduce it, and demonstrate its usefulness as a tool for research administrators.

What is the FOS review? It is a 4-day site visit to foreign institutions by a team of representatives of the NIH, more specifically NIAID, which may be performed when the institution receives substantial NIH funding. The FOS Review follows a specific format and includes a fixed agenda for the visit and a questionnaire comprising of about 150 questions divided into 20 sections as shown.

The questionnaire is intended to extract a comprehensive and fairly detailed overview of the institution’s administrative set-up. It is also designed to spot risks and potential issues, hopefully before they occur, which is why we refer to it as a tool.

Now take a moment to consider how your own institution would be prepared to answer this questionnaire – especially if coming from a foreign funding agency, e.g. the EU Commission. You would get 3 weeks notice to prepare an in-depth description of your entire institutional administration and its systems. Is that not an interesting thought?

Two of us have experienced FOS reviews at our respective institutions. They were intense experiences that were important for our, and our institutions’, understanding of the requirements and administrative burden related to applying for, and managing US federal grants. One FOS review recommendation even led to a change in national legislation, as NIH grants were specifically made exempt from a value-added tax levied on all non-public or foreign funding.

So why is the FOS Review useful for research administrators, then?

First, for foreign institutions, it puts sharp focus on the expectations and requirements from the US funding agency. This may seem evident, but US grants normally constitute a small proportion of the total research income of European institutions, and it is not unusual that a single individual at the institution is expected to perform all the administrative tasks associated with US grants, often as a part-time assignment, too. A single individual, who usually cannot devote all of his or her effort to this task, is thus often expected to carry out the work done by entire grants offices at US institutions. A FOS review visit and the questions themselves will make the need for the allocation of sufficient resources obvious to the institution’s management, and lead to a better understanding of the regulatory framework.

Second, the FOS review questionnaire is designed to identify known potential problem areas, compliance being one of them. Question C4, “What are your organization’s procedures for...
assuring compliance with NIH/NIAID requirements“, is a relevant question to ask any foreign institution. Since national or regional requirements already incur a significant administrative burden, most institutions are unlikely to have specific procedures for foreign funders that provide only a small fraction of the total income, no matter how prestigious such income may be.

Another question that may reveal different understandings of concepts is E1: “How does your organization ensure that funds are not received from several sources for the same science?” In many situations, receiving funding from several sources for the same science – sometimes even for the same project – may be a requirement outside the US, so an alignment of understanding here may be crucial.

A third and last example is the questions about the 8% indirect costs allocation that NIH allows foreign institutions (please note that the FOS review questionnaire does not refer to “F&A”, a term not used outside the US). The 8% is not allowed to be used as regular F&A, but can exclusively be used to cover additional costs caused by compliance requirements.

The FOS review with its 150 questions is thus a comparatively easy and straightforward tool to make a comprehensive review of US Federal requirements for research grants. It provides guidance in what may constitute problem areas and it is easy enough to understand for anyone working with research administration, since it is relatively free from nation-specific terminology. The questionnaire can be downloaded from the NIAID website and is available in many different languages.

If there is one tip that we would like to give the American colleagues managing foreign subawards, it is that please share the FOS review questionnaire with your non-US sub-awardees and ask them to consider these questions. As sub-awardees we would have found it very helpful and positive to receive it from our Prime. The bottom line is that you learn a great deal from these reviews, and even just from the questionnaire. We have certainly become better equipped to receive NIH-funding after the reviews.

References

New Approaches to Long-standing Issues

14%: Rate of increase in online giving in 2013.

$2.7 Billion: Estimated funds crowdfunded online in 2012.

$5.1 Billion: Estimated funds crowdfunded online in 2013.

224: Number of countries where Indiegogo operates.

70%: Crowdfunding campaigns enabled by Indiegogo in the US.

$429.03: Average amount raised per crowdfunding campaign in the US in the second quarter of 2014.

Sources:
http://philanthropy.com/article/Online-Fundraising-Goes/146619
http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8e5be7d0-23c2-11e4-8e29-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3CU3PacnL

Want to share numbers?
Email Heather Kubinec at hkubinec@uci.edu
Japan has a great deal offer to the international research community: first-rate science, superb facilities and know-how, and a public policy apparatus that puts a high priority on basic research in the determination of funding.

Consequently Japanese universities, especially the top schools which put special emphasis on scientific research, are often seen making contributions to a wide range of fields, and it is therefore not uncommon to see Japanese investigators joining international research teams.

But in cases where a West-based scientist joins a Japanese-funded team, what should a supporting administrator know about working with Japan? What are the relevant funding agencies and what sorts of spending rules do they have? Who can you turn to with questions?

A general overview of this topic was given at the recent 56th Annual Meeting in August 2014, introduced by David Richardson of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and included presentations by Tadashi Sugihara, deputy director of Kyoto University’s KURA, and myself.

The university and research funding ecosystem

As has been expertly described in previous NCURA magazine pieces by another Kyoto University colleague, Keiko Okano, the bulk of funding in Japan flows from the science and education ministry MEXT, through two agencies: the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS).

Of course other parts of the government — aside from MEXT — also provide research funding, such as the ministry of trade and economy METI, its energy-focused arm NEDO, and the health and welfare ministry MHLW. Some of the grants are of enormous size, targeting specific projects of particular importance to national science policy, a good example being MHLW’s support for iPS cell research at Kyoto University, the home of recent Nobel laureate and stem cell pioneer Shinya Yamanaka.

But for individual researchers and research labs in Japan, and by extension most co-investigators outside the country, by far the largest source of funding comes in the form of so-called Kakenhi grants, issued by JSPS. These make up about 50% of all research funding in Japan, and unlike for e.g. NIH RO1 grants (to which they are often compared), recipients are from all research fields, from the hard sciences to the social sciences and humanities.

Hence although a great deal of important basic scientific research is supported through the other MEXT funding agency JST, and those grants certainly have significant prestige and importance attached to them, when it comes to the sheer breadth of research involved it is not unusual to consider Kakenhi to be synonymous with all of academic funding. This leads to a situation where the receipt of some form of Kakenhi (officially known as “Grants-in-aid for Scientific Research”) money results in the recipient “becoming” part of the Japanese academic world: equivalent to earning a badge of honor.

Which brings us to the question of how best to support someone working as part of a Japan-based research team.
Pitfalls and barriers for non-Japanese co-investigators

The key to success is effective communication. Since the funding environment and mechanisms are different, your best guide will often be a URA counterpart at the appropriate Japanese institution. This person should be able to guide you through the relevant rules and layers of the university administration and, if necessary, connect you to other related stakeholders.

Keep in mind also that Japanese URA job profiles may be somewhat broader than you are used to seeing elsewhere, including a significant degree of event preparation (such as conference planning), public outreach, and media relations. The delegation of responsibility for such functions comes about partly because of URAs’ English language skills and experience working abroad, abilities not possessed by average university administrators.

More from a structural standpoint, important legal differences should also be kept in mind, such as related to export controls (where Japanese requirements may follow similar lines but differ in key areas), and the handling of genetic resources (problematic largely because the United States is not a party to the 2010 International Convention on Biological Diversity).

And it is worth noting that the fiscal (and academic) year in Japan almost always runs from April to the following March, meaning that purchases tied to a specific year must be received (physically delivered) by March 31. Simply ordered and paid for does not count!

Some common funding limitations in Japan include restrictions on:
- purchases unrelated to the actual research
- using money beyond the stated funding period (such as beyond the end of a particular fiscal year)
- mixing of funds from different sources (almost never allowed!)
- purchasing of alcohol, tobacco products, etc.

The last point may seem obvious, but it can become a thorny hurdle when dealing, for example, with the hosting of a conference reception at which beer and wine are to be served: the payment for these drinks must be handled from a separate source.

Kakenhi grants have additional restrictions, such as those related to:
- equipping of buildings and other facilities
- repairing of damage caused by accidents or natural disasters that occurred during the research period
- payment of wages or other rewards to principal investigators or co-investigators
- payment of expenses that should be covered by ancillary funding (for example utility costs generally provided by the host university)

Other rules and restrictions vary by funding agency and university, so it is key to carefully confirm purchases and timing with the relevant accounting office on the Japan side.

Getting even closer

Going beyond simply being part of a Japanese investigator team, an even higher level of involvement would be for a researcher to take up a visiting, part-time, or temporary position at a Japanese institution, which would open up the possibility of becoming a principal investigator for a Kakenhi or other grant. At this point, however, it would likely be best to leave the details to a Japanese counterpart familiar with the rules and regulations, even though at many major institutions comprehensive support for non-Japanese researchers remains elusive.

This feeling of a lack of full support extends to the ministry level where, for example, information on grants is often only available in Japanese, and the Kakenhi application process itself requires the applicant to navigate a non-English website.

Improvement in such areas is gradually coming. And in the meantime you can call upon a growing network of Japanese research administrators who are eager to assist Japan’s research community with expanding its outlook and deepening ties with institutions abroad.

Japan is a treasure trove of knowledge, people, and funds. Getting beyond the barriers to reach the right person you need to get your job done may take some diligence, but in the end the reward will likely be even greater than the efforts expended.

David H. Kornhauser is a senior member of KURA, Kyoto University’s central office of research administration. He can be reached at david@kura.kyoto-u.ac.jp
**REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE: 2014**

A Compendium of Regulations and Certifications Applicable to Sponsored Programs

---

One Well-Organized Guide to More Than 100 Federal Requirements

- Regulatory Framework (including the Uniform Guidance)
- Export Controls
- Privacy
- Environmental Protection
- Human and Animal Subjects Protection
- Open Government Regulations
- Safety and Security
- Employee Directives
- Fraud, Waste and Abuse
- Data and Dissemination

**WRITTEN BY:** Jane Youngers, Assistant Vice President for Research Administration, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and Pamela Webb, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, University of Minnesota

---

**ORDER YOUR COPIES OF REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE: 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Member Price</th>
<th>Non-member Price</th>
<th>Shipping &amp; Handling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Copy</td>
<td>$92</td>
<td>$122</td>
<td>add $7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 Copies</td>
<td>$78 each</td>
<td>$108 each</td>
<td>add $7 (per book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-10 Copies</td>
<td>$67 each</td>
<td>$97 each</td>
<td>add $7 (per book)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Order Multiple Copies for Your Campus**

Take advantage of multiple-copy discounts to order copies for your business officers, researchers, department administrators, and pre-award and post-award officers. Contact NCURA for pricing on more than 10 copies.

**PAYMENT AND ORDERING OPTIONS**

Visit [www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore.aspx)

OR

Complete form and mail it along with a check made payable to NCURA to:

National Council of University Research Administrators
1015 18th Street, NW
Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036

NCURA Federal Tax ID # 52-1721115

---

**Order Now!**

[http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore.aspx)
Listening to their research “customers” is something every research support department should do well. It is especially important in an environment of ever-increasing regulation and bureaucracy. Yet few research support departments have implemented formal programs to gather and implement process improvement ideas from the people they serve. This article describes one institution's approach to better support its research enterprise by becoming an idea-driven organization.

Don’t Just Blame the Sponsor

“If Bob thinks everyone else is the problem, Bob’s usually the problem.”

The Bob Principle

It’s easy to blame outside regulations for all of our inefficient processes, but a closer look reveals that many problems start from within. For example, new conflict of interest regulations require investigators to disclose potential financial conflicts, but do the regulations require institutions to set up electronic systems that require investigators to click “no” more than 100 times just to indicate that they don’t have a conflict? We can all agree that new vendors servicing our organizations need to be vetted and approved, but do we need vendors to complete a 26 page form where much of the information requested is not applicable to the research side of the business? Do new research fellows that do not interact with patients need to go through the same rigorous credentialing process that is required for new physicians?

We are all familiar with the recent Federal Demonstration Project (FDP) survey that found investigators spend 42% of their time on administrative activities. How much of this burden is created by our own institutions as a result of setting up inefficient processes that are onerous or confusing to the end-user? How often do organizations look at their existing policies and processes to see if they have become outdated or could be streamlined? As a matter of fact, a recent report by the National Science Board on reducing the administrative burden for investigators, found that 77% of those that responded to a request for information to the NSB Task Force created to study this issue, perceived their institution as a source of the administrative burden.

Controlling our Destiny

Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) is no different than other academic institutions - our investigators and support staff believe they spend too much valuable time on administrative activities. While sponsor regulations to ensure public trust in the research we conduct are extremely important and needed, have we created the most efficient processes to manage our research enterprise? From the perspective of our research customers, the answer is clearly “no.”

The research leadership at MGH recognized the frustration within our research community and decided to take the bold step of looking within for a solution. We realized that organizations like FDP and Council on Governmental Relations were already partnering with our federal sponsors to reduce administrative burdens at a policy level. It was time to stop worrying about things we did not control and change the things we could. Our response was to create an “Idea-Driven Organization.”

What is an Idea-Driven Organization?

Many of us are familiar with the terms “Six Sigma,” “the Toyota Way,” or “Lean.” These tools, which got their start in the manufacturing industry, are focused on improving organizational efficiency. Their general principle is to quantitatively analyze each step in a process, identify waste, and implement improvements. While effective, this method is often top-down and driven by management and, consequently, does not take into account small ideas that, collectively, can lead to big impacts within an organization.

The central concept of an idea-driven organization is that the front-line employees see a great deal of problems and opportunities that their managers don’t. They are full of ideas to save time and/or money and to improve productivity, quality, and the customer experience. An idea-driven organization is designed and led to systematically seek and implement large numbers of ideas from everyone, but particularly from the people on the front line.

MGH Continuous Research Operations Improvement (CROI)

In 2012, MGH Research took the first step to become an idea-driven organization. We rolled out a Continuous Research Operations Improvement (CROI) program based on the principles in two books; “Ideas Are Free” and the “Idea-
Driven Organization” by Alan G. Robinson and Dean M. Schroeder. CROI is driven by our “Prime Directive” (thank you Star Trek): Focus on the researcher. Further the research mission and bring value to it. Maximize the researcher’s time at the bench by eliminating or maximizing the efficiency of their ancillary obligations.

All employees who see a problem or opportunity for improvement can submit an idea/suggestion by email or phone. The ideas/suggestions are registered into an electronic tracking system and then triaged to one of 15 working groups (see chart) based on the type of suggestion. Each working group is co-led by an investigator and an administrator. The group is then charged with vetting suggestions, recommending and implementing solutions.

Transparency and open communication to both the suggester and entire research community are keys to the success of the program. Suggesters receive an initial email when their idea has been assigned to a working group, and again every time their suggestion has a change in status. A website visible to all employees displays all suggestions and their current status.

## Results and Successes

Since the roll out of CROI, we have received almost 400 suggestions; 148 have been resolved (implemented), 65 were closed (no change made), and 178 are open and currently being discussed by working groups. The table below shows the break out of suggestions by working group and their current status:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKING GROUP</th>
<th>SUBMITTED</th>
<th>OPEN</th>
<th>RESOLVED</th>
<th>CLOSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Care</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Data</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Research</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Tracking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Infrastructure</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Management</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Management</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space and Facilities</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>392</strong></td>
<td><strong>178</strong></td>
<td><strong>148</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are examples of a few ideas that have been implemented (resolved) to date:

- Our electronic conflict of interest system required investigators with no conflicts to repeatedly answer numerous non-applicable questions. A simple enhancement to our system allows these types of questions to be skipped, collectively saving hundreds of hours of researchers’ time.

- The electronic grant submission system would time out without warning causing instances where unsaved information would be lost. A “time out warning” feature was added, saving 2-3 hours of re-entry work per instance.

- The MGH Research Intranet, which was only available inside the firewall, did not allow employee access to valuable institutional information when not at work. The Intranet is now securely available outside the firewall, giving employees greater flexibility to work outside the hospital.

- The IS HelpDesk phone number was not included in email correspondence to employees requesting IT support, even though the automated email asks people to call the HelpDesk if they have further questions. We were able to track an example of an investigator trying to locate the number for over an hour. The phone number is now listed in automated email correspondence, saving thousands of hours of employees’ time.

## Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

Has our implementation of CROI been perfect? Certainly not. But we are proud of the steps we have taken to move MGH research towards becoming an idea-driven organization. The program has improved accountability, helped restore trust between the research community and those who serve it, and created a forum for open and honest dialogue about the issues that frustrate us and impede research. It was a bold step, and to be honest, has not been easy. There is still work to be done. Just like the title of our program suggests, we will “continuously” re-assess and improve our CROI program. We have asked our research community to help us better the program through retreats and brain-storming sessions. We’ve even brought in an expert from the outside, who also graciously agreed to co-author this article, to evaluate and give recommendations for improving our program.

We have already acted on some suggestions and plan on implementing others in the coming months. Some of these key suggestions and recommendations for moving forward include:

- **Gain senior leadership buy-in across MGH and our healthcare system (Partners).** This buy-in is the most critical element for program sustainability and success

- **Foster a culture of change.** Everyone needs to realize that continuously improving our organization is part of their everyday job

- **Establish a better process to prioritize ideas.** All ideas must be vetted but not all can or should be implemented

- **Train and educate.** Senior leadership must
The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Open Payments website went live on September 30, 2014, as the most comprehensive effort to-date to reveal the full scope of financial relationships between industry and academia. While academic health centers have spent significant time considering how to embrace the transparency espoused by the site, how to respond to potential questions from the media and patient advocacy groups, and whether to reconcile payments reported to the CMS site to internal disclosure systems, I fear that the important role our physicians play in industry collaborations and engagements will be overlooked. Research administrators working with physician researchers must help communicate to the public the critical relationships between industry and academia that advance patient care and stimulate eradication of disease.

The “National Scene” – their thoughts on national issues in research administration.

NCURA members have significant impact on the “National Scene” – their thoughts on national issues in research administration.

Gunta Liders
Associate Vice President For Research Administration, University of Rochester

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Open Payments website went live on September 30, 2014, as the most comprehensive effort to-date to reveal the full scope of financial relationships between industry and academia. While academic health centers have spent significant time considering how to embrace the transparency espoused by the site, how to respond to potential questions from the media and patient advocacy groups, and whether to reconcile payments reported to the CMS site to internal disclosure systems, I fear that the important role our physicians play in industry collaborations and engagements will be overlooked. Research administrators working with physician researchers must help communicate to the public the critical relationships between industry and academia that advance patient care and stimulate eradication of disease.

Richard Seligman
Associate Vice President, Research Administration, California Institute of Technology

UG is on our minds. UG (OMB’s Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements) could bring about the most significant change in the way we do research administration since the 1960’s. Or, it could turn out to have a relatively minimal impact on our day-to-day activities. The problem is that we don’t yet know. With the exception of NSF, the other federal agencies have not yet announced their implementation plans. The agencies have until December 26, 2014 to implement the UG. We’ll have to comply with the new requirements for awards made after December 26, 2014. It’s very much a case of “hurry up” (to fully understand the UG), “wait,” (for the implementation details), and “hurry up again” (to bring our institutional policies and procedures into conformance with the new ways of managing federal research grants).

References

Take the Plunge – Become an Idea-Driven Organization

If you have not already done so, we challenge you to consider becoming an idea-driven organization, or if you are a department administrator, becoming an idea-driven department. Research administration is a service business and all service businesses have customers. The best businesses listen to their customers and work with them to improve service and the customer experience. We should do no less for our researchers. It’s not the easy thing to do, but it is the right thing to do. It brings researchers together with those who support them to improve the work environment, increase efficiency, and contribute in a very tangible way to advance science.

Gary Smith is the Sr. Administrative Director for Research at Massachusetts General Hospital. Gary has been in research administration for over 25 years and involved with NCURA for many of those years. His past service includes Chair and Treasurer of Region I. Gary is happy to speak with anyone wishing to learn more about the MGH CROI program. He can be reached at smith.gary@mh.harvard.edu

Harry W. Orf, PhD is the Sr. Vice President for Research at Massachusetts General Hospital. He has had a 35-year career in science and administration, including scientific research, research administration, teaching and education outreach, and biotechnology start-ups. He can be reached at orf@mgh.harvard.edu

Barbara Cole
Associate Vice President, Research Administration, University of Miami

It’s a conundrum that in this millennium… States can mobilize federal funding more efficiently than the Federal government; except when it comes to managing Federal flow-through dollars for research. We have contracting templates, expanded authorities, and single audit procedures for Federal agencies, but for Federal flow-through funds, we are stuck in neutral. The “State” layer is fraught with inefficiency. When was the last time you were asked to produce files which prove your Institution paid FICA on salaries from a Federal auditor? Although state funding is an important part of our research portfolios, the States need to understand the difference between Universities and “mom and pop” shops. It’s time they become more efficient in their distribution of Federal funds and get out of the Stone Age.
Recently I had the wonderful opportunity to be a member of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program (ELP). Throughout the program I learned about myself, my professional leadership style and how it applies to both work life and NCURA. Among my take-aways from the program are the following 7 P’s to consider when sticking your neck out.

**Passion** is essential. If you have passion for your work, then it does not feel like work. True leaders take the next step: they engender passion in others. Sometimes this means knowing when to take a break—and when to encourage others to take a break—from work. For example, I take my team out to lunch at least once a quarter and have staff meetings at fun places such as the local frozen yogurt shop. But not all fun events need to be planned or scheduled: bring brownies to work to celebrate a “very merry unbirthday.” My team has also participated in a walk-a-thon and played Big Pink volleyball, resulting in contributions for a good cause. The outgrowth of these lighthearted activities is team-building, which creates a positive work environment where more can get done with happier colleagues.

**Power** is a slippery slope. There are two kinds of power that leaders balance: personal power and positional power. Positional power is associated with a job title and rank in the organizational structure. Personal power is the ability to influence others. Both types of power must be used judiciously because they can come and go quickly: your job title is never so high or rank so important that you do not need the knowledge and support of others. I recognize the contributions my team makes to the overall success of a project and the organization in several ways: personal notes of thanks, a bouquet of flowers, public “kudos” at staff meetings, and in annual performance evaluations. It has long been said that you will remember all those you met on your way up when you are on your way down. A good admonition to heed.

**Politics** are inherent in every organization, just like the air you breathe and the water you drink. Politics are not good or bad—they are just universal. Politics affect almost everyone in some manner. For instance, state budget cuts for education had the simultaneous effect of decreasing faculty morale and increasing the demand for sponsored projects services. Likewise, the departure of a noted researcher adversely impacted grant funding totals but also held the promise of a replacement faculty hire. The best advice I ever received was: Politics, ignore it at your own peril. I monitor my environment on macro- and micro-levels and stay informed by engaging many sources who bring different perspectives to light. Communication is a two-way street. Sharing insights and information with others encourages them to share in return. Don’t limit conversations to like-minded people as it is good to hear from individuals who have differing opinions. Political environments are dynamic and it is vital to keep up with the changes.

**Pragmatism** is an essential career skill. As any good poker player knows, and as Kenny Rogers sang in “The Gambler” (1978), “You’ve got to know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em.” As a leader, you will encounter situations when you need to decide that the best course of action for a project and organization is to stand firm, such as not authorizing purchase of a major piece of equipment in the final thirty days of a grant award because the audit risk is too high. Other times it may be best for everyone to walk away, such as foregoing acceptance of a sizable funding award because sponsor terms and conditions are unduly restrictive. It is never easy to determine whether to hold or to fold. The important part is to determine “At what cost?” How many chips is this hand worth? And if you spend all your chips, will you be able to stay in the game? Some hands are worth all the chips, others are not. Each situation will demand that you exercise pragmatism determined by the unique dictates, circumstances, and morals of this hand. Next hand, you will need to evaluate and make the determination all over again.

The proverbial paddle...no matter where you are, you can end up upstream without one. We’ve all been there and some of us more than once! If you find yourself upstream without a paddle, reach out to a peer or mentor who can help get you moving again. NCURA is a professional organization that exudes mentorship and helps to build lasting relationships. The level of collegiality is remarkably high and members generously share their knowledge and resources. For instance, when senior administrators at our institution decided a new institutional policy was needed, email messages to friends in
“Be bold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out.”

James Bryant Conant

Each registration includes up to 5 logins for your institution and access to the powerpoint materials. The program is 150 minutes. The archive is only available through Nov. 15, 2014.

NOTE: If you had previously registered you can access the archive using your prior login information. Visit www.ncuratv.com click Forgot Password, enter your email address and your password will be emailed to you.

Registration Fee $250.00

http://www.ncura.edu/Education/OnlineEducation/Webcast.aspx
Increase your Engagement!!!
Share your qualities! Let us know who you are!

NCURA is so thrilled to see so many members using Collaborate Platform to engage and share!

NCURA wants our members to get the most out of the Collaborate Communities.
We encourage everyone to complete and update their profiles by filling out the additional fields on your profile page — especially your bio and a profile photo. Here’s how:

1. Access your profile
2. Verify that your name and company information are correct. To make changes, click the edit contact information* icon under your name or company name.
3. If you have a LinkedIn profile, click the “Bring in your information from LinkedIn” link to import your photo, bio, education history and job history. (If you don’t have a LinkedIn profile, simply click the gear icon in each of these sections to manually enter the information.)
4. Complete the remaining demographic fields on your profile.

If you have any questions about completing your profile — or anything else about the Collaborate Platform — please contact the Community Curator
Stephanie Moore at moore@ncura.edu or 202-466-3894.
Newly Appointed NCURA Peer Reviewers

Thirteen new Reviewers have joined the NCURA Peer Programs (Peer Review and Peer Advisory Services). Appointed by the Board of Directors, these Peer Reviewers and Peer Advisors bring their expertise and knowledge of best practices to the peer program services intended to assist institutions in either assessment of sponsored program operations or more directed services. The newly appointed Reviewers have completed their five hour orientation and will be participating in Peer Program engagements in the coming months. The program is in its eighth year and has undertaken over 70 engagements at institutions of all size and volume of sponsored awards. Further information on the program is found at: http://www.ncura.edu/InstitutionalPrograms.aspx

Volunteer Pathways

NCURA has identified three distinct volunteer pathways for its members to get involved - Presenter, Leadership, and Volunteer at the regional and/or national level. “Pathways” is intended to inspire and inform NCURA members on how to engage NCURA as a volunteer in any or all of these opportunities. To get involved visit http://collaborate.ncura.edu/VolunteerOpportunities

Jennifer Rosa’s Journey

I must credit the tremendous mentorship that I have engaged over the years for inspiring my pathway within NCURA. Early in my career, I was enlightened to the volunteer opportunities in this organization by my supervisor; not quite aware of the professional and personal growth that it would ultimately afford me. My first conference opened the door to networking with many others - those who would inspire me to learn more and contribute back as an NCURA volunteer. I welcomed this opportunity, eventually sharing the podium with colleagues who would mentor me in the ways of effective presentation and model leadership. Throughout my membership I have grown exponentially, a credit to my involvement with NCURA and the ever-increasing mentorship circle it has opened for me. Now as a newly elected regional leader, I look forward to blazing my way down this new path and the opportunity to engage the membership regionally and nationally in new ways.

Jennifer L. Rosa, CRA is Administrative Director of Research for The Center for Childhood Cancer Research at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. Jennifer has been a member of NCURA since 2006 and is the recently elected Treasurer-Elect for Region II. She can be reached at rosaj@email.chop.edu

(L-R) Govind Narasimhan, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; Glenda Bullock, Washington University in St Louis; Christa Johnson, Washington University in St Louis; Brenda Kavanaugh, University of Rochester; Diane Domanovics, Case Western Reserve University; Mary Louise Healy, Johns Hopkins University; Peggy Lourey, NCURA; Jane Youngers, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio; Jill Tincher, University of Miami; Jerry Pogatsnik, Eastern Kentucky University; Julie Guggino, Central Washington University; Urmila Bajaj, California Institute of Technology; Marjorie Forster, University of Maryland, Baltimore; Judy Fredenberg, University of Montana
Imagine you’re a new faculty member just starting up your own research lab at a prominent research institute. You’re ready to go, but the bench seats are cold and the shelves are unstocked. And although you may have garnered a start-up package, you have now realized you do not have all the funds necessary to get your research projects fully running.

To whom do you go for help?

At the University of Houston (UH), a well-trained Research Administrator (RA) is the answer. Here, we understand that a knowledgeable RA can open doors to faculty into the nuances of grant funding, agencies, and awards management.

A knowledgeable RA is no accident. It is a matter of hiring properly and training appropriately.

In 2011, UH reached out to NCURA to bring training, to our campus, aimed at enhancing the skills of both new and long-standing RAs.

What resulted was a series of four workshops held between October 2011 and June 2012 that covered topics such as awards management, the role and significance of RAs, compliance issues, proposal creation and submission, and the ‘cradle-to-grave’ award lifecycle approach.

Dr. Rathindra Bose leads the Division of Research as Vice Chancellor for Research and Technology Transfer for the UH System, and is the Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer for UH. UH is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university.

“We must have skilled research administrators who understand that we are a trustee of public funding,” Bose said. “We must be good stewards and uphold our responsibilities.”

Supporting faculty is central to the decisions made by the Division of Research, Bose said.

“The task involves ensuring that the information and guidance provided to them by our research administrators is up-to-date with any new regulations and is in line with best practices for the field,” he said. “Ongoing training for our staff is necessary to meet our faculty’s expectations.”

Looking for New Approaches to long-standing issues at your campus? Learn the latest from NCURA’s expert faculty. Bring NCURA Workshops to Your Campus.

NCURA has five distinctive traveling workshops that provide a cost-effective way to train a large number of campus personnel about effectively managing sponsored research! These 2 and one-half day programs include:

- Departmental Research Administration
- Financial Research Administration
- LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration
- LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration - FUND 2.0
- LEVEL II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop - Critical Issues in Research Administration

A minimum of 60 participants must be committed in order to host a workshop at your campus. These can be attendees from your institution as well as neighboring institutions. You supply the on-campus workshop location, the meals and beverage breaks, and the AV equipment and NCURA will provide the rest - a team of presenters who are experts in the field, all workshop materials and a discounted registration fee.

Contact NCURA Meetings Manager Stephanie McJury at mcjury@ncura.edu or 202-466-3894 for more information and to schedule your campus workshop.

http://www.ncura.edu/InstitutionalPrograms/On-CampusWorkshops.aspx
The workshops were not just aimed at being a refresher or a teaching tool for RAs. The goal was to make better RAs that can learn and adapt to the ever-changing nature of research and the awards that fund it.

Judy Morris is a research administrator with the UH Division of Research. She praised the sessions, which were presented in panel format.

“I like that it’s our counterparts that do the presentations and they know exactly how to troubleshoot the issues we come across,” said Morris, who has also attended other NCURA workshops and conferences, and has been in research administration since the early 1980s.

“NCURA presenters are some of the best presenters in the field that I have encountered,” she said. “They are dedicated, answering all questions from the audience and staying until the room is empty.”

In addition to learning about the business of research administration and the opportunity to get questions answered by experienced trainers, the NCURA workshops served as a great way to network and having them held on campus was convenient, said Debborah Dowell.

“The biggest advantage to having the event on campus is one of convenience,” said Dowell, who attended the sessions as a research office grants officer, but who has since been promoted to research administrator also with the Division of Research.

The NCURA workshops and the time spent with RAs were crucial to her success at UH, Dowell said. “As a new research administrator, I would have come into my position clueless about what I was expected to do without the knowledge I gained from the NCURA workshops.”

Prior to attending the workshops at UH, Dowell had also attended other NCURA training events, where the exchange of experiences was of great value.

“One of the primary reasons for attending the national and regional workshops is that we are able to interact with research administrators from many other educational institutions, where we can hear about what is working or not working for the other institutions,” she said.

The quality of the materials provided as part of the UH workshops became a good resource for Dowell.

“They covered the highlights of what every RA should know in order to perform the job effectively,” she said. “But what I remember most about the NCURA workshops were not so much the workshops themselves but rather the speakers that conducted the workshops,” Dowell said.

The instructors, she said, were well able to connect to the audience.

“They made the experience one that was enjoyable to attend and put some humor into it.”

The workshops at UH augment the training RAs receive by attending other NCURA events across the country.

“Attending the workshops helped me understand the diverse array of agreements,” said Maira Gonzalez, research administrator for the UH Division of Research, who attended an NCURA training in Seattle in June 2013. “I more clearly understand that reading up on the agreements and looking at the terms and conditions can help me determine whether certain expenditures are allowable or unallowable.”

Gonzalez said she felt the workshops she attended were not only informative but also had a significant impact on her work.

“Getting a grasp on the administrative side of research administration was an important skill for me,” said Gonzalez, who began her professional career as an RA in early 2013 after first becoming exposed to the field as a student worker. “By seeing the problems that universities and colleges face when trying to receive grants, I am now able to help both the faculty member and UH in a more efficient way.”

Universities that have hosted include:

- University of Alaska, Anchorage
- University at Buffalo
- California Institute of Technology
- University of California, LA
- California State University
- Case Western Reserve University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- University of Chicago
- Cleveland Clinic
- Colorado State University
- Dana Farber Cancer Institute
- Emory University
- Florida International University
- University of Florida
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Grand Valley State University
- Harvard University
- University of Hawaii
- Johns Hopkins University
- University of Houston
- Iowa State University
- University of Kentucky
- University of Maryland, College Park
- Michigan State University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- University of Missouri, Columbia
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai
- University of New Mexico
- New York University
- UNC at Chapel Hill
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Temple University
- The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Vanderbilt University
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
Throughout my career I have had the opportunity to be the pioneer; the first to create and build a framework or model or develop a point of reference for the future. I am often the person who builds the foundation over time and then someone else takes it from there. I created and managed a start-up for seven years providing services to my customers and then retired from business. I have also designed and implemented multiple service-delivery models in the areas of political campaign management, fundraising, marketing, and web design. In my former position at the University of South Carolina, I was a pioneer and created and implemented Post-Award Services in the Arnold School of Public Health (ASPH) for five years. I’ve designed and implemented a Post-Award Service delivery model for researchers, research associates, post-docs, business managers, and administrative coordinators. In my current position at the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), I am, once again, in a position as pioneer forging ahead to build and create a new framework for managing projects. The purpose of this article is to describe the processes and procedures used when designing and implementing a research administration service delivery model.

In order for research administrators to be effective in service delivery, we need to know our target population (those who will benefit from our services), identify and anticipate their needs, be active listeners, give more than expected, and obtain regular feedback. The primary target population is principal investigators (PIs) and we design and implement service delivery models to meet their needs. Our service delivery models focus on how to deliver services in Pre-Award, Post-Award, Technology Transfer, Electronic Research Administration (ERA), Export Control, IRB, IACUC, and other areas. PIs are not generally trained in all of the aforementioned realms of research administration. We bring a diverse scope of expertise that is required for the research enterprise (Smith & Heyward, 2014). We submit proposals to sponsors to receive funding; negotiate the terms and conditions in grant and contract agreements; move products and services resulting from research into the marketplace; and provide many other benefits to PIs. PIs devote their time to teaching, research, supervising graduate students, publishing, and serving on institutional committees. Research administrators and PIs work together as a team and share power in the research enterprise (Jain, Triandis, & Weick, 2010).

**Designing and Implementing Service Delivery Models**

The University of South Carolina created a new position due to significant increase in extramural funding and the accompanying needs of faculty and staff researchers. I was the first person in that position. The position had a primary affiliation with the Office of Research and a secondary affiliation with the Office of the Dean. Public Health averaged around 26 million dollars annually (including new, non-competitive renewal, and competitive renewal awards) in extramural funding and yielded over 31 million dollars in the last fiscal year that I was there. A major task was to develop and implement Post-Award Services for faculty and staff in ASPH. ASPH has centers, institutes, programs, and six academic departments. In order for this endeavor to be successful, public support and endorsement from management was critical. Gaining support and endorsement of the Associate Dean for Research, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Public Health encouraged faculty, staff, department chairs, center directors, institute directors, and program directors to rally around this new endeavor.

The service delivery model involves four main phases. The first phase involved understanding the context of the organization and existing processes and policies. During this phase it was necessary to address critical issues that restricted workflow and affected the ability to maintain the required level of compliance. Restricted fund accounts (e.g., grants, contracts, cooperative agreements) became a high priority. The first six months were spent on forensic accounting, auditing, and correcting account errors. Another step in the process was developing a logic model to identify resources/inputs (e.g., human, financial, material), activities that would need to take place, outputs (e.g., products, services), and desired outcomes for establishing Post-Award Services. See Figure 1 for Post-Award Services Logic Model. Research was also conducted to learn about methods and outcomes used in establishing Post-Award Services at other colleges and universities.

The second phase was gathering information about the perception of all stakeholders which included those needing research administrative services and those that have an impact on the research administration processes. It was necessary to listen to the issues and concerns of faculty, staff, and management. The recurring issue with faculty members at that time was adequate research administration support for their research programs (Heyward, 2014). During the 11th and 12th month of the process, focus group sessions with faculty and staff were conducted. Faculty and staff were separated in the focus group sessions. The purpose of the faculty focus group sessions was to assess needs for post-award management. The purpose of the staff focus group sessions was to assess the amount of time and effort expended on post-award management and to identify education and training needs. The participants for the faculty sessions...
ranged from assistant professors, associate professors, to full professors. The participants for the staff sessions ranged from research associates, business managers, to administrative coordinators.

Specific discussion questions were developed for each group and disseminated in advance of each session so that participants would have time to prepare their responses. This also allowed for productive discussion. The discussion questions for the faculty sessions included:

1. You are interviewing a candidate for a Faculty position and the candidate has several research grants they would bring to ASPH. The candidate asks you to tell them about Post-Award Management (e.g., Quality of Service, Available Resources) in ASPH. How would you respond to the candidate in three to five sentences?

2. How do you define Post-Award Management?

3. What areas of Post-Award Management should Post-Award staff be knowledgeable of in order to support your needs (e.g., Agency/Sponsor Regulations, Federal Regulations, USC Policies and Procedures)?

4. How can the Post-Award Management process be improved to better meet your needs (e.g., Communication, Training, Centralization, Technology, Organizational Structure, Policies, and Additional Staffing)?

5. As an ASPH Investigator, what are your expectations of Post-Award Management in ASPH? List three to five expectations.

6. What recommendations would you offer for ASPH to consider in taking Post-Award Management to the next level? List three recommendations.

The discussion questions for the staff sessions included:

1. When you think about Post-Award Management, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

2. What percentage of your time do you work on Post-Award Management (e.g., 100%, 75%, 50%, 25%)?

3. How many ASPH Investigators do you work with and/or are assigned to?

4. A Principal Investigator whom you provide Post-Award Management for has just been awarded a $350,000.00 NSF grant. What are the first 3 to 5 tasks you perform to get the project started?

5. How often do you have budget meetings with PIs?

6. As Post-Award staff, what are some of the key issues with Post-Award Management in ASPH?

7. How can the Post-Award Management process be improved in ASPH?

8. What workshops on Post-Award Management would you like to see offered in ASPH?

Two note-takers were assigned to each session to record responses accurately. The participants were re-identified in the summary document and they had a chance to review their responses before the summary document became public. In addition to the focus group sessions, a 17-question survey was disseminated to all faculty members to identify the needs of faculty. Content analysis was used for focus group sessions and descriptive statistics was used for the survey. The responses from the focus group sessions were coded for themes. Themes could identify areas of improvement and new services to implement.

The third phase involved making decisions to either add or modify services, processes, or policies and implementing those improvements. The data collected from the focus group sessions and survey helped to assess whether a Centralized or a Decentralized model would best service faculty and staff in ASPH. The organizational model depended on a number of factors. Centralization vs Decentralization depends on the organizational structure, level of funding, required turnaround time, and the number of appropriately trained staff. The results of the data indicated the Centralization model would provide the best service-delivery as compared to the Decentralization model (Heyward, 2014).

Staff could not spend adequate time on post-award management because of their other responsibilities. The range of percent time they could spend on post-award management was between 25% and 50%. 56% of respondents worked with and/or was assigned to six to ten PIs and each PI had a different number and size of grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements. 11% of respondents stated they did not have budget meetings with PIs. 22% responded they had budget meetings once a month with PIs. 67% responded they had budget meetings only when necessary.

The data collected from the focus group sessions and survey was used to craft education and training initiatives. Some of the workshops presented to faculty and staff were:

- Show Me the Money: Post-Award Management
- Post-Award is More Than 1+1=2
- Post-Award: The Business Side of Research
- Effort Reporting: Think Before You Sign
- Grant Reform
- The Conversation About Indirect Costs

A Post-Award Administration Manual and an à la carte list of Post-Award Services were developed and provided to ASPH:

- Account Monitoring
- Advice/Consulting for the Project Close-out Process
- Assistance with requesting no cost extensions and cost extensions
- Budget Management Services
- Department Chair Orientations
- Effort Report Monitoring
- Faculty Orientations
- Liaison with Animal Resource Facilities, Mouse Core, Contract and Grant Account-
Figure 1: Post-Award Services Logic Model

Overarching Goal: To establish and implement Post-Award Services for Faculty and Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCES/INPUTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Public Health</td>
<td>Needs analysis</td>
<td>A la carte list of Post-Award Services</td>
<td>Reduce the administrative burden for faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Email faculty and staff of intentions</td>
<td>Post-Award Administration Manual</td>
<td>Grant and contract accounts closing on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean for Research</td>
<td>Define questions for surveys, interviews, and focus groups</td>
<td>Updated policies and procedures</td>
<td>Decrease in audit findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Develop handouts for focus groups</td>
<td>Training workshops for faculty and staff</td>
<td>Increase staff support for research programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Identify data from archival data that would be useful for surveys, interviews, and focus groups</td>
<td>System training for faculty and staff</td>
<td>Increase in retention of faculty members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Schedule dates for interviews and focus groups</td>
<td>Technical assistance support</td>
<td>Increase access to accounting system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>Schedule conference rooms for interviews and focus groups</td>
<td>Summary document from focus groups</td>
<td>Increase in on-time progress reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Schedule time period for survey availability</td>
<td>Consistent account monitoring</td>
<td>Improved access to information for decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities/Space</td>
<td>Identify note takers for focus groups</td>
<td>Post-Award orientation for new faculty, staff, and department chairs</td>
<td>Faculty and staff perceive Post-Award Services useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last phase is evaluation of the service delivery model. This phase is an ongoing process. The logic model developed in the first phase illustrated the desired outputs and outcomes of the research administration model. The desired outputs and outcomes are used as the criteria to determine the success of the new service delivery model. The model will continually change and be modified to meet new requirements and research administrative needs of the organization.

Conclusion

Service-delivery models are critical to the success of the research enterprise. To be effective in service delivery, it is necessary to gather the appropriate data and assess the needs of the researchers and staff. This can be accomplished through regular communication with the target population and actively obtaining specific feedback on all areas of research administration services. Gaining support and endorsement from upper level management is critical for the success of service-delivery models. It is also important to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of implemented service-delivery models especially as the needs of the target population change and as regulations and requirements change. The evaluation findings can be used to determine if and what improvements need to be made to our service-delivery models.

References


April Heyward, MRA is a Grants Administrator II at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) in the Bureau of Disease Control/Division of STD-HIV. Her educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Benedict College and a Master of Research Administration from the University of Central Florida. April serves on the Master of Research Administration Advisory Board at the University of Central Florida. She is also the author and publisher of April Heyward Research News blog. She can be reached at april.heyward@outlook.com

60 NCURA Magazine
Have You Had Your (sponsored programs) Checkup This Year?

- Faculty Blood Pressure
- Risk Management Reflexes
- Award Management Temperature
- Communication Effectiveness Pulse
- Sponsored Projects
- Staff Heartburn Reading

Check the health of your program through an NCURA Peer Review.

The only research administration review program that has established National Standards reflecting characteristics of effective sponsored program operations. NCURA Peer Review is a parallel administrative process to an academic program review.

NCURA
supporting research...together

For questions or further information or to obtain a copy of the newly revised National Standards contact peerreview@ncura.edu or call (503) 364-1847. Learn more about the review process by visiting http://www.ncura.edu/InstitutionalPrograms.aspx
The NSF and OIG audit communities have released a total of 7 new audit reports. NSF also released the audit resolution of an incurred cost audit where the University successfully challenged the audit findings which resulted in a 99% reduction in disallowed costs. This Audit Watch column will review the original audit findings along with NSF’s final determination in audit resolution and give highlights of the newly released audits. The next Audit Watch column will provide a more in-depth review of the audits.

Resolution of NSF Incurred Cost Audit 12-1-005 released 10-28-2012 with 6 findings totaling $6,325,483.

A California University challenged the questioned costs in NSF audit report 12-1-005 released in September 2011. The NSF Division of Institutional & Award Support reviewed the audit findings and released its review on 06/13/14. NSF reviewed 5 of the 6 findings noting that finding 3 on Cost Transfers was addressed in the original audit report. NSF upheld $43,551 of the original disallowed cost of $5,829,017 for the 5 findings reviewed.

Finding 1: Overcharged Summer Salaries over $1.9M, Reduced to 0 in Audit Resolution

In the original audit report the auditors found the methodology the University used in calculating summer salary was inconsistent with federal policy and NSF guidelines. Per University policy, if the length of the service period for the summer was indeterminate or irregular, a daily rate based on a 19 day month (instead of actual number of days) was applied to summer salary calculations. The auditor’s position was that the methodology resulted in salary charges to NSF exceeding 1/9 of the annual rates. The University’s position was that salaries were based on an academic year which included 171 days of service over a nine month period which equated to a 19 days of service per month. Upon review the methodology was upheld in audit resolution and the entire $1.9M was allowed.

Finding 2: Over $2.8 Million in Unfulfilled Cost Share Requirement, Reduced to 0 in Audit Resolution

The auditors found that the University lacked an adequate system to identify, account for, monitor and track the cost share it contributed to its NSF awards. Cost share contributions were not tracked on a project by project basis in its accounting system. Instead, the departments maintained their own independent, off-line systems to track cost share contributions. Also, the University did not require certified labor effort reports for employees whose salaries are not at least partially paid by federal funds. In audit resolution NSF stated that OMB guidance does not require that cost share be tracked in the accounting system and that there was verifiable evidence to support the cost share. Audit resolution did agree that failure to maintain effort reports was a compliance issue. The University cost share policy was revised to require effort reports.

Finding 3: Approximately $500,000 of Inappropriate Cost Transfer. Not reviewed, Administratively Closed under Audit Report 12-1-005

The auditors found salary and wages cost transfers between NSF awards for labor costs incurred after the awards to which these costs were posted had expired; unrelated equipment cost transfers into an NSF grant; transfers made into an NSF grant at grant close out to spend out those grant funds; transfers from one NSF grant that went over budget into an NSF grant with available funds; and transfers for overhead, department recharges, and materials and supplies that were unrelated to the NSF award to which they were charged. In the University’s response to the original audit they stated that they were in the process of reviewing all of the questioned transactions to determine the reason for the cost transfer.

Finding 4: Over $473,000 of Indirect Cost Overcharges to NSF Grants, Reduced to $5,231 in Disallowance

The auditors questioned $396,418 as overcharged indirect cost, NSF reviewed and allowed $391,187. The $5,231 of indirect cost applied to rental facilities remained disallowed. The audit report also questioned $77,047 of expense related to direct charging of cost typically treated as indirect. NSF reviewed the purpose and goals of the awards in question and determined that the projects reviewed qualified as major projects and the University was compliant with federal requirements and its own policies and procedures for direct charging of costs such as telephone, photocopying, etc. to NSF awards. Of the $77,047 originally disallowed, $65,605 was allowed. The remaining $11,441 of disallowed cost related to furniture costs that were removed from the award in 2009 and did not require resolution.

Finding 5: $440,000 of Unallowable Costs Charged to NSF Grants, Reduced to 38,320 in Disallowance

For $177,573 questioned as equipment purchased at or near the end of the grant period, there were two questioned transactions with transaction dates after the award period. NSF disallowed the transac-
tion for $3,581 and allowed the second transaction of $8,124 based
on the purpose and intent of the project and evidence that the pur-
chase order was placed before the award expired. The remaining
equipment items totaling $165,868 were questioned because they
were near the end of the award period and in some cases were gen-
eral use equipment. NSF reviewed and allowed $134,295 and dis-
allowed $31,573.

For $204,996 questioned because amounts were not in the award
budget and in some cases were for general use equipment, NSF al-
lowed the entire amount and determined that equipment does not
have to be budgeted to be reasonable, allowable and allocable under
an NSF award. NSF did disallow $3,166 in unapproved pre-award
costs related to fabricated equipment with a transaction date five
months before the effective date of the award and purchased with a
personal credit card.

Finding 6: UCSB Used $180,000 of Remaining Fellowship Funds for Non-Award Purposes, Reduced to 0 in Audit Resolution

The audit questioned awards under NSF's Graduate Research Fellow-
ship program. The audit cited $180,255 in questioned fellowship
costs because the costs were claimed costs on the final FFR despite
no actual cost having been incurred. NSF determine that the ques-
tioned costs were COE allowance costs that the University was allowed
to recover. These costs were awarded as an “allowance” based on the
number of Fellows and not reimbursement. Per program require-
ments the actual use of the allowance is at the discretion of the insti-
tution. NSF allowed all of the questioned cost.

New Audits Released

NSF OIG released a report in August 2014 of another California Uni-
versity which questioned the University’s methodology for calculating
summer salary. The audit questioned $2.3 million in costs with $2.1
million pertaining to summer salaries. The methodology used was a
summer service period that runs from mid-June to mid-September
designed to replicate the academic year service period instead of
being based on calendar months. The university uses a prescribed
day summer month. The academic year compensation calculation
uses a baseline period of service for one quarter/term and defines
that period as containing a base line of a prescribed number of ser-
vice days. For consistency, the summer period uses the same number
of working days that can be claimed for full compensation regard-
less of the number of days in the month. The University’s position
was that it was not correct to draw a comparison between employ-
ees compensated monthly or daily and academics compensated for
summer service.

NSF OIG also released a report in July for a Virginia University in
which it questioned summer salary. The report claimed $1.6 million
of questioned costs claimed on 109 awards; $1.45 million of the
questioned cost was for senior personnel salary that exceeded NSF's
two month limit; other questioned costs were for $8,485 in unallow-
able moving expenses; $2,913 in unallowable immigration fees,
$2,101 in unreasonable travel expense and $118,329 in unreason-
able equipment and materials charges. The University stated that the
applicability of the NSF Senior Project Personnel rule for summer
salary for certain classes of faculty was unclear. The class of faculty
questioned were those fully dependent on available research funding
or calendar year employees who are expected to generate a signifi-
cant portion of their funding from sponsored programs. The Univer-
sity's position was that a PI in a position fully or partly based on the
availability of external funding beyond 2 months per year is exempt
from the rule. The auditors responded that, The NSF definition of Sen-
ior Personnel does not contain a distinction between “regular” or
“restricted” faculty. Individuals other than PI’s considered to be fac-
ulty members, and who will participate in the project are Senior Per-
sonnel. The rule does not provide for compensation in excess of 2
months. NSF requires it be disclosed in the proposal budget, justified
in the budget justification, and approved by NSF in the award notice.
They also noted that in one of the awards in the sample, NSF objected
to a PI exceeding the two month rule and the award was amended be-
fore being awarded. Per the program officer, the PI requested more
than two months but NSF only allows 2.0 months per year for all NSF
awards. A revised budget was submitted which limited the salary to 2
months in the first year. Despite the revision, the costs exceeded $12K
in the first year for the questioned award and $10K on a different
award for a combined 3 months.

Other audits issues by NSF and HHS included a June report of a New
York University in which it questioned $75,494 of costs related to
unallowable indirect costs, unreasonable foreign travel and equip-
ment purchases made at the end of a grant’s period of performance
and unallowable conference fees. Another was an Administrative and
Clerical audit of a California University with only $3,765 of ques-
tioned costs and an audit of a North Carolina University with
$335,874 in questioned costs which represented 8 of the 155 trans-
actions reviewed and 4% of the cost reviewed. The University con-
cluded with the auditor recommendations and described the corrective actions taken.

Charlene Blevens, CPA is the Director of Post Award Operations
at the University of Miami. She is a Certified Fraud Examiner. She
has worked in the financial area in both the public and private
sector in various capacities for more than 23 years with more
than 11 years’ experience at universities in research. She has
presented at the NCURA, FRA, SRA and NACCA conferences. In ad-
dition she is the author of the Summary of University Audits, Settle-
ments and Investigations located on the National Conference on College Cost
Accounting (NACCA) website at www.costaccounting.org She can be reached at
c.blevens@med.miami.edu

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2014
It’s finally time to submit your proposal to Grants.gov. You hit the button and start waiting for the emails. They arrive! The proposal arrived at Grants.gov...there’s an error. What? No! Huh? [insert favorite swear word...or two] !@#$%!!!

Below are some of the most common errors on Grants.gov applications, how you can resolve them, and how you can prevent them.

1. Screen is stuck on “PROCESSING PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE THE WINDOW”

The Grants.gov staff says “Most grant applications will be submitted in three to five minutes. However, some larger applications (over 30 MB) can take between 10 and 15 minutes.” If yours is taking longer, check your setting in the Adobe Reader Trust Manager. It may be blocking the Grants.gov site. Here’s how to check/change your settings:

i. Open Adobe Reader and from the EDIT menu, click PREFERENCES.

ii. From the list of Categories, click on TRUST MANAGER.

iii. Under the section entitled “Internet Access from PDF Files outside the web browser” click CHANGE SETTINGS.

iv. The MANAGE INTERNET ACCESS window will open. Under the WEB SITES section, select any sites related to Grants.gov and click DELETE to remove the sites from the list one at a time.

v. From the list of Categories, click on the SECURITY (ENHANCED) link.

vi. Under the PRIVILEGED LOCATIONS heading, click on the ADD FOLDER PATH button.

vii. Browse to the folder containing your saved application package file and click on the OK button.

viii. Click on the OK button until the PREFERENCES window closes.

ix. From the list of Categories, click on the TRUST THIS DOCUMENT ALWAYS link.

x. Click SAVE AND SUBMIT to submit the application.

2. MANDATORY FORMS WERE NOT FOUND

According to Grants.gov, this error means you are “using an unapproved PDF viewer”. You must re-download the application package using Adobe Reader and re-submit. Below are steps to download Adobe Reader or to confirm you are using a compatible version:

i. Go to www.grants.gov and at the top of the screen, look for the SUPPORT tab. In the dropdown, click on the RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE link.

ii. On the left in the new window, click ADOBE READER COMPATIBILITY.

iii. A new page opens with a table listing the versions of Adobe Reader that are compatible with Grants.gov.

iv. To download Adobe Reader, select CLICK HERE TO GET A CURRENT OR PREVIOUS VERSION OF ADOBE READER.

v. This takes you to the Adobe website and steps to download and install Adobe Reader.

3. INTAKE SERVLET - BROKEN PIPE or ERROR: org.xml.sax.SAXParseException

These errors are caused by an incompatible version of Adobe Reader. See the steps above to find a compatible version.

4. “VIRUS DETECT”

This can indicate that the file attachment names do not meet the required length/format or that the application package has been corrupted by a virus. Here’s how to figure out what’s going on:

Review the filenames on all of the attachments in the application. The filename should be less than 50 characters. Grants.gov also asks that we use only A-Z, a-z, 0-9, and underscore in filenames. Avoid using spaces and special characters (-, &, %, #,*, /). Attachments that do not follow these rules may cause the entire application to be rejected or cause issues during application processing.

If you find a filename that does not follow the guidelines above, Grants.gov suggests you change it:

i. Delete the attachment using the DELETE ATTACHMENT button.

ii. Save and close the application package.

iii. Rename the document saved on your computer to meet the filename requirements.

iv. Open the application package and add the attachment.

v. Save and submit the application.

If that doesn’t solve your situation, it’s likely there’s a virus. Grants.gov suggests you “run a virus scan on the application package and all attachments in the application. If the virus scan detects a virus, remove the virus from your computer. Afterwards, download a new application package from Grants.gov. This will
ensure that the application package is not corrupted with a virus.”

5. ERROR 16 (Adobe & S2S Submissions)
This error refers to an issue with a filename. See filename guidelines above.

6. FILE DAMAGED AND CANNOT BE REPAIRED
This error means your application package is corrupted. You must download a new application package, fill it out, and re-submit. You can avoid corrupted files by using a compatible version of Adobe Reader.

7. NESTED EXCEPTION IS ORG.CODEHAUS.XFIREFAULT.XFIREFAULT
This is a scary way to tell you that you have a backward slash (\) in a filename, which is not allowed. See #4 for the filename requirements. Make the changes and re-submit.

8. COULD NOT INVoke SERVICE NESTED EXCEPTION
This message means the grant application will be automatically reprocessed by the system. Your application package will either be successfully validated or it will be rejected with valid errors. Periodically check the status of your submission until it goes through successfully.

9. REJECTED WITH ERRORS
Here are five common reasons the Grants.gov system rejects an application:

i. The DUNS number of the submitter does not match the DUNS number on the application.

ii. Attachments in the application do not meet Grants.gov filename requirements.

iii. A virus was detected in a file attachment.

iv. The application was submitted after the deadline.

v. The submitter does not have an authorized Grants.gov applicant registration.

Address the errors and re-submit the application before the deadline. It must be approved by the Grants.gov system before it continues to the sponsoring agency and can face additional validations.

10. INCORRECT PAGE ACCESS
This error means that the proxy settings on your network are blocking information sent by Grants.gov. In this case, Grants.gov recommends you “contact your IT department to correct the proxy settings. If you are unable to correct this issue after contacting your IT department, please contact the Grants.gov help desk at 1-800-518-4726”. International customers are asked to call the Grants.gov local line at 606-545-5035. Both are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays. If you prefer email, contact support@grants.gov. Grants.gov staff typically answer emails within a business day, but it may take up to two days if the volume is heavy.

11. ENCRYPTED FILE
This means there’s an encrypted file (key or password protected) attached somewhere within your application package. Grants.gov will not be able to decrypt it. Review all attachments added to the application package and remove the encryption.

12. CONSOLIDATE APPLICATION EXPLANATION IS EXPECTED
Be mindful of your cursor’s location when reviewing the application package because Grants.gov warns ‘if you have accidentally put your cursor in either the ‘Consolidate Application/Plan/Funding Request Explanation’ or the ‘Applicant Federal Debt Delinquent Explanation’ field the box will become mandatory (highlighted in yellow).’ If this is NOT what you meant to do, here’s how to fix it:

For ‘Consolidated Application/Plan/Funding Request’:

On the SFS24 form, page 1, section 1.c titled ‘Consolidated Application/Plan/Funding Request’…select YES then select NO. Changing the selection back to ‘NO’ will deactivate the field as long as you do not place the cursor inside the field again.

For ‘Applicant Federal Debt Delinquent Explanation’, if you do NOT have federal delinquent debt to report:

On the SFS24 form, page 3, question 16 ‘Is the Applicant Delinquent on Any Federal Debt? select YES then select NO. Changing the selection back to ‘NO’ will deactivate the field as long as you do not place the cursor inside the field again.

The most stress-free option is to prevent these errors from occurring in the first place. Here is a summary of prevention tips from the errors above:

- Check your settings in the Adobe Reader
- Name your files using the Grants.gov requirements.
- Do not include a backward slash (\) in a filename
- Use the correct DUNS number on your application
- Work with your IT staff to confirm the proxy settings on your network are NOT blocking information sent by Grants.gov
- Always use a compatible version of Adobe Reader. When a new version is released, check the Grants.gov site to determine compatibility before you download it.
- Do not attach any encrypted files to your Grants.gov application.
- When preparing your application, be mindful that the cursor does not accidentally mark forms.

Happy submitting!

In the second part of this two-part series, the authors continue their survey of legal and practical issues related to internationally-funded sponsored agreements.

More U.S. Laws of General Applicability and their Implementing Regulations

Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). United States (U.S.) institutions of higher learning are growing their collaborations with foreign educational institutions, businesses, and governments. International campuses, collaborative research centers, and other joint ventures are springing up globally. To the extent that an institution engages in payments or gifts of value (e.g., lavish entertainment) to a government official, member of a foreign political party, or an “instrumentality” of government to facilitate a service or business opportunity, one must be mindful of compliance with the FCPA.

The FCPA’s anti-bribery provisions make it unlawful for a U.S. person to bribe a foreign official with money or anything of value for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business. Institutions collaborating internationally must take particular care in light of the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) broad interpretation of who qualifies as a “foreign official”, which can extend to commercial or academic officials (Mohraz et al., 2014). This is particularly relevant today, as many foreign colleges and universities may meet the criteria of being an instrumentality, as they are under government control, and perform a function that the government “treats as its own”.

For further guidance regarding compliance with the FCPA, one can refer to the DOJ’s recent resource guide to the FCPA (DOJ, 2012).

Human Subjects and Animal Care Regulations. Pharmaceutical companies sponsor clinical trials that include sites from around the world. This and other instances of international human research require awareness of applicable regulations on human research participant protection, ethics committee review, privacy regulations, training, shipping of biological specimens, documentation and record retention, indemnity insurance, and clinical trial registry requirements. Animal research similarly involves a set of regulations including ethics reviews, training, shipping of biological specimens, and stringent requirements for animal welfare, care and use. We recommend that you work closely with your institution’s ethics review committee or office to ensure that the applicable regulations are understood and can be satisfied. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) maintains an International Compilation of Human Research Standards (DHHS, 2014). The Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International offers on their website http://www.aaalac.org/resources/internationalregs.cfm a page of international regulations and resources.

Dual Use Research of Concern. Finally, there is an emerging field of biological research that is being restricted, not by statute, but by recent policies issued by the DHHS and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (DHHS, 2012, NIH 2013). The policies seek to control certain types of research on certain “tier 1” select biological agents, such as avian influenza. Once restrictions on publication are accepted, technical information generated in the research is likely to be subject to the EAR and licenses for release to foreign nationals and export outside of the U.S. would need to be obtained.

Financial Issues

A number of financial issues are unique to international agreements and require strategies different from those used with a local or domestic sponsor.

Overdue payments or non-payment by a sponsor is always a risk, but collection options related to an international sponsor may be non-existent. In addition to conducting a risk analysis of the sponsor organization, the best situation for the university is to have the sponsor make advance payments. However, many sponsors do not want to accept the risk of non-performance. To reduce the university’s risk for cost-reimbursement agreements, a requirement for frequent (e.g. monthly) invoices and payments allow the university to stop work for breach if a payment is not received. When allowable, a milestone-based contract is also a good option, balancing the risk for both parties. The university can monitor payments for each milestone and again, stop or minimize project work if a payment is late or not made.

Currency issues can also increase the university’s financial risk. For example, a Brazilian sponsor issues an award to a U.S. institution. The award is calculated in Brazilian reals. Will the institution accept the Brazilian currency? Is it permitted by policy and practice, and is it a good business decision? What are the ex-
change rate trends? Are there fees to be paid? This case-by-case analysis is needed, and agreement terms to mitigate risks may be appropriate, such as a clause to trigger renegotiation of the award amount, milestones, or project aims in the case of extreme fluctuations of currency. (Brady & O’Neill, 2008)

Expectations for financial documentation and record retention can vary from country to country. John Richey stated in his 1993 article that U.S. institutions can meet most international sponsor accounting requirements by complying with the U.S. government regulations. For the purpose of project accounting, the key is to understand the sponsor’s expectations. Consider asking the sponsor to write out the requirements in the contract rather than reference a regulation that may need to be translated or interpreted. Similarly, if there is any doubt or confusion regarding disposition of equipment and other assets on termination or expiration of the agreement, the requirements should be clearly stated in the agreement terms.

Government mandates sometimes apply to both domestic and foreign grantees and contractors. For example, the U.S. Fly America Act (49 USC 40118) mandates the use whenever possible of U.S. flag air carriers for federally funded international travel regardless cost or convenience. Open Skies Agreements have eased this requirement somewhat. In some cases the Buy American Act (41 USC 8301-8305) may also apply; which mandates a preference for U.S. products when purchased with U.S. federal funds.

Finally, financial risk from “hidden” costs must be managed from the time the proposal is developed. In particular, when receiving funds as a subrecipient from an international collaborating partner, the travel budget may need to include visa and insurance costs. Other costs to consider are communications, shipping, and translation.

**Legal and Other Issues**

If your program involves international project work – a “footprint” in another country – a number of legal issues must be addressed that are beyond the scope of this article. In his recent NCURA Magazine article, Bill Ferreira just scratches the surface of this complex topic (Ferreira, 2014).

**Signatures.** As part of the agreement discussions, it is worth finding out about any nuances to the contract signature process. Will a blue pen signature in hard copy be required, or is electronic signature acceptable? Will the sponsor accept delegated signature authority, or require the head of institution to sign? Is every page of the agreement to be initialed (more typical in Europe than in the U.S.)?

**Governing law and dispute resolution.** Little has changed since 2008 when we visited the risks attendant to accepting governance by foreign laws, or being silent on governing law in an agreement. For private institutions, choice of law decisions should always be made in conjunction with choice of dispute resolution. For many state supported institutions, accepting foreign governance is usually not an option for sovereign immunity reasons, nor is arbitration or any other binding dispute resolution an option.

**Governing language.** Similarly, the 2008 article’s advice on language stands. If versions of the agreement are created in two languages, a clause should be inserted in both agreements stating which version of the agreement will govern in case of doubt or conflict between them.

**Immunity and consent to jurisdiction.** Many academic institutions outside of the U.S. are part of their country’s government, and as such may be entitled to sovereign immunity from enforcement or performance under a contract. Strategies for risk mitigation remain in structuring payment schedules requiring advance payment, and express waiver of immunity, granting jurisdiction of U.S. courts in certain circumstances.

**Intellectual property.** Since the 2008 article was written, there has been a sea change in U.S. patent law. In March, 2013, in accordance with the America Invents Act, the U.S. went from “first to invent” patent system to a “first to file” system. However, the law retains a “grace period” allowing public disclosure (e.g., publish an article) one year prior to filing without jeopardizing U.S. patent rights (Villasenor, 2013). With the grace period, U.S. law still differs from many other foreign laws which have no such relief. As such, publishing before filing can jeopardize foreign patents, and should be carefully considered prior to publishing with international sponsors or collaborators.

**Duty of care.** As more and more university faculty, employees, and students travel abroad for university educational and research activities, the question of who is responsible for their safety and security has come to the forefront as an issue of “duty of care” (Claus & Yost 2010). For example, when a researcher takes graduate students to a remote African national park to conduct National Science Foundation sponsored research, what are reasonable safety and security precautions that should be taken by the individuals, the university, and the national park? Often

Continued on next page
**James Casey** has been elected to the post of President-elect of the Nonresident Lawyers Division (NRLD) of the State Bar of Wisconsin, effective July 1, 2014. The NRLD represents 6,800 Wisconsin-licensed lawyers, and the President-elect post is the first of a three-year commitment (President, Past President). As President-elect he is also on the Board of Governors, the main policymaking body of the entire organization, and is the Board liaison to the Communications Committee. James has been a member of the Wisconsin Bar since 1990.

**Michele Codd** has retired from George Washington University, where she was the Director of Research Quality Improvement. Michele’s career included many years at Vanderbilt University, plus positions at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Meharry Medical College. She also served as an NCURA travelling workshop faculty member and a peer reviewer. Michele recalls, “My career as a Research Administrator was thoroughly satisfying and allowed me to work with wonderful colleagues, both at the universities and through NCURA.”

**Nancy Daneau** recently joined New York University as its Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs. With over 25 years of experience at both public and private institutions in both department and central administration positions, Nancy is excited to be at NYU and part of the team of administrators supporting the research enterprise. Nancy can be reached at Nancy.Daneau@nyu.edu

**Rashonda Harris** became the Administrative Director of the Center for Cellular and Molecular Therapeutics at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia on September 2, 2014, supporting Dr. Beverly Davidson, the new Center director. The Center’s mission is to use pioneering research in cell and gene therapy to develop novel therapeutic approaches for hitherto untreatable illnesses. Prior to joining CHOP, Rashonda served for eight years as the Associate Director of Research Accounting Services at Temple University.

**Cindy Hope**, Assistant Vice President for Research and Director, Office for Sponsored Programs at The University of Alabama has been elected chair of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) for the initial three years of Phase VI. Phase VI begins October 1, 2014 for a six year period and includes 155 institutions and 10 federal agencies working to reduce administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts. Cindy is an active NCURA member and has served as past regional officer, traveling workshop faculty, national program committee member and FRA conference co-chair. She was recently recognized for her service as a 2014 awardee of the NCURA Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award during the 56th Annual Meeting in August.

**Leerin Shields** is now the Manager, Grants and Contracts at the Translational Research Institute, Florida Hospital. Prior to her move, Leerin had been the Region II Chair and the Manager of Contracts and Grants at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

**Brian Squilla** was appointed Vice President of Administration and Chief of Staff in the Office of the Provost at Thomas Jefferson University effective July 1, 2014.

---

Continued from previous page

a contractual relationship needs to be established with a foreign state or regional authorities, or with a foreign collaborator, delegating some safety and security responsibilities for university personnel and property to those authorities physically able to perform such functions that the university cannot perform due to distance.

A number of universities have sought enterprise-wide solutions to the issue of duty of care, in some cases hiring third party firms to provide additional insurance options such as medevac.

**Conclusions**

Finally, a challenge of many international agreements lies in the conduct of negotiations. An internet search of “cross-cultural communication” or “international negotiations” will result in an abundance of advice. A few items for consideration include the method of communication (telephone, email, Skype), and practical issues such as scheduling calls over multiple time zones and translation of documents. Educate yourself regarding the sponsor organization, the funding program, and the cultural beliefs and values in that country.

It has been exciting and challenging to participate in the increasing globalization of research and, by extension, research administration. As our investigators learn to collaborate creatively, we too must balance our risks against the value of our international collaborations and continue to share our experiences and successes. ❮
NCURA YouTube Tuesday gives members the opportunity to showcase your expertise in research administration for the Research Administration Community.

NCURA YouTube Tuesdays provide member-generated content that enables anyone to learn about all aspects of research administration. Because it’s on YouTube, the audience is even bigger than NCURA members. Since its inception in July, 2011 we have over 233,000 views. It’s truly a way for us to reach out to the community and show the great level of leadership and insight NCURA members have to offer.

We’re inviting you to share your administrative edge with the world! What better way to demonstrate your knowledge of our industry than to stand up and educate others? Not to mention, you can link to your video on your LinkedIn profile, Facebook, Google+, or other social media platform to let colleagues see you in action. Members have also linked their videos to their vitas and volunteer and presenter proposals. The more videos we produce, the more we demonstrate that NCURA produces knowledgeable, talented experts in research administration.

Generating a video is much easier than you might think. This year at the NCURA National Meeting, we offered a special session on the how-to of putting together your own video for YouTube Tuesdays. The session was a huge success! Participants had a chance to get the basics of creating and submitting a video, and we even brought in a camera for some impromptu video spots.

Creating a video is easy to do, so why not give it a shot? There are a couple of ways to do this:

1. All by yourself - See the Draft Script/Timeline template on the right to help you begin organizing your thoughts related to your script. wikiHow has a great instructional site entitled “How to do a YouTube Video” which gives advice on equipment use, idea generation, video creation and final editing. Once you have recorded your clip, contact Tara Bishop bishop@ncura.edu and she can walk you through the rest of the process of it becoming a YouTube Tuesday hit.

2. Get help from NCURA directly – contact Tara Bishop to learn the many ways NCURA staff can assist you with the development and production of a YouTube video. Be sure to check out NCURA YouTube Channel http://www.youtube.com/user/ncura1959 for all kinds of examples and to see if your topic has already been covered. If you have a twist on an already covered topic, we would love to review it!

3. Work with your colleagues on campus to submit 4-5 videos and have an entire month featuring your institution - as Stanford recently did for September.

Thank you for your help in educating the community…together.

---

**Draft Script/Timeline for NCURA YouTube Video**

This worksheet is intended to help you draft a script for your YouTube videos. You are not required to use this worksheet or to develop a script at all, but we hope you will find it useful.

**Introduction (10 Seconds)**

Hello! Welcome to YouTube Tuesday! My name is ____________ and I work at ____________. I want to talk to you today about ________________

**Relevance (20 Seconds)**

Why is this information important?

**Main Content (60-90 Seconds)**

Present your information here - it may be helpful to think of your information in bullet form and then elaborate on each bullet.

- ____________
- ____________
- ____________
- ____________

**Additional Information (if applicable) (15 Seconds)**

Can you provide a quick reference to additional resources?

**Closing (5 Seconds)**

Thank you for your time. Make sure you check out additional videos at the NCURA YouTube Channel.

---

Kallie M. Firestone, is a Senior Compliance Specialist with MIT’s Internal Audit Division and active NCURA member. She has been involved with the organization both regionally and nationally since 2001. Her career in research administration began in 1997 at WSU and has made its way to MIT by way of University of Washington and Vanderbilt. She is the immediate past Chair of the Professional Development Committee.
Dear Region I friends,

Ahh… autumn in New England. It’s a special time of year. It means back to school, football, leaves turning, milder temperatures and even The Walking Dead. It also means that we have newly elected regional officers! Congratulations to Kris Monahan (Providence College) on being elected as the Chair-Elect for 2015. Kris will be joined by Rob Kirsh as the Secretary-Elect (Brigham & Women’s Hospital) and Anna Dement (Massachusetts General Hospital) as the new Treasurer-Elect. We want to thank the Region I Governance Committee for recruiting a fantastic slate of candidates, and we also want to thank each candidate for running for office.

It was great to reunite with our Region I family at AM 56 as well as meet some new members. For those that came to the Business Meeting you learned about plentiful opportunities to become involved in Region I. You would have also heard Region I Treasurer Bob Stemple ramble on and on about numbers and figures. All I need to know is whether we have any money left in the bank, okay? I think we do, but I wasn’t really paying attention. Things got really heated when the subject of a regional mascot came up. Other regions have colorful animals, but what do people think of when they think of New England? The consensus was… the lobster, but I know what I usually do with a succulent lobster and I just don’t think we should treat our mascot like that. In any event, the debate will continue, and next year’s Business Meeting will include a vote to settle this once and for all.

In other news, Region I members dressed up like characters from SpongeBob SquarePants during the banquet at the Annual Meeting:

Hey, don’t forget – we have one more RADG coming in December and our Spring Meeting in Portland, Maine is just six months away. That’s going to be a good one. No pressure, Kris. But seriously, it better be really good. I mean, it better just blow us away: chocolate fountains, wind machines, neon lights… and don’t forget about the lobster! Ha!

Oh, and I just downloaded all of the songs from Ariana Grande’s new CD. Amazing. She reminds me of Whitney and Mariah. I highly recommend it.

Jeff Seo is the Chair of Region I and serves as the Executive Director of Academic and Research Integrity at Harvard Medical School. Jeff can be reached at jeff_seo@hms.harvard.edu

Happy Fall, Region II Colleagues - I hope everyone enjoyed their Summer! It was great to see so many of you at the National Conference in DC this August. The workshops and sessions provided great updates and new information, and the discussion groups offered some lively debates! The meals and activities also offered great networking opportunities and a chance for old friends to catch up. Our regional Professional Development Committee meet-and-greet and hospitality suite were particularly successful! The Officers received some great training and had some productive meetings which will help guide the future of the region. Thanks to the hard working Program Committee who made it all possible!

Here in Baltimore we are already looking forward to next year’s Regional meeting, which we will host Sunday, April 26 through Wednesday, April 29, 2015.

The meeting will be held at the Baltimore Hilton, which is within walking distance to many of Baltimore’s most visited attractions and overlooks Oriole Park at Camden Yards, one of the nation’s finest baseball stadiums. It is next door to the Camden station of the Marc Train for Washington, DC commuters as well as the light rail line from Baltimore’s Penn Station and the Baltimore-Washington International Airport. If you are interested in being on the Program Committee or would like to volunteer at the meeting, please contact Anne Albinak or Ted Fehskens (Johns Hopkins University).

Elections! As previously announced, I am very happy to report the results of our 2014 officer elections:

Chair-Elect: Erin Bailey, University at Buffalo

Treasurer-Elect: Jennifer Rosa, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

Regionally-Elected Member to the National Board: Cheryl Williams, University of Rochester

Congratulations!
Fall is a time for back-to-school and a commitment to new/advanced learning. A great way to increase your knowledge is to take part in one of our traveling workshops. Our Professional Development Committee has been hard at work signing up new hosts for our existing workshops and also designing new offerings based on your requests and new developments in our field. Please go to our website to view descriptions, dates and locations: http://ncuraregioniii.org/pdc

If you don’t see a workshop in your area, we can always come to you! Did you know that host organizations receive a free registration to the next Region II conference? For more information on our workshops and becoming a host institution, visit our website: http://ncuraregioniii.org/pdc

If you’d like to learn more about maximizing the benefits of your Region II membership, exploring ideas for enhancing professional development and programming, or volunteering at regional and national activities, feel free to contact me directly or through our website: http://ncuraregioniii.org/contact

Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii and Twitter: @NCURAREGIONII

Leerin Shields serves as the Chair of Region II and is the Manager, Contracts and Grants, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

REGION III
Southeast
www.ncuraregioniii.com
https://www.facebook.com/groups/192985687430137

Once again, research administrators from across the country gathered in our nation’s capital to develop professionally, network with colleagues, and have a great time doing it. AM56 provided attendees with concurrent sessions and workshops on a wide variety of topics that offered information for everyone! Several of Region III’s own members were presenters at AM56, showing the wealth of knowledge and expertise represented by the Flamingos. Discussion Groups gave attendees the chance to candidly discuss important matters, share how things are done at their institutions, and learn from those at other organizations. Dr. Robert Sapolsky’s keynote address on stress captivated the audience and demonstrated the importance of interpersonal relationships that help us relieve and manage stress. Appropriately, there were tons of networking opportunities at AM56, including the Regional Hospitality Suite activities held nightly. Region III hosted its first Flamingo Fun Walk (thanks for heading this up for us, Pat Green!), and generated enthusiasm for our 2015 pirate-themed Regional Meeting with a challenging “X Marks the Spot” scavenger hunt that attracted participants from other regions as well. Congratulations to Rick Smiley, Laura Letbetter, Cheryl Waters, and our dear friend (and Region III alum) Robyn Remotigue (now Region V) for their win!

The 2015 Spring Meeting, “Uncharted Waters. Exploring Together” will return to the Wild Dunes Resort in the Isle of Palms, SC May 9 – 13, 2015. Please stay tuned for more details and registration information. Thank you to everyone who submitted in response to the Request for Session Proposals! The 2015 Program Committee is working diligently to put together a fantastic program that you will not want to miss.

NCURA Annual and Regional Meetings are excellent ways to stay current in the ever-evolving field of research administration and connected to colleagues who share your experiences. We’d like to congratulate the 2014 recipients of Annual Meeting Travel Awards: Natasha Stark (Kennesaw State University) and Victoria Dean (Eastern Virginia Medical School). Additionally, Region III’s Tanya Blackwell (Georgia Tech) received one of the 2014 Catherine Core Minority Travel Awards. Also, we are proud to announce that Region III won the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund competition by raising over $1,000 through selling T-shirts and “flair buttons” that caught everyone’s attention and served as great conversation starters. Thank you to all who donated and/or participated in those fundraising events.

Region III’s experience at AM56 would not have been as rewarding as it was without the tireless efforts of our amazing volunteers. Join us in thanking the Executive Committee, regional committee members, and all of the volunteers who helped make a successful meeting. Your contributions of time and talent are appreciated, and our continued success depends greatly on your efforts! If you are interested in volunteering for Region III, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Hagan Walker at haganw@clemson.edu

On December 31st, Kay Gilstrap and Tony Ventimiglia will end their terms as Treasurer and Regionally-Elected Board Member, respectively. Please be sure to thank them for their efforts as you welcome incoming Treasurer Alex Atkinson (Tennessee State University) and incoming Regionally-Elected Board Member Erica Gambrell (University of Alabama) whose terms begin January 1, 2015.

Lastly, to help you stay connected and current with all things NCURA and Region III, we will be utilizing a variety of resources and media outlets. Headed by Secretary, David Smelser, we now have a Communications Committee. Be on the look-out for our newly designed webpage coming soon and if you have not already done so, connect with “NCURA Region III” on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. With the help of Tricia Page of The University of Tennessee Health Science Center (Webmaster) and Lawson Culver (Website Volunteer), Brigette Pfister of Virginia Commonwealth University (Social Media Coordinator), and Tanya Blackwell...
of Georgia Tech (Magazine Coordinator), the Communications Committee will make sure you get the information you need to make the most of your NCURA membership!

Tanya Blackwell serves as Region III’s magazine contributor and is a Contracting Officer at Georgia Institute of Technology\GTRC.

“Being a member of NCURA enabled me to be part of a larger community of research administrators, a network radiating out from the regional to the national and even global workplace. The shared wisdom gleaned over the years via presentations, personal conversations, and online offerings helped me gain the knowledge and confidence to rise to increasingly more responsible positions within my institutions. NCURA colleagues don’t just work to build their own careers – they lend a hand shaping each other’s.” Robert Aull, Director Research Administration, Indiana University

Let me begin this corner article with the quote above from a colleague. As we “go global with research,” it’s important to remember that NCURA provides a way for you and your professional colleagues to connect. Read on …

2014 National Meeting

If you attended AM56, I hope by now you have safely returned to your home and workplace. As the conference is jam-packed with offerings, I may not have had a chance to meet with you, so please allow me the opportunity to say it was a pleasure having you join us in Washington, DC. I hope that you were able to take advantage of the many professional development and networking opportunities that NCURA has to offer, and perhaps you even had a moment to sightsee and visit the best that DC has to offer.

For those of you who volunteered at the National Meeting, please accept my sincere appreciation for your effort. You help make NCURA the best it can be with this tireless energy. If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities with Region IV, please visit http://www.ncuraregioniv.com/membershipvolunteer.html

And for those of you who attended this year’s National Meeting, you know that Region IV was honored in the following events:

- Jamie Caldwell received the Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration
- Robert Andresen elected Vice President of NCURA
- Glenda Bullock elected At Large Member, NCURA Board of Directors

These are high level achievements and Region IV is very proud of their outstanding members.

Region IV and Region VIII Joint Conference Chicago 2015

As we look ahead, I would like to remind you that we are now preparing for the Region IV and Region VIII joint conference in Chicago April 26 – 29, 2015. The program committee has been formed, which includes:

Program Chairs
Eva Björndal
Kirsten Yebl

Program Co-Chairs
Beth Seaton,
Bruno Woeran

Logistics Co-Chairs
Tiina Berg,
Jim Maus

Region IV and Region VIII begin the Chicago 2015 meeting planning.
There will be many opportunities to become involved with this joint conference, for more information please be sure to contact Eva Björndal eva.bjornadal@ki.se or Kirsten Yehl k-yehl@northwestern.edu

NCURA Educational Scholarship Fund

I would also like to thank those of you at AM56 who donated to the NCURA Educational Scholarship Fund, which provides funds to members for professional development through an application process. The funds will initially support registration and travel costs to NCURA professional development programs, but may be expanded at a later date depending on the level of contributions received. For further information and to find out how you can make a donation, please visit the website http://www.ncura.edu/Education/EducationScholarshipFund.aspx

Join Us - Connect Globally

On a final note, I encourage all of you to send a photo of you with your institution in the background and have enclosed a few photos of our own as examples. Please send these photos with a caption to suekelch@umich.edu. The goal is to create a collage of all of us, as we connect globally. Join us!

Warm Regards, Sue Kelch, Chair, Region IV

Laura Plant and Eva Björndal at the Karolinska Institute

Sue Kelch at the University of Michigan Health Center

Sue Kelch serves as the Chair of Region IV and is Research Finance Manager in the Department of Otolaryngology, University of Michigan.

REGION V
Southwestern
www.ncuraregionv.com

What a marvelous AM56! From the workshops on Sunday to the final concurrent session on Wednesday, AM56 was packed with information. Region V had more than 140 attendees — of which approximately 50 were new members. If you attended, I hope that you found the meeting as informative and educational (and fun!) as I did. If you were not able to attend, I hope that you’ll be able to do so in the future.

One of the highlights for the executive committee members was our new member meet and greet. The weather caused a change in venue, but a little (okay, a lot of) rain didn’t stop us from spending some quality time getting to know our new members. If I didn’t get to talk with you personally, consider this your formal welcome to Region V.

In addition to the workshops and programming that were open to all NCURA members, regional leaders were invited to attend a Leadership Summit and Regional Officers Idea Exchange on Friday and Saturday preceding the AM. Region V officers and committee chairs attended, learning some best practices for management of the region and sharing ideas with other regional leaders. One presentation was on regional data — membership numbers, growth, representation at the national level, etc. A particularly interesting piece of data from that presentation was that while Region V has one of the smallest regions in the organization, we showed the highest growth in membership from 2004 to 2013 — 89%! Thank you to the past officers and committee chairs of the region for leading us to such remarkable growth.

Also, I would like to offer a special “thank you” to our many volunteers. Be it through the regional connection or the hospitality suite or session presentations or discussion group facilitation, your service to Region V is valued and appreciated.

Please watch your email for a ballot regarding the regional bylaws. A special committee led by Debbie Newton (University of Tulsa) has worked hard over the past year to draft some proposed changes to the bylaws. The changes primarily reflect a simplification of the bylaws, intended to allow us more flexibility in our operations and to bring our bylaws into closer alignment with those of the National office and other regions. I encourage you to read the ballot and associated documents closely and then VOTE!

I’ll close this month with a shout out to Elena Mota of The University Of Texas At Austin and Erin Woods of Texas Tech University Health Sciences
Center for passing the spring exam and earning certification as a CRA. Congratulations!

*Keepin’ it weird …*

**Hollie Schreiber** serves as Chair of Region V and is Manager, Ag Sponsored Programs Administration, at Oklahoma State University

**Samantha Westcott** serves as Region VI Chair and is the Manager, Sponsored Projects Team, The Saban Research Institute - Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles.

---

**REGION VI**

**Western**

[www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura](http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura)

Dear Region VI Members,

What a year this has been for our Region! I want to thank all of you for your continued and gracious and never-ending support for this Region and all we work to accomplish and our successes:

Together, we managed the shift in our regional meeting from spring to fall and to Nevada. Volunteers helped us with outreach to invite hundreds of individuals and institutions that are not actively engaged in our regional and national activities. This effort has received great feedback. We also invited many Emeritus members to the meeting and to become more involved in Regional activities.

In 2014, we continued to increase our volunteer activities and opportunities across the board. We built a road map and determined there are so many places to join in and connect to the Region. If you’re looking to get involved, please reach out to Allison Ramos.

The LeadMe program was broadened by adding Mentors in Training (MINT). Additionally, LeadMe invites Region VII for all levels: participants, mentors in training, and mentors.

We are excited about deepening our connection with Region VII for both the short-term and the long-term. We are working on long-range planning for years to come so that we can expand our Regional activities and opportunities. We are looking to engage in shared activities and programs with other Regions throughout NCURA to strengthen the organization at every level. For example, we’re exploring adding Region VIII — the International Region — to our 2016 meeting. Anyone interested in participating in cross-regional activities, have an idea to share, or just want to give some feedback as we move forward, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

There is no doubt that we accomplish so much with your extra efforts. Region VI is a strong community dedicated to the growth of our profession. Serving this Region is an honor. Thank you.

Warm regards, Sam

**REGION VII**

**Rocky Mountain**

[http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu](http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu)

Hi Region VII Members,

I hope that all of you experienced a fun and enjoyable summer. It really seems like it went by this year at an exponential pace, but I guess that’s the way it goes. With the rush of the annual meeting behind us and the excitement of the upcoming regional meeting it seems like a bit of a lull here, just kidding, but I have been spending my spare time working through the recently released FAQ’s from the COFAR which is proving to be insightful and interesting.

I am happy to report that the requested changed to our Bylaws moving the election of officers to a fixed date of October 1st of each year passed by a landslide and accordingly our Bylaws have been updated on our website. The vote was 97% “yes” and 3% “no.”

The travel award winner to our regional meeting is **Becky VanZee** from Montana State University. Congratulations, Becky and I hope you enjoy the conference.

As you know we are in the process of electing next year’s officers and I want to thank everyone that agreed to have their name on the ballot. Serving as a volunteer for NCURA is a very rewarding and enriching experience, and I appreciate your willingness to give freely of your time and expertise. I’ll be announcing the election results at our regional meeting.

It was great to see you at the annual meeting and it was great to see new members at our reception. Hopefully the meeting and venue met your expectations and you returned to your institutions with both questions and answers. I am looking forward to our regional meeting and the opportunity to network and meet more of our colleagues.

If you have any NCURA questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Leslie Schmidt**, serves as the Region VII Chair and is Assistant Vice President for Research at The Montana State University.
Wow - what a fantastic Annual Meeting! Filled with learning and networking opportunities and the feeling of “coming home” that is so special to NCURA ……

The international region was well represented with approximately 40 participants. We were warmly welcomed by Region IV who will be our partners in crime for the next region meeting, so save the date, 26-29 April 2015 in Chicago. The program committee is already busy and welcomes any additional help, ideas or suggestions that you might have! We also encourage all of you to contribute to our “going-global-photo-collage” by taking a picture of yourself with your University’s logo. Please send your picture to eva.bjorndal@ki.se

A big achievement for the region during the AM was to get our first committee appointed. We welcome Fadia Homeidan (Lebanon), Laura Plant (Sweden), Sonia Furtado (United Arab Emirates) and Joseph-Francis Ogwapit (Uganda) on board! Other individuals and institutions have also shown interest to volunteer which we will follow up - for this we are truly grateful!

Wishing you all a good and productive fall!

Eva Bjorndal serves as the Chair of Region VIII and is the Team Leader Post-Contract and Financial Compliance at the Karolinska Institutet.
## NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Research Administration</td>
<td>Departmental Research Administration Workshop</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>December 8-10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Research Administration</td>
<td>Financial Research Administration Workshop</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>December 8-10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored</td>
<td>Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>December 8-10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Administration</td>
<td>Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>December 8-10, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## NATIONAL CONFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Award Research Administration Conference</td>
<td>9th Pre-Award Research Administration Conference</td>
<td>Walt Disney World Swan &amp; Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL</td>
<td>March 2-4, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Research Administration Conference</td>
<td>16th Financial Research Administration Conference</td>
<td>Walt Disney World Swan &amp; Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL</td>
<td>March 5-7, 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ONLINE TUTORIALS

- A Primer on Clinical Trials – 8 week program
- A Primer on Federal Contracting – 8 week program
- A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements – 8 week program
- A Primer on Subawards – 8 week program

## DEADLINES FOR DECEMBER 2014

- Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors: October 10, 2014
- Submission of Articles to Co-editors: October 17, 2014
- Submission of Advertisements: October 17, 2014

Additional information for authors can be found at: [http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/NCURAMagazine/Submissions.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/NCURAMagazine/Submissions.aspx)

For further details and updates visit our events calendar at [www.ncura.edu](http://www.ncura.edu)