Faculty Charged 100% to Sponsored Programs
Another Compliance Risk?

by Jerry Fife

Add to your list of compliance concerns faculty that are charged 100% to sponsored programs. Why should you be concerned and where are the regulations that address this? Are these new regulations?

This article will discuss recent audit findings and alternatives for properly recognizing faculty effort related to proposal writing, committee assignments and teaching assignments.

Background

A recent university audit by the DHHS OIG assessed cost disallowances for faculty that were charged 100% to sponsored programs while writing sponsored program proposals. The basis for these disallowances is derived from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21 which states in Section F.6. (a)(2):

“Salaries and fringe benefits attributable to the administrative work (including bid and proposal preparation) of faculty (including department heads), and other professional personnel conducting research and/or instruction, shall be allowed at a rate of 3.6 percent of modified total direct costs.”

This language is contained in a section of A-21 describing the treatment of costs for developing the departmental administration pool while developing an F&A proposal. This language has been in A-21 since 1986. Unfortunately, for a host of reasons some universities may have failed to account for this effort and this latest audit report serves as a reminder that this should be taken into account when providing effort reporting guidance. Most universities have informed faculty of this requirement but some may not have monitored this for faculty that have charged 100% to sponsored programs.

Which proposals should be considered? Obviously new proposals fall into this category and institutional funding must be provided to account for this effort. It is important to realize that it is not acceptable to argue that faculty effort devoted to proposal writing occurs during personal time and needs not be included in the calculation of effort. Proposals such as NIH non-competing continuations where the proposal is a progress report portion is chargeable to the project and the remainder is proposed work. In this instance, the progress report portion is chargeable to the project and the remainder should be considered departmental administration and charged to university sources.

In addition, the audit also found instances where faculty charged 100% to sponsored programs, but taught courses during a portion of their time. Although not a part of the audit findings, serving on university committees and not accounting for effort

continued on page 12
For a brief moment, let’s wax nostalgic about the “lazy, hazy days of summer”: no school; regular jaunts to the lake, beach, or mountain cabin; cold lemonade; fresh watermelon; and, hand-cranked ice cream.

Yet, in our academic world, these months are busy and bustling. Although many of us will enjoy a few days of R&R, this is the time of year when our faculty focus on their research and the sponsored project offices recover and regroup from the infamous June 1 deadlines. Summer also means there are only a few months left before our NCURA 48th Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

Summer means a lot of hard work for the annual meeting program committee, led by Judy Fredenberg and Denise Wallen, and ably assisted by workshop chairs Dave Richardson and Bo Bogdanski – confirming the final moderators, speakers, and discussion group leaders for our upcoming meeting November 5-8.

The committee has done a fantastic job in designing a program that will address the many facets of our profession. A variety of tracks will provide timely information for those working in the departments, supporting faculty; those in medical schools, PUI’s, HBCU/MI/HSIs; and those in the central offices who have a myriad of functions.

Questions on export controls? There’s a session. Concerns with Grants.gov and IT issues? Again, there will be sessions. Need to develop an understanding on international research administration? We’ll have a workshop. Trouble with those perpetual open-ended questions: “How do I/How do you (insert any issue here)?” Discussion groups are the answer!

These mission-critical learning opportunities will be joined by some “life-critical” learning experiences, like tips on how better to communicate the “nitty gritty” information of our profession. There’s even a senior level track for our “more experienced” members. Primers, discussion groups, and targeted workshops are under development. Threads woven throughout the program reflect the needs our technical members have, as well as highlight NCURA’s growing commitment to the needs of our community across the international spectrum.

Furthermore, we’ve included adequate time “off-line” to network and learn from each other.

**Mark your calendars now and visit** http://www.ncura.edu/conferences/48/ for the preliminary agenda and other meeting details. Plan to join your colleagues for this year’s annual meeting and take advantage of over 150 professional development opportunities. See you at the Hilton Washington in DC!

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### 48th Annual Meeting Workshop Offerings

Mark your calendars and make your reservations early! November 5 is the NCURA 48th Annual Meeting Workshop Sunday. There is no better way to start your annual meeting than by participating in one of NCURA’s workshops. This year’s workshop offerings span the entire spectrum of sponsored research administration and offer something for every member, regardless of knowledge or experience level. While the perennial favorites will return, we are also offering several new workshops focusing on contemporary topics.

Dave Mayo will be introducing the Federal Acquisition Regulation; Pat Hawk and Bruce Morgan will be talking A-110 with department administrators; Terry Manns and Julie Cole have a new forum for Predominately Undergraduate Institutions; and, Geoff Grant will bring the federal experts for a senior forum discussing topics “du jour.” New workshop offerings will cover such topics as a senior forum on institutional benchmarking; Susan Boone looks into international subcontracts; David Brady examines export controls; and, Marianne Rinaldo Woods compares non-traditional contracting documents. Look at the complete list of workshop offerings and sign up early.

Also new for this year is the introduction of a workshop classification system which allows members to match workshops to the individual experience level of each NCURA member. The four types of workshops are Basic, Applied, Operational, and Policy. Basic workshops will be targeted to members new to the workshop subject area while the Applied workshops will target members who have a working knowledge of the subject and are looking for more details and specifics. These workshops will be conducted in the familiar classroom setting but be prepared to participate; all NCURA’s workshops are interactive.

New this year are the Operational workshops or “managers forums” which are targeted to members who find themselves in need of some additional operational assistance on a particular area of research administration but also have much to share in these “round-table” forums. And finally, the Policy level workshops are targeted toward members who are well experienced in the general subject areas and wish to share their knowledge while learning from other workshop participants.

To view the workshop descriptions and classifications in advance, please visit the annual meeting website and click on the program: http://www.ncura.edu/conferences/48/.

The NCURA membership is again blessed to have outstanding workshop faculty who are leaders in the respective areas of research administration. With over 35 workshop offerings, there should be something for everyone. Please join us on the 5th of November.

Bo Bogdanski and David Richardson serve as the Co-Coordinators for the 48th Annual Meeting Workshops. Bo Bogdanski is the Senior Research Administrator Sponsored Programs, Colorado State University and David Richardson is the Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration, Virginia Tech.
Leadership Development Institute 2006 Belmont Retreat

The Belmont, in Elkridge, Maryland, is the site where The Belmont Report was created, outlining ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human research subjects in 1979. The history of the area presented a fitting location for the 2006 Leadership Development Institute retreat. On May 18-21 the LDI participants gathered to meet their fellow colleagues and build leaders for the university research administration profession and also for NCURA.

The year long LDI course involves communicating each month with an advisor, monthly conference calls or chats online, and readings with homework assignments. The final project which benefits the participants’ institution will be presented at the 48th Annual Meeting during the second face-to-face workshop. Gale Wood, Comet Consulting, is the facilitator for the LDI program and also directed the retreat. At the retreat, LDI participants delved into a two-day course about leadership through various exercises, discussions and role playing.

One of the exercises incorporated mining the Myers-Briggs Trait Indicator (MBTI). The Myers-Briggs Indicator examines four personality dimensions to heighten self-awareness for better personal management, as well as interactions with different personality types in the workplace. Understanding different character traits improves communication and group dynamics. Another helpful task came in the form of a zigzag. The shape represents the time spent during the decision-making process. Jeanne Galvin-Clarke stated “I will use the “Z” communication between people of different MBTI types and other skills from the LDI experience to better recognize the differences between the way people think and solve problems in order to be better able to draw on the strengths of my team. Also, I want to help team members understand the advantages of these differences, and assist team members to stretch themselves by working on developing skills they are less comfortable with.”

In addition, the retreat featured two morning panels. In the first panel, Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director, interviewed Thomas Coggins, N&LDC Chair, University of South Carolina; Christina Hansen, N&LDC Chair-elect, University of California-Irvine; and Jerry Fife, Immediate Past President, Vanderbilt University, about their leadership journey professionally and with NCURA. The three seasoned leaders have over twenty-five years of experience in research administration. Their knowledge afforded a lively discussion about leadership and issues surrounding research administration. The second morning panel, led by RaeAnne Nye, Membership Coordinator, discussed NCURA as an organization and outlined the governance structure.

The retreat helped to build upon leadership strengths and received a positive reaction from the participants. As Tommy Coggins noted, “You are never a ‘finished product’ as a leader, always something to be learned.” At the NCURA 48th Annual Meeting a special reception will be held for the LDI participants along with their advisors. NCURA and the university research administration community look forward to learn about your leadership journey and projects.


Members of the 2006 Class and their NCURA Advisors:
Holly Benze, Johns Hopkins University, Denise Clark, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Advisor; Sara Clabby, Brown University, Vivian Holmes, Harvard Medical School, Advisor; Jeanne-Galvin-Clarke, University of Maryland Baltimore, Jan Fox, Texas Christian University, Advisor; Chris Green, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Bo Bogdanski, Colorado State University, Advisor; E. Jacqueline Hinton, University of Utah, Cynthia White, Washington University, Advisor; Tammy Raccio, Yale University, Kerry Peluso, University of Pennsylvania, Advisor; Sinh Simmons, University of Washington, David Mayo, California Institute of Technology, Advisor; Michael Wetherholt, Murray State University, Patrick Green, Vanderbilt University, Advisor; Danielle Woodman, Daemen College, Patrick Fitzgerald, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Advisor.
It was wonderful to hear about the progress that NIH is making with online submissions at the May meeting of the Commons Working Group (CWG). Prior to the June 1, 2006 deadline, over five thousand applications had been submitted to the NIH through Grants.gov. The percentage of online applications submitted error free through Grants.gov has improved dramatically since the December 1, 2006 deadline, and the volume of help line calls has also decreased dramatically.

The NIH has made a number of changes to its eRA Commons business rules to address concerns of the research community. The requirement for unsolicited R01s to be submitted online was cycled back to February 1, 2007. The deadline time has been changed to 5:00 pm local time, and the requirement to verify the application image has been changed to a recommendation to verify. A Citrix® solution is available for MacIntosh® users to access the 424 R&R Forms in Grants.gov and a non-windows version of PureEdge® is expected to be available as early as November 2006.

The real star at the CWG meeting, however, was the presentation of the Virtual Organization Layers (VOL) solution that is currently in design phase. The members of the CWG and the NIH awardee community as a whole have been waiting a long time for an organizational hierarchy solution that will allow awardees to define rights and roles:

**Rights:** an ability to perform a specific action or have access to certain data (i.e. submit eSNAP progress reports, or view documents)

**Roles:** a predefined unchangeable set of rights for a specific user (i.e. Principal Investigator or Signing Official)

Each awardee has its own organizational hierarchy and VOL will allow the awardee institution to design access to the eRA Commons at multiple levels with adequate security.

VOL will allow awardees the flexibility to decentralize roles within their own organizational structures or to keep the roles within a central research administration office depending upon the culture at the institution. The levels of the Virtual Organization Layers are as follows:

**Root:** the top level of the organization

**Tree:** a visual representation of the organizational structure

**Node:** a tree branch within the organization, representing a school, division, department, etc.

**Leaf:** the lowest node within a tree, one that does not have any nodes under it

The names chosen for the VOL levels made me strongly suspect that someone at the NIH was a fan of Joyce Kilmer and his poem *Trees.*

Under the VOL, the awardee institution will have the responsibility for customizing the rights and, for its own organization, allowing a college or division to have the ability to access information for all departments assigned to that college, division or department. Also, the unit administrator will be able to access information on all applications and awards assigned to that organizational unit.

The following is a list of all the rights, which will exist under VOL:

- **Edit and save Just in Time (JIT) information**
- **Submit JIT materials**
- **Submit no cost extension**
- **View status detail**
- **Submit final progress report**
- **Submit final invention statement**
- **Submit eSNAP – ability to submit progress reports**
- **View eSNAP – ability to view data within the eSNAP Module**
- **View Closeout – ability to view data within the Closeout Module**
- **Edit Financial Status Report (FSR) prior to submission**
- **Submit FSR**
- **View Documents – ability to view documents within the Status Details Page in the Status Module**

VOL will have a new role, HIER, which will grant individuals the ability to manage the organizational hierarchy of their institutions. This role can be assigned at any level by a Signing Official (SO) at the awardee institution or remain the role of any SO at the institution. Under VOL, the ASST, AO, and FSR account roles will be replaced with the BASIC role. The PI role will be replaced by the AO role and the FSR role will be replaced by the Submit FSR right. The PI and SO roles remain the same.

All projects (applications and awards) assigned to a department on the application face sheet will be migrated to that department in the Institutional Organization Hierarchy Tree and all search screens in the NIH eRA Commons will be enhanced to show the Organization Hierarchy Tree. An individual assigned the HIER role will have the ability to reassign a project to another node or department, but a project may be assigned only to one node within VOL at any one time. When a project is assigned or reassigned, the entire project period (all previous years of the project) are assigned to the new organization layer.

The Virtual Organization Layers solution is a well-conceived plan for awardees to manage their projects within the NIH eRA Commons. VOL will be available for testing by NIH Commons Working Group member institutions and should be available to the research community by the end of the calendar year. Congratulations to the entire NIH eRA Commons Team for the development of an excellent concept and continued success toward the final implementation of the VOL solution.

*Thomas Wilson is the Director of Sponsored Projects, City of Hope National Medical Center.*
When was the last time an employee came in with a question or a problem and somewhere in the process they left and we ended up taking on whatever it was? If the answer is “today,” then it might be helpful to learn more about delegation. It happens to all of us—the need to solve a problem that is brought to our attention. There are several reasons for why we do this. We think we could do it better and faster ourselves. We may not trust the person to do it correctly, the person isn’t qualified or trained, or better yet, the person didn’t handle it well the last time! And for every one of these reasons, why would we NOT take on the task? Anybody in their right mind would, right? At the time we think that we are saving everyone’s time by handling the situation ourselves, when in fact, the joke is on us. Well, maybe not the joke, but now THE TASK is on us!

So why is it sometimes difficult to delegate? Perhaps the act of delegation has more to do with ego than anything. If the person to whom we are delegating fails, it is a reflection on us. If the person exceeds expectations, then we may be upset for not doing it that way first. Not everyone feels the latter but one must keep in mind that when an employee exceeds, we are an effective manager. In this case, use that as an ego boost, rather than taking on every task. These situations are the minority. Many of us have the situation where we are afraid to delegate because we believe that the person to whom we are delegating to, due to past performance history, will fail. And when they fail, we end up cleaning up the mess. It’s much easier to “just do it ourselves” we think. It is harder to figure out WHY this keeps happening with that employee. And yes, unfortunately, that means more work for us. Figuring this out should only occur at the beginning of the process of delegation. Once we learn how to be an effective manager, delegation will happen, and the tasks delegated will actually get done, and to our satisfaction, if not exceeding our expectations.

So how does one delegate effectively?

• First, choose what to delegate and have a plan of action.
• Second, identify the appropriate person for the task at hand. Knowing our employee’s strengths and weaknesses ensures that the task is something that they can accomplish. Prepare that person for the task and make sure that they understand the scope.
• Third, communicate what needs to be done. Try explaining the what and the why. What does the employee need to do and why does it need to be done (why it is important)? It is important to share information like timelines, deliverables, background information, and any advice that is important to the activity. Also, consider who the employee should work with and what resources are available for them to successfully accomplish the task.
• Fourth, empower the employee to do the job properly. It may be necessary to back them up in disputes. It is critical to keep in touch with the employee and monitor their progress in accomplishing their task as well as supporting them. Gauge the employee’s feelings by asking how they feel about the project or how they plan on approaching the task. Then, yes, LET GO! It’s a scary process, but necessary in delegation.
• Finally, be sure to acknowledge a job well done. Give credit when the task has been successfully completed. Public recognition both reinforces the enjoyment of success and sets a standard for other employees. This last part is the perhaps the most important part of delegation. If a person is not acknowledged, how are they supposed to be encouraged to take on another task?

Delegation: The Boomerang Effect?

Here are some tips to help delegate more effectively:

• Try not to underestimate your employee’s potential. If you expect the person to succeed, expressing this often, you will be pleasantly surprised more frequently than not.
• Keep lines of communication open at all times. If you let too much time go by, then the person will think that they are not a priority, nor the project.
• Keep your mind open to new ideas and ways of doing things. Your way isn’t always the only way. Projects are more interesting to an employee if they share in the ideas.
• Encourage feedback from the employee regarding the direction of the project. They are the one who is closer to the project and might be able to offer reasons why a project should take another direction.
• Delegation strengthens who you are as a manager. It shows you are an effective manager and can work together with your employees. This helps you with your promotion potential.
• Trust your employee and your intuition. Your employee will sense this and react accordingly.
• Give praise, acknowledgement, and feedback at the end of the project.

Initially, delegating does take more time to master; however, the payoff in the long run is greater than the investment. The more often we use these skills and techniques, the easier they become. Eventually, delegating effectively will become second nature and more useful to us in our position. We will look forward to delegating because it will help free up more time to focus on the tasks we are responsible for, and haven’t had the opportunity to accomplish. Remember the job that we were hired for, but somehow found ourselves doing everything else? Sound familiar?

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Recommended Reading


In 1949, the French author, statesman and social critic Andre Malraux wrote an essay entitled “Museum Without Walls.” One of the ideas he posited was that museums rob art of its original functions by placing it in a contained, unchanging environment. With the advancement of technology, Malraux envisioned an Imaginary Art Museum, made up of reproductions of works of art that would conjure “in the mind’s eye all the world’s masterpieces.”

To compare the functions of research administration (whether electronic or not) to that of museums may be a stretch, but the idea of taking research administration functions out of the containment of four walls has now been around long enough to make the comparison meaningful. The changing face of technology has created a “wall-less” community, one which incorporates a variety of systems which allow anyone involved in research to communicate on any level of the research environment – from proposal concept to agency submission to detailed administration. It could be said that universities and agencies, to a certain extent, have been successful in being able to conjure up “in the mind’s eye all the world’s” first eRA masterpieces. This (still) new and evolving environment has the potential of invigorating the research administration community through, and as a result of, a multitude of components that constantly interact and change. This changed environment has also created headaches almost beyond belief and constantly forces the question, “How can we navigate through this ‘office’ without walls?”

To “prime the canvas,” institutional research administration must be able to build flexibility into how its sponsored research is done. An institution’s research administration must work with every level of the campus community to develop a broad network of information, administration and interaction that will not stop at the campus walls but will facilitate relationships with the whole research world. While eRA is an aspect of the overall picture, it is up to those in research administration to continually ask and learn what is wanted and needed by the research community, and then find ways to answer those needs.

Unfortunately, the needs of the campus research community may not always be consistent with agency eRA demands. An example is the apparent clash of institutional policies and procedures and the online process flow of agency systems. Electronic submission can mean the bypassing of institutional review and approval. What institution can afford to relinquish legal stewardship of its extramural funding?

Ongoing coordination, support and training specific to eRA requirements are critical to the research community. Using electronic tools, whether internally or externally developed, can entail a major shift in work practices. Under what circumstances can this transition be a good thing?

In general, the eRA wake-up call goes something like this:

- Increased (and mandatory) electronic activity usage by funding agencies requires that a sponsored research office be prepared to support agency requirements in terms of implementation, training, and technology.
- A sponsored research office needs to be able to use a variety of electronic systems and tools to support the campus in remaining eligible and competitive in obtaining and supporting research funding.
- A campus must have at the ready infrastructure support for all who deal in sponsored projects at the graduate, research associate, faculty, and departmental and higher administrative levels.

And the overall end result? Feelings of panic by PIs and sponsored research administrators that they just aren’t THERE YET!

But is that panic reasonable?

Experience with eRA has telescoped time and perception of where sponsored research offices actually are in developing robust paperless environments. Granted, positioning faculty, administrators, and institutional sponsored research to survive the roll-out of eRA systems is problematic. There are greater performance, fiduciary, and compliance pressures today on researchers and research administration than just was the case 10 years ago, when the NSF introduced and mandated the use of FastLane. Yet, from the beginning, many sponsored research offices have, taken steps to be proactive, ease psychological and technical fears of an electronic environment, and best position those involved in the research enterprise to remain competitive and equipped for eRA. In taking these steps, sponsored research offices have been
mapping a transition that can provide on-going, positive support for eRA. Strategies to continue to facilitate this transition should focus on:

Engaging the campus community

• Developing links with key campus computer support units to make possible campus-wide access to standardized software.
• Tapping into available campus resources for training in eRA.
• Establishing eRA working groups (i.e., faculty, staff).
• Establishing a network of cross-campus eRA experts.
• Providing a regular review of research administration to the campus which include and highlight eRA external and internal updates.

Measuring eRA knowledge at a sponsored research office level:

• Assessing those involved in proposal/award administration for a standardized set of skills knowledge (i.e., familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel, Adobe Acrobat, etc.) and providing training for those who need to have skills upgraded.
• Providing basic training on all agency systems with update sessions held at least once a year. (Know-how eases the way.)
• Having internal meetings/roundtables to discuss the issues and problems with agency systems, and developing a template letter to agencies containing “suggestions” for improvement.
• Participating in national organizations where access to federal agencies is prominent, and being receptive to piloting and testing agency systems and communicating results to the campus research community.

These steps and strategies probably have been taking place regularly as part of the general state of things by sponsored research offices. So, what has changed? Judging by current national dialogue in the profession, the answer lies with the advent of Grants.gov. The roll-out of this centralized portal for finding and applying for federal funding has increased the importance for institutions to intensify the implementation of complete eRA and has stepped up the need for internal grants management to be online and institutionally/agency connected.

Until now there has not been a need to push, on a grand level, internal grants management systems to interact with agency systems. For agency system releases, the majority of agencies seemed not to be curious as to the impact of their actions on their user community. For example: Even with the consolidation of Federal systems under the portal of Grants.gov, sufficient advance warning as to mandatory use of Grants.gov has not be given from one application cycle to another. Hence the scramble many institutions felt had to be taken to find or develop a proposal development system capable of system-to-system submission in response to the National Institutes of Health’s announcement for the mandatory use of Grants.gov. (The positive effect, on the other hand, in this case, has been the response by institutions to evaluate their eRA readiness.)

Having said all this, what can a sponsored research office still do to maintain an eRA balance? Faced with compulsory use of agency online systems (pre-award and post-award), those in research administration must be prepared to support agency requirements in terms of implementation, training, and technology. The individual institution must also be ready with infrastructure support for all who deal in sponsored projects. However, faced with constraints under the current fiscal environment, careful planning and forethought take precedence at many of our schools in order to protect diminishing resources. Consequently, it may be several years before an internal eRA system is up and fully functional. The luxury of time, however, may not correspond with funding agency demands.

There is no simple solution. Most masterpieces are not created easily or in a single day. But research administrators have developed many creative ways to connect with their research community using resources at hand. eRA does not change that creativity. Outside agency pressures do not change that creativity but can present a difficult impetus for change as in the most current example: Grants.gov.

The challenges presented by Grants.gov can be seen in the light of Andy Warhol’s slightly misquoted dictum, “[Everyone] will have their 15 minutes of fame.” Within those 15 minutes, decisions have to be made about how best to prepare an institution’s research community for yet another proposal submission system. The term “yet” is used since the challenges presented by previous “15-minute-of-famers,” such as NSF’s FastLane, NIH Commons, and NASA’s NSPIRES, have been successfully met by research administrators and incorporated into accepted contract and grant procedures. Grants.gov doesn’t quite follow the path of previous online systems. It is not an agency but is a conduit for funding requests to multiple agencies. It has more than one method of application: by electronic form (PureEdge) or system-to-system. As a result, the standard research administrative paradigm when dealing with agency online systems has not only been replaced by a new one that is different, but is still proving whether or not it is better. Grants.gov tests the procedures most institutions have put into practice for eRA submissions.

The convoluted problems Grants.gov presents seem to have motivated institutions to review internal technical coordination/support and on-going training specific to eRA. While perhaps not always positive, the reactions are actively stretching across each campus research community – that “wall-less” environment. There is a determination to develop (whether internally conceived or vendor created) research administration systems that are institutionally interconnected. Having seen how using Grants.gov can be a sour experience, institutions will want to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the development of a grants system, that those who will have a stake in the system are provided the opportunity to participate in the system’s design and development, and that adequate testing is done prior to implementation. There may be a bit of grappling, but there is a determination to conquer.

The research administration community’s flexibility is how sponsored research gets done. It is that network of information, administration, and interaction which is the stimulus to improve the situation. There is no crystal ball for knowing what will work and what won’t. Change can be difficult, especially when dealing with the new and the unknown. What is known, however, is that research and the researcher are integral parts of the university environment. Success will be measured by how research administration assists in advancing both of them.

Thalia Calliope is a Recovering Research Administrator
Late of a Major Research University
(Currently Witness Protection Program)
(Thalia and Calliope are Greek muses.)
Many of us have heard the children’s story about the tailor who had to make a royal set of clothes that would please the emperor. Under the threat of execution should he fail, the tailor fabricated a set of beautiful, imaginary clothes and convinced the emperor that these imaginary clothes were the finest and most elegant in the land. When the emperor proclaimed how wonderful his new (imaginary) clothes were, none of the emperor’s subjects disagreed for fear of displeasing him. During a processional, however, a young child exclaimed loudly, “But the emperor has no clothes on!”

Clearly, the emperor was not only missing his clothes but also an effective assessment mechanism to evaluate information and make decisions. Our sponsored program operations are not unlike the emperor in this children’s story. We often think our operations are “well-dressed” and performing at an exceptional level, even though we often have no data upon which to make this judgment.

Like the emperor, sponsored programs administrators need information about our operations in order to make effective decisions. Assessment is simply a process used to gather information about a particular area and then that information is used to evaluate objectively the effectiveness of that area. The results of an assessment serve as a basis for informed decision-making on direction and change.

The performance and effectiveness of our sponsored programs operations can be assessed by gathering information about a number of different operational aspects. For this article, five clusters are highlighted. These five assessment clusters can be applied to all or parts of our operations, either individually or in various combinations.

- **Results Centered**
- **Risk Centered**
- **Service-Satisfaction Centered**
- **Infrastructure-Management Centered**
- **Strategic Centered**

**Results Centered.** Assessment in this cluster has a focus on process and outputs. Within this area, we tend to look at how well we have met deadlines, timeframes for processes, or staff effort tracked to functions. A characteristic of results-centered assessment is quantifiable measurement of a specific output.

**Risk Centered.** The risk-centered cluster includes area reviews based on level of risk and how well that risk is managed. This type of assessment may encompass several aspects, such as reviewing institutional policies against state or federal laws and regulations, and evaluating how well policies are applied within the institution.

**Service-Satisfaction Centered.** This cluster is a very common form of assessment that most often collects satisfaction measures from key constituents (often faculty). A common characteristic of this cluster is quantifying value of service from service recipients through surveys. A less common, but very valuable approach to collecting information from these stakeholders is through focus groups. This facilitated, face-to-face process allows for more in-depth and thoughtful answers from service recipients. The recipient responses can provide more detailed explanations than a survey, and the information provided is valuable in the analysis of a service.

**Infrastructure-Management Centered.** Assessment in this area focuses on leadership, decisions, and the decision-making process within the operation. It involves an assessment of areas such as staffing, staff development, and cross-office functionality. It may extend beyond the sponsored programs operation to the institutional infrastructure, encompassing areas at the departmental, school and/or college, and central areas.

**Strategic Centered.** Strategic planning and goal setting is normally an outcome of operational assessment. However, the strategic-centered focus in the assessment process looks at how effectively the operation is connected to its environment, both internal and external to the institution, and how the operation identifies and responds to emerging issues. This type of assessment may include the examination of a variety of broad aspects, such as connectivity to national sources of information about changing policy or regulation, as well as connectivity to stakeholders within the institution for ongoing feedback, both informal and formal, on emerging issues or concerns.

Assessments do not need to be comprehensive for the entire operation; nor do assessment activities need to be driven from the top down. Assessment can be initiated and conducted at any level of the operation. In many respects, the self-audit and self-review initiated by an individual or team within the larger operation is an effective approach to staff accountability and to building self-awareness of issues and identifying opportunities for enhancements. These self-assessments can provide an opportunity for team-building and for staff to learn or enhance numerous skills integral to the assessment process, such as project management, data analysis, report writing, and communication.

However, much like the child’s fresh eyes on the emperor’s clothes, an external evaluator participating in the assessment brings fresh perspectives, best practices, and a level of objectivity. A range of external evaluators can be involved in the evaluation process. Within the institution, this may include members of your service recipient groups (most often faculty), individuals from related offices, and senior administrators. All of these individuals bring important perspectives to the process. However they also can bring elements of politics, personal biases, and lack of expertise in sponsored programs administrative requirements. Peers in sponsored programs from outside the institution bring the necessary expertise and knowledge of the area, as well as an understanding of many of the factors and regulations that drive policies and procedures.

Sponsored programs operations are a critical area of the university, and there are few others that undergo greater scrutiny from such diverse angles and perspectives. We are subject to critical examination from our faculty, researchers, department chairs, senior administrators, department and central office colleagues, auditors, and sponsors. The list goes on. This level and type of scrutiny is a healthy vehicle for receiving feedback, but should be viewed within its appropriate context and with the understanding that those offering the observations may not have a full picture of what we do or knowledge of the regulatory parameters in which we carry out our jobs. Implementing a periodic assessment that utilizes several or all of the clusters highlighted in this article provides our offices with a solid foundation for decisions, for strategic planning and goal setting, and for answering the important question, “How do your clothes look?”

Peggy S. Lowry is Co-Editor of the NCURA newsletter and is a member of the Professional Development Committee. Peggy is the Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs and Compliance at Oregon State University.
We’ve Got a Negotiated Rate Agreement—Now What?

by Cathy Snyder

After endless hours of work and stress while preparing your Facilities and Administrative (F&A) cost rate proposal, you finally have it….the Negotiated Rate Agreement! Some want to frame it, while others never want to see it again. I personally just wanted to sit and stare at it. As I did so, I felt many emotions...mostly relief that it was finally over (at least for a few years anyway). But somewhere in the back of my mind I knew I was not done. I knew that much work was still ahead….implementing the negotiated rates. What needed to be considered? Well, let’s see…..

Notify Pre-Award Office
The pre-award office needs to be involved as quickly as possible. They can be the conduit to adjusting rates on out-going proposals until broad communication of the new rates occurs. They can assist with the ongoing communication efforts. They can ensure that contracts contain proper language for adjusting rates. They will be your best friend in this endeavor.

Fixed Rates for the Life of the Sponsored Agreement
Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21 G7a states that negotiated rates in effect at the time of the initial award are to be used throughout the life of the sponsored agreement until the project is renewed on a competitive basis. If the life of the sponsored agreement extends beyond the negotiated rate agreement in effect, then the negotiated rate for the last year of the sponsored agreement shall be extended through the end of the sponsored agreement. For example, let’s say your institution negotiated a rate agreement that includes a 1% increase each fiscal year, going from 49% to 51%. You receive a 5 year NIH award with non-competitive continuation years. Your award should reflect the following rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>F&amp;A Rate Agreement</th>
<th>5 Year NIH Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>49% Predetermined</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>50% Predetermined</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>51% Predetermined</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 51% rate applies to years 04 and 05 regardless of what rates (increase or decrease) are negotiated for those years.

So, how is this to be implemented? Does your accounting or pre-award system have enough information to determine which agreements would maintain the same F&A rates and which agreements require a change? If not, it may be a manual process to review the agreements on a project by project basis. If possible, add additional attributes or some type of coding to the general ledger system that provides specific, detailed information about the award to avoid the manual process in the future. Updating those attributes can be a monumental task, but if the attributes are properly assigned as new projects are set up, future year rate implementations can be a breeze by just running a few queries.

OMB Circular A-21 G7b states that if a sponsored agreement is awarded in a year that the institution is on a provisional rate, the rate applied to the award can be adjusted once the F&A rate is negotiated and approved by the cognizant agency. Sounds great, right? Well, let’s see….• If my rates went up, the agencies (for the most part) will not award additional dollars on projects already awarded, so the only way to recover the additional F&A costs is to take away from the direct costs. You don’t think the Principal Investigator would mind, do you?
• What if it took me two years to negotiate my rates? Besides it being a career limiting moment, I would also have many projects already totally spent and closed. If my rate went up, I would not even have the option there of taking from the PI. If my rate went down, you are dealing with adjusted financial status reports (FSR) and possible non-recovery. [Tip: If it does take some time to negotiate your rates, try to negotiate any increased/decreases in future years….not what has already passed. For years past, keep those rates at your provisional rate. It will save you an accounting nightmare!]

Something else to consider in the above scenario is the rate that you would apply if, for example, Year 01 was not fully spent and carried forward to Year 02. If the rate increases as in this scenario, would your institution apply the higher rate to the carryforward dollars and take from the PI’s direct dollars or waive the differential?

Grant vs. Contract
Your negotiated rates can be adjusted on grants per your rate agreement as appropriate given the above A-21 constraints. Contracts, however, are a different story. It all depends upon the language in the contract as to whether or not you can adjust the rate during the contract period. [Tip: When negotiating your F&A rates, keep the pre-award office informed so that the appropriate language can be incorporated into contracts as needed.] If the contract language does not allow a change to your rate and your rate is increasing, you will not be able to recover those additional costs until the contract is renewed.

Federal vs. Non-Federal
Does your institution charge a different F&A rate for federal projects vs. non-federal projects? Of course, you cannot charge more than your negotiated F&A cost rates to federal projects, but the Federal government would not prohibit you from charging more to non-federal sponsors. So what do you charge your non-federal projects? Does your institution charge the same rate for federal and non-federal sponsors? If you charge a different rate for non-federal projects, are they clearly identified in your accounting system to ensure proper treatment and how do you implement these changes? What is included in your non-federal rate? Are all non-federal projects treated the same?

Changes in Types of Rates
What if you have to deal with new types of rates in addition to the percentage changing? This can add another layer of complexity to implementing the new rates. In our last negotiations, Vanderbilt University added a couple of different types of rates in an effort to enhance cost recovery.

• We first added a vicinity rate to our off-campus research rates. That rate includes the administrative and library components and is applied to projects that are conducted within 50 miles of campus. Our off campus rate that is further than 50 miles only includes the administrative components as those projects would be too far to benefit from our libraries.
• We also added the uncapped rate for DoD contracts and sub-contracts per DFARS 231.303.

Being able to quickly identify these types of projects in your accounting system is crucial to an easy transition of rates.

continued on page 27
Our Regional Meeting in Portland, Maine was a huge success. The Program Committee put together a great educational program and scheduled in some fun, which included a Portland Sea Dogs (AA affiliate of the Boston Red Sox) victory over the NY Yankees AA affiliate on Monday evening and a lobster dinner on Tuesday. On behalf of the Regional, I want to thank the Program Committee for their hard work in making the meeting a success. I also want to thank Region I’s very own, the NCURABLES, for providing our music entertainment Tuesday evening. A special thanks to Ed Herran, NCURA National Treasurer, for his presence during the entire meeting.

As is tradition, our Regional Awards were presented at the Meeting. Louise Griffin, from the University of Massachusetts - Lowell, was the recipient of the 2006 Merit Award. The award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the field of research administration in the New England Region of NCURA. The Bernard McLane Memorial Travel award was presented to Jennifer Hayek from Yale University. The award provides $500 for expenses associated with the Spring Meeting. Congratulations to both.

We recently finished up another successful RADG season on June 13. Thank you to Mark Daniel (Dana-Farber), Steve Dowdy (MIT), Scott McNeal (Partners Healthcare) and Barbara Seigel (Whitehead Institute) for their presentations on the Grants.gov initiative at the recent RADG. Also, I am pleased to announce that we have extended our RADG contract with the John Hancock Conference Center for another year. Our first RADG of the new season be held October 5, 2006.

I hope everyone has a great summer and I look forward to seeing each of you in the Fall when our events pick up again.

Gary Smith is the Chair for Region I and Administrative Director for Research in the Department Of Surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital. He can be reached at (617) 726-4208 or e-mailed at gsmith4@partners.org.

We’ve just finished another successful Region II Spring Meeting in beautiful Galloway, New Jersey and are already planning next year’s meeting in Rochester, New York. Program Chair, Martin Williams, William Paterson University, and Co-Chair Brenda Kavanaugh, University of Rochester, have pulled together their 2007 Program Committee and are hard at work. The dates for the meeting in Rochester will be May 5-8, 2007. Any topic suggestions for sessions, workshops, etc. will be welcome and you can contact Martin at williamsm@wpunj.edu.

Two big announcements will be coming out this summer. First, our volunteer coordinator and Chair-elect, Ruth Tallman, Lehigh University, will be calling for nominations (and self-nominations) for the positions of Chair-elect, Treasurer-elect and NCURA Board Member. Please take a moment to think about people you know who would be good choices for these important leadership roles. Keep in mind, Region II will maintain its vitality only if we keep an active membership. Get involved by contacting Ruth at rt01@lehigh.edu.

Second, we will soon be sending out an e-blast to announce the availability of Travel Awards to attend the National Meeting November 5-8, 2006 in Washington, D.C. The Travel Awards will provide reimbursement of travel, registration and hotel expenses up to $1,000. Nominees must be research administrators from Region II who have never attended an NCURA national meeting. More details will be forthcoming but start thinking of nominees now.

Please feel free to contact me with any concerns, questions, or suggestions you may have about the Region at cwwilliam@orpa.rochester.edu.

Cheryl K. Williams is the Chair of Region II and serves as Senior Research Administrator in the Office of Research and Project Administration at the University of Rochester.

The Region III annual meeting in beautiful Miami Beach was a big success. We again experienced record registrations for both the workshops and the conference. Much of this credit goes to Michelle Vazin, Vanderbilt University, who, as Chair-elect, organized a great conference and had an excellent program committee consisting of Scott Blackwood, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Dawn Boatman, University of North Florida; Tricia Callahan, Western Kentucky University; MJ Carver West, University of North Carolina at Wilmington; Michelle Joy Powell, Georgia Institute of Technology; Tommy Coggins, University of South Carolina; Brain Farmer, East Carolina University; Cathy Snyder, Vanderbilt University; Jill Frazier Tincher, University of Miami; Mo Valentine, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. In addition, we wish to thank Mo Valentine for her efforts in handling the record registrations and keeping the regional finances in the black. We were blessed with several sponsors but specifically wish to thank [again] the University of Miami for serving as the inaugural Host Institution and for the following institutions who provided support: Florida International University, Florida Memorial University, and NOVA Southeastern University.

Herbert "Chuck" H. Chermside III has suddenly passed away. He retired from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2004 as Emeritus Director of Sponsored Programs. More recently he served as Executive Director for the Research Administrators Certification Council. Chuck was well known in the research community for his advocacy of training and certification. He will be greatly missed.

David Richardson is the Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration, Virginia Tech.
Region IV
Mid-America

Region IV just completed a successful Spring Meeting in Grand Rapids, MI, April 29 – May 2, 2006. The baton was passed from outgoing chair Heather Offhaus (University of Michigan Medical School) to our new chair Diane Barrett (University of Wisconsin – Madison). At the Region IV Business Meeting, a new bylaw was passed to establish a Treasurer-elect position who will train for one year under the current Treasurer before taking on the two-year term as Treasurer. Pamela Vargas, Director of Sponsored Programs, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the Air Force Institute of Technology, was named the recipient of the NCURA Region IV Distinguished Service Award at the Spring Meeting. This award recognizes NCURA members who have performed exceptional service in the field and is bestowed only during those years when a nominee has met a considerable set of requirements, including having at least five years experience in the field of research administration, serving as a regional or national officer or as chair of a committee at the national level, and making presentations and publishing articles in the field.

Speaking of publishing articles, check out the latest Research Management Review (RMR) Conference in Portland, Oregon, August 20-22. Region IV has a number of its members contributing as faculty to the conference:

Diane Barrett, University of Wisconsin-Madison, on Fundamentals of PRA

Beth Seaton and Jill Marshall, Western Illinois University, on Pathway to Research Compliance at PUIs

Terry May, Michigan State University, on Responsible Conduct of Research

James Casey, Cardinal Strich University, on Strengthening Collaboration between the University and Industry

Kristen Yehl, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, on Development, Revision, and Submission of Budgets

Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan Medical School, on Compliance Issues in Preaward

Region IV members are also participating in the SPA II conferences coming up in St. Louis, MO in July and Burlington, VT in August. Kim Moreland (University of Wisconsin-Madison) and Mary Ellen Sheridan (University of Chicago) will be among the SPA II faculty.

It's going to be a busy summer!

Diane Barrett is the Region IV Chair and is the Assistant Director, Pre-award Services at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

REGION V
Southwestern

The Region V Spring meeting held in Austin, Texas was a huge success! Thanks to everyone who helped put the program together. A special thanks goes out to the Program Committee, Pat Myrick, UT Arlington, Barbara Rodela, UT Austin and Reva Rogers UTMB Galveston, what an outstanding program! I would also like to thank Rochelle Athey, who was on the original program committee, but changed jobs and moved to Los Vegas a week before the meeting!! We all missed you at the meeting and hope you are enjoying your new job.

Another special thank you is reserved for Scott Erwin for all of his help along the way. Scott has been an outstanding Treasurer for Region V and will certainly be a great Vice Chair for the Region.

We had 143 registrants for the spring meeting and of those 8 were new members.

For those members who were unable to attend the meeting, I am please to announce the outcome of our recent elections:

Vice Chair/Chair-elect: W. Scott Erwin, Texas State University

Treasurer: Gail Davis, Lamar University

Regional Executive Committee Members at Large:
Alicia Brossette, Southern Methodist University
Gary Carter, Baylor University
Beth Cammarn, University of Texas Medical Branch
Gail Davis, Lamar University
Scott Davis, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

I will be scanning in all the evaluations from the Spring meeting and sending them out to all of the presenters in the next few weeks.

Our next Spring meeting will be held in Arlington, Texas at the Wyndham Hotel in April 2007. If you are interested in presenting, being a moderator or volunteering for this meeting please contact Scott Erwin at w10@txstate.edu. It is never too early to start thinking about presenting!

As the new Chair of Region V, I would like to thank Govind Narasimhan, UTMB Galveston, for all the help he has given me over the last year and for his service to Region V over the past two years.

Vicki Cox is the Chair of Region V and serves as Administrator for the Department of Radiology at Baylor College of Medicine.

REGION VI
Western

Dear Region VI,

What a wonderful meeting we had! By all accounts, the 2006 NCURA Region VI/VII spring meeting at the Kauai Beach Hotel and Resort in Lihue, Hawaii was a tremendous success. There were 278 attendees (270 research administrators and 8 Federal representatives), and 128 workshop enrollees. Many of the presentations are now on the Regional website. Our thanks go to the Region VI/VII IT team – Dan Nordquist, Washington State University; Monte Sutton, Washington State University; Brian Christian, University of New Mexico – and to the many panelists and presenters. Please see: http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura/announce.asp. The range of workshops, panels and discussion groups is testimony to the hard work of all those who worked so hard in planning and supporting the meeting, and in giving workshops and presentations, convening panels, and leading discussion groups.

After discussion over several years, the regional by-laws have been amended. As approved by a vote of the Region VI members in April 2006, the Secretary/Treasurer and Secretary/Treasurer-elect positions have been split into four separate offices: Treasurer, Secretary, Treasurer-elect and Secretary-elect. Additionally, the language on elections was changed to add a section on handling tie votes. The by-laws also now indicate that the Nominating Committee is to be appointed by April 1 of each year to allow sufficient time to complete the nominating and election of new regional officers prior to the annual National meeting in early November. Finally, the Awards Committee is now a standing rather than ad hoc committee.

continued on page 15
Faculty Charged 100% To Sponsored Programs
Another Compliance Risk?

on sponsored programs for which faculty are named as an investigator with no effort also represents a compliance risk.

Mitigating the Risk

Before describing possible solutions to mitigate risk it is important to recognize that taking these corrective actions will not be an easy task, regardless of the approach. It may create a funding issue at the department or school level and while this is not a valid reason for non-compliance, it will complicate the resolution of the compliance risk.

Understanding the magnitude of this risk is the first step in mitigating this compliance risk. This is done by running reports from your institution’s effort or payroll system to determine how many faculty are being paid 100% from sponsored programs. It is also important to determine which faculty will be included in the report. In addition to traditional tenure track faculty, many research universities have research faculty positions that are not eligible for tenure. Although some research faculty may not be involved in proposal writing it is advisable to include these positions in your assessment because it is likely that some do engage in proposal writing. If your institution included research faculty in the 3.6% allowance in the development of the departmental administration pool for your institutions F&A proposal then this must be considered in mitigating this risk.

Once you have completed a report of faculty charged 100%, you will need to work with your institutions research leadership to develop a plan for reviewing and reducing the percentage charged for those faculty involved in proposal writing. Many research universities have already developed monitoring processes that periodically review the effort of faculty charged greater than some predetermined percentage. Most seem to be reviewing faculty charged greater than 90% although some are reviewing at lesser percentages. These reviews may include discussions with appropriate departmental officials or faculty depending on how your university operates. The discussions should be aimed at determining if adjustments in effort should be made to account for proposal writing.

How should the effort be adjusted for faculty charged 100% that are involved in proposal writing? This will depend on multiple factors and there is no clear guidance. If the 3.6% has been claimed for faculty as a part of your institutions F&A rate calculation then auditors may argue that the reduction should be at least 3.6% for all faculty included in this calculation. Since the 3.6% is an allowance it was intended to cover a reasonable amount for this activity spread across all faculty in the calculation. Stated another way, some faculty would be expected to be over the 3.6% while others would be under. A reasonable approach is to consider the amount of proposal writing that occurred during the effort certification period and account for the effort accordingly.

Faculty teaching of regular undergraduate and graduate courses must be accounted for in faculty effort and included as a part of faculty effort as instruction. Faculty charged 100% to sponsored programs should not be teaching courses unless the course is approved as a part of a sponsored instruction project. Also, faculty charged 100% to sponsored projects should not be serving on university committee(s) as these activities should be included as university funded activities and included as a part of the institutional base salary.

What about those instances where a faculty member provides guest lectures, teaches a course that requires an insignificant amount of effort or serves on a university committee that only meets a few times in accomplishing its mission? Again, there is no clear guidance for these situations. The safest compliance position is to count these activities; however, it may be difficult to obtain faculty recognition of these activities when considering effort. A-21 recognizes the concept of reasonability in effort reporting. Therefore, a good strategy for dealing with these types of activities is to carefully define by policy that effort which is considered insignificant for effort reporting purposes. Care should be taken during monitoring of effort to ensure that these types of activities are questioned and documented so that a clear audit trail is created.

Instances where faculty are listed as an investigator with no effort also need to be considered in mitigating compliance risk. To understand why these projects need to be considered it is important to review a clarification to A-21 which was dated January 5, 2001. The portion dealing with effort reads:

“In addition, most Federally-funded research programs should have some level of committed faculty (or senior researchers) effort, paid or unpaid by the Federal Government. This effort can be provided at any time within the fiscal year (summer months, academic year, or both). Such committed faculty effort shall not be excluded from the organized research base by declaring it to be voluntary uncommitted cost sharing. If a research program research sponsored agreement shows no faculty (or senior researchers) effort, paid or unpaid by the Federal Government, an estimated amount must be computed by the university and included in the organized research base. However, some types of research programs, such as programs for equipment and instrumentation, doctoral dissertations, and student augmentation, do not require committed faculty effort, paid or unpaid by the Federal Government, and consequently would not be subject to such an adjustment.”

It is clear from this statement that faculty effort must be assigned to most federally funded research projects. Although not stated, if this concept applies to federal programs it would not be surprising to see auditors extend this to non-federal programs and these should be considered when monitoring faculty effort.

Conclusion

Effort reporting has been the focus of many audits and many compliance efforts over the past few years. Many articles have been written on this topic during this time and this article has covered one small and sometimes overlooked area. Taking the steps as outlined above is yet another step in ensuring compliance in effort reporting.

Jerry Fife is the NCURA Immediate Past President and serves as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research Finance, Vanderbilt University.
NCURA has a well defined structure of governance with a Board of Directors setting policy and direction for the organization, while three standing committees are charged with the task of implementing those policies. The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (N&LDC) is one of those three standing committees reporting to the Board (Professional Development and Financial Management being the other two). It performs the functions of identifying, recognizing and developing future leaders for the organization. Specifically, the N&LDC is responsible for 1) soliciting and slating candidates for NCURA’s elected offices, 2) developing future leaders for NCURA, and 3) managing the recognition and awards program. The Committee is regionally balanced with each region nominating two individuals to serve on the N&LDC and the Board selecting one of these individual to serve a two-year term. The Chair is nominated by the President and confirmed by the Board.

The traditional role of the Committee and the one most closely identified with it is the selection of individuals to run for NCURA’s elected offices. The Committee is charged with slating two candidates for each elected office. The candidates are chosen from a pool of nominees submitted by the general membership. This year, the slate will include candidates for Vice President/President-elect and two At-Large Board Members.

The N&LDC also coordinates NCURA’s awards program which includes: the Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award, considered NCURA’s most prestigious honor, given annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the profession of research administration; the Distinguished Service Award, given annually to up to five individuals who have made significant contributions to NCURA; and the Joseph Carrabino Award, awarded to a federal employee who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either through a singular innovation or by a lifetime of service.

In addition to the achievement awards, the Committee chooses recipients of the Catherine Core Minority Travel Awards, a program that supports travel to the NCURA annual meeting for up to four individuals from underrepresented groups who would not otherwise be able to attend this conference. In selecting recipients, the N&LDC considers whether or not the institution will sustain that individual’s participation in NCURA, the level of the institution’s commitment to underrepresented groups, and the commitment of the individual to research administration.

It is likely that the majority of NCURA members think mostly about the “N” in the N&LDC, but the “LD”, Leadership Development, aspect of the committee’s charge has become very prominent in the Committee’s responsibilities as evidenced by its oversight of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute (LDI). The LDI is designed to help identify and develop leaders for NCURA and the profession of research administration. Over the past several years, the LDI has evolved into a year-long program featuring a rigorous curriculum that includes an intense two day retreat focused on leadership training. The LDI will graduate its fourth class in November.

The N&LDC is committed to providing an opportunity for any member who wishes to participate in the governance of NCURA. To meet this challenge, the Committee needs the active involvement of all our members. Contact your representative on the N&LDC or the national office with your ideas and suggestions. Your involvement is what makes NCURA a thriving organization.

The current Committee members are: Louise Griffin (Region I), Betty Farbman (Region II), Bonnie Bruno (Region III), David Lynch (Region IV), Judy Cook (Region V), Pamela Webb (Region VI), and Tim Edwards (Region VII). Tommy Coggins serves as the N&LDC Chair along with Chris Hansen (Vice Chair), and Jerry Fife (NCURA Immediate Past President) acts as the liaison to the Board.

Thomas Coggins is the Chair of Nominating and Leadership Development Committee and serves as the Director, Office of Research Compliance, University of South Carolina.

Noteworthy!

Milestones

At the beginning of this year, after 37 years, Richard J. McNeil Jr. retired from Northeastern University.

In April David W. Richardson was promoted to Assistant Vice President, Sponsored Programs Administration at Virginia Tech.

As of June 30, Richard T. Burke retired as Special Assistant to the Provost, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

Jacqueline Givens has retired from Kennesaw State University where she served as the Director, Office of Sponsored Programs.

On July 17, Robert A. Killoren Jr., Pennsylvania State University, will become the new Executive Director of the Ohio State University Research Foundation and Associate Vice President for Research at the Ohio State University.
NCURA FINANCIALS

2005 VS 2004 Financial Comparison

SERVICE is the heartbeat of NCURA - both to our Members and through excellent Programming and from our Volunteers whose daily efforts make NCURA a great organization! Continued focus in these key areas propelled NCURA to another year of growth and solid financial gains in 2005. Old records continued to be broken as 2005 brought a new high of 1763 members to the Annual Meeting in DC and membership continued strong growth with just over 5500 members by years end, up by 500 over last year. New ground in programming for 2005: Webcasting as an additional option in our Video Workshop Series, Workshops on Export Controls opened with four sold out sessions, and demand for NCURA’s “Fundamentals” program continued to be strong. A Career Center section was added to our website and provided an added benefit to our members. Below are a few highlights:

REVENUES

A new attendance high at the Annual Meeting increased revenue by 12.5%. Special Conferences posted an increase of almost 15% mainly due to the addition of the Export Controls and Embargoes Workshops and the Webcasting option for our Video Workshop Series. Sponsorship income in a side by side comparison shows a dramatic drop that is due to re-classification of sponsorship categories but in actual funds is in fact only a 9% drop over 2004. In 2005 NCURA introduced a new package of sponsorships called year-long partnerships, where previously sponsorship was marketed on a program by program basis. So an additional $32,000 in sponsorships for specific meetings is included in the total revenue for those programs. Publications rose due to a continued strong partnership with Atlantic Information Systems and solid demand for NCURA micrographs and monographs. Regional conferences had another solid year.

Membership in NCURA increased by 500 to close the year at just over 5500. Just a reminder that NCURA is now anniversary-based and as a result a portion of membership dues income is moved to deferred membership income for 2006.

EXPENDITURES

Overall expenditures increased by 11% in 2005. Member services expenses rose due to convening the first Regional/National Leadership Workshop in July. Annual Meeting costs were up 16% related to an increase in events and hotel related costs. Regional conferences expenditures increased 24% due to increases in the number of events and sessions held at their Spring Meetings. Management and General posted an 18% gain due to researching and planning for a new Association Membership Management System that will be installed in early 2006.

“The successes of the year 2005 represent a joint effort by the NCURA Officers and Board, Regional Officers, NCURA Staff, Committees and the countless members that are always willing to contribute. NCURA is a healthy and growing organization that continues to experience success due to careful planning, execution of its strategic plan and the numerous volunteers willing to serve.”

Jerry G. Fife, 2005 NCURA President

2004/2005 EXPENDITURES COMPARISON

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Ed Herran is the Treasurer of NCURA and serves as the Director, Office of Sponsored Projects for Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Charles Ells, Director of Finance, NCURA.
Members are asked to vote for the Vice President/President-elect and two At-Large Board Members. The N&LDC had a group of highly qualified individuals and they thank each one of them for their willingness to step forward and serve NCURA.

When voters receive the call to enter the electronic “polling booth,” they will see the following candidates presented, along with their resumes/biographical sketches and a statement of their goals and objectives:

**Vice President/President-elect:**
- Edward Herran
- David Mayo

**At-Large Member Board of Directors:**
- Penny Cook
- Marti Dunne
- Dan Nordquist
- David Richardson

Elections are open for 30 days after the polls open on August 1st. Thank you in advance for voting!

The 2006 Nominating and Leadership Development Committee
- Thomas Coggins, Chair
- Christina Hansen, Vice Chair
- Louise Griffin, Region I
- Betty Farbman, Region II
- Bonnie Bruno, Region III
- David Lynch, Region IV
- Judy Cook, Region V
- Pamela Webb, Region VI
- Timothy Edwards, Region VII
- Jerry Fife, Ex Officio

Regional Corner continued

**REGION VI (continued)**

**Western**

By the time you read this the Regional Nominating Committee (Linda Patton, California State University, Fullerton (Chair); Joyce Freedman, University of California-San Francisco; and, Terry Manns, California State University, Sacramento) will have identified a slate of candidates for Regional Offices. The election will take place in September. Please watch for it.

This year’s National NCURA meeting is scheduled for November 5-8, 2006 in Washington, D.C. At the spring business meeting, Region VI decided to fund two awards to support travel to the NCURA 2006 Annual Meeting. Each of these awards will provide a research administrator from within the Region VI geographic area who has never attended an NCURA meeting (either Regional or National) with up to $600 for expenses associated with transportation, hotel and food costs associated with the meeting. Specific information about applying for a travel award and the nomination form will be posted to the Region VI website soon.

Nancy Daneau, California Institute of Technology, and the rest of the Region VI ad hoc Committee on Membership and Volunteerism are planning dinner groups on Monday night. If you are new to NCURA or have just rejoined after an absence, please think about reserving Monday night for this Dutch-treat event so you can meet others and learn about the region, its activities and volunteer opportunities. Please watch the Regional website for more information about this event as November draws near.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer.

*Ann Pollack is the Chair of Region VI and serves as the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Office of Research Administration, University of California-Los Angeles.*

Hello Region VII,

I want to begin this Regional Corner by thanking all of you who volunteered, presented, and assisted with the coordination of various aspects of the spring meeting in Kauai, Hawaii. The program committee for this meeting truly brought together a breadth of knowledgeable representatives from various universities and the federal agencies to provide current information on numerous topics. This meeting competed with record breaking attendance of the Joint Region VI/VII Spring meeting in San Francisco in April of 2004. Thank you to everyone for making this meeting a success!

Within the next couple of months, Region VII will be sending out a call for nominations for the Chair and a Member-At-Large position. I would appreciate the membership taking the time to consider nominating one of your colleagues or yourself for one of these vital positions. NCURA is a leading organization that provides diversified professional development opportunities and this is your chance to be part of the leadership of your profession. I encourage you to get involved in your region at all levels, as those opportunities and experiences will further enhance your knowledge of the organization and expand your professional network.

Have you seen it? Seen what? The preliminary program for the NCURA 48th Annual meeting is out! It’s not too early to mark your calendar or register for the NCURA Annual Meeting which will take place November 5-8, 2006 in Washington, D.C. The preliminary program is available at the following link: [http://www.ncura.edu/conferences/48/](http://www.ncura.edu/conferences/48/).

Have a great summer!

*Josie Jimenez is the Chair of Region VII and is an Associate Director in the Office of Grants and Contracts at New Mexico State University.*
**OIG Draft Guidance Withdrawn**

In November 2005, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of DHHS published for comment a “Draft Compliance Program Guidance for Recipients of PHS Research Awards.” Although most of us lauded its goals, we also noted its flaws, i.e., it was overly prescriptive, applied only to PHS funding and had a “one size fits all” approach to compliance. The response from the PHS awards-recipients community has apparently convinced the OIG to rethink its approach. On June 7, an HHS Press Release announced that the National Science and Technology Council’s Research Business Models Subcommittee will establish an inter-agency initiative to develop voluntary compliance guidelines for recipients of Federal research funding from all agencies across the Federal Government. Go to http://oig.hhs.gov/publications/pressmaterials.html for the 6/7/06 Press Release.

**ORI Model Policy Being Revised**

From its June 2006 Newsletter: ORI expects to publish its revised model policy for responding to allegations of research misconduct for public comment this summer. The revised policy will offer a model that institutions may use to implement the PHS Policies on Research Misconduct (42 C.F.R.Part 93) that became effective June 16, 2005. Following the comment period, the model policy will be further revised to incorporate appropriate comments. After the final model policy is published, ORI will begin to review institutional policies for compliance with the new regulation. http://ori.dhhs.gov/documents/newsletters/

**Upcoming Events:**
Office for Human Research Protection:
September 25-26, 2006

Office of Research Integrity:
September 14-15, 2006
Statistics, Images, and Perceptions of Truth: Detecting Research Bias and Misconduct, Birmingham, AL (Co-sponsor: University of Alabama Birmingham)

September 28-29, 2006
New Capabilities, Emerging Issues and Responsible Conduct in Data Management, Baltimore, MD (Co-sponsor: University of Maryland-Baltimore)

Marti Dunne is a member of the Compliance Neighborhood Committee and Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and Administration at New York University.

**John Carfora**
Chair of NCURA’s Commission on International Research Administration, recently spoke about university research administration in the United States to a group of scholars and research administrators from the Georgian National Science Foundation (http://www.gnsf.ge/eng/about.htm), and below is some timely background:

**Establishment of the Georgian National Science Foundation:**
http://www.gnsf.ge/eng/index.htm

The Georgian National Science Foundation (GNSF) is a Public Legal Entity established by Presidential Decree # 653 in July 17, 2005 to promote the progress of science by funding state scientific grants.

Governing Bodies of GNSF are represented by: (1) Science Board, (2) Director, and (3) Staff. The Science Board includes scientific and public authorities; establishes the overall policies and oversees the activities, endorses the budget and the report of its implementation, distributes the scholarships, bonuses and fees; represents the results and recommendations of the activities of Foundation to the President of Georgia; publishes the detailed information of scientific and technological development.

The mission of the Foundation is to allocate grants from State Budget on the basis of open, transparent and free competitions.

**John Carfora is Chair of NCURA's Commission on International Research Administration, Chair of the International Neighborhood and Director, Office for Sponsored Programs at Boston College.**

**NIH submissions through Grants.gov: June 1 Aftermath**

Now that we’ve had an opportunity to submit REAL NIH research grant applications (R03s, R21s, R34s) through Grants.gov with the new SF424 R&R forms, we’ve discovered MORE common errors: http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/avoiding_errors.htm.

**A few highlights:**
Commons PI User ID: this is critical! It must be inserted in the credential field in the Senior/Key Person section for the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI).

**PDF criteria:**
- Disable security settings. If a document is protected for the sake of an electronic signature, NIH won’t be able to open the document.
- A 0-byte attachment is invalid.
- Do not submit a PDF with editable fields.

**Louise Rosenbaum**

**by Louise Rosenbaum**

NIH submissions through Grants.gov: June 1 Aftermath

Now that we’ve had an opportunity to submit REAL NIH research grant applications (R03s, R21s, R34s) through Grants.gov with the new SF424 R&R forms, we’ve discovered MORE common errors: http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/avoiding_errors.htm.

**A few highlights:**
- Disable security settings. If a document is protected for the sake of an electronic signature, NIH won’t be able to open the document.
- A 0-byte attachment is invalid.
- Do not submit a PDF with editable fields.
• NIH will not accept PDFs with special characters in the file name (e.g., brackets).
• Scanned documents of text should not be uploaded, however a scanned, signed letter is better than one with an electronic signature that needs protection.

Human subjects: If the research is non-exempt, be certain to address all relevant areas.

Managing page limitations: (for R-series applications that require upload of four separate PDFs for the research plan): Marcia Hahn of NIH recommends creating a single document for the research plan which complies with the page limitations, then create the four separate PDFs. A warning may be generated by white space at the end of each PDF, but, “If the applicant has stayed within the required page limits before separating the pieces, then this warning can be ignored and the application will proceed through the process”.
Marcia Hahn advised, “The only time the page limit validation is strict is when separate uploads are not required. One example of that is for Conference Grants (R13s). In the case of R13s, the entire research plan is attached as a single attachment; therefore, there is no allowance for ‘white space’ for the R13 page limit.”

Insertion of URLs in the research plan is discouraged: From the SF424 R&RD Guide, “All applications and proposals for NIH and other PHS agency funding must be self-contained within specified page limitations. Unless otherwise specified in an NIH solicitation, Internet website addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review because reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites. Moreover, reviewers are cautioned that they should not directly access an Internet site as it could compromise their anonymity.”

Pre-population of fields: It is recommended that forms are completed sequentially to allow pre-population of some fields. Note that the applicant (institutional) address information in section 5 of the cover component pre-populates the PD/PI contact information in section 15 of the same document; action must be taken to provide an alternate PD/PI address.

Updated verification information: No action is required once NIH sends the notification that an application has been accepted. The application will be assigned for review without PI or AOR/SO validation. From the NIH notice: “Although the AOR/SO and PI will no longer need to complete the verification process, NIH/AHRQ strongly encourages applicants to take advantage of the two day window to view assembled grant applications in the eRA Commons...both the AOR/SO and PD/PI will receive e-mail notifications when the application...automatically moves forward in the process after two days.”

Good luck with your future submissions!

Louise Rosenbaum is a member of the Pre-Award Neighborhood committee and is Assistant Director, Office of Sponsored Projects at Dartmouth College.

Departmental Neighborhood

by Valera Pate

The Departmental Neighborhood is working to create a forms and information bank for the resource section of the Departmental Administration Neighborhood. The phrase “reinventing the wheel” is used a lot at NCURA meetings. There is certainly no need for the departmental research administrator to add that to our to-do list. If you have forms or information that you use to organize and monitor your sponsored projects and are willing to share them, please send them to a member of the committee and we will be sure to add them to the “resource” section of the Departmental Neighborhood website. We have recently added a faculty accounting handbook from Georgia Tech, located at http://www.ncura.edu/members/neighborhoods/da.asp. Please stop by and take a look around.

Valera Pate is Chair of the Departmental Administrator Neighborhood Committee and serves as Financial Manager II for the School of Physics at The Georgia Institute of Technology.

PUI (Predominately Undergraduate Institutions) Neighborhood

by Jeanne Ware

With the listserv very quiet as of late, that does not mean we are lounging about by the pool! The PUI recently hosted an Interactive Learning Series (ILS) chat on the basics of export controls and sanction programs. We wish to thank our guest expert, Erica Kropp, Director of Research Administration and Advancement, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. Since PUI activity usually does not involve classified or military technologies, most activity would fall under the three exemptions – Public Domain, Fundamental Research or Education Exclusion. It is vital to make special note of the words “usually” and “most.” The most difficult thing about understanding the rules and laws involved is the uniqueness of every situation.

If you were unable to participate, a Power Point slideshow with important reference links can be found at http://www.ncura.edu/members/neighborhoods/chat/exportcontrols_pui.ppt. The full chat transcript can be viewed at http://www.ncura.edu/members/neighborhoods/chat/exportcontrols_ILS.pdf.

In August the PUI neighborhood will conduct an On Campus interview for posting in August. Do you think someone out there would be a good candidate for the interview? Do you want to know about someone in particular, but didn’t want to ask? Forward your suggestions to Jeanne Ware via email at jware@ncf.edu. The person does not need to be a “big shot” or someone with years and years of experience – but what they do and how they handle situations would be valuable to read about and share.

Jeanne V. Ware serves as Chair of the Predominately Undergraduate Institution Neighborhood Committee and is Director of the Office of Research Programs and Services at New College of Florida.

continued on page 23
NCURA Broadcast News

Season Finale on September 12; March Broadcast Wins Award

The fourth program in the NCURA 2006 Broadcast Series, Technology Transfer for the Research Administrator, will air live on September 12. The workshop, moderated by Connie Armentrout, Director of Technology Licensing at the Monsanto Company, will feature experts Ann Hammersla, Senior Intellectual Property Counsel, MIT; Susan Butts, Director of External Technology, Dow Chemical Company; and Ray Wheatley, Director of Technology Transfer, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

Technology Transfer for Research Administrators will explore what may appear to many, the “mystery” of moving intellectual property off of the campus and into the commercial world. The program provides an overview of the tech transfer process, along with the thought process and the underlying infrastructure needed. Among the wide range of topics covered: the Bayh-Dole Act, the Tax Reform Act of 1986; patents; licenses; options; copyrights; trade secrets; trademarks; research agreements; confidential disclosure agreements and material transfer agreements. The panel will provide some historical background to provide context for the rationale behind government, university and industry collaborations. Participants will gain an increased repertoire of contract language to use in negotiations and have a better understanding of how industry views, reviews, and manages agreements.

As with all NCURA broadcasts, participating institutions can register for the live satellite broadcast feed — highly effective for a large audience, or the new option of streaming video that can be viewed by one or two people at a desk top computer. For those unable to view the program live, DVDs are also available.

NCURA’s March broadcast, Grants.gov: Working towards a Common Vision, recently received awards of distinction for both Multi-Media/Streaming Video and Interactive Video Productions at the 2006 Videographer Awards. This production is now available on DVD.

The line-up for NCURA’s 9th broadcast series will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.
The cost of the full series (all four workshops) remains at the original 1999 fee of $2,800 per campus. To purchase an individual session the cost is $950.00 per campus. All Video Workshops will be aired from 11:30 am – 3:30 pm, Eastern Time. NCURA will transmit a test signal one hour (10:30 – 11:30 am, Eastern Time) prior to air time!

Live: Those institutions that choose the live presentation will receive the handout information, satellite coordinates to receive the show live on their campus, a toll-free telephone number to call in their questions on the day of the broadcast, and a license to tape the shows for future on-campus training.

Unable to receive satellite programming? We will be simultaneously “webcasting” our 2006 NCURA Video Workshop Series, offering Broadband and Dial-up bandwidth video-streaming technology over the internet. Participate in the live broadcast, right from your desk. Webcasting is not recommended for large audience viewing (no more than 3 or 4). You should have a soundcard and headsets/speakers to hear the audio portion of the webcast. If you are not sure which version to subscribe to, please contact NCURA. PLEASE NOTE: Webcasting is meant for one desktop only. Multiple logins will be billed accordingly.

VHS/DVD: Those who select the tape option will receive handout information when they receive their copy of the tape.

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A check or credit card information must accompany registration form. For credit card payments, please complete the information below. Registrations received without payment will not be processed. Please make check payable in U.S. currency to NCURA and send payment and registration to NCURA, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036.

Who Should Subscribe?

Any institution which has training needs, whether they be immediate training through participation in the live broadcast or future needs through the use of a taped broadcast, will benefit from this series.

CANCELLATIONS: Notification of cancellation must be received in writing no later than 14 business days prior to each telecast and are subject to a $75 cancellation fee. Cancellations received after the deadline will not be refunded. You must receive confirmation from NCURA to receive a refund.
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See the next page for information about NCURA’s newest publication:
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SPONSORED RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION: A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

Scores of important questions arise in the day-to-day world of sponsored research. Now, there's one authoritative guide that provides practical answers to questions about managing sponsored programs. Published by NCURA and Atlantic Information Services, Inc., SPONSORED RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Recommended Practices will provide college and university research administrators — and others involved in sponsored programs on campus — with a “living textbook” on the wide range of research management challenges they face each day. It features principles and practices, sample policies and procedures, effective strategies to pursue, critical success factors, and pitfalls to avoid.

Sponsored Research Administration is written by more than 20 of the top sponsored research administrators in the U.S., chosen for their unique expertise in the subject areas covered (see Table of Contents for individual authors) and overseen by Editorial Director Richard P. Seligman, Ed.D., who is responsible for identifying topics for chapters, outlining content, selecting authors and managing the work of the project's Editorial Advisory Panel, including:

- Chair: Richard P. Seligman, Ed.D., Senior Director, Office of Sponsored Research, California Institute of Technology
- Michele M. Codd, Assistant Director, Institute for Software Integrated Systems, Vanderbilt University
- Marti L. Dunne, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and Administration, New York University
- Christina K. Hansen, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Office of Research Administration, University of California, Irvine
- Stephen Hansen, Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

Table of Contents

Foreword
Richard P. Seligman, Ed.D., Senior Director, Office of Sponsored Research, California Institute of Technology

An Overview of Sponsored Research Administration
Julie T. Norris, Director Emeritus, Office of Sponsored Programs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Organizational Models
Elizabeth Mora, Associate Vice President, Sponsored Programs Administration, Harvard University

Communication
Kim Moreland, Director, Research and Sponsored Programs, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Information Technology
Kenneth G. Forstmeier, Director, Office of Research Information Systems, Pennsylvania State University

Electronic Research Administration
Stephen D. Douds, Assistant Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Training and Education
Pamela A. Webb, Senior Director for Sponsored Research, Stanford University

The Regulatory Environment
Ann M. Holmes, Chief Operating Officer, Center for Advanced Study of Language, University of Maryland, College Park

Research Compliance
Alice Tangredi-Hannon, Institutional Compliance Officer, Office of Institutional Compliance, The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania and Stephen Erickson, Director, Research Compliance and Intellectual Property, Boston College

Indirect (Facilities and Administrative) Costs
Patrick Fitzgerald, Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Intellectual Property
Mary Ellen Sheridan, Associate Vice President for Research, University of Chicago

Special Issues for Medical Schools
Gunta J. Liders, Associate Vice President for Research, University of Rochester

Legal Considerations
Kathleen S. Irwin, Senior University Legal Counsel, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Interactions With Auditors
Denise J. Clark, Director of Research Administration and Finance, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Post-Award Administration
Milton T. Cole, Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, Villanova University

Administering Research Contracts
David J. Mayo, Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Research, California Institute of Technology

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The job of sponsored programs managers brings them into regular contact with citations to federal requirements their colleges or universities must comply with, or face potentially dire consequences. Some are well known (e.g., OMB Circular A-21 or OSHA), others are new (e.g., the 2002 security and bioterrorism law), and many are arcane (e.g., the Anti-Kickback Act of 1986). These wildly diverse requirements have two things in common: (1) failure to comply can be costly for colleges and universities, and (2) they are summarized in REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE: 2005... so sponsored programs managers have one reliable reference book at their fingertips, whenever they need it.

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In 2006, regulators will focus more attention than ever on the diverse group of federal rules that fall under the umbrella of “research compliance.” This collection of rapidly changing government requirements – Can torpedo the reputation of even the most prestigious U.S. universities, Ranges widely from internal business issues (e.g., effort reporting) to grave matters of international security (e.g., select agents missing from your lab), Can have a very sudden impact on your funding and financial well-being, Is the focus of complex rules and penalties from a dozen federal agencies, Is under constant review on Capitol Hill, where political volleyballs like the Patriot Act now have a direct impact on colleges, universities and teaching hospitals.

To help research administrators manage these complicated issues and do their jobs more effectively, NCURA and AIS are offering Report on Research Compliance, a unique three-part service. Full Year Subscription Includes: Weekly e-mail newsletters, Unlimited Web site access, Monthly 12-page print newsletters. For more information, visit www.ReportonResearchCompliance.com.

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Have you read the latest issue of On Campus yet? The FRA Neighborhood interviewed Paul Nacon, National Director, Division of Cost Allocation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Program Support Center. Log onto the neighborhood to read what he had to say. Also now available in the library section are the slides from the FRA VII conference this past spring.

If you missed the online chat on financial closeout issues check out the transcript at http://www.ncura.edu/members/Neighborhoods/chat/financial.pdf.

Got a question? Ask it on the FRA Neighborhood listserv and tap into the knowledge of your colleagues around the country who are facing the same issues. Joining is easy! Head to the FRA Neighborhood homepage and submit your email address under “Join the FRA Neighborhood listserv.” Then be prepared to have answers to your questions at your finger tips.

The FRA Neighborhood Committee is saying goodbye to two of its members, Lori Selby, Washington State University and Kathy Page, Dartmouth College. We wish to thank both for their years of service, hard work, dedication and many contributions to the neighborhood.

Denise Rouleau is Chair of the FRA Neighborhood Committee and is Director, Sponsored Programs Accounting at Brandeis University.

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Sustainable success. It’s the reason why so many respected enterprises turn to the management & technology consultants at BearingPoint. Our consultants in regulatory costing and grants management work with our clients to not only think about the problems at hand but also help them roll up their sleeves and execute direct, practical solutions. For a different kind of success, turn in a new direction. Turn to BearingPoint.

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IS YOUR GRANT CLOSEOUT PROCESS KEEPING UP?

- Have your sponsor invoices fallen behind?
- Are your grant accounts reconciled to your FSRs?
- Do you know the risks and problems due to the backlog of grant closeouts and reporting?
- Is your grant closeout backlog number in the hundreds or the thousands?
- Are you concerned about grant deficits, residual balances or early account set-ups?

Don’t risk serious compliance and financial risks. get a partner who can help. **RACS LLC can reduce your backlog and help minimize backlog in the future.** Our staff is already trained and experienced to manage these outstanding issues.

Put your CFO’s mind at ease with a cost-effective solution, contact Charlie Tardivo at 216-403-8176 or email at grantsresearch@yahoo.com

Your research faculty and grant sponsors will be glad you did.
The MAXIMUS Higher Education Practice, founded in 1985, provides software and consulting solutions to institutions of all sizes. Our specialty is in the area of Federal Grants and Contracts management and Compliance services.

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- Needs and Gap Analysis of current processes
- Review and Develop Policies and Procedures
- ERS web-based, on-line Software
  - Track Key Personnel commitments
  - Facilitate Labor Cost Transfers
  - Flexible Management Reporting
  - Increase Federal Compliance
  - Plan effort to achieve commitment
  - Avoid overcommitments
  - Facilitate budget effort reductions
  - Compare certification to commitments

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- F&A Rate Proposal Development
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- Institutional Costing and Compliance
  - DS-2 Development
  - Fringe Benefit rates
  - Recharge Centers
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  - Other SSFs (specialized service facilities)
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http://highereducation.maximus.com
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Higher Education institutions are under significant pressure to effectively manage the growing demands of the research enterprise. As federal regulations and scrutiny continue to add more burdens and complexities to the research administration environment, institutions are looking for innovative ways to improve compliance while mitigating the impact on the research community.

More and more, institutions are turning to Huron Consulting Group to help them better understand the issues and expectations, clarify the regulations, and improve compliance in all aspects of research administration. Example areas include:

- Clinical Trials
- Compliance Program Development
- Conflicts of Interest
- Effort Reporting
- Export Controls
- Financial Management
- Human & Animal Subjects Protection

For more information regarding our compliance services, please contact one of the following:

Shandy Husmann, 312-583-8757
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Hurun Consulting Group helps clients effectively address complex challenges that arise in litigation, disputes, investigations, regulatory compliance, procurement, financial distress, and other sources of significant conflict or change. The Company also helps clients deliver superior customer and capital market performance through integrated strategic, operational, and organizational change. Hurun provides services to a wide variety of both financially sound and distressed organizations, including Fortune 500 companies, medium-sized businesses, leading academic institutions, healthcare organizations, and the law firms that represent these various organizations.

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Laura Yaeger, a Managing Director in Huron’s Higher Education and Healthcare Practice, has been working with leading research institutions to develop effective compliance programs. Contact Laura at: 312-583-8762 or lyaeger@huronconsultinggroup.com

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We’ve Got a Negotiated Rate Agreement—Now What?

continued from page 9

Ongoing System Changes

Generally, changing your rates does not just happen after your rates have been negotiated. It is an ongoing process that could occur every year for the life of your negotiated rate agreement. A procedure needs to be in place to update your systems as stated in your negotiated rate agreement. Add attributes to your system or find easy ways to identify those projects that require changes. It will make your life much simpler!

Documentation

Are we done yet? We have negotiated the rates and we have implemented them. What is left? It is extremely important to organize and document all work papers, notes, etc. for the just finished calculation, negotiation and implementation. The process is always so rushed and we often (and sometimes never) take the time (when it is fresh on our minds) to document the events, thoughts, and processes. Note the lessons learned from the negotiation and items that were contentious so you can work on them and better prepare for next time. Document ideas you had during the process, but did not implement that you can try next time to enhance the calculation. As tempting as it is...do not throw it all in a pile...inevitably you will need to come back to it at some point and then you may not remember!

The Finale

And so...you successfully made it through negotiations, implementation and the documentation process! Even though you may feel tied in knots at the end of the day...just remember that in the not too distant future...you will get to do it all over again!

Cathy Snyder is Associate Director OCGA, Vanderbilt University.
NCURA Announcements!

FRA VIII Chairs Announced

“It’s an honor to have the opportunity to serve as the program Co-Chair for FRA VIII. I look forward to working with Pat Hawk, Pam Whitlock and the NCURA Staff in developing a fantastic program! FRA VIII promises to be outstanding and will offer interesting and informative program sessions covering the entire spectrum of financial research administration.”

David Richardson is the Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration, Virginia Tech.

Patricia Hawk is the Assistant Director, Sponsored Programs & Research Compliance, Oregon State University.

“The first FRA meeting I attended was FRA III, and I have been very impressed with the growth of each succeeding FRA Conference—growth not only in the depth and breadth of programming, but also in attendance. This growth is a testament to superb program committee work on all of the previous FRA conferences, so I am both flattered and honored to have been asked to be a part of FRA VIII by serving as Co-Chair of the FRA VII Program Committee. The opportunity to work with Pam Whitlock, Dave Richardson, the NCURA Staff and other FRA VIII program committee members is just ‘icing on the cake’!”

FRA VIII
April 1-3, 2007
Gaylord Texan Resort
Grapevine (Dallas), TX

Series of Online Courses Planned

Based on the success of its online Subawards Primer, NCURA is hard at work at developing the next in what it hopes will become a series of such courses. This next course will be a primer on federal contracting which will address topics such as the nature of a contract, the federal contracting process, applicable regulations (i.e., the FAR), contract negotiation, strategies for implementing and managing federal contracts, as well as recognizing and assessing the risks associated with federal contracts. Please stay tuned for more details.

David Mayo, Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Research, California Institute of Technology.

NCURA Announcements!

David Mayo, California Institute of Technology; Nancy Daneau, California Institute of Technology; Bo Bogdanski, Colorado State University; Randy Draper, University of Colorado at Boulder; Dave Richardson, Virginia Tech.