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ON THE COVER: In our society, the word “politics” often has a very negative connotation. It can be tricky to navigate the political process. Most can agree that politics are both inevitable and necessary. I have heard some joke that politics is akin to making sausage; you wouldn’t want to watch it, but the results aren’t bad.

Politics is often defined as the study or practice of the distribution of power and resources within a community, as well as the interrelationship(s) between communities. Research administration is undoubtedly and undeniably political.

The articles in this issue explore the politics of research administration from several different viewpoints and levels, from the traditional view of the impact of government on our profession to building “political” capital in the office. Several of the articles encourage research administrators to be forward thinking, engage stakeholders, and embrace politics to move forward to success.

For example, Dwayne Lehman’s article Office Politics: Being Politically Savvy provides a nice overview to the role of politics and power concluding that research administrators are required to have the political skills to gain access to information, resources, and the power to influence outcomes. Mary Jo Banasik digs a little deeper into the competencies that research administrators must possess to be effective in the politically charged world of research administration in The T Shape Research Administrator: Maximizing Your Effectiveness.

Politics are also global. Jeremy T. Miner and Tiina Berg look at the politics of sponsors and the roles of research administrators to help navigate the process with case studies from the United States and Finland in Global Political Perspectives: From EAU to HEL and back.

What I love about being a co-editor of NCURA Magazine is the diversity of perspectives presented in each issue and the way I can easily grab onto timely nuggets for my work as a research administrator. From the everyday politics of research administration to the larger role of politics in society, you will find ideas and strategies in this issue that resonate with you and have meaning in your work.

For better or worse, politics is everywhere. Engage and embrace the politics of research administration!

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What a busy year this has been for NCURA and the profession of research administration! We have all been looking around for answers and trying to stay abreast of the changes to the rules and regulations that the Uniform Guidance brought to the table for those of us in research administration. Change is inevitable, and how we manage the change is critical. Like everything else, there are things that have to be negotiated during periods of change; there are wins and losses when the rules get touched. The Uniform Guidance is no different, and all of us are navigating through this now and trying to find the best compromises at our institutions that will ensure compliance without hindering the research. For that reason, I believe the theme of this issue of the magazine, “The Politics of Research Administration,” is going to resonate strongly with many of us in the field, especially given the landscape we find ourselves in this year in particular. The topic is very timely indeed for all research administrators.

I want to share with you some of the exciting activities that took place during the annual meeting this year. The Board of Directors, along with the regional leadership, met for a full day prior to the annual meeting to continue the work on updating the strategic plan for NCURA; where do we want to be in 2025? As I mentioned in the last update, NCURA is always looking ahead to ensure we stay on the cutting edge and continue to be relevant to what the research administration community needs to stay vital. Our organization is very much interested in pushing the limits and testing the waters in order to offer the best opportunities and experiences to our membership when it comes to educational and professional development within research administration. This, in turn, further refines and promotes the profession of research administration as a whole. One of the exciting things that came out of the meeting was the establishment and registering of an official day of recognition for research administrators. September 25th, 2015, was the inaugural Research Administrator Day. The day was established to recognize the significant contributions made by administrators in the support of research innovation, inquiry and discovery. This was a powerful moment. Hopefully each of us at our institutions will embrace this day on an annual basis to highlight and celebrate the vital role that research administrators play in the big picture of advancing research.

Another highlight at the annual meeting was the huge success of the Educational Scholarship campaign for this year, and the generosity and support that was given during AM57. Our membership showed great solidarity across all the regions and the goal set for the meeting was well surpassed. We also had a great partner in the Hilton organization, which also generously contributed to our scholarship fund to help us reach and surpass our goal. I just want to personally thank everyone for their phenomenal support and efforts this year for the Educational Scholarship. It is with endeavors like the scholarship program that NCURA can make a difference in our profession and ensure the further advancement and development of our research administrator professionals. Thank you so much. I know the academic year is in full swing now for all of us, and campus is alive with all the academic and research activities. Stay focused and diligent in your support of research administration and let NCURA and its wonderful resources facilitate and enhance your ability to support your research enterprise to the best of your ability. Remember, NCURA is all about “supporting research…together.”

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Like it or not, politics plays a significant part in effecting change especially at institutions of higher education. A college professor posited that change at a university was like trying to turn the Queen Mary; if you try to make that maneuver too quickly, it will capsize. Dr. Henry Kissinger once said, “University politics are vicious precisely because the stakes are so small. University politics make me long for the simplicity of the Middle East.”

Politics is about influencing people and can be exercised in many ways from exercising power, coercion, negotiation, charm or even bravado. We build and bank political collateral at our institutions by being cooperative and collegial partners on a daily basis thereby laying the groundwork for being on the receiving end of that cooperation and collegiality when implementing change at our institution.

Research administration has not seen a major overhaul of the regulatory framework underpinning the stewardship of federal funding in over 20 years. We have seen our share of new and revised regulations, some more onerous and burdensome than others. We normally are faced with incremental regulatory mandates but whether it is simply shifts in policy and procedures or the need to stand up new electronic systems for tracking and reporting, these most often require that we work with other units on our campus. As a result, research administration leaders must cultivate relationships with constituents within and outside our delegated authority, up and down the hierarchical levels of the university. Political finesse plays a strong part of our ability to effectively do our jobs.

Auster and Ruebottom (2013) identified five stages to approaching the political aspects of change.

1. Map the political landscape.
2. Identify the key influencers within each stakeholder group.
3. Assess the influencers receptiveness to change
4. Mobilize sponsors and promoters.
5. Engage influential positive and negative skeptics.

Let’s consider those stages in a real life example. The Uniform Guidance provides the backdrop as an example of how we must use a political approach when implementing new requirements especially one of this magnitude. Some aspects of the old OMB circulars (A-21, A-110 and A-133) remain intact but procurement and sub-recipient monitoring pieces are two prime examples of significant shifts from previous requirements that will require finesse in working with other institutional and academic units on toward successful implementation. A successful implementation will also require researcher buyin.

Mapping the political landscape requires that we identify the key stakeholders at our institutions who are either a) impacted by the change; and/or b) whose processes and procedures require revision to ensure compliance. In the case of the Uniform Guidance, universities have identified similar players at most institutions; accounting, payroll, purchasing, inventory, costing, internal audit, and policy offices. Many institutions have also engaged representatives from the departmental and principal investigator constituencies at an early stage. Careful consideration of which changes represent the greatest change on your campus can help you identify stakeholders.

A communication plan is critical to successful change management. Effectively communicating to stakeholders the issues of importance to their operations requires customized messages. The message you provide to senior leadership looks very different than what you deliver to principal investigators or departmental and central research administrators. Where senior leadership and compliance offices will be most concerned with
how the risks associated with the change will be mitigated, researchers and departmental research administrators will be most concerned with how policy and procedural changes will impact their day to day performance of their work.

Communication must be two-way and it is through listening and observing that we can achieve the second stage goal of assessing the influencers’ receptiveness to change. Auster and Ruebottom (2013) believe influencers can be divided into six categories: sponsors, promoters, indifferent fence sitters, cautious fence sitters, positive skeptics and negative skeptics. The negative skeptics are pretty easy to identify because they are usually against any change. Positive skeptics play a pivotal role because they are the first to identify the flaws. Recognize that skeptics often are found in middle management roles whereby they have attained some level of power as experts in university policies and procedures. Change may represent a loss of power and expertise for them so it is wise to engage them early on to cultivate their ability to develop a commensurate level of expertise with the revised procedures.

Mobilize sponsors and promoters who will be especially influential in prying the fence sitters off their perches. Sponsors are generally senior leaders who can provide the needed resources and high level endorsement that are essential to the change implementation. Promoters have the social skills, emotional intelligence, and networks to rally the masses and engage the influential positive and negative skeptics.

For any change management process, a change manager should be identified to manage the day to day activities. Prioritizing, pacing and sequencing the work will prevent burnout. Recognizing that any change will follow sequential steps of forming, storming, norming and performing will propel the process quickly through the storming stage to the successful norming and performing stages.

Finally, when training is needed, recognize that successful change implementation is often as much about “unlearning” as it is “learning”. Taking time to understand the reasons why things have always been done will illustrate for skeptics and fence sitters why change is necessary, and hopefully, an improvement. As with all communication, customized training for different constituencies is required. Researchers and those who are impacted as users will be most interested in what this means for their daily routines. Senior management, internal audit and compliance leaders will want to know how any new high risks that may arise will be minimized.

Universities should use change as an opportunity for building internal political collateral by crafting the implementation as to not further add to researcher burdens while ensuring that internal controls are in place to promote transparent compliance. Policies can provide the requisite internal controls while procedures can be more adaptable and flexible to accommodate differences in style and risk tolerance. Implementation of the Uniform Guidance requires a thorough “scrubbing” and updating of institutional policies and procedures to at the very least change references from the old circulars to the appropriate sections of the Uniform Guidance. Use this exercise as the impetus for a holistic approach by examining those longstanding policies and procedures that were developed over time and sometimes in isolation to assure as a whole they are concise, compliant and compatible.

Recognize that change may be the only constant for the near future. Reform looms large on the federal horizon as efforts aimed at reducing the administrative burdens on researchers and institutions is receiving a lot of attention due in great part to studies conducted and reports published by the Federal Demonstration Partnership and the National Science Board. The higher education community eagerly awaits the results of the National Research Council (NRC) study explored the time and costs to institutions required to comply with the federal regulations and reporting requirements related to federally funded research. The National Academies received $1 million from the US Department of Education under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 to conduct this study. The NRC established the Committee on Federal Research Regulations and Reporting Requirements: A New Framework for Research Universities in the 21st Century which has held five meetings exploring both federal agency and institutional perspectives with three additional meetings planned. A final report is anticipated in early 2016.

Several House bills remain in consideration by Congress. H.R. 5056 Research and Development Efficiency Act requires the Director of OSTP to establish a working group responsible for reviewing federal regulations affecting research universities and making recommendations to harmonize, streamline and eliminate with input from non-federal stakeholders.

Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science, and Technology Act of 2014 or FIRST Act of 2014 also directed OSTP to convene a working group to harmonize, streamline and eliminate duplicative regulations and minimize burden while maintaining accountability for federal research funding and required the director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study the use of NSF-funded scientific computing resources at institutions of higher education.

H.R. 2420 Reducing Administrative Burdens on Researchers and Section 1023 of H.R. 6 The 21st Century Cures Act are both aimed specifically at reducing burdens on researchers funded by the National Institutes of Health.

In addition, the Senate in considering reauthorization of the Higher Education Act heard from the higher education community about the cost of regulatory burdens including those impacting recipients of federal research funding in a hearing in February on Recalibrating Regulation of Colleges and Universities: A Report from the Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education.

Understanding the politics at our own institutions as well as on the national level will make us informed voter. Building political collateral at our institutions takes attention to and consideration of the needs of our constituents and is built through the practice of collegiality and cooperation on a daily basis.

References

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Politics – no one wants to play them, but everyone has to at some level. As research administrators we are in a constant state of solving problems and managing change. Ignoring the politics surrounding these processes just complicates the issue and oftentimes results in failure. Following the below steps, we can navigate the perils of institutional politics as we tackle issues.

Problem identification is the first step, and it is not as easy as it sounds. Defining the problem means looking past the symptoms and getting to the underlying issues. Only 20% of an iceberg is visible above the ocean, and the same analogy rings true with problems. The bulk of the problem or situation is often not immediately visible or known. What you see is the first step and you need to dig deeper to determine the “real” problem. If the problem is not correctly identified, the solution arrived at may not be the right one.

Observation is the next step. Step back and study the issue and the people involved. As Yogi Berra once said “You can observe a lot by just watching.” Does this involve central administration, departments, faculty, or a combination of all three? Determine the root cause of the situation. Taking a step back, observing the entire situation and not jumping straight into attempting to solve the issue gives one the ability to make it possible to turn every observation into a personalized learning experience that supports meaningful growth.

Learning the behavior and culture of your campus is key.

“Organizational politics is a full contact sport. It must be played with diligence and a full understanding of the landscape, players and rules. Like any good sports team, preparation before the game makes it much easier to play and gives you a better chance of winning”. (Bolander 2011)

There are many institutions that have developed policies or procedures on the problem you have identified. With the speed of our work lives and the many competing priorities you encounter on a daily basis, you may feel compelled to immediately implement a policy or procedure that you have discovered. But if you haven’t spent the time to learn and truly understand the behavior and culture of your campus, this potential solution will stall at the starting gates. Your campus community may not take ownership of this solution because it doesn’t ring true to them and has not been implemented with your unique campus environment in mind.
information gathering is an important step towards finding a solution. Benjamin Disraeli (British Prime Minister 1874 - 1880), stated, “As a general rule the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information”. The group collecting the information must start by taking stock of what they already know and then decide what information is missing that would provide a complete picture of the situation. Once this basic framework is created, you will need to gather several other types of information. The group will need to research and gather information on what could be considered the facts, determining and deriving logical conclusions from premises known or assumed to be true. Information must also be gathered regarding the speculation and perception on campus surrounding the issue at hand and the prominent opinions of your campus community and how those opinions compare to those within the research community at large.

Team building is an essential building block for navigating the politics of creating and implementing your solution. It is critical to have open-minded people involved who are able to break down silos and communication barriers. Another key element is to bring to the table those individuals who will add value to the team through self-awareness and self-initiated action and will be actively involved in the process. These type of individuals question why we are doing “it” this way and also keep the group focused on the best solution and/or strategy for the issue at hand. Once you have identified individuals on your campus who fit these characteristics, you will need to make sure that these individuals can work together. Discovering the behaviors of the identified candidates will be key to forming a successful team.

Integration of the above elements is paramount on the road to a solution. You have: 1) taken the time to clearly define the problem, 2) ensured that you are working on the real problem instead of merely addressing symptoms, 3) understood the institutional culture, and 4) have gathered the appropriate information and people. Once you have accomplished steps 1-4, you need successful leadership to integrate these elements in a manner that gets the problem to its solution. The leadership styles defined by Daniel Goleman (2000) that are most critical for successful integration and navigation through politics are the authoritative style with its strong, visionary focus and the democratic style with its strong reliance on teamwork, consensus, and communication. Daniel Goleman (2000) states, “The authoritative leader is a visionary, he motivates people by making clear to them how their work fits into a larger vision for the organization.” Having someone who can fulfill this leadership role will help pull the effort together and provide the team with a clear idea of how their actions benefit the institution’s strategic goals. Because of the collaborative nature of the process, a dose of democratic leadership is also important. You have chosen your team carefully based on their expertise and stake in the matter. Take the time to get their feedback and buy in, but allow the authoritative leadership role to keep the process moving by focusing the group on the big picture.

Piloting makes the journey to the solution much smoother. Are you the lone pilot out there trying to create a solution to a problem, or do you have knowledge of others who want to be involved in the process of change? As most will know, one person may be able to bring a problem forward, but it will take a community to create the solution. As author and management expert Ken Blanchard (2001) said, “None of us is as smart as all of us.” Politics is comprised of people, and determining which of your stakeholders need to be partners in the process is an important step towards progress. Choose your copilots strategically based on the specific situation. Who “owns” the problem? Who is authorized to make an ultimate decision? These are the people who need to be driving the process.

Politics can be viewed as the proverbial big gorilla in the middle of the room that no one wants to acknowledge is there, even though everyone can see it. By understanding your institution’s politics, you can successfully navigate through the system and implement the new policies, procedures, or solutions necessary for success. According to author Kathleen Kelley Reardon, being politically savvy doesn’t mean being unethical or devious. At heart, it’s about listening to and relating to others, and making choices that advance everyone’s goals. Like it or not, when it comes to work it’s all politics, but how you manage those politics is up to you.

References

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Office Politics:
Being Politically Savvy

The secret of getting things done is to act!
– Dante Alighieri
Office politics exist at every level within an organization; it is the 800-pound gorilla in the room. Research administrators are not immune to office politics; we require information, resources, and the ability to persuade individuals to achieve a particular outcome, and political skill is needed to accomplish these objectives. In essence, we play with this gorilla on a daily basis. By focusing on the foundations of personal political action, we as research administration professionals can get our jobs done efficiently and effectively.

Politics
For our purposes here, politics is defined as actively promoting oneself and one’s policies in order to influence people and resources to accomplish the tasks and goals in one’s area of responsibility. Several parallels can be drawn between this definition and the definition of leadership, which is “the ability to influence others to accomplish the mission by providing motivation, direction, and purpose”. Office politics and institutional political activity are heavily dependent and determined by an organization’s leadership, culture, communication methods, systems, and structure. It also involves business management issues such as team development, conflict resolution, negotiation, emotional intelligence, (EQ) and performance management.

Why is Politics important?
Some people love the thrill, subtleness, and the complexities of office politics, while a greater percentage of people simply prefer to do a good job, get their tasks completed, and leave the drama to others. However, politics and the acquisition of power are closely related to management, performance, and career progression. Outstanding job performance alone does not guarantee a promotion; solely focusing on work can even hurt you. It is performance coupled with political skill that helps a person rise through the ranks. Pfeffer’s research (2010) indicates that people with political skills received higher performance evaluations and were rated as more effective leaders. He further adds that performance is not the key factor in deciding salary or other opportunities. It is the overall qualities of tenure, educational credentials, and workplace presence that determine promotion and mobility for employees. Not playing this “game” will negatively affect a person’s overall success and effectiveness in completing work, which can lead to their experiencing frustration and not feeling heard or appreciated. The world of research administration is no exception: being politically active is directly related to getting the job of research administration done.

Understand Power
One cannot talk about politics without its relationship to power. Power is not only for those who wish to move up the company ladder. The acquisition of power can provide greater opportunity to contribute to the mission and provide a greater sense of personal satisfaction. DuBrin (2006) states, “Power is the ability or potential to influence decisions and control resources.” It is different than authority, which is the formal right, granted by the organization, to require people to do things and control resources. Power, similar to political capital, is directly related to career success and managerial performance. Managers who focus on the acquisition and use of power are the most effective in accomplishing their jobs, and they also attain higher positions of influence within organizations. Simply put, power is a part of leadership and necessary to get things done. Types of power can be grouped into two principal categories (Figure 2, (Robbins & Coulter, 2005). Formal power is specific to the title, rank, and position a person holds on the organizational chart. Informal power relates to an individual’s personality, character, experience, and knowledge base.

The Three Pillars of Personal Political Action
There are three aspects of personal political action that a person can employ to increase their political influence within their organization (Figure 1). The first pillar focuses on the idea of managing yourself and your actions. This is achieved by following the first two stages of

Figure 1: The 3 Pillars of Personal Political Action

Figure 2: Types of Power (Robbins & Coulter, 2005)

Formal (Power of the Position)
- Legitimate: Positional power (Rank/Title)
- Coercive: Threaten/Punish
- Reward: The least used power

Informal (Power of the Person)
- Expert: Knowledge/Information
- Referent: Trust and respect
- Rational: Reasoning and Problem solving
- Charisma: The ability to motivate and inspire others to action by force of personal traits
being politically savvy based on Kelly’s work (1999). The second pillar advocates establishing credibility to influence peers, which aligns with Kelly’s stage three of organizational savvy. The third pillar emphasizes building a strong relationship with, and “managing” your boss.

Be Organizationally Savvy
Being organizationally savvy “is the ability to manage competing workplace interests to promote ideas, resolve conflicts, and most important - achieve goals” (Kelley, 1999). Being organizationally savvy consists of three stages. Experienced managers can and should use this model to evaluate their department on a periodic basis, especially when there is a change in the organization’s personnel, structure, or work processes.

Understand the Culture
During the first stage of personal political actions you want to experience and gain an understanding of the culture you are in. The culture of an organization embodies everything from the physical layout of the institution and how people decorate their workspaces, to the organization’s stated vision, mission, and values statements. A large component of an organization’s culture lies in its history; the organization is where it is today because of the decisions, practices, and leadership of the past. Next, discover the real power centers within the organization, typically referred to as the underground organizational chart. These are the star performers who have the personal or informal power mentioned above. They are the individuals whom people seek out to answer questions, solve problems and gain advice.

Another aspect of a workplace’s culture involves workplace etiquette, which refers to the rules of the workplace. How do people address each other? Do people engage in conversational dialog before getting down to business, or are they strictly interested in the details of the task? Is the chain of command strictly enforced? Is it taboo to talk directly to the boss’ boss without permission? Is discussion and debate concerning a decision or plan encouraged or discouraged? Like any game, one has to know the rules in order to be able to play.

Network
Stage two of becoming organizationally savvy centers on building networks with others inside and outside the organization. These networks are the doorways to information and knowledge that enables one to accomplish their work. These relationships also allow one to gain and understand the perceptions of others. And, like pieces of a puzzle, they can give insight into the ‘big picture’: that holistic view of how work is processed, its purpose, and the important factors influence decision-making. A word of caution here: avoid relational ties to tainted members of the workforce. Tainted members are those people whose status is questionable. Typically, they are the ones who have a propensity toward a negative attitude, and appear to always be in conflict with leadership, peers, and the organization.

Most importantly in stage two, find a mentor. The mentor need not necessarily reside in your home department. A mentor is someone who will teach, coach, and advise you in becoming successful in your job and help you achieve your professional and personal goals. If you are a manager, become a mentor to others in your organization. It is a great way to help others and to give back by sharing your personal experiences and your tacit knowledge. These relationships establish the groundwork for your power base.

Influence your Peers: Game on!
The third stage in being organizationally savvy is to get the flywheel moving. It is also the second pillar of personal political action to influence peers. Begin by developing a niche of expertise in a certain area and...
become the ‘go to’ person for that topic. This niche of expertise is more than being able to complete an electronic grants submission form, or creating a dazzling spreadsheet, and it goes further than referencing a color-coded, tabbed 2-CFR-200. Expertise is applying what you learned in stages one and two to solve problems and create efficiencies. It is being able to navigate through the gray areas of regulations, policies, and unique circumstances to find ethically appropriate and compliant solutions.

The foundation of creditability is trust: do what you say and say what you will do. In principle this concept sounds simple enough, but in reality, as most learn through experience, it can be quite challenging. Skillful research administrators are eager to help, but understand their limits and only commit to what they know they can deliver. Another way to gain creditability is to be consistent in your demeanor. Maintaining your emotional intelligence (EQ) demonstrates maturity, calmness under pressure, and sets the example for others to follow. Most importantly, protect your integrity as if it was your life. When you lose your integrity, or even if others perceive you have lost your integrity, you will suffer significant setbacks.

Lastly, step up and get noticed. People remember what they like, and that includes you. If you blend in, no one will notice or care. To obtain power, those already in power have to select you for a senior or prime role. The best way for high-level leaders to know the great things that you do and are capable of is to tell them. One of the preferred ways to get noticed and tell your story is to attend meetings and events. Don’t just be there in the physical sense; be engaged in the meeting. Put aside the electronic device, and the worries of all the emails piling up on your inbox, and contribute to the discussion. Also, take a few minutes before and after the meeting to network and continue to build the relationships you have forged. Remember, everything counts!

Manage your Boss

The third pillar of personal political action is to manage your boss. More than any other person in organization, the relationship with your immediate supervisor is critical to your success. They have the power to promote you or prevent your advancement. One should worry about the relationship with their boss at least as much as they worry about their job performance.

On a regular basis, preferably at least quarterly, an employee should ask their immediate supervisor what aspects of their job they think is most critical and what they ought to be focusing on. Take that feedback and act on it! Furthermore, when meeting with the boss, regularly highlight those dimensions of your job performance that favor you. In effect, you will be framing your performance around your talents. This is also a way to emphasize what you enjoy doing most, and the factors that will be used to measure your accomplishments.

Conclusion

Office politics exist within every level of an organization. Research administrators are required to have the political skills to gain access to information, resources, and the power to influence outcomes. Gaining political capital develops through the personal political activities of managing oneself, influencing peers, and maintaining a positive relationship with the boss. Being politically active is directly related to getting the job of research administration done. Be savvy.

References


Dwayne W. Lehman is the business manager for the Human-Computer Interaction Institute (HCII) at Carnegie Mellon University. He served in the U.S. Army for 20 years. A Soldier, Always! He is currently a doctoral candidate of Information Systems and Communication at Robert Morris University. He can be reached at dwlehman@cmu.edu
1,750 research administrators from around the world gathered at the Washington Hilton to learn, share ideas, and spend time with friends and colleagues at this year’s annual meeting.

NCURA members were treated to three and ½ days of workshops, concurrent sessions, discussion groups and office hours. Meeting rooms were filled for updates from the Federal agencies on their grant programs and new policies resulting from the Uniform Guidance. New and exciting areas of interest such as collaborating in Cuba and managing research involving drones were addressed. Other popular topics included subrecipient monitoring, metrics, crowd funding, and customer service.

During the keynote address, Chuck Todd from NBC News offered an insightful look at the state of Washington politics and shared his perspectives on the early days of the upcoming 2016 presidential campaign.

Throughout the meeting, members raised additional funds for the NCURA Scholarship Fund with Region II winning the prize for most funds raised. A big thank you to all who contributed.

There were also several fun and light-hearted moments. Jake Johannsen had everyone laughing with his stories on getting older and his daughter’s hamster’s visit to the veterinarian at the Sunday night banquet. One very popular session looked at TV’s “The Big Bang Theory” through the eyes of a research administrator. And the Tuesday night celebration included competition between regions with on-stage performances of their favorite movie musical numbers. Congratulations to Region III for its performance of “Let it Go” with special lyrics written especially for research administrators.

Mark your calendars for next year’s meeting on August 7-10, 2016. See you at AM58!
1. 2015 Award Winners: Gil Tran, Marjorie Forster, Brenda Kavanaugh, Tom Wilson.


3. Keynote Speaker: Lisa Mosely (Co-Chair), Brenda Kavanaugh (Co-Chair), Michelle Vazin (NCURA President), Chuck Todd, Bob Andresen (NCURA Vice President), Kathleen Larmett (NCURA Executive Director).

1. **2015 Executive Committee**: seated: Heather Offhaus, Treasurer (University of Michigan Medical School), Michelle Vazin, President (Vanderbilt University), Vivian Holmes, Immediate Past President (Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard), Denise Moody, Secretary (Harvard University). Standing: Kathleen Larmett (NCURA Executive Director), Bob Andresen, Vice President (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

2. **Past Presidents**: seated: Vivian Holmes, Pam Whitlock, Dan Nordquist, Pat Hawk, Judy Fredenberg standing: Dick Seligman, Dave Richardson, Kim Moreland, David Mayo, Jane Youngers.


Not pictured: John Donovan, Jean Feldman, Tracey Fraser, Julie Guggino, Tesheia Johnson, Anne Pascucci, David Smelser, Beth Strausser, Jesse Szeto, Laurianne Torres.
Regional Winner: Region III wins regional musical competition with the research administrator’s version of “Let it Go”. Watch it at https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_KoIAnRuYzNFIxWdpq1ZiNk/view?pli=1
Research and Politics: A Perspective of a Political "Newbie"

By Angela Yost

What do you think of when you are asked to think of Research and Politics? Likely that will depend a bit on your experiences and areas of interest: whether or not you enjoy discussing politics or, as the case of most research administrators, you are interested in learning more about the role politics play in the research environment. My aim is to provide introductory knowledge for political "newbies" to gain a better understanding of the role public policy plays in research.

Universities often have designated offices to assist us with understanding the political process and its impact on the University and its stakeholders, and to offer input to politicians in the decision making processes by pinpointing stakeholder values, concerns, and key areas of interest in local, state, country, and/or global issues. Through my research, I discovered our Community and Government Relations office (http://www.cgr.pitt.edu).

Through searching the CGR website, I signed myself up for a mailing list for a publication entitled “Government Highlights”—an email newsletter sent out by the CGR to the University community to provide information on current events on federal, state, and local levels.

Discussion
Mr. Mike Ringler, Senior Director for Federal Relations at the University of Pittsburgh (contact information found while reading the “Government Highlights” publication), kindly agreed to answer some questions I had regarding Research and Politics (M. Ringler, personal communication, August 19, 2015).

Q. What role does the University play in COGR, and vice versa? Does every University have a representative in COGR? (And forgive me if I’m misunderstanding what exactly that is… I’d understood it to be a branch of government made up of people from different institutions, including Universities, whose main goal is assisting all of us with interpretation / translation / and input regarding government policies and procedures that effect our institutions.)

A. COGR is a non-governmental organization. It’s a membership association made up of research universities that have federally-sponsored research expenditures of at least $15m. So only those universities are eligible to become members of COGR. You are right about the main goal. It is to provide information to member universities to deal with federal regulations, and to educate federal agencies about academic operations. Pitt is a member, and our institutional representative is Allen Di-Palma, the director of the Office of Export Controls. Pitt is also a member of other national organizations that are active on Federal issues affecting universities. These include the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of Public & Land-grant Universities, and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

Q. How does your institution keep its stakeholders informed of issues and encourage people to become involved?

A. The Office of Community and Governmental Relations here at Pitt is the primary institutional point of contact for Federal Government matters for all Pitt campuses. We advise and consult within
the University with respect to legislation and executive branch actions, including regulations that could potentially impact the University. Our external stakeholders include Federal legislators and executive branch agencies. We maintain communication with them, advancing the University’s interests and making the resources of the University available to provide policy insights and solutions.

Q. What thoughts come to your mind when you hear the words “Research and Politics”?

A. I came to Pitt earlier this year after working for 17 years for the U.S. House of Representatives, much of that time working specifically on funding for Federal Science agencies, including NSF, NASA, NIST and NOAA. For me, those words bring to mind the solid, bipartisan support that exists in our country for funding scientific research. Despite partisan political differences and changes in party control of Congress and the White House, there is a fundamental agreement, across political lines, that Federal funding for research advances innovation and economic growth, and enhances our national security.

Q. What current political events do you think play the most critical role in research? Who really decides where the money goes, and can the “little guy” make a difference.

A. There are a couple of bills working their way through Congress that have notable implications for Federally-funded scientific research. The House recently passed the 21st Century Cures Act, which would provide significant funding increases for the NIH. The House has also passed the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act, which would provide significant funding increases for the NSF. Both bills await Senate action.

Volunteer. Most institutions offer ways for interested staff members to become involved – politically or otherwise. The University of Pittsburgh has a Staff Association Council (http://www.sac.pitt.edu/) where staff can get involved and stay informed of different events inside and outside the University. Write. After researching areas that matter to you, write letters to Congress. Specifically, within the GFR, there is a subdivision called “Pitt Advocates” (www.alumni.pitt.edu/alumni/groups/pitt-advocates), where I learned that we are provided different educational tools, as well as contact information, and direction on topics of interest to the University and University stakeholders. Information on the state budget process, different pending legislative actions, and state and federal government contact information is all provided in one convenient place. There are templates for letters to compose letters on various issues. There is even an annual organized “Pitt Day in Harrisburg” with a list of talking points provided for reference.

Key Takeaway? As much as I would like to say I found a simple summary of becoming more involved in the research community, it really does take “doing your homework”. Find out what interests you, talk to people about how you can make a difference, talk to your representative, and read all related information you can get your hands on. Take a look at different sources; be wary of group-think and agendas. It’s good to consult a variety of sources before coming to your own conclusion – and remember, there’s no one answer; the point is you are trying to make a difference in what matters to you!

References


Angela A. Yost, is a Research Administrator at the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Medicine. She has been in the field of Research Administration for 16 years, working in various roles such as pre and post award, central and departmental administration, and various supervisory roles. She is a two-year member of NCURA, and an enthusiastic supporter of NCURA Collaborate. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Business (Accounting concentration) from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown in 1999, and Masters in Business Administration (Finance concentration) from the University of Pittsburgh at Pittsburgh in 2004. More recently, she has received Certified Research Administrator status in the fall of 2013. She can be reached at ayost@pitt.edu
Paul Begala

Federal research has produced some of the most important innovations on earth. Start with the Internet, without which I could not watch hamsters on a piano while pretending to work. One of my favorite examples is the human genome. The $3.8 billion the federal government invested in decoding the human genome has, according to a report by Battelle, reaped an astonishing return of 141 to 1. That comparatively small investment has generated economic output of $796 billion. Federally funded research is the best money we spend. It makes us healthier, wealthier, and wiser. And yet we underfund it. We spend less than one percent of our GDP on basic research - significantly less than 40 years ago. We can do better, and I am proud to support NCURA’s efforts to do so.


www.aaas.org/page/historical-trends-federal-rd

Barack Obama

Federally supported basic research, aimed at understanding many features of nature—from the size of the universe to subatomic particles, from the chemical reactions that support a living cell to interactions that sustain ecosystems—has been an essential feature of American life for over fifty years. While the outcomes of specific projects are never predictable, basic research has been a reliable source of new knowledge that has fueled important developments in fields ranging from telecommunications to medicine, yielding remarkable rates of economic return and ensuring American leadership in industry, military power, and higher education. I believe that continued investment in fundamental research is essential for ensuring healthier lives, better sources of energy, superior military capacity, and high-wage jobs for our nation’s future.

Nature 455, 446-449 (2008)


Tucker Carlson

NCURA’s Executive Director Kathleen Larmett asked Tucker Carlson for his views on politics and federal research and he noted, “research is political. You’re never going to get politics out of research. It does distort research priorities at times but, there will always be politics involved. Emotions play a big role in what congress does or does not fund. A member with a grandchild who has an incurable illness will vote to fund research in that area. Even certain diseases are political. Lung Cancer appears to be a politically incorrect disease, and so, gets less funding than Breast Cancer even though it kills more people each year. Look, if you’re going to spend federal dollars, spending it on research gives you a much higher return on investment than giving tax dollars to incentivize people to stay home and not work. If you’re going to disperse government money, you should get a lot back for it. Research stimulates the economy, and in a meaningful way.”

With 2016 just around the corner, when asked if he might stop by next year’s Annual Meeting, he stated, “I hope I’m invited. I love NCURA!”

ALL IN FAVOR OF REQUESTING A

NO COST TIME EXTENSION SAY AYE

Research Administration Memes
https://www.facebook.com/ResearchAdministrationMemes

Research Administration Memes
https://twitter.com/resadmmemes
With an annual budget of $30 billion, the National Institutes of Health is the largest public funder of medical research in the United States. With so much money, competition is fierce: according to the NIH Data Book, in 2014 more than 51,000 applications were submitted and 9,000 awards were granted to researchers in every state and around the world. This reflects an average success rate of 18 percent. Over the past decade, NIH budget appropriations have grown only 7 percent, while the number of applications have swelled 25 percent—10,000 more applications were submitted in 2014 than in 2004. The budget for 2015 and request for 2016 remain relatively flat, which in practical terms means that success rates are likely to continue inching downward, and that researchers who are fortunate enough to win grant awards will face the reality of having less buying power than they did ten years prior.
On the other hand, the European Union has made a significant investment in research innovation, making nearly €80 billion (~$90 billion) in funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020). The goal of Horizon 2020 (as presented on its website) is to “ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation, and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.” The program is open to researchers throughout the world, and most calls require collaboration among EU or associated countries’ organizations and, quite often, among non-EU organizations. In health-related calls, US organizations are not only welcome to participate but also are entitled to receive funding. Data from calendar year 2014, however, suggests that competition for funding is brutal: in the inaugural competition, Horizon 2020 received nearly 37,000 applications and had a success rate of 12.14 percent. In some health-related call topics the success rates dropped as low as 1.9-6.9 percent. Due to reductions in national funding levels, the Horizon 2020 program has taken on an even greater importance in European countries.

A certain irony exists when these initiatives are contrasted. Although the NIH annual budget is 2.4 times the size of Horizon 2020’s annual budget, in the US there tends to be lamenting about chronic underfunding while in the EU there is widespread acclaim for the biggest investment ever in research innovation. Success rates at NIH are perceived by researchers as being abysmal, never mind they are 1.5 times greater than at Horizon 2020 as whole, and 2.8-9.5 times greater when focusing exclusively on health-related funding. Young researchers in the US who are unable to secure NIH funding to support their own investigations may find themselves contemplating switching to careers in industry or leaving the field altogether. Researchers in the EU who were not selected for an award in the inaugural Horizon 2020 competition may find themselves searching for the intestinal fortitude to succeed in spite of the funding odds.

In these times of uncertain funding, research administrators can play key roles in keeping researchers motivated and in increasing researchers’ chances for funding success. The following four examples are drawn from a research university in Finland and a predominantly undergraduate institution in the US.

“It took me a year to get to know the league, the systems.”

– Jari Kurri

Research administrators can help researchers dream big. Beyond reading request for proposal guidelines for eligibility criteria, budget limitations, due dates and submission procedures, research administrators can facilitate identification of sponsor hot buttons, and themes (such as collaboration) that should be highlighted in an application. By working with electronic research development tools and through networks such as NCURA’s Collaborate Global, research administrators can identify potential avenues for forming partnerships locally, regionally, or internationally. Moreover, they can endorse the project with senior administrators to secure internal buy-in for the collaborative arrangements. Research administrators supply researchers with tools and encouragement to be successful.

A University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire researcher had once identified a grant opportunity and planned to submit a request for modest funds for a health-related initiative. When it was pointed out that collaborations were highly encouraged and funding requests of all sizes were welcomed, the researcher was initially hesitant, thinking that a bigger project simply meant more work. As the result of a brainstorming session, a topic of national significance was identified and the researcher began envisioning ways to engage other partners. A series of meetings, phone calls, and emails ensued, and additional collaborators from across the state joined in. As researchers planned the project, research administrators worked together to establish frameworks and agreements that would make the financial logistics viable. The project idea blossomed to four times the original budget size with ten times the impact. The sponsor was captivated by the big idea and awarded big bucks, the largest single grant in the competition. The sponsor now holds up the project as a model for others to replicate.
“I don’t think this league will challenge me enough.”

– Noora Räty

Research administrators often can share examples of projects that sponsors have funded in the past as a way to inspire researchers to submit an application: “As you can see, the sponsor supported a similar project at [university name, location], perhaps they’d be interested in supporting your project as well.” In instances where a sponsor declines to fund an application, research administrators can appeal to a researcher’s sense of determination, persistence, and inner strength, what the Finns call sisu. Remind researchers that they’ve decided on a course of action and urge them to stick with it, regardless of published funding odds.

At the University of Helsinki, active collaboration is supported between researchers and research administrators at the central level as well as the departmental level. When a US federal funding announcement was published, a central level research administrator contacted a researcher whose latest achievements seemed to fit perfectly with the sponsor’s priorities. The challenge, however, was that neither research administrators nor the researcher had much experience with the US sponsor. So, the application was a pilot project for everyone involved. Together, they navigated uncharted territory. The application wouldn’t have been possible without information flowing both ways—the researcher openly shared a long-range vision, research agenda, and key outcomes from previous work and the research administrator helped identify possible funding opportunities and create a long-term funding strategy. This kind of collaboration based in trust and mutual respect is highly rewarding.

“You’re silently hoping, but you don’t want to admit how much you’re really hoping. You try to play it cool. But when I got the call, I started shaking and I got super emotional.”

– Cammi Granato

Research administrators fill many roles beyond what a job title and position description suggest, including serving as cheerleaders, advisors, strategists, mentors, therapists, career counselors, and life coaches. Particularly during the time between when an application is submitted and a funding decision is rendered, researchers may experience some anxiety. They might want to confirm with the sponsor that the application was received or call the program officer to see whether a new detail, such as a journal article recently accepted for publication, can be appended to the application. Research administrators can remain positive during this waiting period and be a voice of reason with researchers, preventing them from becoming their own worst enemies by tinkering when they should leave well enough alone. And when awards are announced, they can become the researcher’s biggest advocate, sharing the good news with key constituents on and off campus.

A University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire researcher was feeling uneasy one time about how long the sponsor was taking to make a funding decision—after all it was a full 24 hours beyond when they said the announcement was going to be made public. After talking it through, the researcher agreed to wait a bit longer. A day passed. Then two. A week. The researcher’s concern was growing exponentially with each additional day. Another heart-to-heart conversation calmed the researcher’s nerves and reaffirmed the same course of action: let it play out on its own. At the end of the second week, the program officer emailed to say an award was imminent as soon as some internal budget logistics were sorted out. The researcher was relieved and thrilled—and thankful for being talked out of taking imprudent actions. A small gift bag of specialty chocolates launched the grant award celebration.

In sum, while the politics of public and private sponsors can make researchers go “eww” and make them feel like they’re going through hell, research administrators can draw on their personal skills, professional resources, and local and global networks to get researchers back on track toward funding success.

Jeremy T. Miner, M.A., is Director of Grants and Contracts at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. He is active in NCURA at national and regional levels, serving on committees and as an officer, presenting educational sessions, and publishing journal and magazine articles. Jeremy was an NCURA International Fellow in 2014 and currently serves on the Select Committee on Global Affairs and the Collaborate Global Subcommittee. He can be reached at minerjt@uwec.edu

Tiina Berg is Senior Research Funding Advisor at the University of Helsinki, responsibilities covering mostly international research funding in the medical field. Tiina has been NCURA member since 2008, was an EARMA International Fellow in 2012, and currently serves on the Collaborate Global Subcommittee. She was a program committee member for the joint Region IV and Region VIII Spring meeting held in Chicago in 2015. She can be reached at tiina.berg@helsinki.fi
I have often reflected over the similarities between research administrators and civil servants in government. The obvious comparison is that the role of research administrator is to make sure that the intentions and dreams of the researchers can be realized, just as the civil servant prepares the ground for realizing politicians’ projects. Just as politicians are dependent on the performance of civil servants, researchers need research administrators to make sure that great ideas become more than just ideas.

That dependence goes both ways. Research administration without researchers is about as unthinkable as a government run only by civil servants, with no politicians. Maybe you are thinking that government without politicians might actually not be such a bad idea? It is a bad idea, and I write this with some confidence, because my grandfather’s older brother, Nils Svenningsen, played an important role in just that kind of a situation during World War II. Uncle Nils, who I remember as a fragile-looking, but old gentleman glasses making his eyes look huge, was director of the Danish Foreign Ministry before, during, and after the war.

After the invasion in 1940, Nazi Germany at first allowed the elected Danish government to remain in spite of the occupation in order to manage internal national affairs. However, tensions gradually grew, and in August 1943 the politicians had had enough and stepped down, leaving the civil servants with the choice to either do the same, or to try to run the country. What would you have done in that situation; what if one day you came to work and the president, all the deans, and all department heads all of the sudden had left?

Nils Svenningsen decided to stay in office and convinced his colleagues in the other ministries to form a council of civil servants to ride the storm out, which they did. According to Uncle Nils, there really was no choice, since he was not in any doubt about the ruthlessness and brutality of the occupying Nazi forces. This government by administrators, “Departementchefstyret” in Danish, was not universally accepted, caused major controversy during and after the war, and the debate still reignites occasionally, 70 years later.

The parallel situation, a university run only by administrators would also provoke intense discussion, even in the absence of an evil external occupying power. In fact, even an unfounded impression that a university’s deans or department heads are acting too much as administrators, or giving the administration too much power, is enough to provoke long indignant letters and articles from academics in newspapers, magazines, and journals.
This information was initially posted by Joe Gesa, Systems Administrator in the Office of Sponsored Programs, on the RESADM-L listserv.

“Start-up” meetings, involving the PI, unit staff, Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) staff, and Grants & Contracts Accounting (GCA) staff, are held at American University when the following criteria are present:

- The project is the first award to the Principal Investigator (PI).
- The PI, Grant & Contracts Accounting, Research Compliance, Vice Provost or Dean has requested the meeting.
- When the sponsored award contains any of the following conditions:
  - Cost Share Commitments/Requirements
  - Effort reporting frequency differs from institutional policy
  - Special space rental requirements: when the project calls for leased space, off-campus space, private/project office space, etc.
  - Special Risk and Compliance Matters: involving human subjects, animals, biological material, export control considerations, foreign travel to known countries of risk, etc.
  - Special Publication Conditions: prior review, special acknowledgement, use of name/logo, etc.
  - Intellectual Property: where terms, though consistent with University policy, are unique or atypical.
  - Atypical project reporting requirements: technical, financial, supporting documentation, etc.
  - Awards requiring project activity/expenses to be tracked and reported separately.
  - Unusual Budget Restrictions (including special re-budget prior approval requirements).
  - Use of Subcontractors/Consultants when proposed payment or deliverable schedule will potentially impact AU’s performance and/or payment obligation to Subcontractor/Consultant.
  - Other special terms and conditions governing PI’s responsibility, project administration, and/or institutional compliance.

Additionally, we require the PI to sign an acknowledgment that his/her responsibilities relating to award specifications and requirements are understood and accepted. Accounts will not be set up without this acknowledgment, and if no meeting is held, the acknowledgement must still be returned before the award is set up.

These meetings facilitate better faculty – research administrator partnerships because these meetings are opportunities to outline terms and conditions, responsibilities, and answer any questions the PI may have.
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/volunteer/volunteeropportunities

Brenda Kavanaugh’s Journey

I, like other members joined NCURA to learn, to meet experts in the field who could help me navigate the often choppy waters of our profession... and learn I did...from the best of them! At some point, I began to realize that I had something to offer as well. As in show business, all I needed was that one big break! That break came when my current boss asked me to present with her at an FRA meeting. Scared to death and with knees shaking, I made it through that presentation! From that point on, volunteering for NCURA was easy. The more I learned about NCURA and its members, the more I wanted to be involved as a presenter and a volunteer. Now, as I enter my pre-retirement years... I realize... I can never retire from NCURA! I want to always be involved on some level.

Brenda Kavanaugh, is the Associate Director of the Office of Research and Project Administration at the University of Rochester. She has been a member of NCURA for over 20 years and is a 2015 NCURA Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Awardee.

employees, publish articles that are decidedly hostile towards administration in almost every issue. Reducing university administration is an uncontroversial political goal, although exactly what that means is rarely, if ever, defined.

Discussing Forskerforum, a Danish professor who does research on research remarked to me that when asked, most scientists will be hostile towards research administration in general, but appreciate and value the administrators that they work closely together with and often know personally. I think that observation is very true.

This summer, at the EARMA and NCURA annual meetings in Leiden and Washington DC, I attended some particularly interesting sessions. In Leiden, the heads of the European research management organizations (RMO) met for the first time, a meeting that a few years back would have been very small, basically two organizations, but now gathered ten RMO’s. We learned that RMO’s can be very different and work under very different conditions, although they mostly have the same missions and visions. In at least two countries, setting up an RMO has turned out to be politically controversial, largely for the reasons outlined above: the perceived (dark) power of research administration should not be allowed to grow too strong.

Still, the number of RMO’s is steadily growing in the world. In the past few years, RMO’s have been established in Finland, Norway, Iceland, Germany, and Austria, and this is just in Europe. My guess is that many more are coming. At the NCURA conference this summer, a small discussion group with members from Canada, Denmark, Japan, Poland, the UK, and the US shared experiences of starting and managing an RMO. This will be the subject of another article, but the trend it illustrates is clear: we are in a period of expanding interest—and importance—for research administration. Added together, the member association of INORMS—the international research management umbrella organization—is estimated to count at least 35,000 members.

I see this growth as positive and beneficial for all involved, but I am not convinced that everybody in the research community would share my outlook, certainly not the professor who did not want administrators at his university. Research administrators should not be as political as politicians, but we need to believe in and promote our profession. Turning back to the starting point, one fundamentally important task for RMO’s is to demonstrate and communicate that research and research administration are not opposites, but two sides of the same coin; the entire enterprise of scientific research will not function if either one is reduced beyond functionality or removed.

Which leads us back to Nils Svenningsen and WWII: the administrative council of ministry directors that de facto governed Denmark for the final part of the Nazi occupation did manage to do its job, but it gradually became more and more difficult. The arrangement could never have worked in the long run, because politicians and civil servants depend on each other to function. All politics aside, so do scientists and research administrators.

Olaf M. Svenningsen, Ph.D., is the Head of Southern Denmark Research Support at The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) and the Region of Southern Denmark. Olaf’s primary responsibilities at SDU are pre-award activities, including strategy and systems development and implementation. Olaf is presently chair of DARMA, the Danish Association for Research Managers and Administrators, and an EARMA Ambassador. He can be reached at osvenningsen@health.sdu.dk.
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PAM WHITLOCK received the Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award at the 57th Annual Meeting. This is NCURA's most prestigious award given to the member who has made a significant contribution to the profession and demonstrated noteworthy service to NCURA. The following is her acceptance speech:

I simply can’t express how much receiving the Outstanding Achievement Award means to me. When I found out, I called my mom and scared her almost to death because I was crying and had to explain they were good tears and good news. I am delighted that she is here today, along with my son Jeff and his family. Seriously, I am extremely proud my NCURA colleagues believe I have been able to make a difference for our NCURA members through my years as a research administrator.

The memory of my interview at UNCW is still vivid. I had worked at a United Way Agency prior to taking a position on campus. During the interview, my future Director asked me what I knew about sponsored programs. Thinking I was an expert after having been involved in a National Parks Service construction/renovation grant at the Agency, I waxed elegantly, then found I was interviewing for the post-award side. OOPS! He hired me anyway, thank goodness and I became a research administrator.

I was raised to believe volunteering and giving back makes a difference in the lives around us, so, at my first meeting (an annual meeting), I volunteered to be on Region III’s program committee that spring and I’ve been involved ever since. A couple of years later, I started presenting at the regional level. I still remember the nerves and trying to script (word for word) my share of a half day workshop! My co-presenter, Julie Cole, gently removed the stack of paper from my hands and told me to just speak to what I knew. That’s a lesson I will never forget. For our newer members, the best advice I can give you…and you’ve heard it before…is get involved with your regional activities. Several of the friends sitting up front with me today were among the first NCURA folks I met and they have become like family to me.

As I became more active in NCURA, I began to realize what a fabulous, supportive group of people I’d found and, almost as exciting, they understood me when I talked about what type of work I did! No, NSF isn’t “Not Sufficient Fund” and NIH did not mean “Not Invented Here”! These folks actually knew they were Federal Agencies that provide funding for faculty! A copy of “The Role of Research Administration” micrograph no longer had to be shared to explain what I did at work.

I came up through the ranks of Region III – Secretary/Treasurer, Vice-Chair, Chair and served as Regional Representative on the national Board of Directors. I am proud to have received the Region III Senior Professional Service Award in 2004. Following the example of many of my role models, I have stayed involved in regional activities while leading at the national level. I truly believe we have something special in NCURA – we are a family of professionals who care about each other’s success and are willing to volunteer time and talent to ensure our peers and our future members develop the knowledge and interpersonal skills necessary to grow and be successful. The “give back” philosophy is alive and strong as we support each other in our journeys. This is one of the core values that has kept me involved, even after “retirement.” When I got the phone call from Jerry Fife that I had been elected Vice President, I was so amazed that I called him back and asked if he was REALLY sure. Those three years as Vice President, President and Immediate Past President were a wonderful experience both personally and professionally. Some of the initiatives that were begun: Re-establishing a presence in INORMS, the grant program to support a Masters in Research Administration, and the design and development of the next step in ensuring a continued source of leadership – the Executive Leadership Development plan.

Throughout the many years I’ve been involved in NCURA, many of you have heard me refer to the members and organization as family. A family cares about each other and ensures their success. That is true of NCURA – we build educational, professional development, and mentoring opportunities to ensure our profession and organization remains strong, vibrant and ready for the future. NCURA truly is family. We cheer each other’s successes and support each other during the down times.

I am honored and awed to be selected for this year’s Outstanding Achievement Award. Many thanks to everyone who has supported, listened, and taught me what I know. Without support from many people, I would not be here. Thank you.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
NCURA RESEARCH PROGRAM

Proposal Deadline: Monday, November 2, 2015 at 5:00pm Eastern Time

The NCURA Research Program is founded on the tenets of NCURA’s core values, with the goal of enhancing research and education programs that increase both public and private support for NCURA. Proposed research activities should include the collection/acquisition of new data and/or in-depth analysis of previously existing data.

Topical areas can include but are not limited to: public policy issues and research administration (e.g., the impact of the Uniform Code change in policy on the research office and research administration or the impact of export control reform); advancement of technology transfer in research administration and associated challenges and obstacles; analysis of research enterprise models both domestic and global (e.g., models and elements that support success rate of proposal submission and awards - ratio of staff-to-PI); operating budget, training programs, types of staff, incentives; efficacy and impact of education and training programs targeting staff and/or faculty; research enterprise strategic planning models such as preparedness for responding to the anticipated senior management retirements and potential staff shortages; or comparative studies on the use of social media.

Questions?
Contact Denise Wallen,
Research Officer & Sr. Fellow,
University of New Mexico,
505-277-7649,
wallen@unm.edu

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AWARDS
Approximately three to six projects may be funded.

FUNDING PERIOD
One year with an anticipated start date of February 2016.

ANTICIPATED FUNDING AMOUNT
$40,000

Proposals received in response to this Request for Proposal will compete for funds in the general funding pool of $40,000 (USD). The number and size of the awards will depend on the number of proposals received and their relative scientific merit, though it is anticipated that up to 3-6 awards may be issued.

For information on the proposal process, format and submission information, and award terms and conditions, please visit:
www.ncura.edu/MembershipVolunteering/Programs/NCURAREsearchProgram.aspx
Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to report that the planning for the 2016 Financial Research Administration Conference (FRA) is well under-way! The conference will be held at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, March 6 - 8th and will be immediately followed by the 2016 Pre-Award Research Administration Conference March 9th - 11th. The theme this year is *Creating Possibilities* which reflects our current status of navigating through the Uniform Guidance implementation and increasing demand for accountability and transparency from our sponsors and researchers. This unique point in time poises us to refine and develop streamlined internal control environments that help us to create a robust internal controls structure while identifying process gaps and increasing efficiency.

The conference will be held in beautiful New Orleans which has rich history, dining and culture.

Join us for big ideas in the Big Easy at the March 2016 Financial Research Administration Conference!

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**We have 144 concurrent and discussion sessions, 24 spark sessions and 27 workshops planned across 11 tracks:**

- Audit/Compliance/Risk Management
- Departmental
- F&A/Costing
- Federal
- Financial and Non-Financial Post Award
- Institutional/Organizational Development
- Internal Controls: Policy/Process/Metrics
- Medical/Clinical Trials
- Non Federal/International
- Personal and Professional Development
- Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions
- **NEW!** Internal Controls: Policy/Process/Metrics
- **NEW!** Organizational Development

**Program Committee Co-Chairs:**

W. Scott Erwin, Texas State University.
Roseann Luongo, Harvard University.

by Sarah Lampson & Katie Porter

By John Hanold

When I first started negotiating research contracts, I asked my supervisor whether we had any breakdown of basic clauses and legal terms. I was told we didn’t really have such a thing. Instead, I was to read through the agreements that were given to me, ask questions, and think through all the issues on my own.

I felt adrift for a long while, like a newborn confronted with a strange new language. I would have been very eager during those early months to get my hands on this Guide. The entire work is an alphabetical glossary of about 100 contractual terms, such as Intellectual Property, Confidentiality, and Liability. Each page begins with a definition (“What is it?”), an explanation of its importance (“Why do you need it?”), and sample text that you might see in an agreement. Other than a “Resources” section at the end, there really is nothing else to it.

This simplicity is one of the best things going for the Guide. When I look at a Termination clause today, I tend to think through a long list of potential problems. But this Guide was never intended as a substitute for years of experience. The simple explanations provided by this guide would be especially valuable for a new negotiator who is just trying to learn the basic vocabulary of the discipline. I can imagine a new negotiator on my staff flipping back and forth through these pages many times, just trying to get a basic handle on a new clause.

Two things will become obvious to anyone who reads through this text: 1) The authors have special interest and expertise in clinical trials, and 2) the authors are very Canadian. Depending on the needs of your office, these emphases may or may not be a cause for concern. Personally, I appreciated the authors’ expertise on the topic of clinical trials. In fact, I felt like I learned some new things about human subject research from reading this text.

I even found myself scribbling little compliments in the margins in response to several particularly clear definitions and examples.

However, if your office is not very involved in negotiating clinical trial agreements, the persistent focus on this topic may be off-putting. In some cases, it seems like the emphasis on clinical trials was at the expense of other contract types. For example, the section on “Reporting” only discussed reporting as it applies to clinical trials, ignoring property reporting, patent reporting, and financial reporting. The section on “Regulations” mentions clinical trial regulations, but ignores animal subject regulations, export control regulations, conflict of interest regulations, etc.

The Canadian perspective permeates the text, including lots of references to things I had never heard of before, like the “ADR Chambers in Ontario” and the “Tri-Council Policy Statement.” Some non-Canadians may find this annoying; I was mainly just amused. Most of the content is readily understandable to a U.S. audience, even if written from a Canadian perspective (e.g., “Naming a jurisdiction involves specifying the laws of a particular province.” p. 62). Unfortunately, the tendency of the authors to explain everything almost exclusively from a Canadian perspective is likely to limit the extent to which the Guide will be embraced in the U.S.

The authors have an opportunity to take this good start and expand upon its general appeal by involving a U.S. author in the second edition. For example, the section on “Breach of Contract” could be expanded to include a discussion of termination clauses in the FAR, “Certification Regarding Responsibility Matters,” FAPIS, etc. The section on “Overhead” really ought to include some reference to the term “F&A,” and ideally would include direct references to the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. Direct references to the Uniform Guidance and other U.S. regulations also would serve as a useful overlay.

The format of the Guide lends itself to almost infinite expansion. If the authors put out a second edition, I would urge them to make sure all acronyms are spelled out when first used (e.g., ICH-GCP, REB). Additional topics could be addressed, such as patent indemnity. Certain sections could benefit from expanded treatment, such as copyright and background intellectual property. In a few cases, it felt more like the definitions were pointing in the direction of something (“Good Manufacturing Practices”) without really explaining what the term entailed.

It might also be necessary to deviate from the standard format of the text in certain places. For example, it seemed odd to me when the text followed up to its definition of Debarment with the standard question “Why do you need it?” I also believe the section regarding “Severability,” while perfectly cogent in itself, could have been removed entirely without having any impact on the Guide as a whole. I didn’t necessarily agree with everything that was recommended in the Guide. For example, I’m generally uncomfortable with relying on a “reasonable person” standard to determine whether certain information should be considered confidential. But for the most part, I felt like the guidance was prudent, clear, and appropriate.

There’s room for improvement and expansion here, but this text is a nice starting point for what could become an excellent training tool for the junior negotiator, both North and South of the 49th. 

John Hanold, Ph.D., is Associate Vice President for Research and Director of Sponsored Programs at The Pennsylvania State University. He’s been working in research administration since 1995 and is a frequent presenter and contributor to NCURA. He can be reached at jhh6@psu.edu
Research Administration in Japan

Japanese URA’s Experience in Europe

By Tamaki Suzuki and Chiyoko Kanno
Establishment of the Kyoto University Heidelberg Office

In May 2014, the Kyoto University European Center Heidelberg Office was formally opened in a historic building on the campus of Heidelberg University. The “European Center,” as it is known, was established by integrating the Heidelberg office with the former European representative office in London that had served as an operating base to promote industry-academia collaboration. Along with Kyoto University’s international strategy, the European Center promotes research and educational exchange intended to enhance Japan’s partnership with European institutions and businesses.

Why Heidelberg? The relationship between Germany and Japan in the field of academia has been long and deep. Historically, the modern Japanese university finds its roots in Berlin University, which espouses the concept of “academic freedom.” In the Heidelberg University archives of 1868, there is a school register that lists the name of a Japanese student—the first formal record of an international student attending a German university. Since that time, Japan has increased academic and student exchanges not only in Germany, but all over Europe.

In 1993, the European Union (EU) came into being and both political and economic integration became a shared goal. Academic students and staff tend to value diversity, but at the same time, they also tend to view the EU as a single, autonomous unit. For Japanese residents, following the details of this trend while residing on the other side of the globe was not easy. It is the responsibility of a university to educate and conduct research in a globalized manner, thus there is good reason for us, as University Research Administrators (URAs), to expand our engagement with Western nations. Let us introduce what we do at the newly opened Heidelberg office.

URA management of the Heidelberg Office

The primary functions of the European Center are to support Kyoto University’s research and educational activities in Europe; promote the internationalization of faculty and students; enhance the university's international public relations efforts; facilitate industry-government-academia collaborations; and foster international networks. The URAs of the Kyoto University Research Administration office (KURA) are expected to manage the Heidelberg Office and become involved in promoting joint research with European institutions. The aim is to extend Kyoto University’s current partnerships and explore new opportunities for collaboration.

HeKKSaGOn University Consortium: The frontline of Japan-Germany academic exchange

Why was the liaison office opened in Heidelberg? This question is often posed to us when we describe the activities of the office. Without mentioning the strong partnership with Heidelberg University, the HeKKSaGOn consortium—a Japan-Germany academic collaboration—formed the base of the Heidelberg office.

HeKKSaGOn is a university consortium that comprises six leading universities from Japan and Germany: Heidelberg University, Kyoto University, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Tohoku University, the University of Göttingen, and Osaka University. Established in 2010, the consortium was designed to enhance relationships between Japanese and German universities, including faculty and student exchanges, research collaborations, and summer school programs.

Several research groups with common objectives were formed. These groups conduct research and share knowledge and technology via various workshops and symposia. There is also significant crossover between Japanese and German laboratories, which share their knowledge through student workshops such as “winter school” and critiques of master’s or PhD theses work. URAs working in the Heidelberg Office also serve as the point of contact for Japanese members of the consortium, assist in the planning and organization of workshops, and help facilitate the smooth exchange of information.

In April 2015, the Heidelberg University office was opened on Kyoto University’s main campus in Yoshida. Today, both Kyoto and Heidelberg Universities exchange staff; this exchange serves as a unique and powerful pipeline to enhance Japan-European collaboration on research and education projects.

International Symposium: the intellectual exchange

Each year, Kyoto University organizes several joint symposia with foreign universities. The aim is to disseminate outcomes and to promote research collaboration among overseas institutions. Through lectures, presentations, discussions, and site visits, researchers share their findings and try to find common objectives for joint research. These opportunities are also helpful to young researchers who wish...
to stimulate their minds and expand their network of research partners.

Since the establishment of the Heidelberg Office, URAs have assisted in planning and managing joint symposia with two countries. First, in May 2015, URAs worked with the University of Bordeaux in France. Earlier, in September 2014, URAs worked with four institutions in Sweden: Stockholm University, Uppsala University, KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan), and Karolinska Institutet. Staff can easily visit counterpart universities and associate institutions in Europe, which allows for face-to-face discussion of session programs and event management. Moreover, URAs based both in Kyoto and Heidelberg are expected to nurture the networking opportunities that emerge during the symposia.

URAs as partnership stewards

Kyoto University drafted an Agreement on Academic Exchange with more than 140 universities and institutions (excluding independent memorandum of understanding between departments) from around the world. As of August 2015, 56 of the institutions are located in Europe. As the globalization of research and education rapidly advances, the role of international URAs is gaining importance in that universities are seeking to enhance their partnerships strategically. The European Center, following an international strategy, is helping to extend current relationships while simultaneously nurturing new collaborations with European institutions.

As news of the partnership spread, Kyoto University and L’Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in France finalized their Agreement on Academic Exchange. The signing ceremony was held on May 28, 2015, followed by a one-day seminar that was also organized by KURA. Although there was no MoU between the two parties, independent exchanges between various research fields have taken place (e.g., humanities, history, economics, African studies, public policy, Asian studies, etc.).

URAs based in the Heidelberg Office have exchanged information with the EHESS during repeated in-person meetings. In Kyoto, URAs in the KURA headquarters and each department have supported communication efforts with researchers who already work with EHESS or those who wish to work with the institution in the future. Based in both Kyoto and Europe, the URAs are uniting a corps of researchers and enabling the collaborative vision that was laid out in the Agreement on Academic Exchange.

European funding opportunities: the role of international URA

In this article, we have reported the contributions and various challenges faced by URA toward the internationalization of Kyoto University, particularly by using the overseas office in Heidelberg. However, as with many international research projects, the issue of funding is critical. Recent funding schemes such as Horizon 2020 require member states to raise funds, which are then distributed by the EU to research groups that most clearly fulfill the goal of accelerating transnational knowledge circulation. Despite these opportunities, very few Japanese researchers have applied or have had their applications approved. There are high barriers to clear, including communication difficulty during the application process and project management issues, which cause some applicants to avoid the process altogether. The new resources at KURA and the Heidelberg Office are expected to mitigate these challenges and support the fundraising process.

In summary, let us emphasize that the ability and experience of international URAs will go some ways in determining global leadership, thus steps toward continual career development are expected.

For more information about Kyoto University European Center, please visit http://www.oc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/overseas-centers/eu/en/ and our Facebook page.

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Chiyoko Kanno is a University Research Administrator at Kyoto University Research Administration Office (KURA). She received MA in International communication, from Graduate School of International Politics, Economics and Communication, Aoyama Gakuin University. She worked in the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (2001-2004), the Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, The University of Tokyo (2004-2011) and Nihonbashi Gakkan University (2010-2015). She can be reached at kanno@kura.kyoto-u.ac.jp
In their article, The politics of federal R&D: A punctuated equilibrium analysis, Valdivia and Clark argue that public research and development (R&D) has benefited from a relatively stable incremental growth in the last four decades resulting in sustainable research advancement. They point out, however, that the current political environment forecasts a ‘storm’ fueled by hyper-partisanship, tighter budgets, and emerging conceptions of public accountability that threatens to change the general balance enjoyed in public R&D so far. Looking at the history of public R&D of the past 40 years and the recent changing winds brought about by political and fiscal upheaval, they suggest what agencies should do in response to the new budget politics.

A historical picture: Gradualism has been dominant in agency R&D budgets. Public R&D has been a decentralized system that does not force agencies to fight each other for a larger slice of the R&D pie; “each agency requests an R&D level based on its own funding history” (p.1). Agencies in which R&D is just a small share of their overall budgets (e.g., DoD, DoT, VA), try to keep their R&D lines under the radar when making their budget requests. Agencies with research missions (i.e., NSF, NASA, DoE, NIH), or in which R&D is a significant part of their overall budgets (e.g., DoC), highlight the positive impacts of their research activities to gain public support for their R&D budgets. As a result, most agencies have generally experienced stable growth since 1976, consistently gaining purchasing power. This, according to Valdivia and Clark, is a pretty good deal for everyone involved, as long as R&D is not placed in the crosshairs of fanatical partisanship.

The forecast: A new budget politics. As a turning point in the weather, Valdivia and Clark point that the R&D budget’s “growth rate has fallen to near zero once discounted for inflation” (p.2). In their projection, they paint a picture akin to a dangerous fire kindled by crass partisanship, tight budgets, and demands for quantifiable outcomes, that has the potential to engulf agencies in a hunger game in which they undermine each other, fighting for a “fixed” (at best) or a “shrinking” pie (at worst), thus threatening the sustainability of public R&D. “The new political climate will discourage agency requests for special budget treatment and will increase accountability pressure on agencies and research organizations” (p.13). Valdivia and Clark argue that the policymakers’ approach of just focusing on return of investment (ROI) from federal R&D to organizational outputs and to societal outcomes is problematic and oversimplistic since most “research cannot be linked in neat causal chains to outcomes” (p.14).

What should agencies do in response to the new budget politics? Based on their analysis, Valdivia and Clark advise that instead of focusing on short-term R&D budget spikes, agencies should set their eyes on institutionalizing long-term “gradual but sustained growth” (p.13), thus minimizing disruption in the research enterprise. Furthermore, in the current political climate, asking for budget increases above what would be typical is a risky proposition that would put agencies under greater scrutiny, a probe increasingly focused on measurement of ROI of R&D monies that, however worthy, will unavoidably fail to extract politics from the budget process, they say. Instead, they propose that research should be evaluated by “the integrity of the scientific process and by how responsive this process is to public values and social expectations” (p.15).

Valdivia and Clark end by proposing two tactics to effectively manage the new political reality of measuring research outcomes: One, add qualitative assessment of R&D to frame the policy debate within “a richer description of selected examples that do link research at the program/grant level to societal outcomes” (p.15). And two, stress process assessment for research and limit outcome measurement to development in R&D (p.15).

References
Politics Around the GLOBE

With the knowledge that politics has no boarders, we took the question, “How do politics impact research and management in your country?” to the 21st Annual Conference of our partner the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA). EARMA’s Annual Conference was held June 28th through July 1st, 2015, in Leiden, The Netherlands, and had its largest attendance to date!

Austria

Turning away from the common view on what influence and impact governments or research funders have on research administration, it is worth taking a closer look at this topic from a different angle. Is there already an influence of the research administration on governments and research funders?

In my opinion there is and I would like to take the European Framework program as an example. The world’s largest collaborative research funding program was characterized by rigorous (sometimes excessive) controls within the area of project implementation for many years, which were also manifested in a very strict audit and control strategy. This development was the result of a research funder, the European Commission, which was driven by the European Court of Auditors due to high error rates in the context of cost reporting. These high error rates, among other reasons, were the result of partially very complex rules that therefore left a wide range of interpretation combined with various interpretations of different executing units of the research funder. This led to a research community outcry in 2010, and the initiative “Trust researchers” was initiated by research administrators and organizations, which arranged thereby a reorientation up to the European Union Commissioner for research and innovation and also the European Parliament.

Thus the newest European research program, “Horizon 2020,” is characterized by changes regarding a simplified implementation of rules and a trust based audit strategy focused on fraud detection. This, among other activities, was made possible by pointing out and illustrating concrete problems, as well as the co-operation of research administrations on all levels.

Also on the political level, a stronger political influence, as well as proactive actions by the research administrators and administrations in general, will become more and more important—especially for new research funding and support schemes.

At the same time, the widespread expertise and insight of knowledge referring to the impact of research activities and research organizations should not be disclaimed.
This guarantees an optimal and optimized use of research funds. Therefore, an intensive co-operation and exchange of research administrations, especially between those of different countries and continents as it happens already (e.g. between NCURA and EARMA), is necessary, important, and should be encouraged and expanded in the future.

Martin Baumgartner has been Head of Unit and National Contact Point for Legal and Financial issues in Horizon 2020/FP7 since 2008. His professional experience includes international cooperation, coordination and evaluation of EU funded projects. His expertise is far scattered from legal topics like project participation rules, operational framework to financial aspects like audits, reporting and funding schemes, IPR and knowledge transfer. He works as trainer for the FFG and NCP Academy and frequently gives lectures and holds seminars. As member of the Member States expert working group for Horizon 2020 he has been advising the Austrian ministries in determining their position on the funding rules. He is also member of the Open Access Network Austria (OANA) and the DESCA Consultation Group. He graduated as Master of Law from the University of Vienna.

England
Politics (with a capital ‘P’) in the UK is perhaps not as big a jamboree as it is in the US, but politics (with a small ‘p’) is as pervasive in the British Isles as it elsewhere. If you want to achieve something, you need to know who the decision makers and influencers are and influence them. There is not enough space here to do the subject justice, so I will restrict myself to an example in the hope that it might be of some use, to at least one reader…

The problem: how do you ensure that colleagues are not using research metrics inappropriately?

Short solution: you can’t! For example, whilst people know that Journal Impact Factors (JIFs) measure the overall citation impact of the collection of articles in a given academic journal over a certain period, they will still use it as a shorthand way of indicating the quality of an individual article in that journal. This is clearly nonsense as the article might contribute to the JIF. And anyway, there is no proven strong correlation between citation counts and quality. But the JIF is there—readily available and easy to use—and so its gets used.

Long solution: you can, over time, but it takes a long time and a lot of effort. I was recently involved in a 15 month initiative in the UK looking at the possibility of using metrics for research assessment (and of course citation count is one such metric). This culminated in the very substantial (and hopefully, influential; time will tell…) Metric Tide report, which carefully outlines the landscape, draws a number of conclusions, and makes recommendations for the sector (sorry, space again, you’ll have to read the report). So what was the political aspect I hear you ask? Well, there were many, but here are two. Firstly, the report was generated after a broad consultation and a series of workshops where advocates and naysayers alike were brought together to debate the pros and cons of various aspects of the use of metrics. On its launch, the report was almost universally positively reviewed. Secondly the rationale for the whole process was political. In the UK we have a 6-yearly research assessment exercise which includes the (rather expensive) peer assessment of about 200,000 research outputs (mainly journal articles). Government asked a question: can’t this simply be done with metrics and save millions of pounds? The answer is no, not if you want the same answers; and it seems like they have heard the message.

So, in summary, to be ‘political’ you need to be well informed, and that means working hard and doing a lot of research—now didn’t I just speak to someone who knew a thing or two about research?

Simon Kerridge has been a Research Manager and Administrator for over twenty years, having previously been a computer science researcher; he also ran a small software company. He is Director of Research Services at the University of Kent where he is responsible for all aspects of the research support including pre-award, post-award, information, strategy, assessment and governance. He is also the Chair of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (UK) and is passionate about the development of Research Management and Administration as a profession.

Ireland
It’s Saturday and I sit down to read the Guardian Higher Education Network’s Anonymous Academic. The article underlines the very essence of politics in higher education (HE). The need to manage and allocate scarce resources, the art of getting done what you need to get done while making sure they think it was their idea! Whether we are talking about research administration or about higher education in general, the article very accurately describes what life can be like as an administrator or manager in an HE environment.

Politics, with either a large ‘P’ or a small ‘p’, has been described as ‘The art of lying to one’s friends and diplomacy that of lying to one’s enemies,’ but I think that trivialises the essential commerce of negotiation that we all, out of necessity, indulge in to get any task done. Politics done well is a good thing. The question is always the same; How do limited resources get allocated so that they produce the best return(?) implies making a choice and that act of choosing itself implies managing different interests and expectations; the very heart of any political process.

Even in the era of the gentleman scholar—and most were gentlemen—politics was never very far away; Charles Darwin, undoubtedly had to negotiate with Robert Fitzroy as to where to put his collections on the HMS Beagle, and spent many years ‘politicking’ his way around the acceptance of his ‘On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life’ or…think of Rosalind Franklin and the structure of DNA.

Possibly the clearest modern example of the intersection of politics and research is the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme. The politics are about supporting the Europe 2020 agenda by maintaining Europe’s place in an increasingly technological world, building the European Research Area, a research ‘common market’ of ideas and people and the integration of the European research effort. The research funding is about providing the resources to promote and reward appropriate behaviour.

More locally, a much more interesting situation arises; the age-old tension between the institution’s expectations for the research it carries out and the researcher’s expectation of the research they perform.

In HE, the institutional mission—to educate and ‘form’ the student to make the most of their lives and their contribution to society—determines that research is an activity to be carried out. Student formation is
the institution’s raison d’être. Researchers, on the other hand, may often take a more prosaic view of their research. Many, if not all, are driven by very high ideals, but their measured research performance determines their career prospects in a very direct way and students may be just the unintended ‘lab-fodder’ consumed along that way. Neither position is wrong, but the tension between them is fertile ground for ‘politics’ and politicking. The politicking is getting the institution and the researcher to agree a modus operandi (or even just a modus vivendi) that lets them both realise their expectations.

**John Donovan**, Chairman of EARMA and Head of Research at Dublin Institute of Technology in Ireland, is a PhD in molecular genetics from the National University of Ireland. In 1986 he worked at the Institute of Biochemistry in the University of Frankfurt and after 3 years moved to the University of Leeds. Returning to Ireland in 1992, he took up a position as Senior Scientist with St. Luke’s Institute of Cancer Research. In 1994 he moved to a position as Executive Secretary of the Irish Research Scientists’ Association and was responsible for many of the briefing and policy documents prepared by the Association that ultimately led to the establishment of Science Foundation Ireland and The Programme for Research in Third level Institutions with a combined budget of some €13b.

Having left the bench, John moved into research and innovation management and, for the present, is Head of Research at Dublin Institute of Technology. John has served on the board of EARMA for 2 years and is now in his second term as EARMA Chairman. His current interest is what makes research sustainable in new, small universities. John is on a number of national and international policy groups, including Ireland’s National Open Access Committee and the Irish Government’s High-Level H2020 Group.

John has been a radio journalist, co-produced and presented, what was until recently, Ireland’s longest running science radio show and The Millennium Thomas Davis Lecture Series on Irish public radio broadcaster, RTÉ. John has also done time as an itinerant PhD examiner in various places in Ireland and Europe. John is married to Lynda and has one child, a son studying in Oxford. To relax, John and his scouts walk in the hills and build snow-bivvys!

**Israel**

Being a research administrator means working in an environment that is full of constraints yet is constantly changing. Politics exist in every dimension: national, international, municipal, and institutional, and affects our quality of life. We therefore must be aware, understand, and convey it to our internal and external service recipients. Flexibility is an essential guiding component in our way of doing things, in view of the situation and the constant change in our reality.

When thinking of the relationship between research administration and politics, a few related dimensions come in mind:

- The national situation regarding budget allocation for research in the near future: Having elections every two years with different governments rising and falling create uncertainty in the availability of research budgets and forces us to creatively find alternative funding sources for the interim periods. Since governmental funding is substantial whether received directly or indirectly from supported bodies, there is uncertainty regarding the capability of maintaining existing research teams, maintaining ongoing collaborations, and planned activities such as conferences and workshops.
- International relations affect both renewal of and existing agreements, which facilitates ongoing research connections and collaborations. We must continue to encourage international collaboration and joining foreign research groups in spite of the fear of academic boycott and biased judgment. Sometimes, it is hard to translate the real reasons for rejections from formal notices, and to know whether they are truly based on professional judgement or biased due to political reasons.
- Municipally: A new Hi-Tech park situated adjacent to the University is rapidly developing and playing a significant role in transforming Beer-Sheva into the Cyber Capital of Israel, and even of the world, as both startup companies and mature companies are briskly opening offices there. This development will bring many new opportunities to the region and encourage industrial collaborations. There is a great potential to change the university research portfolio in a much more applied direction. The change in the European framework to more applied and product-driven projects can be, in these circumstances, an advantage that can be exploited.

Strengthening academia-commercial connections is a complex task, which can bring high revenue. These challenges also require strengthening the collaboration with our technology transfer company, finding the mutual goals and creating an alliance for establishing a strong support net for our researchers.

- Institutional: For research administration professionals, it is clear that investing in research support and reducing the researchers’ burden of managing grants will increase motivation and allow researchers to be engaged in additional initiatives. However, after a long management-union negotiation process, a new salary agreement has been signed, resulting in an increase in the university’s labor costs, thus making it very difficult to expand the research administration and support personnel. It will take major efforts to convince the university’s leadership of the need for new recruitment when budget cuts are the order of the day. Following the basics of organizational politics, creating support from other stakeholders—such as the Finance Division or the Department of Donor and Associates Affairs—are required if there is to be any chance of allocating additional resources.

This is, in a nutshell, a short and partial overview of the political environment that affects and changes our work. In addition to the above mentioned issues, there are constant changes such as new appointments of key personnel, changes in organizational structure, and new external and internal procedures and regulations. They all affect the distribution of resources and personal attitudes, and evoke struggles for power and influence.

**Sharona Rittberg** serves as the Director of Research & Development Authority at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel for the last 10 years. This is her 4th position at the University administration. She is a graduate of the University in Politics & Government.
The knowledge and influential power of research managers is not to be underestimated. Due to their enormous knowledge about funding agencies, funding mechanism, and institutional networks, research managers have the potential to influence, support, and guide policy of their stakeholders in pursuing a targeted strategy. Universities are responding to the changing patterns of global competition and are addressing urgent societal challenges collaboratively with their partners, supported by public and private international research funds. Grants offices and research managers are playing a crucial role in this process. They might not be aware of their influence at first sight as it is visible only in a long-term perspective. I would like to illustrate this mechanism on the following case we had at our university:

In 2007, the very competitive and prestigious ERC (European Research Council) grants were set up in Europe. The commissioned grant amount between 1.5 – 2.5 Mio Euros for 5 year for basic “rocket” science is very generous and tempting. The motto of ERC is “Supporting top researchers from anywhere in the world”. The program is extremely selective and over the time ERC grants have established themselves as a high quality label among the research community. By actively promoting these grants within the institution not only among researchers but also among the university board we as research managers raised a lot of awareness. At the same time, we tailored our service portfolio for researchers who were applying for these grants in order to motivate and support them in the most effective way. The first results were very promising and by winning the first of these prestigious grants we automatically raised interest and high demands for the services of the grants office and other central departments of the university. Over the time, researchers have successfully applied for these grants, winning ERC grants was incorporated in the strategy plans of the university and is part of the discussions when hiring new faculty. In supporting researchers and internal services within the university by constantly informing about the newest developments, providing statistics and information material to winning applicants, the grants office gained recognition, shaped its profile and so did the university who raised its visibility. At the same time, successful ERC grantees attracted excellent researchers from all over the world and were able to staff up their research group. Also, the internal competition boosted the application rate of the researchers.

This example shows that due to the initiative of research managers, a strategy within the university can be set up. Of course it was not solely the merit of the research managers, but they contributed a big share in explaining constantly the importance of these grants, in raising awareness, supporting the researchers in the application process and also in actively disseminating the results. The standing of the grants office as well as the university within the global competition could thus be consolidated.

Agatha Keller is co-head of EU GrantsAccess Office, a joint Grants Office of ETH Zürich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) and University of Zurich. She studied history at the University of Zurich and post-graduated from the EPFL (École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne) with a degree in University Policy & Research Policy. She is the past chair of the NCURA International Region, the Program Chair of the 1st NCURA International Region Meeting as well as a Member of the NCURA Board of Directors.

References
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It is hard to believe, but by the time we gather at PRA, the Uniform Guidance will be over a year old. As research administrators, we analyzed the impact, developed strategies, and implemented policies and procedures for compliance. We know we’re not finished; the process is iterative and ongoing. Change is the only constant in our field. Embracing each change as a challenge and turning it into an opportunity is how we build for the future. This is the focus of our 2016 concurrent sessions and discussion groups.

This year we are excited to offer a Case Study Track which will allow hands-on, problem-based learning. NCURA members will delve deeper into a subject and use critical thinking to explore solutions to a particular problem that is posed in the session (similar to “What Would You Do?”). What a great opportunity to learn and share with your colleagues!

We are delighted to announce that Shari Harley will deliver the keynote address. Shari is the founder and President of Candid Culture, an international training and consulting firm that is bringing candor back to the workplace, making it easier to tell the truth at work. She is the author of the book, How to Say Anything to Anyone. Shari will share with us how to say anything in two sentences. We are sure to get some great takeaways that will enhance our ability to communicate in all aspects of research administration.

Rest assured that the program committee is hard at work finalizing sessions that will stimulate everyone’s interest and increase your knowledge base. There will also be numerous opportunities throughout the meeting to network and connect with friends and colleagues. So we invite you to join us at the 10th PRA Conference in New Orleans where we will share in change, challenge, and opportunity.

Yours in building for the future,

We are thrilled to invite you to the 10th annual Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA) Conference to be held March 9 – 11, 2016 in New Orleans, Louisiana, known as the Queen City of the South, at the beautiful Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. The theme of the meeting, Change, Challenge, Opportunity: Building for the Future, reflects the many changes and challenges that we are experiencing, such as the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.
# PROGRAM COMMITTEE

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We’re eager to work with you.
This is a tale of four years of effort to create and launch a multi-disciplinary Center, capital ‘C’, at a traditional, department-centric academic medical university. It is a cautionary tale of success, setbacks, and progress in fits and starts—the little Center that could.

In late 2011, at State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University (Upstate) in Syracuse, the Center for Global Health and Translational Science became the first Center established under the campus Strategic Plan for Strengthening Research (Goodman et al., 2008). Other centers existed at Upstate, mostly self-designated, but none had been chartered as such under the guidelines of the Strategic Plan. The Plan defined a Center as “focused, theme-based activities that fit within one or more research pillar [theme].” The focus of the Center for Global Health is the development of drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines for global health diseases and emerging pathogens. The translational research continuum includes discovery research, pre-clinical laboratory studies, animal studies, and regulated human use trials.

Reporting to the Vice President for Research, the Center for Global Health was founded as a collaboration between the basic science Department of Microbiology and Immunology, and the clinical Department of Medicine’s Infectious Disease Division. The Chief of Infectious Disease (ID) and the Chair of Microbiology and Immunology (Micro) had extensive experience in global health research and each planned to funnel resources—financial and other—toward the Center.

The Center pushed, prodded, and pleaded its way into the life of the university, gaining speed and learning lessons along the way.

**Lesson 1: Know Your Resources**

The first resources dedicated by the departments were human resources. A Director for the Center was hired by the Department of Medicine, a dynamic infectious disease physician and clinical trial specialist with more ideas and energy than our campus had seen in some time. The Chief of ID and the new Director of the Center were cut from the same bolt of cloth, Army green, and each had retired from Walter Reed Army Institute for Research after years of military service in medicine and research. Successful centers are often reflective of the sustained drive and individual success of the Director (Stahler & Tash, 1994). At Upstate, this couldn’t be truer; it has even acquired a name, the ‘Polhemus Effect’, so dubbed by our current Vice President for Research and applied to both the welcome bump in research expenditures from Center faculty, and the whirlwind of activity that surrounds the Center and its Director.

At the Center’s founding, I was the Micro department’s Research Administrator with some success helping teams get funded. I was loaned to the Center “…and then there were two.”

We were very successful very early; we had four large FDA-regulated vaccine trials funded almost simultaneously, but we quickly outstripped many of the core research resources on our campus. We underestimated the capacity of some core facilities and services, and we wrestled with an academic culture less familiar with delivering milestones on time and within budget. Core facilities that had served the university well in the past were ill equipped for the scrutiny of Quality Assurance reviews and FDA audits. Unfortunately our Director was new to our campus, and I was new to these types of studies; clearly we didn’t know how much we didn’t know. We had to replicate and charge to the studies many of the services, equipment, and personnel that we thought would be provided by the cores or our partner departments; as a result our early studies were under-budgeted.

By Holly Chanatry & Katie Keough

The Little **Center** that Could

NCURA Magazine
Lesson 2: Know Your History and Culture
As the first Center of its kind at Upstate, we were trailblazing a new way of operating that was unfamiliar and counter to the way things had been done before. One early problem was we didn’t quantify and document the pledged support. The only formal document was the VPR’s approval letter creating the Center. No MOUs were executed between the two founding departments spelling out expectations of equity in contributing resources. We wrote by-laws that identified Center membership types and the reporting hierarchy, but never did we request anything from the partner departments detailing their understanding of exactly what resources (funds, space, personnel time, administrative help) we expected them to provide. It was an agreement among colleagues to work together toward common goals.

Funding agencies have set interdisciplinary or collaborative ‘team science’ as the new standard, and this work typically crosses departmental boundaries making it ideal for centers (Bennett, Gadlin, and Levine-Finley, 2010). However, centers often lack the gravitas of departments, especially on more traditional, department-centric campuses. This is reflected in promotion and tenure processes, faculty governance, staff hiring, teaching, and committee work—all tied to departmental affiliation, not center membership (Mallon & Bunton, 2005). Since we were emphatically not a department, we lacked access to our institution’s mechanisms for departmental revenues, such as a percentage of faculty salary recovery from grants. Instead, the Strategic Plan provided for chartered Centers to earn operating funds of 5% of the F&A expenditures by member faculty. Since our campus does not redistribute F&A to the units that earned it this was a new and controversial initiative, one that if realized would support the Center without impacting funding that went to departments. And the more we brought in, the more discretionary funds we would earn.

Lesson 3: Get it in Writing
In fact, we did get the 5% in writing. Our letter of approval to create the Center clearly states that we would receive those calculated F&A funds. And we did, right up until we didn’t. Several changes in leadership brought to light our vulnerability as the only Center with ‘official’ status. For a variety of reasons, within a two year window, much changed: the VPR who developed the Strategic Plan, signed the Center into existence and championed the 5% of F&A for operating funds, stepped down; one of our founding department chairs became the VPR, we lacked access to our institution’s mechanisms for departmental revenues, such as a percentage of faculty salary recovery from grants. Instead, the Strategic Plan provided for chartered Centers to earn operating funds of 5% of the F&A expenditures by member faculty. Since our campus does not redistribute F&A to the units that earned it this was a new and controversial initiative, one that if realized would support the Center without impacting funding that went to departments. And the more we brought in, the more discretionary funds we would earn.

Which leads us to…

Lesson 4: ’Just Keep Swimming’
The funding success consumed us for the first couple of years. The reputations, connections, and body of work of our Director and Chief of ID brought immediate returns. This is a great problem to have, but it was still a problem. Because of our non-department status, we had to seek partner departments to ‘host’ our staff hires. Upstate is a large public institution that cannot move nimbly. Unlike at a private institution, it is difficult to simply hire a talent we know or someone great who crosses our path. We have to do a lot of legwork and sometimes we lose the prospect when he or she can no longer wait on the market.

Lesson 5: Look Back but Always Move Forward
We are still on the learning curve. We recognize the value in working on the ‘big picture’ issues. We plan to convene an external Advisory Board, something we should have done at the start. Then again, we were barely off the ground before the first funding hit and time was—and still is—a luxury. With a little more breathing room now, we are carving out time to firm up processes and workflow. We have enlisted the help of my co-author, a colleague from a neighboring campus, to re-examine our organizational structure and culture. This takes dedicated attention and is easily pushed aside for more pressing deadlines despite our recognition of its value.

We are a team of eleven now and our collaborators are multiplying. We have a growing portfolio of fully funded work that has expanded into international programs, including creating a research platform in Ecuador with outstanding partners in country. These come with their own sets of hurdles and yet more lessons learned. We are still trying to figure out where we fit in the university’s structure, and I am sure others on campus are waiting to see where we land before launching another center. Hiring is still difficult, and we are still negotiating for operating funds. But we are looking forward to the changes anticipated with the new academic year, including a new campus President with opportunities that will bring. We keep our eyes open and keep moving forward.
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Communicating a Constructive Compliance Message

By Aurali Dade and Suzan DiBella

Presentations on export control often start with examples of serious ramifications of violations, from large institutional fines to prison time for researchers. While this tactic may serve some useful purposes, the practice creates an air of fear and a certain degree of loathing of the topic among university researchers. What can export control experts do to communicate more constructively about the topic?

If you have worked in research administration for some time, chances are that you have attended a presentation or had a discussion related to the topic of export compliance. Chances are also good that someone mentioned the word “prison” during this discussion or presentation.

It might have been part of a rhetorical question, as in, “Did you know that an export control violation could lead to prison time?” Or, the statement might have been more specific, as in, “One researcher actually went to prison for an export control violation.”
It’s quite common for presenters on the subject of export control to open training sessions with discussion of the most extreme consequences of violations. This practice may have developed, at least initially, because there was a widespread lack of awareness of new and evolving regulations in the area. There may have also been a degree of disbelief among faculty and staff that such consequences could apply to academic researchers; presenters frequently face incredulity about implementation of regulations that seemingly run counter to the mission of the research university. Given this environment, some rhetorical “scare tactics” may have previously seemed warranted to bring attention to these regulations, which have very serious institutional and individual consequences if violated.

**Why Export Control Compliance Is Difficult To Discuss**

Universities embrace the fundamental mission of advancing knowledge through basic research and creative activities, extending knowledge through provision of a liberal education of students that allows them to think creatively and understand broad topics, and disseminating knowledge through publication and civic engagement (Rosenstone, 2003). Within this mission are the implicit themes of openness and academic freedom. Research administrators with responsibilities for implementing compliance programs can find themselves accused of tramplng on or not understanding these values. This is especially true when universities work to implement or improve export compliance programs.

Export compliance laws have received increased attention from universities over the past decade. The central goal of these laws is to protect and control information and materials that are crucial to the United States for reasons of national or economic security. (For a more detailed discussion of export control laws and the related risks that universities face, see Brady, Peloso, and Rowold, 2015.)

As described by Epley (2013), these laws apply not only to the transfer of information and materials out of the country, but also to the transfer of these materials to foreign nationals within the U.S. Universities enjoy specific exceptions to these controls through the fundamental research exclusion, public information exclusion, and other mechanisms. However, most universities still must have a program that brings attention to and guides compliance with export control regulations, especially with regard to sponsored projects, research teams’ travel to foreign countries, and/or the activities of visiting students and other individuals from sanctioned countries. Faculty who learn of export control restrictions for the first time may find the controls not only burdensome, but also somewhat objectionable; they may take exception to the very idea of the government having a say in what information they can share. This is where a strong communication plan is especially critical for the compliance program.

**Use of Rhetorical Scare Tactics**

Using scare tactics may work for grabbing attention, but, according to Walton (2000), social scientists have mixed views on their effectiveness. Appeals to fear can be powerful tools, but when the threat of fear is seen as unsubstantiated, such an appeal is considered a fallacious argument (Walton, 2000). In the context of export control training, use of this rhetorical device may negatively impact audience trust in the presenter and his/her information if audience members feel the threat is not realistic or is not applicable to them.

In all fairness to presenters using this tactic, they’re just doing what they’ve been told: In public speaking 101, students are instructed to gain audience attention in their introductions. Techniques for doing so vary, but one standard method is providing a shocking fact or statistic. The practice of opening a training session with the story about the faculty member who went to prison for export control violations certainly fits the bill; it is indeed shocking. Frankly, the thought of any university researcher being held personally responsible – and possibly even sentenced to jail time – is surprising to most people previously unaware of the regulations.

And, given the typical density and detail involved in the sea of federal regulations applicable in research, the threat of prison time seems, well, *newsworthy*. It’s exciting to discuss federal regulations where there are such palpable, even gritty, consequences of a violation. Reading most federal regulations, as the joke goes, is a sure-fire cure for insomnia. Export control, on the other hand, actually garners the interest of FBI agents, who regularly visit college campuses to learn about research activity with export control implications.

Yet, use of attention-grabbing headlines goes only so far in the export control training context. A well-reasoned methodical approach is a better choice, and certain basic tenets must be communicated. Most presenters discussing export compliance wish to convey the following information:

- These laws exist, apply to the university setting, and have serious consequences if violated;
- Universities enjoy several important exceptions for work occurring on their campuses;
- Some grants and contracts specify controls, and, if the award is accepted, these controls must be put in place;
- Travel and shipping materials outside of the U.S. can trigger export controls (but there are also some exceptions); and
- Most importantly, researchers should contact the export compliance office with questions and for assistance.

Presentations that focus too heavily on consequences of noncompliance have the strong potential to distract and detract from the real messages presenters wish to convey. Employing a few key principles will help presenters develop a constructive approach to discussing export control.

**Key Principles for Communicating About Export Control**

**Consider your audience.** For mixed audiences with individuals unfamiliar with export control, avoid extensive discussion of extreme scenarios involving jail time. Remember that the first reaction to discussion of export control-related prison sentences will be one of alarm. Because export control issues are not relevant to most university research, many individuals will likely be relieved to learn that they will not be impacted. Others may just want to hear about the instances in which export control regulations are applicable to their research. For those with research or equipment with probable export control implications, the reaction to discussing prison sentences may be more concerned, perhaps even angry; they may react negatively to the suggestion that they could be lumped in with those who have violated the regulations.

**Prepare well-defined solutions to share.** Come prepared with examples of how to resolve export control issues. Be familiar with the areas of research of the person or persons involved in the discussion, and provide specific examples of technology and information that are controlled as well as management plans used within the discipline. Seek examples and guidance on successful solutions from
colleagues at other universities if you are unfamiliar with a given area.

Focus on support. Make the focus of the discussion the support that your office is able to provide in this complex area. Highlight the steps you have already taken to enhance the institutional program and provide examples of real-world situations in which you have assisted researchers with compliance. Point the audience to information and resources and any pertinent forms that you have developed (all of which are provided on your website, ideally). Give examples of your office’s activities that support and assist researchers in complying with the rules, and emphasize your institution’s commitment to compliance.

Tell them what’s in it for them. Highlight the fact that these laws apply whether or not faculty and staff previously knew about them. Emphasize that the support being provided by the institution enables them to be secure in the knowledge that they are complying with the law, thereby reducing their personal liability. Convey that you are able to provide the expertise in this area so that they can focus on the research that is important to them.

Taking a constructive approach sends a message to faculty and staff that you are their partner in addressing export control issues. It also reinforces the service orientation that research administrators seek to convey. In the end, using the above techniques rather than shocking stories is more likely to enable you to meet your goals of education and partnership in building a culture of compliance.

References

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October/November 2015 45
Informal politics involves social and personal interactions between individuals. It creates alliances and advances individual goals and ideas. Informal politics create interactions between individuals in everyday life situations.

Conducting research and the administration of the research can sometimes end up creating informal politics and put research administrators and Principal Investigators (PIs) on a collision course. Sometimes these situations start lively conversations and can lead to an “us and them” attitude between a central office, the PI, and departmental administration. This “us and them” approach can have a polarizing effect on working relationships. Contrasting positions can foster incorrect assumptions and turn into trigger points that only increase tensions within the university community.

PIs are unique individuals with distinctive personalities. Sometimes those personalities create a reputation of being difficult with which to work. However, no matter the reputation, their passion is evident the minute they start to talk about the science. PIs have amazing visions for their science and it is inspiring to hear a PI talk to a program officer about the scope of work and how it has progressed, particularly when it is clear their initial vision is becoming a reality. Often times the same PIs who are excited and animated when explaining the evolution of their science have a hard time navigating the financial management of the award. This can be especially true if funding for the visions came from different sponsors. The PI may have great success working with various cohorts and yet is unable to work well with the central office or departmental administration. Informal politics enters the mix with each group trying to do their jobs while attaining the same goal.
The research administrator is complying with the terms and conditions of the sponsored project, and also helping PIs with budgets, compliance issues, submitting federal financial reports, and receiving reimbursements. The PI just wants to conduct the science, which sometimes doesn’t fit into the existing time frame or terms and conditions of the award. It is crucial to remember where expertise lies: research administration has the financial expertise in administrative aspects of the award and the PI has expertise in the science and research.

These inherent differences in viewpoints can make it hard for research administrators to do their jobs. Research is not always performed in a manner a research administrator would deem systematic. There can often be a struggle between the PI and the research administrator over the specific expenditures of a sponsored project. Differentiating expenditures and a PI’s time and effort across several projects that have the same scope of work and similar outcomes is often frustrating and time consuming for both the scientist and the research administrator.

The PI may not see projects as separate awards, but as a conglomerate of research to reach a desired goal of a single overarching project. The funding agency may or may not agree. That is why separate modifications or different grants are issued, even though the work may be continuous.

Sponsors also have their own informal political agendas affected by current trends that cause further consternation for the PI and central administration. Funding for certain areas of science such as climate change may be more prevalent than funding for other areas of science. In situations like this, the research administrator should be adequately versed to help the PI find additional funding opportunities within the preferred area of study. The sponsor may also implement changes in the scope of work or the time frame of the award. The PI may be frustrated with the discrepancies in what is required while pursuing their research. The research administrator should be able to bridge the gap between the sponsor’s priorities and a PI’s research needs.

Bridging this gap is not often easy. It requires incorporating knowledge of federal, state, and local regulations, knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), plus a grasp of the issues that guide the agency’s informal politics and priorities.

Research administration usually consists of grey areas, whereas GAAP doesn’t. The grey areas within research administration can cause little speed bumps that quickly turn into huge roadblocks. The simple question of “is this expenditure allowable?” usually goes from a straightforward “yes or no” to “it depends” or “maybe.” Justification for the “maybe” or “it depends” can lead to a whole new set of questions. Changing the “it depends” back to a “yes or no” is often stressful and time-consuming. Diplomacy must be used to create a consistent and applicable audit trail to ensure the expenditures can be billed to the sponsor. If a “yes” cannot be reasonably reached while ensuring compliance, then it’s important to explain why the expenditure is a “no” and remove the expenditure to unrestricted funding. This may increase differences of informal politics within the university, but it assures compliance with GAAP.

It is also the research administrator’s job to help create the audit trail. Wearing an auditor’s hat is a helpful way to approach this. A good rule of thumb: Ask questions. If the answer isn’t clear, then ask more questions. The department or the PI should be able to explain why the charge is allowable and applicable on the sponsored project. From there, the research administrator’s job is to clarify and obtain adequate documentation.

The research administrator needs to connect dots within the audit trail that would be obvious to the researcher but not so much to an auditor (or anyone else for that matter). For example, a sponsored project may have budget for travel to Antarctica to study ice worms, but the PI is planning a trip to Florida to study manatees. Extracting clarification from the PI and documenting it in the audit trail is the job of the research administrator. The research administrator must document the correlation and justification between the two and if there is a logical reason to change the trip to Florida, then it would likely be an allowable charge on the award.

Another example: The project allows the institution to purchase a computer for a graduate student working on the project, but the computer is purchased in the last week of the award. There must be documentation that shows the direct benefit to the sponsored project of purchasing a computer in the last week of the award. Knowing the political climate of the department, coupled with institutional knowledge and the goals of the sponsor, will help to navigate through these ambiguous areas.

Often times when a research administrator is asked what they do conversation trends to slow down. Something akin to “What’s that?” “Oh, that’s nice” or “How interesting” generally follows and then the conversation moves on. Yet the knowledge and depth that is required to be an effective research administrator is staggering. A research administrator is expected to know federal, state, and local government regulations. Subsequently, those regulations have to be fit into the terms and conditions of a sponsored project and then further interpreted by institutional guidelines and PIs. “Interesting” doesn’t even begin to cover what a research administrator does.

This is especially true in the political climate in which many universities currently find themselves. At our institution, funding has been cut by $20 million (about 5%) for this fiscal year and more cuts are expected in the next fiscal year. Declining budgets means informal politics are increasing. There is more competition for both federal and non-federal dollars and increased competition at the pre- and post-award levels. Does the administrative burden of managing sponsored projects decline just because the budgets do? Just the opposite! The burden has increased.

Research is all about sharing information to benefit the general public and is a living, breathing body of knowledge. Informal politics plays a huge part in sharing this knowledge. There has to be room for discussion so that all sides can reach common ground. Understanding each side’s expertise, priorities, and also common goals is instrumental in bringing about success in each and every project. Doing so makes for a savvy research administrator and will help to eliminate an “us and them” attitude.

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In May, as the record snowpack melted away in the Northeast U.S., the NCURA Global Traveling Workshops headed south to mark two firsts: NCURA’s first traveling workshop in Africa, and its first five-day workshop. In partnership with the University of Zimbabwe, University of Colorado Boulder, and Stanford University, and funded in part by a National Institutes of Health grant, the workshop engaged 33 participants representing 10 institutions and five African countries in a lively week-long interactive training and discussion.

The workshop was held at the University of Zimbabwe, hosted by Professor Exnevia Gomo, and coordinated by Ms. Thokozile (Thoko) Mashaah. As the workshop participants from Rwanda, Malawi, Botswana, Uganda, and Zimbabwe hailed from a variety of roles and institution types, discussion topics varied widely, including research administration roles and responsibilities, financial and institutional compliance, research capacity building, and policy development. The workshop was led by Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan; Csilla Csaplár, Stanford University; and Vivian Holmes, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, who were excited to tackle the institutional and cultural challenges that the participants face.

All three faculty agreed that interacting with attendees from diverse institutions and cultures was humbling. Working through the challenges they are facing, while establishing the research administrative structures at their institutions, highlighted the similarities to our own backgrounds — in a global context.

While the workshop materials followed content from NCURA’s Fundamentals, Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) II, and Department Research Administration (DRA) curricula, the length and context of the workshop allowed for a more comprehensive and collaborative exploration of the research administrators’ institutional challenges. Many of the participants were already quite familiar with U.S. federal regulations, having applied for (and in some cases, received) NIH grant funding. Their institutions also regularly receive European Union awards, non-federal U.S. awards, and local organization awards. The challenges in many situations were
related to building and maintaining the institutional infrastructure necessary to support and manage all types of sponsored awards — and the universal question: How do you distribute IDC received?

Research administration is still emerging as a professional field over much of Africa, and many of the research administrators in the room serve tirelessly in multiple institutional roles. Two of the participants were both research administrators and faculty/principal investigators, one of whom was in the process of preparing and submitting a large NIH proposal as the workshop was progressing. When the proposal wouldn’t send, Vivian ventured across campus with the project team during one of the breaks to help navigate a Grants.gov systems issue—live research administration training at its best!

One of the most significant outcomes of the workshop was the creation of a local peer network in Southern and Eastern Africa. In addition to the workshop being highly instructional, it proved successful in facilitating the participants’ cross-institutional conversations, as they are tasked with handling similar issues with similar resource constraints. Having the peer group actively engaged in real-life problem-solving was energizing and rewarding for participants and instructors alike.

In addition to the instructional benefits, the collegiality of the group led to an immersive experience of exploring Zimbabwe’s capital city of Harare. The city is a bustling metropolis on par with some U.S. mid-majors, and it boasted lively street life (sights included a street-side billiards game and open-flame corn-roasting), a well-developed downtown area, and several universities. Menu highlights from the week included braised goat, sadza (the Zimbabwean version of polenta or grits), ginger beer, and peanut butter rice, as well as delicacies of tiny fried (whole) fish and fried caterpillar. Even Nando’s fried chicken, a local favorite dining spot, made an appearance in the workshop materials through a dialogue about direct and indirect costs. The cultural interchange among all was valuable and enlightening.

As the traveling workshop ended, the class held an impromptu “graduation” where each participant came forward and received a certificate from the workshop faculty on behalf of NCURA. The contribution level of all attendees during the week had been high and individuals were shown appreciation by the group through clapping and occasional cheering. It was a clear demonstration of the forged network and support system that had been established, and a promise of future collaborative efforts to come. 

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We all deal with difficult people. Our faculty are often creative, brilliant, busy people who may lack certain social or organizational skills. But we could apply this same description to ourselves if we’re being honest. We all face time-related struggles; there’s nothing worse than getting a last minute proposal that has participation from multiple units and sub-recipients, each of which has its own process for review and approval. These situations can be even more difficult when individual working relationships are strained.

Workplace relationships can affect our productivity, success, and happiness at work. This is especially important for research administrators because our actions can directly impact the careers of faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and others working on funded research projects. For example, when phone calls, emails, and requests for follow up go unanswered, deadlines can be missed, and important action items can slip through the cracks. This can result in missed opportunities, lost funding, and soured workplace relationships for years to come.

When we feel that others do not take us seriously or trust us to follow through, collaboration becomes next to impossible. Ultimately, our work takes longer and requires more effort, resulting in lost productivity and an unhappy workplace climate.

Negative working relationships can have long lasting consequences as well. We never know what the future holds. The colleague you work with now could be your supervisor down the road, or vice versa. The faculty member whose proposal you submit today could become the Dean next year. Negative relationships now could mean missed opportunities later.

How to improve your working relationships

Of course, no workplace is perfect. There will always be conflict and difficult situations. However, there are some simple steps you can take to improve your working relationships!

Step 1: Reflection. First realize that a good working relationship simply means being able to work efficiently and collegially together to accomplish a common goal. With this in mind, think of your favorite and least favorite people with whom you work. Write down the positive and negative qualities and behaviors of each that impact your relationship with them. How do they respond to phone calls and emails? Are they dependable, friendly, trustworthy, and knowledgeable? Reflect on these lists. Are there negative things on your “least favorite” list of which you are also guilty? Are there positive things on the “favorite” list that you can emulate? What common traits appear on both lists?
Step 2: Conscious change. Use your list from Step 1 to develop a second list of personal action items. What behaviors do you need to change? This may not be easy, but it will be worth it.

Then think back on your least favorite people in Step 1. This is your starting point for specific working relationships to improve. Your list of changes could be small, like setting a goal to respond to all queries, even if it's just to say “I'm working on it.” Or you may need to work on your people skills. Invite someone you don't know well for coffee or lunch. Develop your ability to recognize and respond appropriately to your own emotions and those of others. The key is to be purposeful in making positive changes.

Step 3: Evaluation. Every few months revisit your lists. Reflect on the changes you made and what impact they've had. Are your relationships improving? What additional steps can you take to maintain a positive direction? It is important to repeat the whole process periodically as some issues are resolved and new ones arise.

Common opportunities for change
Even if you don’t have specific relationships that need work there are general workplace behaviors that will always contribute to a happier and more productive workplace. These are common opportunities for change:

Use Workplace Etiquette: Even in the severest of deadline crunches courtesy must be the rule of the day! Always say please and thank you. Faculty are people too and there may be circumstances of which we are not aware. A proposal may be late because the PI is dealing with a full teaching load and a sick child. The research administrator who seems constantly on edge may be caring for a sick parent. The better you know your faculty and colleagues, the easier it will be to respond to each situation. Make a point of knowing names, asking questions, and showing an interest in others. Be nice, even when others aren’t.

Communicate Effectively: Keep your communications brief, direct, specific, and positive. As a rule of thumb, always commend in public and criticize in private. Copy the department chair or Dean when you’re expressing appreciation for a job well done, but speak to the person privately if you have to discuss mistakes.

Assume Positive Intent: When a colleague or faculty member says something that upsets you, pause before responding. There’s a chance that it was an innocent remark so make it a practice to assume that it was meant innocently. You’ll be amazed at how well this works. If you find it very difficult to do this or if someone is intentionally rude, it’s important to remember that the actions of others are a reflection on them, not you. Don’t take it personally.

Always Follow Up: Make an effort to always be helpful. If you can’t answer a question, let the person know you’re working on it, or direct them to someone who can help them. “That’s not my job” is never the correct answer and will never have a positive effect on your relationships. Do your homework before asking questions (don’t be that person who asks the same question answered on the second page of the Grant Proposal Guide!), but don’t be shy about asking if you aren’t able to find an answer on your own. Make sure that everything you do in the workplace adds value to someone’s day.

Always Follow the Rules: Be mindful of protecting and valuing your own credibility and integrity. If you handle each proposal or transaction with care and professionalism you will soon be regarded as a trustworthy, dependable colleague. When others see you as a professional who always behaves ethically, they will want to work with you. This kind of relationship always improves morale and productivity.

Respect the Boundaries of Others: It is tremendously important to respect other people’s time, especially when dealing with faculty. It’s also important to respect personal boundaries; accosting someone in the restroom with a thorny financial question is not respectful. On the flip side, it’s also important to respect your own boundaries. If you are taking a vacation, stay off of email! Strong personal boundaries make for a healthy life as well as a happier workplace!

Avoid Negativity: We all succumb to gossip from time to time, but it can really damage relationships in the workplace. Always strive to be positive. This includes avoiding the blame game. When things go wrong, the focus should be on how we can improve things next time, not who was at fault. Blaming never results in positive change and can create ill will that is hard to resolve. If you know that a particular situation is the result of someone’s mistake, it may be a good idea to communicate with them privately. Focus on the issues, not the people. This means that you also have to respond gracefully when criticized by others in the workplace. Making mistakes is normal and is the best way to learn. Acknowledge your mistakes, respond proactively, and don’t get caught up in the blame game.

The best way to make sure you’re doing everything you can to promote good working relationships is to practice your skills. Start using the action steps above. Go to research events and learn about your faculty. Get to know research administrators in other units at your institution. Participation in NCURA activities is another great way to practice skills. Ask and answer questions on Collaborate and other social media, and at regional and national meetings. Use contacts you make there to practice your relationship building skills. This will help you not only hone those skills but also build a network that will expand your career horizons and even help in those last-minute subaward situations! It’s great to see an NCURA colleague on one of those emails and know that you are working with someone friendly and reliable.

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Today, federal funding for Research and Development is the norm. Without these federal funds, it is unlikely that the leading research universities would be able to produce the amount of quality research that people have come to expect. Prior to World War II, the amount of funding for Research and Development was $70 million dollars, which when adjusted for inflation equates to only 1% of today’s federal R&D budget of $146 billion dollars. Universities obtaining funding from the federal government for research was not commonplace; R&D funding generally came from private sources, and most of the leading U.S. scientists looked abroad to European universities to receive advanced training. Federal funding for R&D was typically put toward research in the agriculture, national defense, and natural resource sectors, and this research was done in government labs by government employees. But all of that changed seventy years ago when, following the end of the War, Harry S. Truman’s administration released a report penned by Truman’s science advisor, Vannevar Bush, titled Science The Endless Frontier. The report, released in 1945, played a critical role in making Research and Development what it is today.

Vannevar Bush was an engineer, an inventor, and a science administrator. During World War II he played an integral part in the advancement of science and technology as head of the U.S. Office of Scientific Research and Development, the organization responsible for almost all of the military R&D during wartime, including the Manhattan Project. The war created a need for new and evolved technologies, and when pushed, the United States rose to the challenge. When the war ended, Bush’s report ensured that the forward motion of science and technology advancement continued. In Science The Endless Frontier, Bush emphasized the fundamental need for stable, long-term government support for Research & Development at independent institutions. He understood the value of research for curiosity’s sake, and how such research could meet needs of the nation and the rest of the world. The report outlined policies and tenets that would help to grow basic research in the United States, and turn the country into an international leader in innovative science and technology. Funding would come through newly developed agencies such as the National Science Foundation, and Bush determined that the agencies responsible for handling the funding should be led by those with a background in science, as they would be the ones best suited to determine the value and impact of projects.

In 1945, following the end of World War II, Vannevar Bush saw the need for a greater, more diverse body of research. He saw the progress that was made during wartime, and insisted on maintaining and encouraging that progress in peacetime. Technologies that had been developed during the war now needed to be applicable during peace. Through the publication of Science The Endless Frontier, he pushed the United States in a direction that would accomplish that. Others have built upon Bush’s ideas over the last seventy years, making changes in policies to meet new challenges. For example, huge leaps in technology were made during the Cold War with Russia, when the United States was once again pushed to create better technology more quickly. It is quite plausible that without the foundation of Bush’s report, the U.S. would not have had the capacity to compete during those years. Bush’s work has acted as the blueprint that shaped Research and Development into what it is today. Research scientists and the Research Administrators who support them have Vannevar Bush to thank for many of the resources and much of the infrastructure necessary for them to operate today.
Building a Pathway

What I love about being a research administrator is that it is a job that is rarely boring and it expands my knowledge and skills. Early on, one of my mentors told me she is always learning something new and that is why she loved her job, and she was precisely right. Our field is one that requires extensive knowledge in numerous, disparate categories, from export control to the new OMB Uniform Guidance to university policies to agency specific guidelines. Nevertheless, the more experience I gain, the more I understand that the most important skill is the art of dealing with people. University research administrators often operate in politically charged environments, which demand that our customer-service-focused field be handled with even greater tact and sensitivity. We are often met with new situations, hotbeds, new PIs, or new sponsor contacts that cause us to strive for better ways of interacting with people. This is something research administrators face no matter the institution. We can learn from the situations we have confronted in the past, as well as from talking with colleagues on their tricks of the trade, but there are some situations we come into contact with that require creative solutions. Often, due to the internal stakeholders’ interests in research growth, the stakes are high.

In February 2013, I moved to Nova Southeastern University (NSU) from a different state and was tasked to service the Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography as their new Office of Sponsored Programs Grants Officer for post award services. As I became familiar with my new university, I learned that NSU has campuses scattered throughout the Miami Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Tri-county Metroplex, as well as in North Florida, West Florida, Central Florida, and Puerto Rico. Even though the university strives to be “One NSU,” building relationships and understanding across these different campus environments with diverse physical surroundings can be challenging.

The Halmos College in the Guy Harvey Oceanographic Center building in Dania Beach is poised with one eye to the sea and one eye to the port. To get to the campus, one must leisurely drive a winding path through John U. Lloyd State Park. Idyllic would be an understatement, with the beach just a short stroll away and eating lunch overlooking the port a daily possibility. Their research takes them to exotic locales such as the Keys, Tahiti, Indonesia, or other far stretches of the world. Contrast that scene with an office building and computer in the midst of 90 miles of urban sea where I, their research administrator, sit. It is difficult to be sympathetic to the diver who considers sunblock allocable to his research grant while I am bathing in fluorescent lights. Whether the cost is subsequently found allowable or not, there is a marked difference of perspective. I find myself engaged in the age old tug of war between all of the guidelines, terms, and policies I must help enforce, and the researchers I must serve who have the altruistic vision to save the turtles, corals, or sharks.

Groundbreaking research is happening at this campus at an incredible pace, and the Oceanographic Center is one of the prolific hubs of research at NSU. How do I balance PI needs with sponsor requirements and serve all stakeholders? How do I earn the trust and respect of these
Researchers? It was evident early on that this was to be a delicate and complicated task.

As is the birth of most innovation, a potential solution came out of a brainstorming session in a regular meeting with my supervisor. We were pondering how I can better serve Halmos College: I can be knowledgeable; I can be efficient; I can be helpful. However, perhaps we could do more to improve our service. Then we thought, if I could only tackle the distance problem, maybe that would help? What if I could spend time at the Guy Harvey Oceanographic Center building from time to time? With support of my supervisor, we coordinated logistics and schedules to make it happen and one morning I found myself driving on the long winding road to the sea.

I have to admit, the first time I worked remotely with my laptop from the Oceanographic Center’s conference room I was nervous and not sure what to expect. I was the compliance personnel; I was alone and outnumbered. However, the first day ended and I was in one piece. It soon became evident that going into their territory was the key. A large issue became a small one when I could walk down the hall and discuss it in 5 minutes looking in people’s faces. I could soon feel their appreciation for me because I was taking the time to come to them. They felt more comfortable and found it more convenient to approach me in person rather than send an e-mail or make a phone call. Furthermore, I was taking the time and interest to learn about their research and their challenges; developing that understanding helped me serve them better. The physical barriers were eliminated and communication flowed.

Because of the initial success I experienced, the other Grant Officer who assisted the Halmos College with pre-award services started coming out as well. When our office reorganized, the new Grant Officer started their relationship off on the right foot by joining me right away for our day at the Oceanographic Center. Our next endeavor involved bridging the gap with other central university offices who worked with the Halmos College. We invited representatives from NSU’s Contract and Grant Accounting Department and the Office of Procurement Management to join us. Likewise, the manager of NSU’s Grant Writing Laboratory came out to share funding announcements and to see how their office could assist the oceanographic researchers with proposal development.

Sincere positive feedback started flowing in from the faculty. We continued to see much accomplished on our days at their campus. We could not change the distance between the campuses, and we could not change the compliance issues that we were tasked to enforce, but we could start to change the politics that we all face in research administration by investing in the relationships. We started to appreciate the faculty and their research in a whole new light. We were able to see actual experiments in progress in the professor’s labs, and we were able to hear firsthand about their setbacks, future plans, and innovative ideas. They were able to see us hard at work, working for them. They were able to see our genuine interest or concern as we listened to them. Perhaps the fundamental element of successful communication is feeling heard.

Based on these successes, we plan to continue to hone this model so it can be expanded to other colleges and centers at NSU. Although the investment was small, the return in improved communication was significant. Ultimately, this lead to us succeeding at our function of facilitating the research.

At any rate, I am glad I took a chance. I am glad my supervisor and other management supported the endeavor. Besides, I can’t beat having one eye to the sea and one to the port, even if for only for an occasional day.
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In the first article in this series, “Emerging Audit Trends – What You Need to Know,” (published in the August edition of NCURA Magazine) we discussed what colleges and universities needed to know regarding data analytics, an audit tool heavily employed by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Inspector General (OIG), but gaining attention and traction from other federal agency OIGs. We also covered how OIGs flag certain risk factors as they are analyzing the data to identify potentially questionable costs, and what institutions can expect to see from these federal agency audits going forward. As a refresher, agencies are now using data analytics to identify higher risk grantees and specific transactions for detailed review. Using information provided to the agency and from public sources, data analytical techniques are allowing agencies to more efficiently use limited resources to provide greater coverage across costs charged to their award portfolios (Dr. Brett Baker explained the NSF’s approach in more detail in the August edition of NCURA Magazine).

In this article we will give an overview of some of the common challenges and pitfalls faced by institutions during these audits. Furthermore, we will go over what an institution can do to prepare, both prior to and during the audit, to help maximize their success.
Challenges and Pitfalls

Any audit has the potential to present complexities and unforeseen challenges, and a data analytics audit is certainly no exception. Below we outline several challenges faced by clients undergoing these audits.

- **Lack of familiarity with the institution**: Auditors, which may be OIG employees or subcontractors from an outside firm, may have little or no familiarity with the institution they are auditing. As a result of this “familiarity deficit,” auditors are not well versed in a university’s specific systems, policies, or processes. They may not fully understand the data they are receiving or charging practices for the institution, which could lead them to deem a cost as unsupported.

- **Communication gap**: Auditors have their own language and it can be challenging for people outside of the profession to translate. As a result, there may be a communication breakdown if the university does not fully understand what or why auditors are requesting something. Additionally, auditors may ask a follow-up question or request documentation, but it may not be clearly stated in a way to identify exactly what they are looking for. This all leads to a “Lost in Translation” scenario where the university must decipher not only what the auditor is requesting and why, but also be timely in their response.

- **Span of audit scope**: Data analytics techniques are used to evaluate all costs charged within an institution’s portfolio of awards from a particular agency, identifying a subset of riskier transactions for deeper evaluation and review. This may result in several hundred transactions (or more), along with supporting documentation, being tested across the institution. However, where agency audits previously focused on a higher number of transactions for only a handful of researchers or a single department, the transactions selected through data analytics may now encompass only a few transactions per award across a large volume of research projects. This necessitates an increased level of communication, coordination, and collaboration necessary to obtain supporting documentation or other necessary information related to the transactions selected.

- **Lack of dedicated resources**: University resources dedicated to audits vary across institutions. Some schools dedicate personnel to interact with auditors and facilitate audits, while other schools (perhaps due to lack of resources) do not. Whatever the reason, schools choosing not to dedicate a person to oversee the audit have had very difficult experiences in responding timely and knowledgeably to audit requests and questions.

The university has a very short timeframe to respond and defend the transactions before they are deemed unallowable by auditors, and, as stated above, such audits commonly require a heightened level of support and coordination for appropriate and timely response. A lack of a dedicated resource may impede the university’s ability to meet the response deadline.

- **Poor records retention**: Documentation to support awards and expense transactions is not always maintained by institutions or investigators, either in an easily accessible way, or at all. As with most audits, the award population sampled will likely be made up of multiple years, which may require pulling a lot of old documentation to support the transactions. If universities and investigators do not adequately maintain this information in an organized fashion (either electronically or in hard copy), there will likely be delays in providing the documentation. As a result, auditors could deem transactions as unallowable.

While agency audits are focused on reviewing specific transactions, auditors will also consider and opine on internal controls, and whether the institution maintains the proper control environment to effectively and compliantly manage awards. A lack of clearly defined award management roles and responsibilities or established standards and procedures could impact an institution’s ability to respond to and defend costs, resulting in costs being deemed unallowable, and more broadly could impact the receipt of future agency funding. With the Uniform Guidance’s standards regarding internal controls within an institution, this secondary consideration will likely only expand as a focus area for agency audit work.

“Any audit has the potential to present complexities and unforeseen challenges, and a data analytics audit is certainly no exception.”
What Can Universities do to Prepare?

There are several ways that an institution can prepare for a data analytics audit when the OIG comes knocking on the door. Colleges and universities should:

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

- Educate yourself and be prepared: Take the time to learn audit lingo and understand the audit process. Past OIG reports are available to the public and are great resources to understand what the auditors are focusing on and noting as findings. This can also help the institution understand what the auditors are looking for or documentation to review if their questions and requests are not clear.

- Identify an Audit Liaison: Identify a person that can coordinate the institution’s response amongst the various offices, departments, Principle Investigators, and other research staff. Work to get in front of the question and put your “OIG hat” on to think through what might be important to them in assessing your response. This person (or persons) will also have a key role in collecting the necessary support to provide the audit team, helping to stress the importance of timely responses and hopefully minimizing unintended negative impact caused by the decentralized nature of academic institutions. Throwing volumes of documentation at the OIG auditors is a response tactic of the past and being helpful will go a long way, especially with funding dollars at stake.

- Maintain award support documentation: Formalize policies and procedures for documentation maintenance and record retention and communicate both across the institution. Even if documentation is several years old, it should be relatively easy to access. Remember, federal standards require supporting documentation to be available for a certain length of time following any receipt of federal funds, and the agencies have a right to request such documentation to substantiate costs charged. For purposes of managing the audit, it may also be most effective to have a central repository for documentation, which can be easily accessed by the necessary individuals supporting the audit, especially if award personnel employed at the time of the transactions are no longer with the institution.

Institutions should also consider leveraging their Internal Audit department to assist in the response. Internal auditors are there to help the institution, and they can bridge the potential vocabulary gap with the OIG auditors since they speak the same language or help the institution evaluate if documentation available would be sufficient support for a transaction. Institutions can consider requesting a proactive internal audit focusing on transactions with similar “risk flags” so that they can identify potentially inappropriate charges and remediate in advance. Also, we see more and more institutions employing “continuous monitoring” strategies to identify problematic charges as a normal course of operations, reducing the potential exposure to a backend agency review.

Concluding Thoughts

Now is the time for institutions to assess their processes and make changes as necessary before they are called on to undergo this type of audit. If institutions can get ahead of this emerging audit trend and get things in place on the front end, the audit process will likely be a much smoother experience. Consider tying in the Uniform Guidance requirements to internal controls around operations. For example, monitoring activities are key controls that often get bypassed when day-to-day issues need attention. Interestingly though, if monitoring controls are effective and performed, in the long run, this will lead to a reduction in the “fire drills” that cause administrators headaches.

"Take the time to learn audit lingo and understand the audit process."

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NIH Continues Strong Support for U.S.-European Collaborations in Medical Science

By George Herrfurth

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has supported collaborations between U.S. research institutions and those in Europe for decades; European researchers and research institutions continue to be significant partners with U.S. academia and other research organizations in NIH-supported biomedical and behavioral science endeavors. Every NIH extramural Institute or Center has supported grants or other projects in various European countries. The overwhelming majority of NIH-supported collaborations are in the form of U.S. Principal Investigator-led projects or activities done in collaboration with one or more European partners. However, in some rare instances the NIH funds direct grant proposals for unique or exceptional science endeavors. Every NIH extramural Institute or Center has supported grants or other projects in various European countries. The overwhelming majority of NIH-supported collaborations are in the form of U.S. Principal Investigator-led projects or activities done in collaboration with one or more European partners. However, in some rare instances the NIH funds direct grant proposals for unique or exceptional science endeavors.

In fiscal year 2014 (FY2014), the NIH supported 3,810 grants/projects in 39 European countries and Israel. The majority of these activities were between U.S. academia and the academic research institutions of 26 European Union member countries (3,235 grants or projects). However, academic and other researchers in non-European Union countries, including Switzerland, Israel, and Norway, also accounted for a significant number of grants or other projects (575). Table 1 provides a listing of numbers of grants or projects by country.

Direct grants represent only about 3 percent of the overall grant total. Most of the direct grants were made to research institutions in the United Kingdom (about 37 percent of the overall total of 123 grants). Swiss institutions represented the second highest total with about 15 percent of the total. Table 2 highlights the 123 direct grants received by European and Israeli research institutions in FY2014.

The NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) accounted for the most grants/projects in Europe and Israel in FY2014, accounting for 21.5 percent of the overall total. NIGMS supports basic research that increases understanding of biological processes and lays the foundation for advances in disease diagnosis, treatment and prevention. NIGMS-funded scientists investigate how living systems work at a range of levels, from molecules and cells to tissues, whole organisms and populations. Other major supporters of research collaborations between U.S. and European researchers include the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (13.8 percent of the total), the National Cancer Institute (12.6 percent), and the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (10.5 percent). Figure 1 provides an overview of NIH supported research in Europe, by institute or center.

While extramural collaborations between U.S. and European researchers are important to NIH, so are the benefits NIH derives in its intramural and other facilities with European post-docs, visiting scientists or senior scientists. European researchers, particularly from European Union countries, represent the largest cadre of foreign researchers at NIH.

Table 3 highlights the total numbers of foreign researchers who required immigration-related services by NIH during FY2014. The data show that European Union researchers, when added to researchers from the rest of Europe and Israel, led overall numbers of researchers at NIH facilities. Most of these were Visiting Fellows who seek greater research training opportunities in NIH intramural laboratories.

In sum, European research and researchers have played a significant role in NIH's efforts to realize the Mission of NIH: to advance the scientific endeavor in health to provide benefits to American citizens and, in so doing, contribute to advancing global health.

It was President Franklin Roosevelt who said in 1940 that the NIH “…speaks the universal language of humanitarianism. It has been devoted…to furthering the health of all mankind, in which service it has recognized no limitations imposed by international boundaries; and has recognized no distinctions of race, creed or color.” It was a valid statement then and now.

George Herrfurth has served in the Division of International Relations of NIH's Fogarty International Center since 2001. He is the European Regional Affairs Officer and also serves as the Multilateral Coordinator for NIH involvement and support of the Department of Health and Human Service's engagement with organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization. Mr. Herrfurth has over 30 years of experience and expertise in international health and environment issues. He served as a Department of State Foreign Affairs Officer for 12 years in both the Oceans and Environment Directorates of the Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs. He received his B.A. degree cum laude from the State University of New York at Albany and was awarded his M.A. degree from American University's School of International Service. He is a recipient of both a Department of State Superior Honor award as well as a Meritorious Honor Award. He can be reached at George.Herrfurth@nih.gov.
**Table 1. NIH-Supported Activities Involving European Researchers/Research Institutions FY 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>Numbers of Supported Research Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Union</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,235</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Cyprus, Latvia, Malta = 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other European & Israel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Numbers of Supported Research Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other European Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>385</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. U.S. National Institutes of Health-Supported Direct Grants to European Researchers and Research Institutions, FY 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>Numbers of Direct Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Union</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Cyprus, Latvia, Malta = 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other European & Israel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Numbers of Direct Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-European Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Researchers From Select Countries/Entities at NIH Institutes And Centers (Mainly at NIH Intramural Laboratories), FY 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Member Countries</th>
<th>Numbers of Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Member Countries</strong></td>
<td><strong>803</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Countries In Europe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Numbers of Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Countries In Europe</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other* 351**

*Other = Totals From Countries With Less Than 20 Representatives, Includes Iran (16)

**Grand Total:** **3,434**
To successfully navigate the politics of research administration, research administrators must have well-developed competencies that enable them to effectively interact and collaborate with colleagues in various areas of practice across the organization. Whether expert research administrators work together to develop institutional policies and procedures, compile a complex multi-disciplinary proposal, or to deliver workshops and training events to the broader campus community, such professionals possess highly desirable skills that allow them to maximize their effectiveness. Research administrators who wish to be highly effective in their positions should proactively seek to develop a skill set that can be characterized as T-Shaped.

The T-Shaped Professional

The term “T-Shaped” professional was coined in print in the 1990's to describe well rounded individuals in the context of employment in computing (Donofrio, Spohrer, and Zadeh, 2010). T-Shaped professionals have deep disciplinary knowledge, excellent problem solving skills, and complex communication skills that allow them to successfully collaborate with specialists from diverse disciplines and functional areas (Spohrer, Gregory, and Ren, 2010). Developing more professionals with a T-Shape is a promising response to rapid change (Donofrio et al., 2010). T-Shaped professionals are able to modify their skills in response to organizational needs (McIntosh and Taylor, 2013), which is highly desirable in the field of research administration.

Figure 1 illustrates the T-Shaped professional concept. The vertical portion of the T, the I, represents deep disciplinary expertise. This may include expertise gained through education and/or work experiences that may be applied to a specific area of practice in research administration. The horizontal plane of the T-Shape encompasses your skills (Gardner, 2015) that when developed enable a professional to apply expertise across boundaries to facilitate problem solving and innovation. Based on the T-Shaped professional concept, I have identified four key competencies for research administrators that may serve as a useful professional development tool: a broad knowledge base; an understanding of current technology and how it may be used in the practice of research administration; developed communication skills; and established collaborative networks.

As the complexity of research administration continues to rise along with the need for more advanced technologies to meet changing demands, more T-Shaped research administrators will be needed to move the field forward. Developing core competencies toward becoming a T-Shaped research administrator is a professional growth goal.
strategy that can bring payoffs to both the research administrator and the organization.

**Becoming a T-Shaped Research Administrator**

Professionals who desire to become more T-Shaped should pursue professional development opportunities that will broaden competencies along the horizontal plane of the T. To transform your shape from an I with deep expertise to a T that includes broad competencies, begin by assessing your strengths and weaknesses across the horizontal plane to identify where your skills may be further developed. Then pursue activities to develop or strengthen your competencies using the suggestions that follow as a guide.

**Broaden Your Knowledge Base**

Expanding your knowledge base to include the broader environment that impacts research administration will help you to be proactive in your field. Be aware of funding priorities of various funding sources and changing regulatory and administrative requirements by subscribing to multiple sources of information, such as the NIH’s Extramural Nexus, news updates from the National Science Foundation delivered directly to your email, and the ScienceInsider that provides daily news from the journal Science.

If your area of expertise encompasses one or two elements of research administration, such as pre-award, post-award, contract negotiation, or compliance to name a few possibilities, familiarizing yourself with areas of practice outside of your own will also broaden your knowledge base. Understanding, for example, common post-award pitfalls or high risk issues from a compliance perspective will help develop your expertise and problem solving skills as a pre-award administrator. Attending research administration training opportunities at your institution or at research administration conferences where you can choose sessions that cover material beyond your usual area of expertise will also help to broaden your knowledge base. Volunteering for committee service at your university where multiple practice areas of research administration are represented is another good way to learn and contribute by being present.

A broad knowledge base in various topics of research administration enables research administrators to appreciate and understand issues that colleagues must manage across various units in the institution. This knowledge is helpful for addressing scenarios that may impact multiple practice areas in research administration.

**Embrace and Understand the Newest Technology**

Technology is essential to the practice of research administration. Technology may be as simple as email and spreadsheets, or as complicated as developing home grown research administration software solutions to meet your institution’s growing needs. A T-Shaped professional makes an effort to be familiar with the latest technology and to understand how technology may be used to make the practice of research administration more efficient and effective. Technology is an important tool in research administration, and T-Shaped research administration professionals are at the forefront of this rapidly changing environment.

Take time to think and learn about technology. Consider what technologies may help you with your job responsibilities. Are there professional development courses at your institution that can strengthen your weaknesses? Or consider taking on-line courses through a partner organization or through your local community college. Face technology head-on so you are ready when new tools become available, or even become necessary or required to do your job.

**Develop Your Communication Skills**

Developed communication skills are essential to effectively work with a diverse group of stakeholders. Research administrators frequently interact with other research administrators, faculty members, administrators from regulatory practice areas, and stakeholders from various external agencies. Different individuals may use different language to discuss the same topic. It is important to be mindful of your audience. Speaking a common language will go far in enabling you to communicate effectively with stakeholders.

When using acronyms or discussing your institution’s policies, faculty members or sponsor representatives may not have the same familiarity as you do with the terms you use. Make an effort to be deliberate and thoughtful about your communications taking into consideration whether the language, tone and style used are appropriate for the audience at hand.

Effective communication is important, especially in the digital age when it is often not possible to discern the intended tone of an email message. To develop your communication skills, consider enrolling in professional development sessions on communication related topics at your institution, or seek out sessions about communication through research administration conferences or webinars on-line.

**Establish and Build a Network**

An established network is helpful for research administrators to facilitate team work and develop joint solutions to emerging challenges. Developing a network will provide you with a sounding board when confronting unusual situations or problems. Fellow research administrators who have faced similar situations may be able to share advice or best practices based on their own experience. These interactions can develop your own knowledge base as well as the knowledge base of those in your network. Make an effort to network with other research administrators at your institution, network through regional and national conferences, and by participating in Collaborate NCURA, NCURA’s professional networking platform.

**Maintaining the T-Shape**

Staying on top of the ever-changing field of research administration requires the continuous pursuit of learning and professional development. Staying the course can help you maintain your T-Shape for the long term, maximizing your effectiveness as a research administrator as well as the value you bring to your institution.

**References**

2. Gardner, P. (2015, March). T-shaped individuals: An imperative for undergraduate education. Presented at T-Summit 2015, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. Retrieved from: https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=KX1LmYKdx0GLXn1W1pd0yMDE1L1ByZWNhdGVhbnN8Z3g6ZW1NDBI4bZN3z5kHl3nNk
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The rules keep changing. We have all had to get our brains around the new Uniform Guidance, change our workflows, update our documentation, and amend our policies. Now comes the task of making sure that all these changes work—that we actually follow the new regulations, day in and day out. And even as we do this, new rules and regulations will come down the pike. As the regulatory landscape changes, the basics of a good compliance program stay the same. This article sets out these fundamentals, which can serve as touchstones in any environment and as a set of reference points that are simple and immutable.

Where do the basic criteria for effective compliance programs come from? Not to sound alarming, but they originate in the criminal law—a document called the United States Sentencing Commission Guidelines Manual (2012), or Federal Sentencing Guidelines. The Guidelines were developed in the late 1980s as federal prosecutors struggled to develop a consistent approach to punishing corporate wrongdoing. In judging just how bad a corporation might be, prosecutors wanted to give credit for what it did right: Did it at least try to obey the law by having a compliance program? If so, how good was the program? They mapped out the basic characteristics of good compliance. The resulting Guidelines criteria were so well thought out that they have spread far beyond the criminal context and are now used by many regulators and compliance professionals as a roadmap to effective compliance.

So without further ado, here are seven key compliance suggestions drawn from the Guidelines:

1. **Have clear compliance ownership in a structure that goes to the top**
   The Board—or whatever governing body your organization has—needs to know about the compliance program and how it is run; high-level personnel should be charged with the program’s oversight. We are talking about the compliance tone coming from the top. Below them, it should be crystal clear who has operational responsibility for each aspect of compliance; those individuals should have adequate resources and authority to do their jobs and should regularly report up the line.
2. Maintain up-to-date written policies and procedures
   You need to have your program in writing so that you can (1) prove it exists, (2) train on it, and (3) keep it going if a key person leaves. You need both higher-level policies that are shorter, more concise, and track regulatory requirements as well as procedures for operational nuts and bolts. Combined, your policies and procedures should show the overall design of the compliance program and specify who does what. Remember that policies and procedures are living documents and should change as new issues and rules appear both from the regulatory standpoint as well as within the organization. The organization must have a clear process to routinely review and update them as needed.

3. Train
   An effective compliance program has to be communicated to everyone responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures. Therefore, training on policies and procedures during implementation and any modification must be provided. Not only do those individuals who are directly responsible for the program require training, but current employees and new hires should also be included.

   Training must also: (1) be kept current, just like the policies and procedures; and (2) be carefully tracked, so if push comes to shove, your organization has documents verifying who was trained on what and when.

4. Monitor
   Continuously monitor to make sure the whole program is working as designed. There is a real danger in having a compliance program that looks good on paper but is not actually understood or being carried out. See if people are actually following the policies and procedure, and if not, try to identify the reasons. Reasons for non-compliance may include lack of training, policies and procedures that are not clearly written or understood, or systems limitations. Identify risks of compliance failures and strengthen your corresponding controls.

   Part of this continuous monitoring process is coordinating with Human Resources to check on employees. Consider whether you should perform background checks on any specific categories of employees (e.g., animal research administrators who may have animal activists backgrounds). Most organizations check new hires, but even long-time employees who, for example, handle finances can engage in serious misconduct. Heavily regulated industries like finance have long conducted such background checks, and there is a trend towards using them in the not-for-profit world as well.

5. Incentivize
   It should be clear that your compliance program “has teeth,” and that those who don’t comply may be subject to sanctions, including termination if necessary. These sanctions should be clearly written, not necessarily in every policy and procedure, but clearly and prominently enough so that everyone is aware and organizational leadership can easily demonstrate the commitment when necessary.

   By the same token, there should be an upside for employees who are diligent in knowing and following the rules. Many organizations grade individual compliance as part of their annual performance evaluation process.
6. Periodically take a step back

Does the overall design of your program still make sense? Set aside some time to think about whether the world—or your organization—has changed since you set up your compliance framework. Compliance is all about risk management—have your organization’s risks shifted? Are you paying sufficient attention to the issues that are the highest risk areas?

This does not necessarily have to be a big analytical exercise; often, your gut instincts will tell you the answer if you take time to listen to them. I find it useful to think about the 80/20 rule: often a large portion of the real risk is generated by a relatively small part of the overall regulatory landscape. Everyone has limited time and resources—the point is to deploy them where they will do the most good at mitigating real-world risks.

7. Consider a whistleblower hotline

Ideally, employees will feel free to raise compliance or other concerns with their supervisors. However, there can be situations where they do not. In these more sensitive circumstances, it is very helpful to have a system that allows employees to report their concerns to the organization without fear of retaliation.

There are a number of vendors who provide anonymous hotlines that meet this need. In my experience, they are inexpensive and reliable. As third parties, they provide true anonymity to employees. A whistleblower hotline can be very valuable. The mere fact that an employee uses it can alert you to managerial problems in your organization. The content of a tip is important information for any compliance program. An anonymous hotline can serve as a safety valve, offering employees an option short of going to the press or a regulator when they have a concern they cannot raise internally.

If you keep these basic ideas in mind, you will have a compliance program that evolves as the world changes. It will prevent violations, detect them if and when they happen, and promote a culture of compliance. A compliance program that follows these fundamentals will put your organization in a position to demonstrate that it understands its responsibilities, takes them seriously, and does everything it reasonably can to fulfill them. In a word, your compliance will be solid.

References


David Brown is the Chief Compliance Officer at the WGBH Educational Foundation in Boston. He is involved with NCURA Region I and has presented at regional meetings. In a former life, he was head of securities enforcement for New York State. He can be reached at david.brown@wgbh.org
In August 2015, Elizabeth Adams, Executive Director of the Office for Sponsored Research-Evanston campus at Northwestern University, moved to the University of Virginia to assume the role of Assistant Vice President for Research Administration, leading UVA’s Office of Sponsored Programs. After more than a decade at Northwestern, Elizabeth is particularly looking forward to managing a combined central pre-award and post-award office, working with UVA’s top-ranked medical school and advancing UVA’s ambitious research agenda via strategic transdisciplinary and cross-sector partnerships.

Erin Bailey is now Chief Financial Officer for the Clinical and Translational Science Award at the University at Buffalo.

James Casey, American University, has been selected as a Fellow of the Wisconsin Law Foundation. The Fellows program is an honorary program, which recognizes members of the profession in Wisconsin who are known by their peers for high professional achievements and outstanding contributions to the advancement and improvement of the administration of justice in Wisconsin.

Dr. Steve Hansen has taken the position of Interim Chancellor of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville for a one-year appointment.

Tim Schailey is now Director of Research Administration at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA. Tim is an active member in Region II where he currently serves as Treasurer and a member of the regional program and professional development committees. Recently, he was elected Chair of Region II where he will assume that role beginning in January 2017. Additionally, has also co-authored several articles and served as a presenter at both national and regional conferences.

Dr. Maria Thompson has been appointed the seventh president of Coppin State University, located in Baltimore, MD. She took office July 1, 2015. She served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Oneonta from 2011 to 2015. Thirteen years of her career (1998 – 2011) were spent building the research enterprise at Tennessee State University (TSU). At TSU she held various positions in research administration culminating in a promotion to vice president for research and sponsored programs. Maria is a 2005 graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute (LDI).

Have a milestone to share? Email schiffman@ncura.edu

What I Found on Twitter

Science.gov - @sciencegov - To slow the spread of infectious diseases, NSF, NIH, USDA support new research

AAU - @AAUniversities - Thanks to for effort to make grants, contracts, awards compliance more efficient, less costly;

Times Higher Education - @timeshighered - Metrics are no substitute for good research management:

Be Leaderly - @BeLeaderly - Office politics: Is playing the game necessary to be successful?

Fast Company - @FastCompany - 5 habits that could be holding you back at work:

NASA - @nasa - Team studying how Greenland melt water is contributing to sea level rise:

Inside Higher Ed - @InsideHigherEd - Educational spending by public universities increases despite state disinvestment

I just started following @theIOM, @Sciencegov, @whitehouseostp, and @BeLeaderly.
IS ONE OF YOUR PERFORMANCE GOALS TO FINALIZE A TRAINING PLAN FOR NEW EMPLOYEES?

NCURA is your partner!

NCURA’S LIFECYCLE OF THE AWARD SERIES, beginning in September and running through June 2016 will provide the onboarding help you need in these critical areas:

 peppermint October 14, 28, & 29, 2015 PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT
 peppermint November 9, 12, & 16, 2015 BUDGETING
 peppermint January 20, 27, & February 3, 2016 AWARD NEGOTIATION
 peppermint April 12, 2016 AWARD MONITORING
 peppermint May 16, 2016 COMPLIANCE

The series will kick off with a session on Developing Your Institution’s Online Tool Box... A must for every institution!

This outstanding group of faculty are developing the nuts and bolts of what your new and current staff need to know.

Julie Cole, Duke University
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Cynthia Hope, The University of Alabama
Martin Kirk, University of British Columbia
Roseann Luongo, Harvard University
Rosemary Madnick, University of Alaska Fairbanks
Tolise Miles, University of Colorado Boulder
Craig Reynolds, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
Jeffrey Silber, Cornell University
Janet Simons, University of Maryland Baltimore
David Smelser, University of Tennessee
Joseph M Smith, University of Maryland, College Park
Sandy Sward, Montana State University
Pamela Webb, University of Minnesota
Samantha Westcott, Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Each area of the Lifecycle Series will have a multi-hour learning experience which you can participate in “live” from your computer and will also be available on CD Rom, and MP4 for the onboarding and ongoing education needs on your campus.

Registration Information available at www.ncura.edu
Three American universities are set to conduct wide-ranging research on cryptocurrencies using roughly $3m in grant funding from the National Science Foundation, a US government agency that supports and funds scientific research.

Cornell, the University of Maryland and the University of California Berkeley will focus on developing new cryptocurrency systems that, according to principal investigator Elaine Shi, will address “pain points” attributed to bitcoin and other existing networks.

The Initiative for Cryptocurrency and Contracts (IC3) will also involve Cornell researcher Emin Gun Sirer; Dawn Song from UC Berkeley; and Jonathan Katz, David van Horn and Michael Hicks from the University of Maryland. The funding itself will be used to support the researchers involved with the project.

According to Shi, the growing ecosystem of startups focusing on digital currency research and rising interest among a broad range of parties necessitates “a rigorous science for cryptocurrencies”.

She told CoinDesk:
“We believe that our research can help establish cryptocurrency as a prominent research area, and make a big impact in shaping the future of financial transactions and e-commerce.”

According to National Science Foundation acting deputy division director Nina Amla, funding for the initiative comes from the Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace program, an initiative devoted to funding research into cyber security and digital privacy. That program saw $75m in grants awarded last year, a figure that the agency hopes to meet or exceed this year.

Focus on smart contracts
The initiative will devote resources to developing new systems that enable expanded transaction scalability, privacy and user functionality. Smart contracts will be a major focus of the initiative, building on prior work by University of Maryland researchers.

One such project is Hawk, a blockchain system that enables private smart contracts to be written but not disclosed to the public. Developed jointly by Cornell and the University of Maryland, Hawk was unveiled in early June and will see further refinement and development as the IC3 project commences, according to Shi.

The work builds off previous efforts conducted at the University of Maryland last fall, during which time faculty and students formed a smart contracts laboratory to explore potential issues and opportunities. A research paper on that initiative can be found here.

One of the major findings, according to Shi, was that “it is extremely easy to make mistakes programming smart contracts”. This, she explained, raises the risk that funds can be irretrievably lost or diverted by “a selfish counterparty” as a result of such an error.

“This is where we can greatly benefit from formal program analysis techniques,” she said.

Latest investment in cryptocurrency research
The IC3 initiative isn’t the first time the NSF has invested in a program devoted to conducting research into cryptocurrency.
The agency, which received more than $7b in funding from Congress for Fiscal Year 2015, has funded other efforts aimed at exploring cryptocurrencies, including one initiative at Princeton University and another at the University of California-Irvine.

The NSF’s Amla echoed Shi by saying the proposal offers a way to address a number of cross-disciplinary subjects, related to not only cryptocurrency in particular but also cybersecurity, digital privacy and financial innovation more broadly.

“There’s a lot of really good technical issues here that they have identified and have proposed to study,” she said.

Beyond cryptocurrency
Shi hopes the initiative will lead to “closer collaborations” between companies in the industry and academic researchers working on cryptocurrency issues or related projects.

She explained:

“We have been faced with many challenges in trying to bring formal rigor to cryptocurrency design. Personally, I am particularly excited about cross-disciplinary research challenges, and I believe that cryptocurrency can serve as a central playground for synergizing disparate research communities.”

Ultimately, the goal is to seek potentially new ways of developing and implementing cryptocurrency technology.

“I believe that our research will help solve some of the fundamental challenges and most difficult problems in cryptocurrency design, and make a big impact,” Shi concluded.

The original story can be found here: http://www.coindesk.com/us-gov-ernment-funds-3-million-cryptocurrency-research-initiative

If you want to share a “cool” project idea, please email Kellie Klein at kellie.klein@wsu.edu

Communicate Your Skills and Relax your Brain

Communication is one of most basic things we do every day and it can actually be one of the best ways of working smarter. Everyone has his or her strengths and weaknesses, and if your department or team can utilize those strengths, this could build a stronger unit. For example, perhaps someone is very skilled with Excel. If asked, they might be willing to give informal training to others on this program. These mini working-smarter groups within your location can be useful for time management; say for example, someone is working and gets stuck. Instead of spending an hour trying to figure things out themselves, they could reach out to someone else from the informal training they attended who they now know is skilled and ask them. What better way to support research together? Sharing information is a wonderful tool, but it is dependent on the engagement of others. Relaxing your brain on the other hand, is one trick that starts with you and can be done entirely by you. There have been studies that show that relaxing the brain through meditation, yoga, running, even closing your eyes for five seconds throughout the day can have a great effect on your health, but it also can be one of the most amazing tricks for working smarter. All too often, we tell ourselves we do not have time to relax, but taking small breaks throughout the workday, and getting up from your desk to stretch can be essential, efficient and effective in producing a better end result.

Gabrielle Stump Ceriales, is a Financial Administrator in the Department of Mathematics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology
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.”

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 Deborah 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 she spent with RAs were crucial to her success at UH, Dowell said. “As a new research administrator, I would have come into it 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
- Clemson University
- Cleveland Clinic
- University of Colorado
- 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
- Tufts University
- The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Vanderbilt University
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
The demands of research productivity have escalated considerably at Predominately Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs). Of course, research has always been important in keeping faculty current in their respective fields, as well as in developing student researchers. However, external funding is playing a larger role in faculty and student research. When competing against large research institutions for limited pots of money, PUIs have little chance of winning. For many institutions, presenting a paper at a national conference used to be considered active involvement in research and sufficient for tenure. However, now at PUIs new hires come in with greater expectations of doing research, both because they were trained to be researchers through their dissertations and post-doctoral experiences and because administrators now desire more funded research activity.

All universities are also dealing with large amounts of advising, curriculum work, and compliance with learning outcomes assessment, so much so that many faculty are concerned that the culture of assessment is far too often associated with the culture of sanctions (Kramer 2006). Faculty are constantly subject to the competing priorities of teaching pressure, such as criticism through student evaluations; service commitments that are evaluated, but frequently not rewarded; and points earned for participating in research programs. Additionally, the vast majority of prestigious, peer-reviewed research journals in which faculty strive to publish accept only a small percentage of articles, and competition for external funding is getting harder every year.

Another problem that frequently occurs as institutions grow is that as their structure changes, the long-term members who were critical in building the organization may feel displaced by newer members (Kilburn, 1998). While many are quick to dance around the semantics of valuing faculty contributions, it is clear that even at most PUIs, research is now considered more valuable in the rankings of school prestige. There are “older” and “newer” generations of faculty, each seeking validation for their contributions in building the success of their institution. While both may be valued, the newer faculty working for lower salaries while producing more articles and bringing in more external funding may be seen as contributing more and creating more value for a school than the faculty who have been teaching expertly for years.

Many faculty are being directed to teach more classes and take on more students per class (Wilson, 2011) while state funding has been stagnant (Bewly, 2010). Administrators question how they can best support faculty in the struggle to do more with less without styming creativity. Administrators help faculty members, but they are also responsible for judging the quality of faculty work. There is a certain awkwardness when an administrator both evaluates and assists faculty. How does an administrator make suggestions and guide a faculty member without sounding judgmental? The power differential in the relationship clearly steps on academic freedom as the faculty members know their work will be evaluated by the person helping them.

Institutions, especially PUIs, have many long-term administrators with little experience in funded research. Regardless of how well-meaning the administrators may be, if they were faculty members at a time when research was not the school’s mission, their experience with major research initiatives is likely to be limited. On the other hand, administrators who have experience with grants are likely hired from outside the university from more prestigious institutions for higher salaries than those who have been with the school longer. Think about the new boss with a higher salary coming in and telling you what to do—not a warm fuzzy feeling. Yet because of the increased research pressure, all faculty are expected to obtain external funding and need administrative support and assistance in doing so.

How do you find someone who can offer assistance without impeding the faculty member’s research? We claim that there must be a filtering mechanism that introduces resources at the university to help faculty succeed in their research development. The filter person understands the reality of “publish or perish” and “get funding or do without.” One of the difficult issues is that while equality in the treatment of faculty may be ideal in developing harmony across the university, it may be unreachable. There is also a chasm between the funding available for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields compared with non-STEM fields. Because there are potential clashes between faculty hired under the old

By John C. Kilburn, Jr., Anne Frey, and Celeste Kidd
Solutions:

1. Finding a filter: The filter must be an outsider in the sense that they do not judge. Instead, they serve in the role as an “old head” sharing his or her experience. The filter must have the support of the sponsored projects office, as filters are the guides that lead faculty to the office. We have found that an active faculty researcher can be just the right filter for other faculty members. Those just starting out in the area of grant writing will have more respect for someone who has been successful in the proposal process and who knows what it is like to be a faculty member. The filter who has received previous research awards will be seen as experienced in the area of external funding; therefore, faculty will be more inclined to follow his or her guidance. Our pre-award office hires faculty at other institutions who have received research awards to guide our inexperienced faculty through the proposal development process.

Let’s face it. It can be intimidating walking into the sponsored projects office for the first visit. Faculty members know they must, but they are afraid of giving up control of their work. They are also dealing with multiple competing priorities (teaching, service, research, publication), so they have to know that the goal of research administrators is to provide technical support so the prospective principal investigator (PI) can focus on the scholarship and science of the proposal.

Everyone has heard the phrase “constructive criticism.” In the absence of trust and buy-in from the prospective PI, comments may be seen as criticism only, which may make them feel threatened and concerned about their reputation on campus. However, if the sponsored projects office staff provide opportunities for external proposal reviewers to review and provide feedback on research proposals, faculty may be more open to the constructive criticism offered because it comes from an outside, objective source rather than the provost or dean whose job it is to judge the quality of the work.

2. Sponsored research office as a haven: Our office begins a relationship with new faculty by meeting one-on-one to simply chat about their research interests. We also sign them up for our grant hunting software, which gives us the keywords and topics chosen by the investigator to describe their primary research interests, helping us to more effectively seek funding opportunities for their interests. We also add investigators to our faculty researcher booklet in which we include a photo of each and a brief biographical sketch they provide us to describe their research. The booklet is helpful when speaking to program officers and other outsiders about the talent we have on campus.

3. Make community partnerships – The sponsored projects office can also be of value with community networking. Faculty isolated in their labs are less likely to be known in the local community. The office personnel can find local gatherings, such as Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club meetings, at which faculty members new to the community present their research. Our faculty who have presented their projects to the local community have been met with great interest and the desire to know more about the ins and outs of the university.

Also, many of the established faculty have a significant number of connections in the community. They can facilitate research partnerships and opportunities for community outreach, as well as provide significant knowledge about the community needs through their years of daily experience in the community.

4. Self-selection of speakers and consultants: Before scheduling grant trainings or seminars, we have learned to get input from faculty members. There is a difference between the faculty who shuffle into workshops trying to make it known that they are participating and those who truly want to learn. The first group attends the workshop even though they may not feel a connection to the speaker and easily dismiss the presenter. Faculty members who have helped select guest speakers and consultants will be more enthusiastic about taking advantage of their input.

PUI faculty members are pulled in many directions, burdened with layers of assessment, and struggle to balance their responsibilities for teaching, service and research. They have very little time to pursue their own research interests, let alone develop publishable articles and compete for external funding. Understanding this helps guide our service and outreach to them as we work alongside funded faculty members who act as helpful filters and provide nonjudgmental support.

References

Greetings Region I!

This September we held our first RADG outside of Boston, I can only speculate that it was a smashing success since, as has been the case for all these articles, I am writing about it before it has taken place. This Curriculum Committee changed the location of this event based on your feedback. The expert panelists for this Best Practices in Research Administration session provided invaluable information to attendees. When you let us know what you want, we can work to be responsive to your needs. Please send your suggestions for RADGs and Workshop to us at curriculum@ncuraregioni.org. We want to hear your ideas for topics, speakers or ways to make our program even better.

This September we also held our Region I 2016 Election and I wish I was able to share the results with you but the final results are not yet in. What I can share is that the Governance Committee put together an absolutely fabulous slate of candidates. We had at least one candidate from every state in our region, and each one brought great skills and experience to the table. With so many outstanding candidates, I wanted to vote for all of them!

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) has been working on our first ever Region I Networking Event. It is scheduled for October 27, 2015 from 4pm-6pm at Emmanuel College, and this too was put together because you told us that you wanted to have more opportunities to network with colleagues. This FREE event will provide you with the opportunity to establish contacts and friendships that can help you in your work and career development. Check our website at www.ncuraregioni.org or email pdc@ncuraregioni.org for more information.

Also consider attending the October 5, 2015 Current Challenges in Research Administration Workshop. I have no doubt that this too will be a successful endeavor given the broad wealth of knowledge and expertise our faculty bring to these programs. The December Workshop, Budgeting with Excel, will be limited to 20 participants and will provide you with hands on training. Keep an eye out for the email announcing when registration for this workshop opens and check for updates on the website at www.ncuraregioni.org.

Now that we’ve finished looking into the future, time to revisit the past. It was great seeing so many of you in Washington DC at AM57! Lots of people contributed to making this event a reality but I want to highlight the efforts of two people behind the scenes that helped make AM57 a successful and enjoyable event for our region’s members; Lorraine Kiley, Chair of the Volunteer and Membership Committee, did a great job ensuring that we had tasty snacks and beverages in our hospitality suite; and Susan Zipkin really stepped up and took charge of coordinating the performance of Bohemian Rhapsody, wigs and all, for the regional competition Tuesday night. Thank you Lorraine and Susan!

We are always looking for volunteers, email us at vmc@ncuraregioni.org to learn more about how you can get involved.

I hope to see you at our FREE Networking Event on 10/27/15!

Michelle Auerbach serves as Chair of Region I and is the Executive Director of Research Integrity and Assurance at Boston University. Michelle can be reached at chair@ncuraregioni.org.

REGION II
Mid-Atlantic
www.ncurarregionii.org
https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii

It was so great to see everyone at AM57 in August! Region II did a fantastic job collecting over $2,700 for the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund! We raised the most money of all the Regions! Thank you to everyone that bought glow bracelets, 50/50 tickets, or donated change or cash for this cause. A special thanks to Anne Albinak, Johns Hopkins University and Dennis Paffrath, University of Maryland, Baltimore for their generous donations.

Region II also had a strong showing in the Tuesday night musical competition. Under the competent and patient direction of Erin Bailey, Chair-Elect, we danced to a medley of Grease songs. We may not have won, but the enthusiasm and dedication (those costumes!) from our volunteers was phenomenal. Thank you to everyone who participated – we hope to see you in all of our future productions!
At the Region II Business Meeting on August 3 we announced the winners of our recent election. Congratulations to:

Chair-Elect: Tim Schailey, Thomas Jefferson University
Secretary: Mary Holleran, West Virginia University
Treasurer-Elect: Charles Bartunek, Johns Hopkins University

Tim, Mary and Charles will join Erin Bailey, University at Buffalo (2016 Chair), Jen Rosa, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (2016 Treasurer), and myself (Immediate Past Chair) as the Region II Officers for 2016.

Congratulations to Hilah Zia, Georgetown University, the winner of our Region II Logo Contest. We look forward to incorporating our new logo into our website and other Region II endeavors moving forward.

Region II recently updated the Administrative Policies and Procedures. The revised policies can be found on our website. Thank you to the Steering Committee and the Region II members who provided valuable feedback on the proposed revisions.

Volunteer Opportunities – A special note from Erin Bailey, Chair-Elect and Chair of the Volunteer and Membership Committee
Region II has 171 new members/members. With so many new faces we wanted to make sure all members know how to get involved. There are various committees that are always looking for new faces and new ideas and we would love to see many of you join a committee. We need input from all members, whether you just joined NCURA or have been an existing member. It also doesn’t matter if you are new to the profession or a seasoned research administrator; we are always looking for help. Remember, it’s always better to volunteer instead of being voluntold...
If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Erin at eedb@buffalo.edu

Professional Development Committee Update
Visit the PDC section of the Region II website (http://ncuraregionii.org/pdc) for a current listing of PDC workshops near you! Want a workshop to come to your area or interested in hosting a workshop at your institution? Contact the PDC Chair, Greg Slack gslack@clarkson.edu Don’t forget - institutions hosting a workshop receive either two free workshop registrations or one free Region II Spring Meeting registration!

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

Jill A. Frankenfield serves as the Chair of Region II and is an Assistant Director in the Office of Research Administration at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Brigette Pfister, Scott Niles, Rick Smiley, and Heather Lennon, the “Let It Go” (Research Administration style) was nothing short of amazing! Grab some popcorn and visit https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B_KOoIAfvRuyNFYYaWdqc1ZINik to view the winning performance.

How do we top such a phenomenal year? Well, by getting started NOW on the 2016 Spring Meeting, “Building Teams, Breaking Down Barriers” will be held at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa in Miramar Beach, Florida, April 29 – May 4, 2016. We want to thank everyone for submitting in response to the Request for Session Proposals. The 2016 Program Committee will select from these submissions to put together a program destined to meet everyone’s continuing education and professional development needs. Be on the look-out for more details, registration information, and wonderful volunteer opportunities. We encourage you to volunteer. It is the contribution of your time and talents that will make this the best Spring Meeting yet!

Please join us in congratulating our newly elected leadership! P. Maureen “Mo” Valentine from the University of Memphis is the incoming Chair-Elect, Rob Bingham-Roy from the Georgia Board of Regents is the Treasurer Elect, and Deborah Smith of The University of Tennessee Health Science Center will be our Secretary. We look forward to excelling under your leadership! Region III is also VERY PROUD to have representation in the National Organization. Barbara Gray from East Carolina University is the NCURA Vice President/President-Elect for 2016 and Tony Ventimiglia of Auburn University is the NCURA Secretary, whose terms begin January 1, 2016. These are definitely exciting times in Region III.

Continue to visit our webpage and social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter) pages to stay abreast of regional information, news, and updates. Read your Third Thursday e-Blasts and send any questions or suggestions to chair@ncuraregioniii.com

Tanya Blackwell serves as the Public Relations Coordinator for Region III and is a Contracting Officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology/GTRC.

Happy Fall All! I hope everyone celebrated the inaugural National Research Administration Day last month. I saw many fabulous pictures and videos on social media of the celebrations. We’re already looking forward to next year in Region IV!

For those of you that missed the annual meeting this year, just a few notes on what’s going on in the region:

- Lori Kaser, Ohio State, Region IV board member, is leading an initiative to review the volunteer positions in region IV and develop a roles and responsibilities matrix. By defining the opportunities available, members should be able to identify the positions that are a good fit for their skills and interests, and will also be able to add value to their personal resumes and CVs.

- Patience Graybill, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and Region IV board member, is offering her expertise in social media to assess our region’s communication strategies. As always, we’re looking to reach the entire Region IV membership community, and we recognize new communication tools are likely the best way to reach all of our members.

- We have a team working on developing a workshop program that will be available to interested institutions within the region. Keep an eye out for announcements over the next year.

Keep an eye out for updates on all of these ongoing initiatives over the next year!

Finally, make sure to save the date for our spring regional meeting in Kansas City this year! I hear we have a wonderful inspirational speaker lined up to kick off the meeting with the “Heart of Leader”. There have also been rumors of barbeque and line dancing. I can’t wait to see you all there! We will be looking for sessions and presenters soon. If you want to present just let us know. If you’re new, we can pair you with a veteran speaker. It’s a great way to get involved, network, and even add more professional support to your resume!

Hope you all enjoy the holiday season!

Kirsten Yehl is Chair of Region IV and serves as Administrative Director, Institute for Public Health and Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. She can be reached at k-yehl@northwestern.edu
Region V members and the NCURA family recently lost a dear member in the passing of **Myrta Kennon Stager**. Myrta’s research administration journey spanned over 30 years from local to national levels. She continued to serve the research administration profession and give to NCURA members until her health forced her to finally retire.

During her research administration career, Myrta was employed by the University of Houston as Director of Sponsored Programs and at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston as Director of Research Education. She served as a Region V representative on the National Board of Directors and received the Region V Outstanding Achievement Award at the regional meeting in 2006. After retiring from UTMB in 2006, Myrta served the entire NCURA family for seven years as Manager of Volunteer and Regional Relations at the NCURA national office in Washington, D.C.

Myrta was full of life; her laugh, sense of humor, positive energy, enthusiasm and amazing sense of optimism were among the qualities that made Myrta one of a kind. She was never one to give up. A close friend of hers commented that Myrta’s life was a celebration. She enjoyed good friends, good food, her dachshunds and the Texas Hill Country. All these good things tied to even better memories for Myrta’s friend who commented, “I can only wish that everyone is lucky enough to have a ‘Myrta’ in their life.”

Myrta nurtured, helped and took a larger view that was instrumental in positively influencing and shaping professional and personal progressive paths of those around her. One may describe her as the Mother Teresa of research administration.

Myrta made a difference - in Region V, in NCURA, in research administration and in many of our lives.

In mourning her passing, Region V and the NCURA family also celebrate Myrta’s life and strive to follow her example of service and giving back to our members and research community at large.

In other recent news, over 165 members of Region V attended the annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in August. Over 25 of our members volunteered at Regional Connection by welcoming new members. On Saturday evening, we teamed up with Region III for a **DC After Dark Tour**. 48 Region V members were able to make the bus tour of some of the most famous national monuments. The weather was perfect for sightseeing, too!

The big Tuesday night party was great fun and our region was well represented in the talent area which was led by Hollie Schreiber, our Immediate Past Chair. The skit was **Pitch Perfect Riff Off** featuring songs about Texas and Oklahoma. A huge thanks to the following people who shared their talent: Hollie Schreiber (OSU), Adrienne Blalack (Tulsa), Scott Davis (OUHSC) Connie Barton (UTMB), Cheryl Anderson (UT Southwestern), Colette Solpietro (Texas Tech), Becky Castillo (MD Anderson), Joanne Palmer (Texas State), Amy Cook (Texas Tech), Barbara Reyes (UT Austin), Jennifer Vasquez (TX A&M HSC- Houston), Elizabeth Kogan (UT Austin), Nicholas Lavelle (son of Karen Lavelle of Rice).

Speaking of talent… we are in need of many volunteers to assist with the upcoming 2016 annual regional meeting which will be held at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas. Save the date and join us April 24-27 for an excellent opportunity for networking and professional development. Shelly Berry-Hebb will be chairing this meeting. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Beth Milam, at bmilam@tamu.edu

By now most of you know that September 25 has been declared National Research Administrator Day. Everyone is looking for ideas in ways to celebrate this occasion. Please ensure that you are signed up to use NCURA Collaborate where many have begun sharing ways to celebrate and recognize our great profession!

**Katherine Kissmann** serves as Chair of Region V and is Director, Contracts and Grants at The Texas A&M University System Research Services. She can be reached at kkissmann@tamus.edu
RVI and RVII Salt Lake City Regional Meeting:
Life Elevated...reaching new heights in research administration
Salt Lake City, Utah, October 4-7, 2015

Your leadership teams are working feverishly to complete the final details of our meeting in Salt Lake City. For up to date information on registration, hotel, and the conference program, and airline discount code, please visit our website at: http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura/meetings.aspx.

Keynote: We are pleased to present our Keynote Speaker, Phil Gwoke, a Gen Xer with Bridgeworks, a firm of thought leaders, experts and trend spotters on generational dynamics in the workplace and marketplace, will present, When Generations Connect, Communicating with Four Generations of Employees.

Travel Awards: Thank you to all the applicants who applied for the RVI travel award to attend Salt Lake City. The applicant pool was competitive, as usual, and I am pleased to announce the Salt Lake City Travel Awards are to:

Ryan Moritz, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Anastasia Rutherford, Kaiser Permanente Southern California

Call for Volunteers: We will need many volunteers to help set-up and operate the registration desk, help with room monitoring, and the many other important activities that make our meetings run smoothly. There will be E-blasts with information on how to sign-up. However, don’t hesitate to contact our Volunteer Chair, Sam Aleshire at skgoodwin@alaska.edu

Elections: Please join me in congratulating and welcoming our new officers-elect. Their terms will begin January 1, 2016.

Chair-Elect: Sinnamon Tierney, Portland State University
Treasurer-Elect: Caroline Jones, Stanford University
Secretary-Elect: Heather Kubinec, University of California, Irvine
Member of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC): Kevin Stewart, University of California, Santa Barbara

We congratulate the elected candidates and thank them for their willingness to serve the Region. I also extend my sincere thanks to the Election’s Committee for their hard work.

Additionally, we would like to announce that a vacancy, due to the elected member relocating outside the region, on the Regional Advisory Committee has recently been filled by Michiko Taniguchi Pane, Stanford University, to complete the term, through December 31, 2016.

Thanks to the leadership and officers working so hard to put together the many details necessary for the upcoming Salt Lake City meeting. They are amazing!

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned the valuable outcomes from connections made with fellow members at NCURA meetings. Years ago, I met an individual who helped direct my development growth significantly. That leader and teacher was Wanda Bowen. It is with a sadness that I share with you that our colleague and friend Wanda passed away earlier this month.

In memory of our colleague and dear friend, Wanda Bowen...

Earlier this month, Wanda, our colleague and dear friend passed away on August 19th, 2015. Many of you may recall getting to know Wanda when she worked for University of Alaska, Fairbanks or as she served in one of the many volunteer roles she held with NCURA, such as when she worked the registration desk, presented a session, or while serving on a committee or as an elected officer. Wanda was instrumental at supporting so many initiatives to advance the research administration profession, and she did so with sincerity and strength of purpose. Wanda touched so many of us positively, and like me, you likely recall those precious memories with much gratitude.

A special reflection shared by Maggie Griscavage: “Wanda was a terrific second-in-command - she liked to help, but behind the scenes. Whenever I gave recognition where it was due, Wanda actually blushed! She loved sharing her NCURA knowledge, her passion for volunteering, and her skills as a research administrator. She lived what she believed, that it was always imperative to do the right thing. She was a true friend, and I will miss her very much.”

Wanda attended George Washington University, School of Business, formerly worked as the Assistant Director for at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks Office of Contracts and Grants (beginning her career at UAF as a student assistant) and more recently as the Fiscal Officer at IdeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence. Wanda was dedicated to supporting the sharing of knowledge and serving as a volunteer for NCURA and various community organizations that she held dear.

Wanda, our hearts rejoice for knowing you, our good dear friend. May we further your legacy of listening, motivating, and being involved by supporting each other’s professional and personal growth.

Regards,
Melissa R. Mullen

Melissa Mullen serves as Region VI Chair and is the Director of Sponsored Programs at the California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo. She can be reached at mrmullen@calpoly.edu

REGION VII
Rocky Mountain

http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu

“The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary” – Vincent Lombardi

As we approach fall, I look back on my yearly goals to take a quick glance to see how much I have accomplished. However, it also serves as a reminder of what remains to be undertaken. This being said, I encourage everyone to reflect back on their goals, and if
POLICY/REGULATION/COMPLIANCE NEWS:


Fraud: US vaccine researcher sentenced to prison for fraud. More... http://www.nature.com/news/us-vaccine-researcher-sentenced-to-prison-for-fraud-1.17660

UNIFORM GUIDANCE:


AGENCY NEWS:

eRA Update: Document upload in ASSIST now available. More... http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/support.htm#guidelines

NIH: Simplify NIH's Grant Application instructions. More... https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2015/08/14/help-us-help-you/

FUNDING NEWS:

Rock Talk: What are the chances of getting funded? More... http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2015/06/29/what-are-the-chances-of-getting-funded/#sthash.nlAaJPX0.uxfs&st_refDomain=&st_refQuery=

FUN AND CHUCKLES:

Why Ya Gotta Be So Rude?: Rudeness at work spreads like a virus. More... http://www.futurity.org/rudeness-work-961262/

Class of 2019: The Annual Beloit College Mindset List has been posted, providing a look at the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of students entering college this fall. More... http://themindsetlist.com/2015/08/the-beloit-college-mindset-list-class-of-2019-born-1997/

E-XTRA NOTABLE AND INTERESTING

Be Happy at Work: 16 things guaranteed to make you happy at work. More... http://www.forbes.com/sites/travisbradberry/2015/06/09/16-things-guaranteed-to-make-you-happy-at-work/2/

HR Watch: 9 Things Highly Successful People Say Every Day. More... https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/9-things-incredibly-successful-people-say-every-day-jeff-haden


If you have any favorite links from e-Xtra that you would like to see in a future issue of NCURA Magazine, please email suggestions to Lourana Swayne at l.swayne@wsu.edu.
they are in progress or have been completed, put them under your “wins” category. I have found focusing on simple “wins” helps me move towards completing the overall main goal. It is similar to working on a jigsaw puzzle. Each piece is a task/goal you would like to undertake both professionally and personally for the year. Eventually, each piece fits into place, and you have a complete picture of the puzzle. It may help you to start out small, and over time grow into a larger puzzle.

The annual meeting was a success and very informative. The weather was perfect balmy Washington DC summer. It is always a great time meeting and chatting with attendees from different regions. The Tuesday night festivities were hilarious as well as quite entertaining. As a “non-dancer,” I was happy to share my comedic flare while attempting to dance during the choreography. Thank you to everyone who participated. I am also pleased to have had the opportunity of meeting and introducing our travel awardee, Nicole Tuttle, from Utah State University. I want to thank Sandra Logue and Natalie Buys for organizing the travel committee and selection of the awardee.

All roads lead to Salt Lake City! It’s that time for our joint Regional Meeting in Salt Lake City, October 4th-7th. I wanted to give a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has been working diligently on organizing the meeting and program. Make sure to check out the SLC visitor’s site at http://www.visitsaltlake.com and our webpage at http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu/announcements. If you are interested in volunteering some of your time for this meeting, please let me or Sandra Logue know. This is a great opportunity to network with colleagues in your geographical area, learn new things and of course, have fun. We will also be announcing our travel award recipient soon. Thank you Sandra Logue, Natalie Buys, and Garrett Steed for your steadfast efforts on the travel award committee.

It has taken some time to collect nominations for our open elected positions. We have outstanding candidates. I am amazed by our executive leadership team and the nomination committee. Keep an eye out for the announcement and vote! Your vote is important for us to continue to prosper as a region. As I have previously stated and firmly believe, it takes a village to manage growth and change. You can be the change.

Like us on Facebook! Gearing up and joining the media age, I am pleased to announce Region VII has created our own Facebook site at https://www.facebook.com/groups/NCURRegionVII/?pnref=lhc. Join us! As you know, social media is the quickest way to interact and receive information.

Please make sure you visit our webpage often for upcoming announcements. Looking forward to seeing you in Salt Lake City!

Marj Townsend serves as Region VII Chair and is the Research Advancement Manager for the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University. She can be reached at marjorie.townsend@asu.edu

A great time was had by the more than 50 region VIII members who attended AM57. Prior to the meeting region VIII members were sent information on key global activities happening at the meeting, from focused sessions on international matters, to the international business meeting and region dinner. This set the tone for arrival. Upon registration, members received a multi-flag covered lanyard to highlight the region, and a flag sticker to proudly display the country they were from. A focus of the registration desk was also promoting the 2016 joint regional meeting of regions VI, VII and VIII, to be held 2-5 October 2016 – make sure you save the date!

Huge thanks go to new international region member Barbara Slattery for creating both an “international membership” card and a “save the date” card to promote the upcoming Hawaii meeting. Thanks also go to Bella Blaher and Elka Wakefield for providing props to build buzz for the regional meeting. Visitors to the desk jumped right on board, dressing up in Hawaiian-themed attire and posing for the camera with sunglasses, promotional cards and pineapples! Photos can be seen on twitter at: #RMHIHawaii2016. Thank you to the many international members who volunteered some of their time on the registration desk.

It was an action packed meeting and the guidebook app was a great way of keeping track of activities from the different session tracks, marketplace, social events and roundtable discussions. An enormous thank you goes to the AM57 organizing committee.

In other international region news, in the second half of 2015 we will be holding elections for the international officer positions – stay tuned for details!

Julie Ward serves as the Region VIII Reporter and is the International Research Manager, Division of Research, at the University of New South Wales, Australia.
NCURA’s Traveling Workshops head to Savannah
December 2-4, 2015

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

**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

**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

**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

**Level II: Sponsored Projects 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

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

Research Administration:
The Practical Side of Leadership ..................November 30 - December 2, 2015
La Quinta, CA

Departmental Research Administration Workshop ..........December 2-4, 2015
Savannah, GA

Financial Research Administration Workshop ............December 2-4, 2015
Savannah, GA

LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project
Administration Workshop ..................................December 2-4, 2015
Savannah, GA

LEVEL II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop ......December 2-4, 2015
Savannah, GA

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Financial Research Administration Conference ..................March 6-8, 2016
New Orleans, LA

Pre-Award Research Administration Conference ..............March 9-11, 2016
New Orleans, LA

58th Annual Meeting .............................................August 7-10, 2016
Washington, DC

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

WEBINARS

Life Cycle of the Award Series – Proposal Development (3 Part Series)
October 14, 2015, 2:00 – 3:30 pm Eastern Time
October 28, 2015, 2:00 – 3:30 pm Eastern Time
October 29, 2015, 2:00 – 3:30 pm Eastern Time
See website for details

Going Global: What Your Institution Needs to Know about Managing
Research Without Borders
October 30, 2015, 2:00-3:30 pm Eastern

Crowd Funding: An Enormous Opportunity at your Fingertips
November 18, 2015, 2:00-3:30 pm Eastern

Creating the Cohesive Team Your Office Needs to Thrive
December 1, 2015, 2:00-3:30 pm Eastern

The Right Metrics: Choosing, Measuring and Evaluating
Metrics to Drive Performance Success in Your Office
Available On-Demand

Is it a Gift or a Grant and other Critical Funding
Mechanism Clarifications Your Staff Need to Know
Available On-Demand

How a Few Bad Apples Can Cost Your Institution Millions:
What Your Institution Needs to Know to Mitigate Institutional
Risk of Research Misconduct and Navigate Landmines in the Process
Available On-Demand

DEADLINES FOR DECEMBER 2015

Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .....................October 9, 2015
Submission of Articles to Co-editors .................................October 16, 2015
Submission of Advertisements .................................October 16, 2015

Visit our website for enrollment periods.

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

For further details and updates visit our events calendar at www.ncura.edu