At the Confluence of Creation and Collaboration

ALSO INSIDE: INFORMATION ON NCURA’S 52ND ANNUAL MEETING
On the Cover: I know I am preaching to the choir when I say this, but research administrators are at the confluence of creation and collaboration. This fusion is even more exciting given the unique challenges and issues that colleges and universities face today, particularly in the context of significant budgetary and economic issues.

Through our administrative expertise, we collaborate with our researchers while they create new knowledge and develop global connections. Whether you are involved in finding funding opportunities, proposal development and writing, regulatory compliance, contract negotiation or financial administration, your efforts are central to allowing the research enterprise to function efficiently and ultimately prosper.

This annual meeting issue of NCURA Magazine reflects the different dimensions of our contributions to creation and collaboration. Not only will you find the latest information on the annual meeting and specialized sections such as the neighborhoods, but you’ll find an excellent selection of feature articles that dovetail nicely with the annual meeting theme. James Fortner’s article examines ARRA funding as an opportunity for both collaboration and creativity. The relationship between researchers and pre and post-award offices is essential to our profession, and Kristine Kulage and Ruth Torres talk about how to bridge that gap. David Smelser examines his experience at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville to provide suggestions on how to best write multi-million dollar proposals. Communication is a central component of all our jobs, whether that is done through traditional or non-traditional means; articles by Kerry Peluso and Maria B.J. Chun discuss communication and the collaboration it can enable.

This issue also illustrates a subtle global dimension. Articles by Professor Brian Fitzgerald and his colleagues discuss the Peer-to-Patent Initiative as it is developing in Australia, Japan and the United States; Gretta Rowold discusses export control reform; and the article by John Carfora et. al outlines the recent GUIRR workshop on international research collaborations. Creation and collaboration are truly global goals.

So, enjoy this issue in advance of the annual meeting. Just remember—though our jobs are challenging in the present climate, every day you are making your own contributions to creation and collaboration.

See you in Washington!

James Casey
Senior Editor

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Our Program

The NCURA Peer Review Program is a powerful tool available to assist the senior research administrator and the sponsored programs operations. This program is available to all institutions with NCURA members.

The completely confidential peer review is conducted by a team of nationally recognized research administrators. The review utilizes National Standards that were developed by NCURA. The Standards represent indicators of effective operations in the areas of:

- Proposal Services, Award Acceptance and Initiation,
- Award Management, Research Ethics
- Organizational Structure and Staffing
- Communications, Outreach and Education
- Compliance and Risk Assessment
- Electronic Research Administration

For questions or further information on the NCURA Peer Review Program, contact peerreview@ncura.edu, call: (503) 364-1847 or visit http://www.ncura.edu/content/peer_to_peer_review/.

Our Peer Reviewers

Our peer reviewers are research administrators who are active in the field. They are senior, experienced, and nationally recognized. They have worked at multiple institutions, understand institutional cultures, and recognize today’s challenges facing the research enterprise.

The institutional experience of our peer reviewers ranges through all volumes of funded activity found in sponsored program operations, as example:

- Predominantly Undergraduate
- Emerging Research Institutions
- Research Intensive Institutions
- Major Research Institutions

The NCURA Peer Reviewer understands research administration challenges and can bring that expertise to your institution.

Join our Annual Meeting session to hear about some trends from our peer reviews Monday November 1, 2010, 10:30 am-12:00 “Improving Research Administration Effectiveness: Institutional Trends, Practices, Directions”

Come see us at the Annual Meeting at Booth 315!
Members of the Coeus Consortium have been collaborating officially since 2004, working communally to enhance our many existing features as well as designing significant initiatives like our newest module for Animal Care. Even before the Consortium, Coeus reached out to other institutions to create the best possible IRB module. We know the best ideas are created when the best minds converge.

The Coeus Consortium's convergence with the Kuali Foundation will continue this community connection of collaborative software development. As dedicated research administrators, we know what tools are needed to support our campus initiatives. Join us with our proven model of collaborative enhancement as we venture forth in the open source software arena.

For more information contact Stephen Dowdy, Coeus Program Director at coeus-info@coeus.org
At the Confluence of Creation and Collaboration
Closing in on the 52nd Annual Meeting

To say that we are excited about NCURA’s 52nd Annual Meeting would be a terrific understatement! The myriad bits and pieces – wrapping up the program; double-checking times, speakers, and evaluators; working on special events, food, registration, committee meeting times, the new member breakfast, and receptions and more receptions – are coming together. We have found that the meeting itself is reflective of our theme: It is truly a confluence of collaboration and creation on the part of many individuals.

Yet we might well have called the meeting theme, “At the Confluence of Creation, Collaboration, and Change.” Our world in research administration is one of change. Surely ours is among the most nimble of professions. And while our meeting this year also reflects a few changes, what is not changing is our sense of community. The connections we build with each other is one of the greatest perks of being an NCURA member. These connections occur in different ways: with colleagues who share their tried-and-true solutions; with our federal partners; and through the personal friendships that develop. AM52 will follow tradition and provide many opportunities for these connections.

Welcome Home to the New Hilton

We return home to the beautifully-renovated Washington Hilton with wonderful changes in our gathering space. The small conference rooms have been reconfigured and now have state-of-the-art technology and audiovisual capabilities. The exhibit space has doubled. The pool area has been relocated and totally refurbished. There is a Starbucks in the lobby area and an elegant new bar in the lobby next to the Capital Café, which has also been refurbished and renamed The District Line. All 1,070 guest rooms have been updated. One change that has generated considerable buzz, Ladies, is that there are now 79 bathroom stalls near the meeting areas!

NCURA Tailgate Reunion Kick Off

The annual meeting has always begun with a formal banquet on Sunday night, but AM52 will kick off a bit differently. With much input from the regions, we will gather in the ballroom for the NCURA Tailgate Reunion! We promise an evening of fun and lots of opportunities to mingle. Dress casually and wear your school colors. This event will be an ideal opportunity to connect with old friends and make new ones in an inclusive, relaxed, and enjoyable forum. We will gather by region in the ballroom and, in addition to a few surprises up our collective sleeve, your region’s leadership is hard at work preparing for the regional cheer and mascot competitions.

After the tailgate, wander over to the coffee house for some good old acoustic memories with NCURA’s own Grateful Deadlines.

Keynote Address

We are very excited about our keynote speaker this year. Daniel Pink is the author of the book Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us. In this time of incredible budget constraints, Pink addresses how to use rewards – and how not to use them – to improve performance. Daniel Pink is entertaining and will share fascinating information that will change the way you think about your work and maybe your life.

Regional Reunions

In recognition of the vital role our regions play in the NCURA community, time has been scheduled on Monday after lunch for regional reunions. This format will give the regions a scheduled opportunity to connect with new members and discuss regional matters. Members can expect to be updated on regional initiatives, introduce and welcome new members, and engage the regional membership in conversation about strategic plans, volunteer initiatives, etc. Your regions are there for you, so meet for dessert, and in between the introductions and business, chat about how your regional cheer and mascot were better than all of the others.

Dinner Groups

The ever-popular dinner groups will meet on Monday evening. The NCURA National Office always has a great selection of restaurants from which to choose. The difficulty is making a decision! Menus will be posted early with the sign-up sheets. Most of the restaurants are within a short walking distance, and it is another opportunity to connect with your colleagues and spend some time together while sampling the fare Washington has to offer.

Soul Source and the No-Cost Extensions Farewell Tour

Per tradition, join us on Tuesday night for the 21st anniversary of NCURA’s own house band, Soul Source and the No-cost Extensions. Come rock to “Stick Your F&A Right Here!” as well more traditional rock and roll favorites.

Many of us have grown up as research administrators listening and dancing to this group over the last 20 years. Sadly, as all good things must come to an end, this will be Soul Source’s Farewell Tour. Join us as we thank Steve Smartt and these talented colleagues and friends for their dedication to our entertainment these last two decades, and wish them the best.

See You There!

We know that you, too, are finalizing your plans. It isn’t very far off!
The meeting theme for NCURA’s 52nd Annual Meeting (AM52), “At the Confluence of Creation and Collaboration” represents the interdependent relationship between the researcher and the research administrator. Confluence is simply a coming or flowing together at one point. AM52 workshop and senior forum offerings are designed to complement a combined stream. One stream helps the research administrator grow and develop a sense of mastery in the profession. The other stream leverages the workshop activities, and the expertise that is a part of it, in order to advance the research enterprise at our respective institutions.

We are back at the renovated Hilton and our Sunday workshop schedule! We continue to offer the full-day Pre-award, Post-Award and Departmental Administration Basics so those new to the field will have a solid foundation. We have added a full-day of EAR and Troublesome Terms to delve into these complicated areas. Other offerings include Managing Conflict of Interest, Effort Reporting, Financial Compliance, Negotiation Skills, NIH Proposal Development, Risk Assessment, Subawards and many others! NIH Day and NSF Day have also returned to their full-day Thursday time slot at the Hilton. The workshop offerings are intended to leverage the interdisciplinary programs and sessions that will be underway throughout the Annual Meeting.

Let’s explore just a few of the new AM52 workshops that can help you enhance your potential and advance the research enterprise where you work:

Jilda Garton (Georgia Tech) will lead a workshop on Technology Transfer, Start-ups & Industry Collaborations, designed to examine the complex relationships that arise when universities interact in research projects that involve technology transfer.

Participants will be offered hands-on style learning in the workshop Export Control Reviews at the Proposal and Award Stages. Designed to de-mystify the review process for export control issues that might be lurking in solicitations, RFPs, and proposals, participants will analyze the export control issues from “cradle to grave.”

In the Human Capital track, the workshop Manage Successfully: Office Leadership in Research Administration is designed for the beginner to mid-level manager, and will introduce and develop key concepts of effective management—from vision and planning, to delegation and accountability. The workshop will cover important issues in human resources, training and team building.

For participants with practical experience working with proposal writers, a new NCURA offering is Thinking Like a Grant Reviewer. This workshop will provide practical guidance on how to attain a better score from reviewers and will use interactive approaches to create an insider’s experience of grant reviewing.

Robert Hardy (Council on Governmental Relations) will lead a workshop designed to help participants with the complexities and pitfalls to be aware of in negotiating the data rights terms of federal research agreements: Rights in Technical Data and Software and Data Policies under Federal Grants and Contracts.

In Developing a Good Idea and Good Grantsmanship, Denise Wallen (University of New Mexico) and Jackie Hinton (University of Utah) will explore the many facets of research development and grantsmanship. Attendees will evaluate appropriate funding sources and RFPs, and learn how to plan for and develop grant proposals.

The Complex Issues in International Research Contracting workshop will examine issues in international contracting. Emphasis will be placed on how to assess the importance of particular terms for specific research projects and how to build and communicate positions persuasively during difficult negotiations.

The Annual Meeting offers workshops for all levels of staff. The Sunday schedule has been designed to allow participants to attend a general topic workshop in the morning and then continue the dialogue in a more advanced workshop in the afternoon. Remember that the Basic program level assumes general knowledge and the Intermediate workshops will introduce and develop topics that exceed basic knowledge. Advanced workshops assume mastery of the subject and will focus on more in-depth knowledge. Be sure to check the program level, descriptions and prerequisites to ensure that the workshop you select will meet your knowledge level and needs.

The Senior Forums are intended for administrators responsible for or involved in policy creation. These smaller interactive environments will provide a chance to explore complex topics including: Economic Development Issues, Human Subjects Research Compliance and Being a Good Boss in Tough Economic Times.

These are but a few of the AM52 offerings that are designed to help attendees gain a proficiency in topics of interest to them, as well as, assist them in leveraging their new-found knowledge at their institutions. The field of research administration affords a great opportunity to be closely connected to important research, as well as the ability to positively effect its facilitation. Recognizing the opportunities and actively choosing to create and collaborate are key ingredients that can push us to personal best levels in our jobs.

Ty Helpinstill is Workshop Co-Coordinator and serves as Senior Contract Specialist, Office of Industry Engagement, The University of Texas at Austin.

Georgette Sakumoto is Workshop Co-Coordinator and serves as Administrative Officer, Office of Research Services, University of Hawaii.

This year, NCURA will publish and sell The Research Administrators’ Cookbook with proceeds going to the not-for-profit organization Feed America. Submit your recipes by September 27th to recipes@ncura.edu. Please include your name, institution, and contact information. The Washington Hilton, seen this season on BRAVO’s Top Chef, will provide a panel of judges, including Executive Chef Andre Cote, that will help us select first place winners! So, get cooking!
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2010
7:30 am – 5:00 pm
ON-SITE SERVICE DESK OPEN
NCURA E-CHECK IN

8:30 am – 4:30 pm: FULL DAY WORKSHOPS

WS #1: Pre-award Basics
WS #2: Post-award Basics
WS #3: Departmental Administration Basics
WS #4: Introduction to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)
WS #5: Troublesome Terms from Non-Profits, Foundations and Industry: Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place

8:30 am – Noon: MORNING WORKSHOPS

WS #6: Compliance Issues for Pre-award Administrators
WS #7: Export Controls: Regulatory Overview & Basic Concepts
WS #8: Cost Sharing on Sponsored Projects: Why No Good Deed Goes Unpunished
WS #9: Risk Assessment: Theory to Practice
WS #10: Working with the ITAR: A Hands-on Approach to State Department Export License Applications and Requests
WS #11: Financial Compliance
WS #12: Proposal Development to NIH
WS #13: Service Centers: How to Open and Operate – Legally!
WS #16: Technology Transfer: Start-Ups & Industry Collaborations
WS #17: Manage Successfully: Office Leadership in Research Administration
WS #18: Developing a Good Idea and Good Grantsmanship
WS #19: Subawards – Beyond the Basics

1:00 – 4:30 pm: AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

WS #20: Developing an Effective Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training Program
WS #21: Export Control Reviews at the Proposal and Award Stages

WS #22: Managing Individual and Institutional Conflicts of Interest
WS #23: Subrecipient Monitoring
WS #24: Beyond the Basics: BIS & OFAC Licensing
WS #25: Preparing for Audits: Guidance for Central Office and Departments
WS #26: Thinking Like a Grant Reviewer
WS #27: FAR and Federal Contracting
WS #28: Reviewing and Negotiating MTAs, NDAs, MOUs, IPAs, CRADAs, and OTAs
WS #29: Complex Issues in International Research Contracting
WS #30: PUI and Minority Serving Institutions: Issues and Strategies
WS #31: Developing Training Programs: Multi-Modal Delivery and Assessment
WS #32: Clinical Trials: Practical Solutions for Complex Problems
WS #33: Negotiation Skills for Research Administrators
WS #34: Effort Reporting and Management

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2010
8:30 am – 4:30 pm: FULL DAY WORKSHOPS

WS #35: NIH Day
WS #36: NSF Day

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2010
2:45 – 5:00 pm: SENIOR FORUMS

SF #1: Economic Development Issues
SF #2: Truth and/or Consequences in Human Subjects Research Compliance

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2010
8:30 am – Noon: SENIOR FORUMS

SF #3: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Where Are We Headed?
SF #4: Being a Good Boss in Tough Economic Times

11:15 – 5:00 pm: SENIOR FORUMS

SF #5: Managing Change in Sponsored Programs
With Liberty and Access for All

By Carol Blum

Can we talk? Whether this catch(y)phrase invokes for you the comedienne Joan Rivers or the vocal styling of Tevin Campbell, talking or communicating between investigators and research administrative staff will become increasingly critical in the next few years. New and amended regulations and proposed legislation require close collaboration and cooperation between the scientific and administrative staff of institutions.

Examples abound. The proposed revisions of the Public Health Service (PHS) regulations governing Objectivity in Research, a.k.a. Financial Conflicts of Interest, represent the most obvious need for open and honest communications. Proposed in May 2010 with implementation of a final rule possible in late 2010, the PHS crafts changes that build on accurate and complete disclosure of significant financial interests by PHS-supported investigators. Full disclosure of research-related financial interests and relationships within the thresholds has been the rule, but PHS is shifting responsibility from the investigator to the institution for the determination of whether or not a significant financial interest (with thresholds redefined) constitutes a financial conflict of interest related to PHS-funded research. The institution will be required to sift through the disclosed interests related to institutional responsibilities (also defined) to find those that are PHS related. Most administrators hasten to acknowledge that they will need to confer with the investigator initially as they do a first sort. This regulatory shift is intended to address the problems highlighted by recent Congressional inquiries that demonstrated a need for a more thorough assessment of financial interests and the relationship of those interests to the research.

It is unfortunate that the public perceives that any such relationship or interest will inherently bias research outcomes. This proposed PHS regulatory structure relies as most regulations rely on the honesty and integrity of the investigators. And most regulations recognize that a critical element in assisting investigators achieve compliance is education. The proposed PHS revisions to the financial conflicts of interest include a mandatory training requirement.

It is easier to provide education and monitor investigator compliance when the initial steps in compliance occur at the outset of a funded project’s activities – as in the case of the PHS Financial Conflicts of Interest. It will be more difficult for an institution to meet its compliance obligations through its investigators in those cases where compliance occurs after the activity is complete.

The Federal Research Public Access Act of 2010, first proposed in the Senate by Senator Joseph Lieberman (S 1373, June 2009) and more recently proposed in the House by Representative Michael Doyle (HR 5037, April 2010) and reintroduced by Representative Todd Tiahrt (HR 5253, May 2010), would require each federal agency with extramural research expenditures of over $100 million to develop a public access policy that requires the submission of an electronic version of the agency-funded investigator’s final manuscript that has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal and the replacement of the final published version if the publisher consents to the replacement within 6 months after publication in the journal. But for the timeline – 6 months rather than 12 months – this legislation extends the NIH Public Access Policy to all federal agencies with a $100 million-plus research budget.

The House Oversight and Government Subcommittee held a hearing on July 29, 2010, that, while not linked to specific legislation, vetted the same arguments raised when the NIH Public Access policy was under review at NIH – publishers’ investment in peer-review and publication will be undermined; taxpayers should have access to research results funded with tax dollars. While the arguments are not new, some believe that this issue will continue to surface in this era of transparency and accountability.

The compliance challenge posed by the Public Access Act is that meeting this obligation is entirely dependent on the investigator and is most likely to occur months, even years, after the grant that supported the research is closed. A publication that describes research outcomes is almost exclusively written after the work is complete, and the institution does not monitor nor have a role in the relationship between an investigator and a publisher. In order to attempt to capture or monitor compliance, NIH has begun to notify investigators (and their home institutions) if a publication listed in an application or progress report bibliography or a biographical sketch appears to have required submission to NIH’s PubMed Central and does not have a PubMed Central reference number in the citation. And if the institution fails to comply? First, NIH gives the grantee an opportunity to correct the deficiencies. But, as noted in the NIH FAQ’s, “even if a grantee is taking corrective action, NIH may take proactive action to protect the Federal government’s interests, including placing special conditions on awards or precluding the grantee from obtaining future awards for a specified period, or may take action designed to prevent future non-compliance, such as closer monitoring.”

The National Science Foundation’s (NSF) new Project Outcomes Report requirement poses similar compliance challenges. Required in awards made on/after January 2010, the Outcomes Report must be submitted elec-
tronically via Research.gov within 90 days of the expiration of a grant. This report is a brief summary prepared specifically for the public, describing the nature and outcomes of the project within the context of NSF’s review criteria—the intellectual merit and/or broader impacts of the work—written for a lay reader. NSF will automatically attach all publications resulting from the award as reported annually in the FastLane project reporting system to the Outcomes Report. The Project Outcomes Report addresses a requirement included in the America COMPETES Act of 2007 (PL 110-69). Section 7010 required that “all final project reports and citations of published research documents resulting from research funded, in whole or in part, by the Foundation, are made available to the public in a timely manner and in electronic form through the Foundation’s Website.” As the research community knew, NSF does not require a cumulative final report; rather investigators submit annual reports.

Again, this requirement is met by the investigator, but it is a term/condition of an award that is the responsibility of the institution as the grantee. As in the case of late final project reports, NSF can withhold awards to an investigator until the Project Outcomes Report is complete. If NSF sees a systemic institutional problem with completion of Outcomes Reports, the Foundation will address that problem with the institution.

The research community will see other policies and regulations proposed that rely on the knowledge and expertise of investigators to notify their institution and the sponsoring agency of issues or concerns. As the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) continues its examination of the dual use research of concern—biological research with legitimate scientific purpose that may be misused to pose a biologic threat to public health and/or national security – the community will see similar needs for effective education to ensure compliance. In an April 2010, report on Addressing Biosecurity Concerns Related to Synthetic Biology, the NSABB recommendations echo its earlier support of investigator peer-to-peer outreach and education as the most effective first step in addressing biosecurity questions.

Institutions need to engage their investigators in designing innovative ways to provide effective educational and training programs that help investigators understand their roles and responsibilities in achieving institutional compliance. Institutions need to make available resources that assist investigators in meeting their obligations. And everyone needs to approach the process with a recognition that mistakes will occur. James Thurber reminds us, “Never ascribe to malice that which can be adequately explained by ignorance.”

Carol J. Blum is Director for Research Compliance and Administration at the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR). Before joining COGR in 2001, Carol served Ohio University for ten years as associate vice president for research after three years at the Ohio Board of Regents as director of graduate and special programs. She holds a PhD in history from the University of Cincinnati. She has recently begun exercising the right side of her brain in art classes and continues to volunteer at the Washington Literacy Council and Washington Area (Reproductive Health) Clinic Defense Task Force.
The Peer-to-Patent Initiative: Revitalizing Patent Examination With Peer

Every day we hear someone complain that this or that patent should not have been granted. People complain that the patent system is now a threat to existing business and innovation because the patent office grants with alarming regularity patents for inventions that are neither novel nor non-obvious. People argue that the patent office cannot keep up with the job of examining the backlog of hundreds of thousands of patents and that, even if it could, the large volumes of prior art literature that need to be considered each time a patent application is received make the decision as to whether a patent should be granted or not a treacherous one.

It is unsurprising that the patent system is failing in this way. Patent law is a complex area of the law, and the number of patent applications filed each year is truly staggering. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), for example, has in recent years received more than 420,000 patent applications annually and has a backlog of more than 1 million applications. Similarly, the Japan Patent Office (JPO) receives over 400,000 patent applications each year and has a backlog of more than 750,000 applications.

Short of abandoning the patent system altogether, which is not a realistic proposition, the best immediate solutions that have been struck upon involve improving the system incrementally. Small steps rather than giant strides are called for. In this vein, projects which look at how we might harness and share our collective knowledge to enhance the patent system have emerged. For example, organizations such as the USPTO, Google, Cambia and the European Patent Office (EPO), have moved to provide better public access to pending applications and granted patents. Cambia, through its Patent Lens initiative, has gone even further, proposing the development of extensive publicly accessible patent landscapes that explain where various biotech patents fit alongside related technologies.

From yet another direction, we have seen the attempt through the Peer-to-Patent program to utilize the power of collaboration made possible by the “network” (sometimes referred to as “crowd sourcing”) to augment the examination of patents. Peer-to-Patent allows members of the public to assist the patent examiner by putting forward relevant prior art, and possibly locating that “needle in a haystack” that ultimately invalidates a patent.

The rise of Peer-to-Patent is well documented by its founder Professor Beth Noveck of New York Law School in her recent book, Wiki Government (2009). In her book, Noveck recounts the pioneering steps she and others, like Manny Schecter from IBM and Jack Harvey from the USPTO, took to make Peer-to-Patent a reality. What Noveck really wants us to understand, however, is that Peer-to-Patent is merely an exemplar of a new methodology for government administration known generally as Gov 2.0. Gov 2.0 is the use of Web 2.0 technology and practices, including “crowd sourcing” (what she calls collaboration), to provide new opportunities for government to engage and work with citizens. President Obama’s Open Government Initiative is one example of this revitalization of participatory democracy. (You will not be surprised to learn this initiative has been driven by Beth Noveck, now the Obama Administration’s Deputy Chief Technology Officer.)

Benefits of the Project

The principal benefit of the project to the general public and innovators is that it improves the quality of issued patents. It leads to clearer patent landscapes and reduces uncertainty surrounding freedom to operate. Patent applicants also benefit from Peer-to-Patent. The benefit to participating applicants is that their applications will undergo a more rigorous examination against the strictures of novelty and non-obviousness than they would receive without the benefit of the insights of the crowd. After such a thorough inspection, the resulting patent is likely to be more robust as a consequence. More robust patents are less likely to be litigated or disputed in licensing discussions. In addition, the identification and elimination of weak claims early in the examination process ultimately saves the applicant money by avoiding the expensive process of pursuing or enforcing non-meritorious patent claims. Ultimately, it is anticipated that open peer review will encourage applicants to file applications that are better constructed and more clearly drafted.
Peer-to-Patent may be of particular value to university technology transfer officers as a means of signaling potential obstacles to successful patent prosecution. Unlike large corporate patent offices that have substantial operating budgets for patent prosecution, university technology transfer officers are often limited in their financial resources for patent prosecution. As a consequence, patent prosecution in a university setting may be hampered by imperfect information about the state of the art a patent may have to compete with. The sooner a technology transfer officer can determine the likelihood of validity and breadth of claims, the better. This is where Peer-to-Patent steps in. If a patent application quickly draws attention and draws substantial prior art assertions from reviewers, the technology transfer officer may be in a better position to assess whether continued prosecution is worthwhile. Thus, Peer-to-Patent may lend itself to improving university tech transfer efficiency and financial performance.

**Implementation in the US and Japan**

To date, two Peer-to-Patent pilot projects have been run in the United States, one has run in Japan and one has run in Australia. The New York Law School (NYLS) launched the first Peer-to-Patent pilot project in collaboration with the USPTO in June 2007. Over the course of two years, the project attracted in excess of 2,600 registered peer reviewers who reviewed 187 patent applications. In approximately 10% of cases, the USPTO relied on prior art submitted by the community of reviewers to reject one or more claims. Results from the Japanese pilot are comparable.

Feedback from the USPTO indicated that 69% of patent examiners surveyed think that a program like Peer-to-Patent would be successful if incorporated into regular office practice, and 67% of examiners believe Peer-to-Patent would be helpful in doing their job.

The USPTO and NYLS are now working through plans for a third U.S. pilot, possibly commencing in September 2010. This third pilot would expand the technology subject matter areas that are eligible to participate while tightening the review period to make it more efficient.

**Implementation in Australia**

Peer-to-Patent Australia, a joint initiative of the Queensland University of Technology and IP Australia, the government instrumentality that houses the Australian Patent Office, was launched on 9 December 2009. Peer-to-Patent Australia initially ran as a six-month pilot whose object was to test whether an open community of reviewers could effectively locate prior art that might otherwise be found by the patent office during a typical examination in a jurisdiction outside the United States. The Australian project followed the model created by the New York Law School closely, even using the same software platform.

In response to the 31 patent applications that were put forward for peer review, Peer-to-Patent Australia’s community of volunteer reviewers had, towards the end of the six-month pilot period, submitted 106 items of prior art. At this stage we do not have any information describing the use the patent office within IP Australia has made of the prior art identified in examination.

**Concluding Remarks: The Future of Peer-to-Patent**

Peer-to-Patent has shown that through the Web, it is possible to rally communities of motivated citizen experts to engage with government and volunteer their time to act for the public good to achieve better outcomes. It demonstrates that using the power of the web to help reinvestigate public administration and patent administration, in particular, is something we will see more of.

What remains to be seen is whether Peer-to-Patent can be applied more generally in patent
administration and whether a patent office will take the concept in-house and make it a part of regular office practice, as opposed to being outsourced to a university as at present.

A second order issue concerns the global connectivity of the Peer-to-Patent platform. That is, whether the future of the project will cause the current model of jurisdiction-specific or country-based projects to make way for a combined international platform housing patent applications filed in jurisdictions all around the world. Such an approach makes sense given that the vast majority of patent applications filed today are filed in multiple jurisdictions. If such a global approach were adopted, it is logical that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) should play a role.

As pioneering practitioners in this space we encourage you to learn more about Peer-to-Patent. While we may not revolutionize the patent system, the opportunity to contribute to some small steps that might make it a little more robust should be incentive enough for all of us to reflect upon what is a thought provoking approach.

References:
Peer-to-Patent Australia: www.peertopatent.org.au
Peer-to-Patent: www.peertopatent.org

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ARRA – Collaboration and Creativity at Work

By James G. Fortner

It would be difficult for a research administrator, especially one working in central administration, to discuss collaboration and creativity without mentioning the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). During the past year, ARRA has facilitated collaboration among research administrators at institutions across the country, has spawned new collaborations between researchers and administrators within institutions, and has required plenty of creativity in the way institutions have managed the special reporting requirements without the benefit of additional funding for support. One year later, I would like to offer a quick retrospective of Georgia Tech’s approach and lessons learned so far during the era of ARRA.

Centralized Reporting in a Decentralized Environment

Georgia Tech has a decentralized environment for the management and oversight of sponsored projects. Despite this structure, we felt that it was necessary to centralize all ARRA reporting accumulation, review, and submission activities. The reporting deadline was a major consideration in reaching this decision. The complex reporting instructions also caused us to see value in speaking as one unified voice to avoid contradictions.

When we first heard of the additional reporting requirements of ARRA-funded awards, we immediately saw the need to assign unique accounting codes and naming conventions to these awards. This was an important first step because it gave us the ability to easily identify ARRA awards and to query various systems for the data elements required for reporting.

The Office of Grants and Contracts Accounting serves as the central reporting unit for ARRA research awards received by academic units of Georgia Tech. The effort is coordinated with the Office of Sponsored Programs, the Georgia Tech Research Corporation, and the home departments of the Principle Investigators. Using Georgia Tech’s data warehouse, data elements are selected from several different internal systems. These include financial information from the general ledger and grants systems and salary information (including FTE) from the salary planning and distribution system. Non-financial data elements are extracted from the Office of Sponsored Programs’ database.

After the closing of each reporting period, information for all ARRA awards is extracted to compile data elements in the prescribed Excel template. Agency-specific data elements that are not available from institute sub-systems are entered by the reporting point-of-contact. Every data element is verified for accuracy on each ARRA award prior to uploading the spreadsheet to the federal web portal.

The verification and review steps required prior to submission are difficult to manage and are becoming even more difficult as expenditures increase. Although the reporting is centralized, it is truly a collaborative effort involving all of the offices noted above. The challenge for each office is and will continue to be providing the staffing and support required to complete the reporting requirements by the stated deadlines.

Interpreting the Instructions

The university community realized early on that the ARRA reporting instructions were not always crystal clear. National organizations such as COGR rallied to seek clarifications on behalf of the university community. Institutions also reached out to each other through NCURA and other list-serves to share ideas and thoughts regarding interpretations and implementation. One year later, we are much closer to having a better understanding of the requirements.

The jobs calculation area is one example of how the instructions have been clarified over time. These instructions were originally geared toward standard hourly employees with one assignment. Thanks in large part to COGR and input from the university community, the instructions were expanded along the way to incorporate the standard employee effort reporting percentages that are used in research universities. The cumulative job counts were also changed to quarter-specific job counts, causing slight changes in the way this information was compiled.

Perhaps the most helpful advice that we at Georgia Tech received came at an NCURA regional meeting that featured federal representatives who were there specifically to address the ARRA reporting requirements. One federal representative indicated that we should ask ourselves, “Does this or will this (treatment) cause the numbers to be misleading to the public?” So simple, yet so profound to administrators lost within the ARRA forest. The words have since served as our overarching guidance when faced with an interpretation of the ARRA requirements.

Preparing for Audit

ARRA awards have sparked new interest on the audit front as well. The annual A-133 Compliance Supplement now contains expanded ARRA audit requirements for institutions that are subject to these annual audits. The work does not end there, however. During the past year, Georgia Tech has participated in two separate federal agency desk reviews and one State Board of Regents review of ARRA internal controls and procedures. We expect more of these special reviews during Fiscal Year 2011.

Although the standard audit preparation approach is the same for all sponsored awards, it bears mentioning that audits of ARRA-funded awards will receive additional scrutiny in the
coming year. Georgia Tech’s standard approach can be summarized as follows:

1. QUESTION. When it comes to interpretations of federal guidance, ensure that all foreseeable audit questions have been asked and answered internally in advance and then documented. Remember “Does this or will this (treatment) cause the numbers to be misleading to the public?”

2. DOCUMENT. It is crucial that documentation be present, clear, and supportive for all amounts and other information reported via federalreporting.gov. Internal controls and related procedures should also be documented and implemented.

3. REVIEW. It is important that evidence of the applicable internal controls, including management reviews, is available for review.

All audits are subject to auditor judgment and interpretation. However, documentation of a rational and objective approach is always seen in a more favorable light than undocumented errors and omissions. Like case law in the legal arena, we learn a great deal through audit reports. For this reason, some unclear instructions will be clarified during the next year as audit reports are issued. Procedures can then be enhanced and improved as necessary.

F&A Rate Effects

Those of us with exposure to Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate proposals and negotiations have long understood the importance of space-to-base comparisons. This simply means that the percentage of space allocated to organized research should not differ significantly from the percentage of organized research modified total direct costs (MTDC) in the base.

In the mathematical F&A equation, organized research modified total direct costs comprise the denominator (or base) and applicable F&A costs for research comprise the numerator. Since the majority of F&A costs are allocated on the basis of space utilization, auditors and negotiators typically confirm that the percentage of space is not overly tilted toward the organized research pool since this leads to a higher numerator and a higher rate. This is understandable, and rate/space study regulations, systems, and procedures have been built to ensure that space and base amounts are consistent and properly classified.

An alarming trend seen in recent rate negotiations is the introduction of an ARRA inflation factor as an addition to the organized research MTDC base (denominator). The argument for this adjustment is that ARRA awards represent new awards over and above those that would have otherwise been received and expended. Even if we accept this basic argument, it would be inappropriate to ignore the F&A (numerator) impact of additional ARRA-funded organized research activities.

Any ARRA-related adjustment to the F&A rate calculation should alter both sides of the equation. Additional organized research activities, no matter the source of funding, carry a cost. These activities typically require a higher allocation of plant and other facility component costs due to unique and costly space and energy costs. This is indeed the case at Georgia Tech, and we were able to demonstrate that F&A costs have incrementally increased over time as the MTDC base has increased.

What’s Next?

Some believe that ARRA-type reporting requirements for all federal awards are the wave of the future. In addition to ARRA, each NCURA meeting also includes plenty of discussion regarding the challenges of other new, non-financial, compliance initiatives. The additional transparency, timeliness, and oversight are welcomed but they do carry a cost that must be recognized.

Currently, the “cost” (or price) of the additional requirements noted above is arbitrarily capped via the F&A rate. With the administrative cap in place, improvements in administrative efficiency must be continuously pursued. Tools such as data warehouses and new automated reporting solutions are examples of how this can be done; however, these also carry a cost in terms of acquisition, development, maintenance, and support.

The one sure bet is that more collaboration and creativity will be required in the coming years as universities seek to balance the cost, risk, and capacity considerations of the changing economic and regulatory landscape. The success stories of the next ten years will depend on it.

James “Jim” Fortner is the Director of Grants and Contracts Accounting at Georgia Institute of Technology. The Grants and Contracts Accounting Office is responsible for the financial management of sponsored projects from the point of award through closeout and for establishing Facilities & Administrative and Fringe Benefits Cost rates for the academic units of the Institute. Jim has 20 years of experience in university finance and accounting administration, including 15 years of experience in grants management administration. He has been with Georgia Tech since 1997 and previously worked at Emory University. Jim holds a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Georgia State University and an MBA degree from Kennesaw State University.
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GUILR Update: June 2010 Meeting
WATER: Quality, Quantity and the Need for Innovative Technologies

By Susan Sauer Sloan

Water is an essential element for life. It is also crucial for the global economy. Water drives virtually every industry and is required to produce food, goods and services used by each one of us and by all nations. It is linked closely with energy, will be impacted by climate change and is necessary for global health and sanitation. There is no debate here: Water is something that we cannot do without.

The summer meeting of the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUILRR) held June 29-30, 2010 in Washington, D.C. was intended to provoke cross-sector thinking and dialogue around water as an underestimated, finite and exhaustible resource. The meeting opened with a stark examination of declining water levels in Lake Mead. This Colorado River reservoir has long provided ample water for consumer, industrial and agricultural use to the western United States and Mexico. If current diminishing supply trends continue, however, a state of water emergency could conceivably be reached in the next two years, and the Hoover Dam could stop generating electricity shortly thereafter.

The group then considered the foremost causes for global water issues, namely climate change and uncontrolled population growth. Several speakers emphasized that water has traditionally been undervalued and, in order to realize efficient resource management, the economic worth of water needs to be adjusted higher. Moreover, it was argued that a flexible system is needed whereby water rights are solidly defined, transferring water from a public good to a private one.

Industry water practices and the global impact were deemed to be concerns for all sectors. To mitigate concern, it was suggested that the federal government provide information and data for areas under water stress while academia provide tools for business best practices, accounting and risk assessment. Companies, then, should be in a better position to create more efficient management strategies and systems while openly addressing/disclosing water scarcity risks.

In a panel discussion, representatives from three multinational companies spoke about industry’s role in our water future and the need for sustainability strategies. Presenters on behalf of PepsiCo and Nestlé Waters highlighted their company’s respective commitment to analyzing its water footprint throughout the production line, utilizing certain tools and considering both the components and context of the footprint in diverse regions of operation. The IBM representative reiterated industry’s responsibilities through smarter water management and underscored the importance of government-university-industry collaboration when addressing challenges in water management and infrastructure.

The panelists concurred: businesses in the 21st century must engage in policy, stakeholders and communities for both philanthropic (societal benefit) and economic (competitive advantage, decreased costs) success.

As part of the meeting, GUILRR members considered the dynamics of water resource management between urban and rural communities in response to limited resources, and also the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s safe ground and drinking water policies. The EPA is currently driving a systematic approach to more robustly address public health. Moreover, the agency coordinates monitoring and data-collection efforts with the states to more fully understand public drinking water quality, public health protection and water system sustainability.

For a more expansive meeting recap, visit www.nas.edu/guirr (see “Past Meetings,” left column). All online presentations are posted with the speakers’ permission.

Susan Sauer Sloan is Director of the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable.

[Image of Susan Sauer Sloan]
Dr. John M. Carfora became Associate Vice President for Research Advancement and Compliance at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles) on July 1st.

Jennifer Shambrook received her Ph.D. from Walden University this August. The topic of her dissertation was Health Behavior, Occupational Stress, and Stress Resiliency in Research Administrators in the Academic Environment. Her sample population came from over 1200 of the NCURA membership. The information will be published in upcoming articles.

Michelle Auerbach, formerly of the University of Massachusetts Boston, is now the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs at Suffolk University.

After thirty-five years of service, Robert (Rob) Barbret retired August 31, 2010, as Director of Sponsored Programs, University of Michigan—Ann Arbor.

Kelly Hochstetler, previously at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, is now the Director of Export Controls at the University of Virginia.

Anne Pascucci, formerly of Radford University, is now the Director of the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects at Bridgewater State College.

Kirsten Torguson, previously of City of Hope, is now the Research Grants Officer in the College of Health & Human Development, at California State University, Fullerton.
On August 13, 2009, the Obama Administration directed the National Economic Council and National Security Council to conduct a comprehensive interagency review of the U.S. export control system in order to address the ever-changing nature of today’s foreign policy, national security, and economic environment (White House, 2009). The complexity and antiquity of the current system are well known to most within the exporting community, and past attempts at reform seem to have resulted in nothing more than a piecemeal approach to addressing insular issues.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates offered exporters the first glimpse at the plan for reforms during remarks provided to the Business Executives for National Security (BENS) on April 20, 2010. After describing the current regulatory scheme as a decades-old, bureaucratically labyrinthine system that does not serve the nation’s security needs or economic interests, Secretary Gates described a blueprint for reform that includes four key changes which have since been dubbed “the four singularities”: a single export control list, a single licensing agency, a single enforcement-coordination agency, and a single information technology system (Gates, 2010).

He then set forth an ambitious timetable for implementation, stating that three phases of the process would unfold over the course of one year. Phase I included the executive branch transitioning the current system into a single tiered control list and single licensing agency. The second phase would support this transition by creating a single IT structure and implementation of the tiered list, while also progressing towards a single licensing system. The third and final phase would involve a thorough overhaul of the current system by creating a single licensing agency and single enforcement coordination agency (Gates, 2010).

A few months later, National Security Advisor General James Jones provided more detail when he addressed the Senate Aerospace Caucus (SAC). Notably, he specified that the current export control system is in reality three different systems—one for munitions administered by the State Department, one for dual use items administered by the Commerce Department, and one for embargoes administered by the Treasury Department (Jones, 2010). This clarification established that reforming export controls will require incorporation of all three systems, including the sanctions and embargoes handled through Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Phase I Progress Report

As of August, 2010, Phase I has resulted in the completion of a set of criteria necessary for the creation of a tiered control list which will place the most stringent controls on the most sensitive items (Jones, 2010). With an established set of criteria, it should be possible to quickly add new items and technologies to a list for control, while outdated items and technologies can be eliminated. It has also resulted in the creation of a “bright line” jurisdictional process necessary for determining which items are on the Munitions List and which are on the Control List (Jones, 2010). Additionally, work is underway to harmonize the definitions for certain terms and concepts found in the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), and OFAC regulations (Wolf, 2010). For example, the EAR uses the term “specialy designed” to describe certain controlled items, while the ITAR uses “specifically designed or modified.” Similarly, the terms “fundamental research” and “services” are being evaluated in order to find a consistent definition for both.

The distinct structure of each control list has presented a unique challenge in that the Commerce List is essentially a “positive list,” meaning it describes an item as being controlled only if it is found on the list. For each item controlled, the Commerce List contains detailed technical parameters that can be used by exporters to evaluate the potential for applicable controls. In contrast, the Munitions List has been described as a list of broad, vague, and general descriptions that, at the same time, fail to put exporters on sufficient notice about what is controlled. With the criteria for control completed and the bright line jurisdictional test established, work has begun on evaluating the Munitions List and converting the controls in one category into a positive list, identical in structure to the Commerce List (Jones, 2010).

Another Phase I development of note is the creation of “holding” entries on the Commerce Control List that allows for items that are not munitions to receive “a sufficient level of control” even if there is no applicable entry on the CCL. Additional detail has not been provided on this new control mechanism, but apparently the holding entries were created in response to a prolonged interagency dispute on how to best manage these types of items (Jones, 2010).

Additionally, Phase I has involved the creation of the Export Enforcement Fusion Center, an office staffed by employees from all of the current export enforcement entities. The Center will serve as a clearinghouse for all export licenses when the single IT system comes online.

Phases II and III—What to Expect

Groundwork has also been laid for Phases II and III. “Significant progress” has been made towards developing a single license application form (Jones, 2010). Currently, each agency has unique forms and processes, and the creation of a single form supports the development of a single IT System.

By the end of Phase II, there should be two control lists with the same structure, as well as established licensing policies linked to the control tiers. Also included in Phase II is a complete transition to a standardized licensing system with a single application form.

Phase III should result in the merging of the two control lists into a single list. A single licensing agency should also result, with the current expectation being that this will be an independent entity governed by a Board of Directors comprised of Cabinet officials that will report directly to the President. A single enforcement will have to be created, most likely by combining the Office of Export Enforcement (currently under the Department of Commerce) and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (currently under the Department of Homeland Security). Phase III is also expected to result in the deployment of an enterprise-wide IT system. The congressional action required for Phase III will be sought during 2010 (Jones, 2010).
Definitions

The Devil Is in the Definitions

With so much of export control reform still in a fledgling state, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what the impact will be for higher education. However, a handful of key issues could certainly impact the day-to-day operations of academic institutions.

Most universities grasp the importance of understanding what is and what is not subject to regulation based upon the current definition of “fundamental research.” Similarly, identifying “deemed exports” and “services” that may require a license is a key responsibility for export control officers and research administrators. Re-defining these terms means that universities will have to re-evaluate their current practices and procedures to ensure compliance with any new terms or concepts that result from export control reform.

So, when it comes to the potential impact of the proposed reforms, the devil is in the definitions. Harmonizing key terms could result in a more streamlined, transparent, and consistent approach to export controls. However, it is fair to say that any modification also holds the potential for creating confusion and additional compliance burdens, particularly if changes are made without input from the academic community.

For universities that have obtained licenses from any or all of the regulatory agencies in the past, new forms and systems mean learning how to handle licenses all over again. The potential upside of having consistent licensing practices and a single licensing agency may prove to be worth the effort, particularly if the time required to process license applications improves significantly.

A “bright line” jurisdictional process for determining what is controlled as a munition and what is controlled as dual use should be a positive step, particularly if this process is transparent to the exporting community. Similarly, having a single control list (particularly if it is structured as a ‘positive’ list) could be an improvement.

Are We There Yet?

All told, the current reform effort involves recognition of the three systems in current use, four singularities that are key to the success of proposed reforms, and a three-phased implementation plan. Thus, a 3-4-3 approach has taken shape and while this certainly has provided a more comprehensive structure to export control reform than past attempts, much remains to be seen.

Most exporters will acknowledge that the developments to date have been encouraging, particularly the progress made towards paring down of the control lists and the creation of a single application form for license applications. Also encouraging is the acknowledgment that the licensing agencies will be transitioned to the Department of Defense’s licensing system USXPorts which was created in 2003, and that the State Department’s licensing functions were already being migrated to that system (Jones, 2010).

The finalization and implementation of the reforms still faces significant hurdles. Particularly with any Phase III changes that require legislative action, progress could be hampered by political pressure and accusations that the reforms represent a weakening of national security controls. However, the current reforms seemingly have the support of the Department of Defense, which has been a less than enthusiastic participant in past attempts at reform. This, coupled with the momentum that the reform effort has gained and the noteworthy signs of progress described above, indicates that even if the reform process becomes drawn out, this effort will likely result in more change than any previous attempt.

Most exporters would readily concede that the current export control system is in sore need of comprehensive reform. However, even with the impressive amount of ground that has been covered, it is too early to predict just how successful the current reform effort will be.

References:


Gretta Rowold. As University of Oklahoma’s Executive Director of Secure Research Operations, Gretta Rowold is responsible for interfacing with the United States Departments of Commerce, State, and Treasury on export control and sanctions-related matters. In this role, she addresses the issues that arise under the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) and the Internal Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), as well as the Foreign Assets Control Regulations (FACR). Additionally, as the FSO, she administers the provisions of the National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual (NISPOM) published by the United States Department of Defense.

Prior to joining the University of Oklahoma in 2006, she was employed by Argonne National Laboratory, a Department of Energy laboratory managed by the University of Chicago, in Argonne, IL. She served as an Export Control Analyst in the Security and Counterintelligence Division and also as the laboratory’s Material Protection Control & Accounting Export Manager.

Rowold earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Central Oklahoma in 1997 and followed with a Juris Doctor from the University of Oklahoma’s College of Law in 2004. She has bar licenses in Oklahoma and Illinois. She currently is the Vice Chairman of the Association of University Export Control Officers, and is a member of Society for International Affairs, the American Bar Association’s Export Controls and Economic Sanctions Committee, and the Oklahoma Bar Association.
Reflecting on the theme of the NCURA 52nd Annual Meeting, “At the Confluence of Creation and Collaboration,” which centers on the interdependent relationship between the researcher and the research administrator, my colleague and I joined forces to explore the differences between researchers’ interactions with pre-award administrators and post-award administrators within a biomedical research institution. The inherent differences in the types of services these offices provide establish a precedent where faculty members are likely to interact differently with the two offices. In her article, “Pre-Award Administrators are from Pluto, Post-Award Administrators are from Saturn; Or Are They?” M. Spina isn’t afraid to tell it like it is: “Pre-award administrators are the good guys and post-award administrators are the bad guys.” During the past year in our department, we have worked diligently to bridge the gap between how faculty perceive and interact with our pre- and post-award offices, and we have already made substantial progress. The first step we took in bridging this gap was to recognize the fundamental differences between the offices.

**Pre-Award Administrators: “The Good Guys”**

Pre-award administrators are seen as “the good guys” for one obvious reason - everything they assist researchers with is directly related to a positive end result: a funded grant. From the dissemination of program announcements to initial budget meetings and coordination with faculty in other departments, pre-award administrators set up their researchers for success from day one. By editing biosketches, checking grammar, inserting graphics, and uploading electronic attachments, they play a critical role in ensuring the final product has the highest potential for funding. They help faculty recognize budget gaps, assist with application neatness and compliance, and complete administrative elements of a proposal, allowing researchers to focus on the science. Pre-award administrators also may develop templates for grant sections and deliver presentations to faculty about developments in the research world. Although the scope of pre-award office duties extends beyond grant submission, when there are grant deadlines, all other work is likely set aside, and researchers have the office’s undivided attention. This teamwork attitude immediately places faculty in the frame of mind that pre-award administrators are “on their side.” They don the virtual “white hat” in the world of research administration, and in the best of relationships, they are viewed as valuable members of the research team.

When a grant is submitted, pre-award offices are often complimented by relieved researchers with “I couldn’t have done it without you.” And, when a grant is funded, pre-award officers rejoice with their faculty members in celebrating the accomplishment. Pre-award offices often disseminate announcements about funded grants, singing the praises of our researchers. I have often been the recipient of tokens of appreciation from researchers who are elated to have their grant funded and eager to recognize the “heroic” role the pre-award office played in making it possible.

The funded project is then handed off to the post-award office, similar to a baton in a relay race, for implementation and account set-up. The pre-award office has cleared their plate, making room for the next submission. When this transition is overly distinct, it contributes to the overall gap. Just as researchers view institutional sponsored projects office more as a barrier than a partner in conducting biomedical research, the same relationship can develop between researchers and departmental post-award offices. Once the grant is awarded, the post-award office is immediately perceived as policing the project and erecting roadblocks to conducting the science that faculty worked so hard to fund. To complicate matters, post-award offices typically do not participate in the pre-award steps of grant preparation. Yet, once funded, post-award offices are expected to monitor a project about which they have little previous knowledge.

**Post-Award Administrators: “The Bad Guys”**

Post-award administrators sport the virtual “black hat” in the world of research administration, and in their relationships with researchers are viewed as the “sheriff” cleaning up the town. When project spending is going smoothly, researchers are content; but, when a lapse in post-award compliance is identified that affects the research, it is often perceived negatively. Rather than viewing the post-award administrator as a positive team member who is looking out for their safety, the researcher often views their involvement as overly cautious or even unnecessary. “Post-award administrators fix problems with proposals, unravel bureaucratic red tape and move on to the next problem. Unfortunately, they are often associated (at least in the faculty member’s mind) with the problems they are trying to fix” (1). They are seen as bureaucratic, trapped in the confines of institutional policy constantly standing in the way of scientific progress. If there is a good relationship between faculty and the post-award administrator, there is an unspoken expectation that in times of doubt the administrator will coach them out of the particular situation. But when the recommendation fails, so does their reputation with faculty.

Post-award administrators in biomedical institutions perform a complex set of duties that are often more expansive than those of pre-award administrators. Besides managing financial affairs, post-award administrators manage human resource issues and clinical practice matters. Performance is measured by how well a post-award administrator navigates through the complexities of the institution rather than how much they assist researchers. In reality, post-award administrators are unsung heroes of research administration, helping faculty members avoid negative, project-threatening situations such as overspending and non-compliance.

Post-award offices work just as diligently for researchers as pre-award offices. They carefully monitor spending patterns, coordinate effort reporting, and conduct financial closeouts. While pre-award offices develop templates and repositories of information for researchers, post-award offices create multiple reporting tools that unravel the complex institutional financial data researchers must review, and they confirm financial

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1 Spina MT. “Pre-Award Administrators are from Pluto, Post-Award Administrators are from Saturn; Or Are They?” The Journal of Research Administration 2000; winter-spring.
Joining Forces to Bridge the Gap

If the first step toward bridging the gap in how researchers interact with pre-award and post-award offices is to acknowledge the fundamental differences between the two, the second step is for these offices to recognize they are not two separate entities working in silos but are instead working in tandem throughout the lifecycle of a project. Both offices must project a “teamwork” attitude with faculty, even if the precise nature of the teamwork differs. For pre-award, it’s “working together to create a compliant, successful final product worthy of funding.” For post-award, it’s “working together to ensure that the project is conducted within all required regulations and funds are spent in the most efficient way possible to get the most ‘bang for the federal buck.’”

Faculty members realize that while pre-award administrators are fully versed in the structural elements of grant writing and in various compliance issues (e.g., conflict of interest, human subjects research), post-award administrators can navigate the complex institutional web of “red tape” and help build more accurate proposals. In addition, since post-award offices will inherit the monitoring of projects from the pre-award office once they are funded, it is essential that these administrators not be handed funded grants blindly. It makes sense for post-award administrators to participate in proposal development, just as it makes sense for pre-award administrators to participate in the financial monitoring of projects. Can there be a united front where pre-award and post-award administrators are both viewed as heroes in the funding battle and, rather than white versus black hats, both wear grey hats? Based on this idea, our offices began efforts to bridge this gap and implemented significant changes in the way we conduct business.

No More Silos!

Successful efforts in bridging the gap between the relationships researchers have with our offices fall under one philosophy: no more silos! Phase I of this endeavor was to break down our silos physically. The pre-award office was moved from a secluded location into our school’s new centralized Office of Finance and Administration. Having pre- and post-award offices in such close proximity not only made it easier for researchers to meet and communicate with both offices, but also visually reassured them that we were working closely together as a united front. Another physical barrier was broken when pre-award files were merged with post-award. This empowered pre- and post-award administrators to view the history of the other side of business for each project and alleviated any unintentional veil of secrecy. Along with merging paper files, information technology staff created shared virtual network folders that permitted both offices to view proposals and financial reports and to easily share important electronic information. This level of transparency has made it easier to work as a team and provide suggestions for improvement in grant procedures.

After breaking down physical silos, phase II was to eliminate the communication silos between our offices and researchers. We make concerted efforts never to refer to each other as separate entities, which helps convey that we are one team. Our offices constantly cc: each other on e-mail correspondence with faculty, whether pre- or post-award related. Our pre-award office standard procedure now includes post-award administrators’ attendance at key grant proposal planning meetings. Post-award administrators are also consulted in the final steps of grant preparation so that potential post-award budget issues are addressed prior to submission. At the same time, our post-award office invites pre-award administrators to quarterly financial report meetings with faculty and consults with them to crosscheck on spending and effort tracking. Not only has the flow of communication improved, but researchers also have a higher level of confidence in both offices by witnessing firsthand our collaboration throughout the lifecycle of a project. Thus, pre- and post-award administrators are “on the same page” when meeting with faculty.

From Chasm to Crevice

In 10 months, we have experienced encouraging levels of success. Faculty members freely voice their level of trust and satisfaction with both offices to higher management, as well as praise both offices directly for their expert assistance. Work flows more smoothly between the two offices, there are fewer errors in both pre- and post-award activities, and one office does not receive more credit than the other. We have also reaped unexpected rewards, having incidentally created an environment of innovation and enthusiasm where all ideas for improvement are welcome. Best of all, faculty members feel they can turn to either office for support and have equal confidence in the information they receive. The gap, although still present, now resembles a crevice more than a chasm.

Kristine M. Kulage is Director, Office of Research Resources, Columbia University School of Nursing and Bioméd Corner Contributing Editor of NCURA Magazine.

Ruth E. Torres is Director of Finance, Columbia University School of Nursing.
Examining Core Elements of International Research Collaborations: A Washington Workshop
by John M. Carfora, Bob Killoren, Susan Sauer Sloan and James Casey

In the December 2008/January 2009 volume of the NCURA Magazine, we authored an article on the efforts of the I-Group — a formal working group on International Research Collaborations convened by the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) at the National Academies – to sponsor a workshop on international research collaborations. The purpose of the workshop was to (1) bring subject matter experts – from universities, industry, government, and professional organizations in the USA and other nations – together from specialized areas of international research collaborations; (2) publish a record of proceedings and a meaningful primer (book) for distribution to interested persons in the various sectors; (3) develop web-based resources on international collaborations; and (4) convene future conferences and workshops in the areas of international research collaborations. We are delighted to now report that this workshop took place at the National Academies Keck Center on July 26-27th, 2010, and brought together subject matter experts and invited participants from academia, the private sector, U.S. and other Governments, and a number of professional organizations around meaningful discussions and solutions.

The workshop opened around the theme of Creating an environment for Productive International Collaboration, and, in particular, how the role of “transboundary collaborations” in advancing knowledge and offering economic opportunities worldwide is growing, thanks to factors such as access to the Internet; globalization; and greater mobility of information, ideas, and people. Though international research collaborations also are growing (as measured, for example, by multinational co-authorship on publications and shared funding for international research projects), there are bottlenecks and frictions that can pose impediments to meaningful and successful international collaborations. This workshop’s first track broadly looked at trends and issues that pertain to fostering productive international collaboration from the point of view of governments, universities, and industry.

Quite often cross-cultural nuances and culture-centric perspectives – grounded in one’s experience or merely assumed – cloud conversations between faculty researchers and research administrators when they are negotiating the shared development of meaningful international research agreements. Given this reality, the second workshop session featured a number of experts on cross-cultural communications, understanding, and collaborations. As one speaker – an anthropologist – aptly noted: “Culture is a shared understanding of how things work. If we are to work effectively together, it is important that we understand, appreciate, and respect one another’s perspective.”

The workshop’s ethics panel took its place between the culture panel and the research integrity panel in the sense that ethics are informed by culture and govern behavioral choices in the conduct of research. Thus, this panel explored issues related to the ethics of safeguarding privacy, security, and confidentiality; bioethical issues related to human subjects research; and other activities with bioethical implications, all from both a domestic U.S. and a global perspective.

The research integrity panel expanded the ethics discussion by focusing on standards and practices that promote responsible data collection and appropriate authorship byline decisions. This panel explored issues related to current Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training for data integrity and authorship and considered the impact that different international educational standards can have on data integrity. The panel concluded with a discussion by an international team who described their experiences in negotiating authorship agreements and in building capacity to assure data integrity.

Risk management is a continuous process designed to proactively identify and mitigate risks to help promote the achievement of the organization’s objectives, strategy, and mission. Risk management also drives accountability and integrity of the organization’s work and helps ensure that individuals within the organization see it as their responsibility to reduce risk as part of their daily jobs. This panel explored specific issues relating to risk management in the international setting.

Intellectual Property (IP) is a central issue in international research collaborations. What is the balance between the facilitation of research and the protection of IP? The members of this IP track discussed and outlined the major issues, challenges, and successes of IP on the international level, including such topics as background intellectual property (BIP); the connection between IP and export control; the management of IP at the university, industry, and governmental levels; and emerging issues in the coming years (such as managing IP given the increasing transportation of large data sets and research across national borders). The IP team paid particular attention to practices and models of IP used in individual countries, for inclusion in project deliverables.

Export control regulation presents special challenges when working with international collaborators and when conducting research overseas. Researchers who are used to open academic environments are often surprised to learn that certain areas of collaboration, especially in science and engineering, may be more difficult with certain international partners. In addition, trade embargoes and sanctions—reflecting foreign policy concerns of different nations—can affect a researcher’s ability to travel to certain countries.
and transport certain research equipment. The export control panel discussed the various issues raised by these regulations, their effect on international research collaborations, and compliance strategies used by various institutions to meet these challenges.

Conducting research with foreign partners can take a wide variety of forms. Sometimes this involves conducting research in the U.S. with foreign partners; other times it may involve field research, setting up limited business operations, or even establishment of a new campus overseas. This final workshop panel discussed the legal issues related to these various scenarios. The speakers looked at registration and memoranda of understanding with foreign governments and governmental approvals. They also addressed legal agreements and documents used to facilitate particular business activities, such as payment of taxes, real estate issues, and employment requirements. The panel covered the various methods used by institutions to incorporate legal review into ongoing operations. Furthermore, this panel discussed the research funding opportunities and challenges presented by the European Union’s 7th Framework Programme.

Over the next several months, I-Group will be quite busy preparing its workshop summary report for publication, developing a web-based resource on international research collaborations, and convening a future workshop/conference. One thing for sure, we will keep you updated, and, in the meantime, you can explore the July workshop’s proceedings at http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PGA_058064. An overview of this particular project – its genesis and development – is posted at http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PGA_050827.

Any opinions present within this article are solely those of the authors, and do not represent the positions of I-Group, GUIRR, or the National Academies.

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FRA 12 is coming soon!

We’re very pleased to announce that FRA 12 will be located in beautiful San Diego, CA from March 4-6, 2011. The two and a half day conference will be held at the Manchester Grand Hyatt (http://www.manchestergrandhyattsandiego.com/). Located on the waterfront in the heart of the city, the hotel is within walking distance of the Seaport Village’s shops, the Gas Lamp Quarter’s restaurants and entertainment, and the USS Midway aircraft carrier museum.

The theme of this year’s conference is “Looking Forward Strategically: Balancing Collaboration, Problem-Solving, and Accountability.” As we all know, financial research administration is more than accounting and enforcing rules. To be successful, it takes research administrators who can build on an understanding of policy, compliance, and financial management. It takes someone who can work together with many different groups of people—on and off campus. It takes someone who can look at a situation creatively and come up with solutions that address the needs and concerns of multiple constituencies. In short, it takes research administrators who can strategically balance all aspects of their job to be successful.

This year’s conference will offer more sessions and learning opportunities than ever before. We want to learn and discuss what it takes to be a successful financial research administrator. We also want to offer opportunities for people to meet their peers and colleagues to share their experiences (and have some fun, too). Most of all, we want everyone to be able to come away from the meeting with ideas and strategies that will help them going forward.

We hope you will be able to join us in March!

Sincerely,

FRA 12 Co Chairs

Bob Andresen
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Kay Ellis
University of Texas at Austin
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Submitting a $20 Million Proposal

By David Smelser

Recently there has been shift in sponsored research towards interdisciplinary programs emphasizing collaborative research efforts. Bringing researchers from a variety of disciplines together to examine an issue is the academic equivalent of moving away from the “great minds think alike” mentality towards a “two heads are better than one” approach. Sponsors are dedicating enormous sums of money to these types of cross-cutting programs, often specifically for the formations of new centers, and in turn are soliciting proposals that require a tremendous amount of effort to prepare. As someone who has conducted research of my own, I appreciate the new emphasis on collaborative research and welcome the contributions that will be made to science as a result. As a university employee, I also welcome the countless benefits to the institutions involved with these projects, such as millions of dollars in funding, more faculty lines, higher quality graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, and maybe even a little fame.

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to work with faculty to submit both a Science and Technology Center (STC) proposal and Engineering Research Center (ERC) proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF). The STC and ERC programs issue some of the largest awards made by NSF annually. These awards are very prestigious, extremely competitive and worth a lot of money ($43.5 million combined). Consequently, the proposals to these programs are quite complex and require both great attention to detail and a significant amount of time to prepare.

To give you an idea of the complexity of these proposals, our STC proposal had 33 researchers identified by name, 16 subcontractors and four other affiliated institutions, 19 postdoctoral researchers, 14 new graduate students, 10 technicians and a 96-page budget to explain the $25 million request. The ERC proposal had 99 letters of commitment from private industry partners, state government, pre-college schools, national laboratories and affiliated and partner universities, as well as 37 researchers identified from six countries. I was very fortunate because I was able to work with the faculty for about four months on each of these proposals – and trust me, I needed every minute.

While researchers and institutions gain so much from these awards, the question must be asked, what does preparing mega-proposals mean to research administrators, especially to those of us working in pre-award services? Does it mean longer hours, an extra cup of coffee each day and a bottle of Excedrin in your desk drawer? It could, but it does not have to. As it turns out, submitting a mega-proposal can be pretty easy. After preparing these mega-proposals, I have learned some valuable lessons, which can be used not only on the largest of proposals, but also in our day-to-day work as well.

“Stay Organized, Stay Stress-Free”

1) Take Pride in Your Contribution: We all work in research administration, so we are fully aware that we will not be the one with our picture on the cover of the university newspaper when the proposal gets funded. But that should not stop us from being proud of the role we play. It is very important to keep in mind that the science in all of these mega-proposals will be rock solid, so it is the little things that can determine whether or not the proposal will be funded. Catching a minor oversight by the PI could make a major difference to the review panel. When working on these proposals I always tell my PIs, “you do what you do best, and let me do what I do best.” Never forget that you are an expert in your field, just as they are in theirs, so take pride in your contribution to the proposal.

2) Get to Know Your Counterparts: When was the last time you received a proposal that was due at the last minute? If your answer is “earlier this week,” you are in the same boat as the rest of us. This is why it is vital to touch base with your fellow research administrators at collaborating institutions early in the process. We all welcome the chance to get ahead of the game and not get stuck with a million-dollar subcontract with 20% mandatory cost-share that is due in two days. Also, when working on proposals, it is inevitable that something will change at the very end. By establishing a relationship with your colleagues at other institutions, you will have an ally in your corner.

3) Understand Your Time Frame: All too frequently, researchers are four months away from a deadline and feel they have all the time in the world, but we all know that is not true. It is very important that we, as research administrators, discuss time constraints and the realities of proposal preparation with the PIs we will be working with. Those of us in research administration have seen nearly every road bump imaginable, and it is important for the PIs to understand how long the process really takes and the common things that tend to cause delays. When working on a mega-proposal, it is beneficial to create a timeline that includes milestones for different points in the proposal process. Also, having regular “status check” meetings tend to keep the proposal on track. When PIs have to show up at a meeting and report on their progress, they often feel more accountable for completing the tasks they have been assigned. Do not be surprised if the PI is hesitant to accept a timeline at first, but they will thank you for it in the end.

4) Invest Some Time Up Front: It is also important to know what the research team is trying to do. No, I do not mean becoming an astrophysicist or expert in smart grid technology overnight, but it is good to understand the overall theme of the proposal. Does the proposal primarily consist of research activities, or is it focused on educational outreach? The central theme of a proposal can have a dramatic effect on the types of documentation you need to obtain, how the budget should be prepared and which institutional officials should be involved. Understanding what the

With a few days left until the deadline, having confidence that your new friend will come through for you provides great peace of mind.
the PIs Desk"

Working on our STC and ERC proposals gave me the unique opportunity to see what proposal development is like from the other side of the fence. Many people who work in research administration never get the chance to see a proposal come to life, from the original idea all the way through the proposal development process. We generally only see a proposal a few days before the deadline and do not tend to examine the efforts required to get the proposal to our desk. By working with these PIs for several months, I gained a new perspective on how they felt during different stages in the process and have begun to better understand their mindset. It might be hard to believe, but they do not try to make our lives difficult; they just see things in a different way. I truly believe that in the field of research administration, we can all become more effective if we take the time to understand the PI’s point of view.

Under enormous pressure: In the final days before submission, the PIs are focused entirely on their work. For most PIs, having a proposal funded could be the difference between gaining tenure and losing their job. In the case of the mega-proposal, this may be a career-defining moment: the culmination of years of dedicated work. Either way, PIs feel an enormous amount of pressure during proposal development. While this proposal might be just one in a giant stack for you, submitting a proposal is not just another day at the office for the PI.

PIs are people, too: PIs do not get release time to write their proposals. They still have to teach classes, grade student papers, publish articles, manage their labs, mentor post-doctoral researchers and graduate students and even to squeeze a personal life in there somewhere. While research administrators are not “clock punchers,” researchers, especially those ambitious enough to apply for sponsored funding, are doing so on their personal time. Often we see PIs as robots, but they are people, too.

Their mindset: PIs are researchers, not research administrators, therefore they do not have the same level of understanding of administrative issues that we do. Their job is to conduct world-class research, educate future generations and bring in research funding, not necessarily to understand every policy and regulation of every sponsor. We see proposals day-in and day-out while most PIs usually do not work on them more than once or twice a year. An example of an administrative issue that PIs frequently do not realize is that proposals consist of much more than the page limit of the project narrative. PIs tend to focus on their research, which is completely understandable because that is their expertise and comfort zone. But we know that there is more that goes into submitting any proposal than just the project narrative. The STC and ERC proposals I worked on were about 88% documents that went beyond the project narrative. We should always keep in mind that a PI’s skill set is different from our own. If we take the time to recognize and understand that PIs have a different outlook on sponsored research, we can help them understand all of the additional details that they are not aware of, do not understand or just do not want to worry about.

By keeping the proposal organized, encouraging the PI to stay on track, staying cool under pressure, understanding the PI’s mindset and, most importantly, taking pride in your role in the proposal process, submitting any proposal, even a mega-proposal, can be easy!

David Smelser is a Sponsored Programs Administrator at The University of Tennessee –Knoxville and has worked for 7 years in various university research settings, from the laboratory to the University’s Office of Research. His primary roles within the Office of Research include representing sponsored programs on the proposal development team, serving as the University’s Responsible Conduct of Research coordinator, and administering the University’s awards from the National Science Foundation, UT-Battelle, Department of Justice and Homeland Security.
One of the most commonly heard challenges faced by financial research administration central offices is the challenge of communicating policy changes and other information across their campuses. One of the most commonly heard complaints from non-central research community members is frustration with a lack of communication and too limited involvement with policy changes and decisions made regarding research administration policies and procedures. Those involved in both central and non-central research administration offices are busy and generally work in stressful, deadline driven environments. As everyone struggles to keep up with the changing requirements, tight deadlines, and increasing reporting and compliance requirements, communication can often take the back burner to more pressing issues. The unfortunate result of this situation is that the volume of issues and challenges experienced by all is multiplied.

Beyond this, many central offices struggle with how to reach those they need to communicate with. There are a multitude of methods used for communicating within a university. Unfortunately, many of these methods are overused, and messages are often ignored by the recipients. Members of university communities generally receive large numbers of emails with messages or links to newsletters. They have access to dozens of university central administration websites and central information systems. There can be several central administration offices involved in the administration of their sponsored programs. Even knowing who to contact for what can be very challenging.

**Communication cannot move in only one direction**

The most important thing to keep in mind when trying to design an effective communication plan for a central research administration office is that communication will not be effective if it only travels in one direction. While some messages will need to be “delivered,” a successful communication plan has to keep in mind that communication needs to travel in many directions. When a central office has the need to communicate an important change or new policy, the likelihood of a positive reception will be greatly increased if the community has had the opportunity to be involved in the development (when reasonable and appropriate).

**Use multiple methods of communication**

There is no one method to best communicate financial research administration news and policies. Relying on one method of communication to reach dozens, hundreds, or commonly thousands of members of a research community would be foolish. As we all have different learning styles, we all have different communication styles. Posting a new policy on your central policy website and assuming that it has been communicated would be foolish. While perhaps a good idea in concept, most administrators will probably not visit the policy website regularly to check for updates or additions.

There are a variety of methods commonly utilized to widely communicate financial research administration news and changes:

**Listserves**

Sending messages out via a listserv made up of a select group of interested parties can be a very valuable resource. However, this should be used sparingly for important messages. Sending large numbers of messages with information of varying and limited levels of value can lead to recipients deleting them without reading. Generally, this mode of communication is best used for information that needs to get out there immediately and demands high attention from many or most of the listserv members. Utilizing the subject line to grab the appropriate attention and audience is strongly recommended.

**Newsletters**

Newsletters can become an essential communication mode for many research communities. It can provide a single location for research administration information. Coordinating efforts with other central offices such as the preaward office makes good sense. Limiting the number of newsletters that need to be reviewed by the research community increases the chance that they will read what is made available. The initial announcement of the availability of a newsletter should be widely communicated with the message that everyone involved in sponsored project administration should view each newsletter as made available. A newsletter can be very effectively used as the main information source for research administration news. In order to accomplish this, the central office should communicate that all important changes or announcements related to sponsored project administration will be included in the newsletter (emphasizing that a review of each issue will ensure that one is aware of what they need to know). It is recommended that all issues are posted and retained on the central department’s website. In addition, the use of an opt-in listserv is recommended for sending out the issues as they are published. Many institutions find that monthly issues work best while others find that quarterly (or less frequently) can meet their needs. Newsletters can be fairly easily developed using software such as Microsoft Word or Adobe Indesign. They can be provided in printable or html formats.

**Websites**

Obviously, websites can be a very effective communication tool. However, it is important to keep in mind that people will typically visit the website only when they have a specific need. While posting news on your homepage can be valuable, important announcements should not be communicated only on the website. Careful consideration and planning should
be given to the organization of the website. It is important to obtain feedback from the community you are trying to reach on the effectiveness of your website. They should be able to find the information they need without significant struggle. All websites should include the contact information for someone to provide feedback to.

Old fashioned use of human contact

While modern technology has brought many efficient methods to communicate to large numbers of people very quickly, it often lacks many of the benefits that direct interaction between two or more humans can provide. Providing information in person allows the communicator to respond to any confusion or questions immediately. It provides the receiver with the opportunity to express any questions or concerns. The challenge here is reaching the large number of interested parties within a University. Effective methods for doing this can include offering open forums or town halls which work well for providing many with the opportunity to have input. However, detailed issues can often be better addressed in smaller groups. Forming committees that represent the different groups within the institution can usually be more effective for obtaining feedback and comments on specific issues. For example, having a group of faculty and a group of non-central administrators (from across the institution) can provide strong forums for receiving feedback on decisions to be made.

Surveys

For some decisions, utilizing smaller or open forums to receive feedback or discuss particular issues may not be appropriate or efficient. Obtaining feedback from larger groups can often be most easily accomplished utilizing an electronic survey. There are a variety of low or no cost tools available that will allow you to set up a simple survey that will gather a variety of information from a large group. It is important to carefully design your questions to obtain the information you need in as few questions as possible. When sending out the survey, it is important to note how long the survey should take (the longer it takes, the less respondents you may have so keep it as brief as possible). You should also include a note as to when the survey must be completed and will close.

Educational Sessions

The main communication role of a central financial research administration office is disseminating the information the research community needs to properly administer their project. This often goes beyond simpler communications and expands into more of an educational effort. Offering brown bag lunch sessions or brief educational sessions on a particular topic can provide an opportunity to more fully communicate a new policy, procedure, or process.

Online educational modules and tools

While in person educational sessions work very well and should be included as part of the communication efforts, online educational tools can be very effective in providing the information that many need in an easy to access format. While there is a variety of creative software available to develop online education, power point presentations can be effectively used in this area.

Financial research administration areas where these modules can be effective include (but are not limited to) topics such as the OMB circulars and effort reporting.

Did you get the memo?

While the formal memo is seen less and less these days, it still has its value. For important issues that need to have attention drawn to them, issuing a memo (that can be sent as an attachment to a listserv announcement and posted on a website) can provide a more official announcement for an important communication.

In the demanding and busy pace of a central financial research administration office, it can be extremely challenging to maintain a high focus on the area of how we communicate. However, the ability to effectively communicate news and policy changes from the central financial research administration office to the institution’s research community is essential to a successful research enterprise.

Kerry Peluso is the Associate Vice President for Research Administration at Emory University. Kerry has over 20 years experience in research and grants administration, is a CPA and holds an MBA. In her current role, she is responsible for the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Office of Grants and Contracts Accounting. These offices provide pre and post award research administration support services to Emory’s research community.

Prior to joining Emory in February 2007, Kerry held the position of Director of Post Award Financial Administration at the University of Pennsylvania. Her background also includes several years experience as a Senior Accounting Manager at Rutgers University in the Division of Grant and Contract Accounting and seven years experience managing grants for non-profit organizations. Beyond grants and research administration, Kerry’s background includes five years experience in tax, private and public accounting.

Kerry has been involved in a variety of roles with the National Council of University Research Administrators including serving as National Treasurer, Chair/co-Chair of national conference and Chair of the Financial Research Administration Neighborhood Committee. She served as a faculty member for NCURA’s Financial Research Administration Workshop and is currently a Peer Reviewer for the NCURA Peer Review Program. She is a frequent speaker at national conferences.
Expanding the Reach of the Departmental Administrator through Publishing

By Maria B.J. Chun

While writing a grant application to help subsidize the cost of a conference I am planning, I learned a new phrase: research dissemination and translational meeting. A kind colleague, whom I had only met on e-mail via a mutual acquaintance, sent me a copy of a successful grant submission (in response to a similar FOA) and introduced me to that term. This creative term serves as a huge reminder of one of the key products expected from the conduct of research: the sharing of knowledge with as many people as possible. One of the primary means researchers use to disseminate their findings is through peer-reviewed publications. This mode of communication can be highly beneficial to research administrators, particularly at the department level, since we are often hidden away as components of a larger bureaucracy. This article discusses how research administrators can utilize publishing as a means to expand their reach, even beyond NCURA. The work that we do is helpful to any organization that has an involvement in research administration.

Research administrators are a diverse group of professionals. They come from a variety of backgrounds with regard to their educational training and their work experiences. On the job, many of them handle a multitude of tasks and responsibilities; this is particularly the case for those in departmental administration. For example, I am a community psychologist who worked largely in analytical and higher level administrative positions prior to taking my current position as the Associate Chair for Administration and Finance in the University of Hawaii at Manoa’s Department of Surgery. Having always worked for oversight, regulatory bodies or central administration, it was quite a shock for me to move into departmental administration. For the first time, I did not work for an entity that was sending out directives or calling the shots; I was now subject to the policies and mandates. What helped me most with making this transition was both tapping into my own eclectic background and utilizing linkages with NCURA and other professional organizations, such as the Society of Research Administrators International and the Health Care Compliance Association. After attending a research dissemination and translational meeting, I discovered that most of my colleagues were members of multiple agencies involved with research administration in some form or other. Below is a description of publication opportunities within these organizations, along with their web addresses that contains the author guidelines.

Starting with NCURA, there is the Research Management Review, which is the scholarly journal for the council. According to its website, it is “concerned with the broad range of issues affecting the administration of research and the changing research environment at the national and international levels.” It also “provides a forum for the dissemination of knowledge about the study and practice of the research administration profession” (NCURA, 2010).

There is also the Society of Research Administrators (SRA) International, which publishes The Journal of Research Administration. According to its website, it “publishes articles . . . dedicated to the education and the professional development of research administrators.” It “also serves to provide articles covering the changing research environment worldwide, and to highlight quality and innovation in research administration” (SRA, 2010).

The Health Care Compliance Association is yet another forum. According to its website, Compliance Today is a “monthly magazine providing valuable information for compliance professionals. It provides peer review articles, written by experts in government, law and industry, on a variety of issues that Compliance Officers grapple with each day.” Author guidelines can be found at: http://www.hcca-info.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Publications/ComplianceToday/CT_authors.htm.

In addition to getting the word out about your experiences as departmental administrator, there are other benefits to publishing. With regard to professional development, having publications can enhance your resume. By writing an article, you are demonstrating your analytical and writing skills and showing your initiative and desire to share your knowledge. This may help with a merit increase and/or promotion decisions at your current job; or, if you are looking to move, it can possibly help you land a new position.

Publishing can also potentially enhance your relationship with your principal investigators (PIs) by showing that you too understand what is involved in the conduct of research. Even if your article may be on an administrative as opposed to a “hard science” topic, standard research
methodology may be used to study the topic, whether it is a literature review, collection and analysis of survey data or an actual “experiment.” Even if you don’t have a research background, a viewpoint, editorial or best practice article may be just as valuable. Your PIs can develop empathy for your efforts as a research administrator, which can promote a more collaborative culture of working together toward a common goal.

Finally, publishing can serve as a way to network and meet other departmental administrators. It is so simple to cut and paste a web link onto an e-mail and blast it out to potentially interested parties. Or you can collaborate on an article by inviting research administrators from other institutions to serve as coauthors on a topic of mutual interest.

Good luck with taking advantage of these wonderful opportunities. These are just three examples of the many ways you can help to expand your reach as a departmental administrator. In fact, if you are interested in collaborating with me, you can reach me at mariachu@hawaii.edu or at (808) 586-2925. Happy publishing!

**References:**


PRA 4 Review

After a year’s hiatus, PRA came roaring back to a sellout attendance of over 400! Reflecting its theme of Pro-Active Research Administration, the conference began each day with Tales from the Audit in which four veteran NCURA members shared their experiences (and battle scars) with humor and the wisdom of hindsight. With strong participation from our federal partners, attendees also had the opportunity to hear about new funding opportunities and initiatives from their institutions’ strongest sponsors. The evaluations from attendees indicated that 96% of those responding would recommend PRA to a colleague and 94% felt that it had met their expectations. Many folks also commented that the smaller size of PRA4 enabled them to do more extensive networking and to ask individualized questions of the presenters and faculty. With its unqualified success, expect to see PRA as a permanent annual NCURA offering.

Check out the upcoming PRA 4 webinar
Managing Effort: Truth or Consequence
September 16, 12:30-2:00 pm.

Registration is available at
http://www.ncura.edu/content/educational_programs/online/webinars.php
Didn’t get to go to the Pre-award Conference this summer? Or simply want to enjoy it again?

You can now listen to one of the outstanding sessions from PRA online. “The Domino Effect: How Pre-award Actions Affect the Post Award Compliance World,” can be accessed at http://www.ncura.us/podcast/PRA4.mp3.

Make sure to watch for more information about PRA 5 coming next summer!
Providence also host city to NCURA Board and Leadership Convention

Just prior to the PRA4 Conference, NCURA’s Board of Directors met for 1½ days in Providence. A number of items were discussed, including a 6-year financial review of NCURA’s programs. The Board approved new faculty for the traveling workshops; Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration; Financial Research Administration Workshop; and the Departmental Administration Workshop. Also approved were, incoming members for the 2011-2012 Financial Management Committee; Nominating & Leadership Development Committee; and the Professional Development Committee and the establishment of a Task Force on Social Media. Of particular importance, was the approval of pursuing an amendment to the bylaws and administrative policies to eliminate the requirement to hold the annual meeting in the last quarter of the year. Official notification of this proposed bylaws change will be sent to the full membership in the near future and discussed at the upcoming Business Meeting of the 52nd Annual Meeting.

Following the Board meeting, elected national and regional leaders gathered for the 6th NCURA Leadership Convention. The group met in a series of breakout groups to discuss the envisioned future of both national and regional meetings – focusing on our forecasting on our meeting needs in 2020; the increasing need for international collaboration and cross-training; and ways to support NCURA’s growing educational programming. Many innovative ideas resulted from this informal and collegial gathering of leaders; a number of which will be used as a guide for future planning.
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New England
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As the seasons change and fall approaches, Region I is gearing up for NCURA’s 52nd National meeting in Washington DC. We will have 3 travel awardees joining us. Region I is again planning to have a special event for newcomers at our annual meeting as well as an event to show our appreciation for volunteers. We would also like to remind and encourage Region I members to volunteer at the national meeting if interested. Please contact region1@ncuraregion1.org if you need more information on volunteering at the national meeting. Congratulations to Denise Rouleau for being on the national volunteer spotlight.

During the month of July, NCURA’s Annual Leadership conference and PRA IV, were held back to back in Region I’s beautiful state of Rhode Island. It was nice to have a national offering in our backyard. Region I was well represented at the Leadership conference by Susan Zipkin, Chair, Bethanne Giehl, Chair Elect, Kevin Brodric, Treasurer, Tom Egan, Board Member, Kris Monahan, VMC Chair, Karen Woodward Massey, Curriculum Committee Chair, and Vivian Holmes, Chair Elect for the NLDC (National Nominating and Leadership Development Committee). There were many important discussions including programming, NCURA’s international perspective, and how the regions and national can work together. Region I stood out as the most active region in the country. We are very proud of our regional offerings and will continue to work hard to offer high quality programming.

Congratulations to Region I PRA Travel Award winner Kate Elshirl from Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

Region I elections are currently underway, and we have an excellent slate. Nominees for Chair Elect are: Pat Fitzgerald, (Harvard University) and Tammy Raccio (Yale); Nominees for Treasurer Elect are: Carlo Eracleo (Partners Healthcare) and Randi Wasik (UMass Worcester); and nominees for Secretary are: Steve Hoffman, (Dana Farber Cancer Institute) and Estelle Lang (Brown University). The ballot is open from August 10 to September 9 and the winners will be announced soon after.

In 2011 our Region I Spring Meeting makes a come back to Connecticut! We have just signed the contract for the spring meeting to be held at the Omni, New Haven CT. The Omni is a fabulous hotel, New Haven is a great location with lots to do, and we will have a very robust program as always. The program committee will be looking for volunteers to help with this event. Please contact the chair elect through the link on the website if you are interested.

Other Region I committees have been busy over the summer. The VMC has matched 12 mentor and mentee pairs for our 3rd year in a row of this successful program. The VMC is excited about a few purposeful activities which are underway. The first is the addition of a Spotlight on Volunteerism page on the NCURA Region I website. Collaborating with the Region I web committee and webmaster, the VMC will begin populating a Spotlight on Volunteerism page on the website September 1, 2010. The Spotlight will highlight a different volunteer opportunity each month and include a quote or quotes from those who have held the featured position highlighting the benefits of volunteering within NCURA. The VMC is also looking for new blood, so anyone who is interested in helping to organize Region I’s volunteer activities, please contact Kris Monahan.

Congratulations to Julie Morelli Novak from Tufts University who is the lucky winner of the 6/2/10 RADG raffle. We look forward to seeing everyone at the RADG meeting September 30. Tony DeCrappo will be presenting an update from COGR. Please join us for this informative update and fill out an evaluation form for your chance to win a free RADG meeting.

I hope to see many of you Oct 31-Nov 3 at AMS2! The program looks terrific, there are many excellent workshops, and there will be a Tailgate party on Sunday night. If you are planning on attending and would like to actively participate in our “Region I Tailgate Show” please contact region1@ncuraregion1.org.

Susan Zipkin is the Chair of Region I and serves as the Director of Research Finance, Radiology Research at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

REGION II

Mid-Atlantic
www.ncuraregionii.org

Is it ever too early to start talking about the next Spring Meeting? Never! The Program Committee, Chaired by Cheryl Williams and Jill Frankenfield, has already sent out information on the meeting and a call for sessions. I would like to start this Regional Update with a summary of what we’ve been working on for the meeting.

Perhaps the most important news concerning this year’s meeting is that we are re-arranging the schedule to offer more sessions and varying their length, including discussion opportunities, and identifying both the learning objectives and skill-levels. These changes allow the Program Committee to offer both more variety and depth and will help attendees to better plan their schedule. These changes provide participants with increased opportunity for professional development targeted more closely at their particular needs.

These changes also provide an increased opportunity for members to present a session. Several calls for session ideas have already been sent to members and a lot of submissions have been received, but there is still time to organize and suggest sessions. If you haven’t presented at a Spring Meeting, please feel free to contact the Program Chair or Co-Chair to talk...
about your idea and how it might be developed into a session. A link to the session abstract submission site is on the Region II homepage.

The theme of the 2011 Spring Meeting is Setting Our Sights on the New World of Research Administration. New York City was founded to be the hub for international enterprise, has always been known for its cosmopolitan atmosphere and attitude, and has always managed to be at the forefront of exploring whatever new world the old world is facing. As we begin to look at the post-ARRA landscape of Research Administration, we already know that the first legacy will be the continuation of enhanced compliance requirements. What else will we be left with? Who will be needed and what skills will be required? Where could this lead? How much will this be like settling a new world?

We will announce many of the details of the Spring Meeting during the Regional Reunion at the 52nd Annual Meeting in November. This will include the four workshops that will be presented on Sunday afternoon, the keynote speaker, the schedule for the meeting, and many of the sessions that have been accepted.

**Spring Meeting 2011**

**Theme:** Setting Our Sights on the New World of Research Administration

**Dates:** May 1 to 3, 2011

**Location:** New York Helmsley Hotel, 212 East 42nd Street, New York City

**Schedule:**
- May 1, Workshops, 1 to 4:30 pm
  - May 2, Plenary, Concurrent Sessions, Business Meeting, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm
  - May 3: Breakfast Discussion Roundtables, Concurrent Sessions, 7:30 am to 12:30 pm

A final note on the 2011 Spring Meeting: If you are attending NCURA's 52nd Annual Meeting in November, be sure to stop by the Region II Hospitality Suite to pick-up your special “bling” to help us spread the word and promote our trip to the Big Apple.

Speaking of NCURA's 52nd Annual Meeting (October 31 To November 3, 2010 “At the Confluence of Collaboration and Creation” if you didn’t read anything else in this issue of NCURA Magazine, there are some things you will need to get ready before hand, and the Region is going to need your help while you are there.

You will need to plan ahead to be ready for the NCURA Tailgate Reunion. This will be a football-themed opening dinner that replaces suits with school colors and the comedian with comedy. The first thing that came to mind for me was a t-shirt (too hot for a sweatshirt!), but then all of our schools have big, bold and/or odd things that represent us and incorporate our colors – like big foam hats and fingers and animals – that I should encourage you to wear or bring these too to the Reunion. Why? Along with displaying our school spirit, we will also be asked to show our Region spirit by having a mascot and a region cheer. We will need everyone ready to help our cheer captain and cheer leaders to yell, scream and shout to lead our Region to victory! Whatever that means.

For those of you from schools or institutions or agencies that may not have football programs, tailgating, school colors or odd things to wear, please feel free to rely on your alma mater, to pick a college within Region II, or wear/bring something fun that could represent where you are from. Like a giant caduceus.

Steering Committee and Regional Planning

By now, I hope that you all know that we had a change in leadership this summer. This early change to a new Chair, combined with the adoption of the new By-Laws and Administrative Policies, and the appointment of additional members to the Steering Committee has given the Region the opportunity to undertake some long range planning. There are many items on the list to talk about: The Spring meeting length, focus, structure, locations, other forms of professional development that the Region can offer or sponsor, member relations (new member recruitment, support, mentoring), volunteer opportunities, leadership training, communication, and the budget. If there is something that we should be talking about, please let me know.

There will be an update on our progress in November and, with luck, a report in May.

**Region II Current Officers and Steering Committee:** Chair: Martin B. Williams (williams@wpunj.edu), Past Chair And Chair-Elect, 2010, Alexandra A. Mckown (amckown@jhsph.edu), Secretary, Anne E. Albinak (aalbinak@jhu.edu), Treasurer, Holly Benze (hab@jhu.edu), Treasurer-Elect, Mary Holleran (mary.holleran@mail.wvu.edu), Past Treasurer, Jeanne Galvin-Clarke (jclarke@umaryland.edu), Regionally Elected Member of the Board of Trustees, Brenda Kavanaugh (brenda.kavanaugh@rochester.edu), Chris Schlenker (schlenker@marshall.edu), Cheryl Williams (cheryl.williams@rochester.edu), Spring Meeting 2011: Chair, Cheryl Williams (cheryl.williams@rochester.edu), Co-Chair, Jill Frankenfield (jfranken@umd.edu).

**Martin Williams** is Chair of Region II and serves as Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at William Paterson University.

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**REGION III Southeast**

**www.ncuraregioniii.com**

As we reach the end of the summer and the beginning of another academic year, there are new faculty members to meet, proposal and reporting deadlines for which to plan, and new regulations to study. It is also time for Region III to announce our new committee chairs. Region III is pleased to welcome them all: Mau-
reen Tice (St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital) is our new Fundraising Subcommittee Chair; Kim Linkous (Virginia Tech) is our new Nominations & Elections Committee Chair; Paige Robinson (Vanderbilt University) is our new Membership & Awards Committee Chair; Jill Tincher (University of Miami) is our new Site Selection Committee Chair; and Jeanne Hermann-Petrin (University of Tennessee Health Science Center) is our new Webmaster. As we mentioned in the May/June Regional Corner, Robyn Remotigue (Mississippi State University) is our new Volunteer Coordinator. Rodney Granec (University of West Alabama) will continue to serve as Hospitality Committee Chair. Region III deeply appreciates the service of the former committee chairs and warmly welcomes the new ones.

Serving as a committee chair is just one way to contribute to our Region. There are also plenty of fun and rewarding volunteer opportunities that require only a small time commitment. Volunteering is a great way to get more involved and to network with your Region III colleagues. Are you willing to give a couple of hours working registration at a meeting, assisting with audio-visual needs, or welcoming your colleagues in the Hospitality Suite? Check out the volunteer opportunities listed on the Region III web site, contact Robyn Remotigue (robyn@spa.msstate.edu) and let her guide you, or contact a committee chair directly if you already know where you would like to help out. The regional meetings, annual meetings, publications, and other networking and professional development opportunities and resources would not be available without so many members contributing a little bit of their time and energy. Paige Robinson reports that we have over 85 new members in Region III since April 2010! If you are one of those 85, please don’t hesitate to volunteer. We not only welcome you, we need you! New members are particularly encouraged to apply for a Travel Award to the upcoming annual meeting. Keep your eyes open for the award announcement and application!

The upcoming 52nd Annual Meeting is back in the newly remodeled Washington Hilton this year and will be held from October 31 - November 3. Be sure to register for this informative and fun meeting, entitled “At the Confluence of Creation and Collaboration.” The meeting will focus on the interdependent relationship between the researcher and the research administrator. The preliminary program, registration, and hotel information are now available online at the NCURA website at http://www.ncura.edu. Check out the Program page and start making plans now. Many Region III members will be presenting workshops, leading sessions, or moderating discussion groups, and all will enjoy catching up with fellow flamingos at the scheduled Regional Reunions. As for the Region III Hospitality Suite, Rodney Granec promises something for everyone. Activities will be posted on the Region III website soon. Attending the National Meeting is also the only way to catch the farewell performance of Soul Source and the No Cost Extensions, which includes several Region III members.

An update on Region III elections: we were looking for a few good nominees and we think we found them! Thanks to everyone who submitted nominations for the upcoming Region III elections. This fall members will receive an electronic ballot to elect a new NCURA Region Chair-Elect and Regionally-elected NCURA Board Member. The ballot will include biographical information for each candidate. Successful candidates will be announced prior to the NCURA National meeting in October. Here are descriptions of the two positions for which members will cast their votes:

- The position of Chair-Elect plays a critical role in assisting the Chair to represent all members of the region. The Chair-Elect shall serve as Chair of the Program Committee to plan and coordinate the Region III Spring Meeting. Full job description can be found at http://www.ncuraregioniii.com/docs/NCURA_Region_III_Volunteer_Opportunities.pdf
- The Regional NCURA Board Member shall serve a term of office as specified in the NCURA Bylaws. The Regional NCURA Board Member shall be invited to report relevant discussions, actions, and plans to the regional membership during regional business meetings. Job description can be found at http://www.ncura.edu/content/volunteer/opportunities/member_of_the_board_of_directors.php

Representing our region in these capacities involves a significant time commitment. Please take time to thank everyone on the ballot for their willingness to serve. Without their dedication and hard work, our conferences and organizational infrastructure would not be possible. Elections Committee Chair Kim Linkous extends a special thanks to those individuals serving on the Region III Nominations and Elections Committee: Tony Ventimiglia, Advisor (Auburn University), Garrett Steed (Georgia Institute of Technology), Brigitte S. Pister, (Clemson University), and Tamara Hatch (James Madison University). Good luck to all the candidates!

Save the Dates: Please plan to join us at the 2011 Region III Meeting that will be held from April 30 – May 4 at the Wild Dunes Resort on the Isle of Palms in South Carolina. This venue is one of our favorite meeting locations – every one of our visits there has been memorable. Wild Dunes is also a big reason for Region III’s reputation for being “One Beachin’ Region” as the meeting takes place right along an extraordinary stretch of wide Atlantic beach. A 15-minute drive takes you right into Charleston – a city replete with art, architecture, history, and fine dining. With so many folks eager to come, the program is sure to be full of strong presenters, sponsor representatives, and subject matter experts. Don’t feel guilty about enjoying yourself; the fun is what brings together the best of our Region! And that includes you – so make sure your calendar blocks off April 30 thru May 4 for the 2011 Region III Meeting. If you want to get there early (in spirit at least) check out www.WildDunes.com!

Region III Chair-Elect Rick Smiley (East Carolina University) and the Program Committee are already hard at work developing an agenda that will make this a meeting to remember. Despite the impact of financial constraints and travel freezes, attendance at the regional meeting actually increased from 174 in the previous year to 245 last year. The increase in attendance is testament to the quality of the programming. We expect this year to be even better. Thanks to Tony Ventimiglia and the Site Selection Committee for taking us back to this fantastic venue for our next meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

Our Regional Meeting fundraiser is quickly becoming a Region III tradition. In 2009 proceeds went to purchase two shelter boxes for displaced families, and this year we raised just under $2000 for medical relief in Haiti. We hope to make an even bigger difference in 2011. In the past two years we have had poker runs, impromptu auctions in the Hospitality Suite and at the Tuesday night party, and State coin jugs for attendees to contribute loose bills and change in competition for the beautiful Traveling State Cup Trophy (Georgia and Tennessee have won in 2009 and 2010...
respectively). This year at our spring meeting in Memphis, we had a blast with our Honorary Duckmaster raffle. Cindy Hope (University of Alabama) was thrilled to win this event and did a fabulous job as the Honorary Duckmaster at the end of the day, escorting the World Famous Peabody Ducks back to their rooftop mansion after spending the day swimming in the lobby fountain. The fundraising subcommittee is still forming, and anyone interested in participating is invited to email Maureen Tice (maureen.tice@stjude.org). We’re also looking for a local charity to benefit from our efforts at the Isle of Palms in spring of 2011. All suggestions are welcome.

As always, if you have items for the Regional Corner, please contact Region III Chair Jennifer Shambrook (Jennifer.shambrook@stjude.org) or contact the newsletter contributors, Sam Gannon (sam.gannon@vanderbilt.edu) and Laura Letbetter (llebett@kennesaw.edu). If you have items for the website, please contact Jennifer or contact webmaster Jeanny Hermann-Petrin.

Laura Letbetter and Sam Gannon serve as Region III’s newsletter contributors. Laura is Director of Proposal Development for the Office of Grants and Contracts at Kennesaw State University. Sam is Education and Training Manager for the Office of Grants and Contracts at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

REGION IV Mid-America
www.ncuraregioniv.com

You know you’ve been experiencing a heat wave when your plastic thermal coffee mug has melted into an amorphous mass by the time you get into your car after work. I hope the rest of you have been able to stay cool this summer and not let anything but the weather get you too hot and bothered. It’s been hot here in the Midwest, but luckily we’ve been spared too many of the country’s worst weather-related events.

Our Spring Meeting was held in Omaha, Nebraska, and we are happy to report it was a roaring success. We had over 200 attendees. After a minor flight cancellation snafu, we ended up having two keynote addresses, delighting our members with riveting stories of Abraham Lincoln as well as fascinating chronicles from the Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Omaha, Nebraska. Stephen L. Hansen was presented with a special “Distinguished Service” award during our Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, for providing “ad-hoc services, as needed” for his last-minute keynote address on “Popular Images of Abraham Lincoln.” It is difficult to overstate our appreciation for Steve’s contributions to Region IV!

All sessions and workshops were very well-attended. From the feedback we’ve received from the on-site evaluations, individual e-mails, and online survey, the Omaha program was of exceptional quality. Thanks to the Program Committee members, to Co-Chairs Craig Reynolds and Mary Laura Farnham, and most importantly, to the workshop faculty, presenters, and discussion group facilitators for their expertise and valuable contributions in making this meeting so successful. The evaluations received are excellent; our membership was very pleased with what I believe was a top-notch program.

New Officers and Board members were also announced at our Business Meeting. Shannon Sutton (Western Illinois University) is our new Treasurer-Elect and Michelle Schoenecker (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) is our new Secretary. Two new Members-at-Large were elected: Robert Holm (Butler University) and Nancy Reidelberger (Washington University St. Louis). Region IV Other Board Member is Dorothy Spurlock (University of Toledo).

Your new Chair-Elect and upcoming Program Chair of the next Spring Meeting, David Ngo of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is already working hard to put together his program committee and preparing for the next meeting in Cleveland, Ohio. I’m sure he’ll be looking for volunteers for the many activities related to the Cleveland meeting. This is a great opportunity for new members to get involved and network with colleagues in the region. Be sure to check with David to see if you can play a role in ensuring the success of our next Spring Meeting.

This summer the Region IV Board will be planning activities for NCURAs 52nd Annual Meeting. We will also be happy to take all your suggestions for a Region IV cheer for the upcoming tailgate event in D.C. Watch for upcoming email announcements and requests for proposals!

Christa Johnson is Chair of Region IV and serves as the Associate Dean for the Office of Research and Projects at the Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

REGION V Southwestern
www.ncuraregionv.com

Over 151 people attended the Region V regional meeting in South Padre Island, Texas. The theme of the meeting was “Riding the Wave: Research Administration and Economic Recovery.” The keynote speaker for the meeting was Dr. Keith McDowell, Vice Chancellor for Research and Technology Transfer, the University of Texas System. The 2011 regional meeting will be held in the Woodlands, Texas.

Region V announced the election of Jeremy Forsberg, the University of Texas at Arlington, as Chair-elect; Reggie Crim, the University of Texas at Austin, as Treasurer; Thomas Spencer, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center as an ad hoc member of the regional Executive Committee; and Katherine Kissman, Texas Engineering Station, as an ad hoc member of the regional Executive Committee.

Marianne Woods took office as Regional Chair at the close of the Region V regional meeting. The first meeting of the Executive Committee was held in August and the following committee chairs were appointed:

Program Committee
Chair: Jeremy Forsberg (University of Texas at Arlington)

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Speaking about voting, Elections for Region VI Officers-Elect are underway, remember to vote for our Elect-Officers when you receive the email notice. Thanks to all of our candidates who have agreed to run in this important election and their willingness to serve our Region. Special thanks to the Nominating Committee for recruiting, nominating and putting together the ballots. The Nominating Committee consisting of Ted Mordhorst, Chair of the Nominating Committee, University of Washington, Dick Seglman, CalTech University, Heather Kubinec, The Broad Foundation.

The Awards Committee selected two regional members who received a Travel Award each to attend the Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA) Conference held in July, 2010. The winners were: Shereda Julian of Stanford University and Sara Kinser of Washington State University. Congratulations to all Travel Award Recipients!! The selection for the four travel awards to the 52nd Annual Meeting is underway. Thank you to the Travel Award Committee – Kevin Stewart, University of Santa Barbara, Ann Pollack, University of California, Los Angeles, Csilla Csaplar, Stanford University, Maren Boyack, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Casi Heintzman, University of Washington – for your diligence in reviewing applications and selecting this year’s travel awardees.

The Membership Committee has just launched a new Membership and Volunteer (MV) Ambassador Program to strengthen our membership outreach, especially for our new member. More information about the Ambassador Program can be viewed via our website at: http://www.ogrds.wsu.edu/r6ncura/announce.aspx. Your volunteerism and involvement in Region VI are much appreciated and are important to the health and longevity of this successful Region.

The Educational and Professional Development Committee (EPDC) has been meeting frequently via conference calls to discuss a number of hot topics such as: Time Management, Effort Reporting, and many of the Mentee’s Personal Best Projects.

As one of the mentee stated: “Prior to my participation, I had no vision past the front door of my office, now I see that my career in Research Administration filled with opportunity and growth potential..... The Lead Me program is designed for everyone to find their professional niche and to achieve their best. That was the beauty of the program. It also allowed me the creativity to explore my passion within my chosen profession. I am most grateful for being afforded this opportunity and will continue to develop within this evolving industry.” By Derick Jones, Mentee of the LEADME Program.

As of the writing of this article, negotiations are being finalized for our 2011 Spring Meeting which will be held at the Westin Hotel in Denver Colorado from April 3 to April 6, 2011. Thanks to Region VII site selection committee of Tim Edwards, University of Montana, Debra Murphy, Arizona State University for all of their hard work! Planning is underway for our 2011 Spring Meeting and more information about our 2011 Spring Meeting will be posted on Region VI website as soon as it becomes available. The Region VI site selection committee will soon be convened to look at a location for RM2012, and consider possible sites at Big Island, Hawaii, among others.

Finally, please be sure to come to the Tailgate Party at the 52nd Annual Meeting, wear your school colors, and bring a pennant and/or logo of your school to show our regional pride! We look forward to seeing you at the 52nd Annual Meeting in D.C.

Sinh Simmons is Chair of Region VI and serves as Associate Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Washington.
I love summer and it will soon be passing (it is still really hot here in Tempe as I work on my note to you) but I am looking forward to fall in Washington, D.C. – cool crisp air, colorful foliage and a time to get together again. We are all busy making plans for National meeting October 31 – November 3, 2010, where we will be back at the Hilton and I am anxious to see everyone again.

I want to thank Winnie Ennenga, Immediate Past Chair, for heading up our Nominating and Elections Committee. As you know, the nomination period is open for our annual elections. This year we were seeking nominations for Chair Elect, one Member-at-Large, and the regionally elected National Board Member. Elections will be under way as you read this – your vote counts so please let your voice be heard. We will announce the results at the Business meeting during the 52nd Annual Meeting. Thank you in advance to everyone who agreed to run and participate. We do appreciate your willingness to serve, your time and your commitment.

Thank you also to Ralph Brown and Kimberly Page for serving as our travel awards committee. It will be exciting to see each of you and our award winners at the National Meeting. The “Annual Bash” will have some surprises this year and I look forward to the opportunity to network and learn new information from the workshops and concurrent sessions. Remember to check the NCURA website for the latest information on the program titled “The Confluence of Creation and Collaboration 52nd Annual Meeting” at: http://www.ncura.edu/content/educational_programs/sites/52/.

One more note of thanks to everyone on our Executive Committee – I appreciate your guidance and support. What a team.

The latest news on planning for the 2011 Region VI and VII Meeting is that we will be meeting in downtown Denver, Colorado, April 3 – 6, 2011 at the Westin at Tabor Center. Tim Edwards, our Chair Elect, is doing a terrific job at bringing the site selection together and with a combined team of Region VI and VII we can look forward to a really great spring session. Up-to-date information will be distributed soon. Be sure to watch for news and announcements on our website (shhh - our website is having a makeover you will want to check it out often to be one of the first to see its premier).

Warm regards – see you soon in Washington, D.C.

Debra Murphy is Chair of Region VII and serves as the Director, Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at Arizona State University.
Leadership Tips: Navigating the Four Corners of Change Through

Change is not just a campaign slogan; it is a constant. In our personal lives, change manifests itself in numerous ways: marriage, divorce, birth of a child, death of a loved one, promotion, pursuit of other opportunities, and so on. These life changes can be planned or unexpected, and in either case can generate strong emotions and confusion that can cause a temporary loss of vision of the path along life’s journey.

Layered upon these personal events are the changes one experiences in the workplace. These changes too may be planned or unexpected. Changes such as the incoming or outgoing transfer of colleagues, the rearrangement of an organizational chart, campus-wide implementation of new electronic systems or the creation of a different strategic focus for the organization can also generate feelings of unease and disorientation that, if left unmanaged, can blur the organization’s vision.

Each individual and organization responds to such changes in different ways and at different rates. A critical component of the art of leadership is the ability to discern where the individuals composing an organization are on the continuum of change implementation. Many are familiar with the Kübler-Ross model, commonly known as the “Five Stages of Grief.” This model was first introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book, On Death and Dying. Similar to the Kübler-Ross model’s description of five discrete stages through which an individual progresses when dealing with grief and tragedy, there are models describing how individuals deal with change. One of these models is represented by the “Four Rooms of Change” model introduced by Swedish social psychologist Claes Janssen in the late 60s and early 70s, also referred to as the “Four Room Apartment” model.

Janssen’s “Four Rooms of Change” model postulates that individuals progress through four discrete stages of change: Contentment, Denial, Confusion, and Renewal. The following is a discussion of each of Janssen’s stages of change and suggestions for leadership behavior during each stage based on the “Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership” model introduced in Kouzes and Posner’s book, The Leadership Challenge.

Changes..., if left unmanaged, can blur the organization’s vision.

Contentment

In the Room of Contentment, we are concerned with Modeling the Way of being centered and in control with a strong focus on the current situation. It is also important to balance the focus on the current reality with being open to Challenging the Process, or being receptive to change so that you can take advantage of opportunities and are not blindsided. As a leader, one should avoid treatment of the Room of Contentment as a room of complacency. A continual focus on processes and potential areas for improvement keeps the group from stagnating in the midst of a dynamic fiscal and regulatory environment.

You might find yourself in this room just prior to finding out you are expecting a child, before a major system implementation (ex. grants.gov), or new regulations (ARRA) are being imposed. Just prior to these changes you are likely hard at work focused on meeting deadlines, managing staff, and attending meetings, and must always be sure to keep an eye towards the horizon of continuous improvement. A group will typically experience a transition from the Room of Contentment to the Room of Denial due to internal forces (ex. new process needs) or external forces (ex. budget cuts).

Denial

The Room of Denial is understandably difficult, but essential to the change process. The group may be experiencing anger, disorientation, apathy, disappointment, or any combination of the above. As in the Room of Contentment, a leader needs to be open to Challenging the Process and being receptive to change. It is critical to Model the Way by staying calm so that you can be open to hearing new information as it becomes available and creating an environment that is conducive to information sharing so that you can Enable Others to Act, or assimilate information and create future structure or process.

Before the group can transition from the Room of Denial to the Room of Confusion, it needs to exhaust itself of the feelings of discontentment described above. While the pragmatic, perhaps impatient, leader might consider the group’s necessity to vent as an unaffordable luxury and a waste of time, it is important to allow those storm clouds to dissipate rather than steering the ship away from them. Allow everyone to be heard, including the introverts in the room that may feel uncomfortable among the venting extroverts. One thing to keep in mind is that it is important to make sure that venting is done constructively in the workplace (and beyond!). A creative idea to turn venting into a constructive activity is to brainstorm.

The Room of Denial is not one that will produce the solution(s) to the situation at hand, yet it is vitally important to Encourage the Heart as we support each other through the transition into the next room.

Confusion

The Room of Confusion is a place where you have acknowledged that change is a reality, but that reality is still not clear. You are in a place where you can start to figure out what initiated the change, what the change means, and what the future will look like as the pieces of the puzzle start to come together. In this Room it is critical that you Model the Way of bringing people together to share information and to collaborate. As information comes in and the vision becomes more defined, we need to commit ourselves to Inspiring a Shared Vision in each other. While Inspiring the Shared vision, it is still important to give people room to Challenge the Process as we analyze information.

4 Managing Change, http://web.mit.edu/hr/oeed/learn/change/art_four_room.html
6 Managing Change, http://web.mit.edu/hr/oeed/learn/change/art_four_room.html
By Greg Luttrell

Collaboration

and fine-tune the vision. Through Enabling Others to Act, we allow our colleagues to guide themselves through the Room of Confusion and transition to the Room of Renewal with a clearer vision of where they need to go.

The Room of Confusion is the one in which the direction forward is charted. Similar to the Room of Denial, each group member should be encouraged to participate in the problem definition and the solution selection. Again, the leader should focus on gathering input not only from the always-willing-to-contribute extroverts, but also from those who may take a bit longer to formulate and express their opinions. A more thorough approach in this room will enable a better solution than one that is hastily contrived.

Renewal

In this Room, all five of the Practices of Exemplary Leadership can be applied. The Room of Renewal requires that you Model the Way of moving the organization and processes forward. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary to give people the structure and freedom to digest their new reality, which can be accomplished by Inspiring a Shared Vision. While we are in the Room of Renewal, we start to transition to the Room of Contentment, where we are at ease with our current reality, but must still keep our minds open to continue to Challenge the Process in a commitment to continuous improvement. Throughout the experience in this room, it is also critical that we continue to Enable Others’ to Act by allowing them the freedom to piece together their new reality within a broad framework. And of course, as with each room we visit, it is critical that we continue to Encourage the Heart as we support one another through the change process.

The Room of Renewal is where the group can take a breath and celebrate a victory; whether it is great or small. You have gotten past the anger in the Room of Denial, the wilderness of potential alternatives in the Room of Confusion, and arrived at the place where the future path can finally be viewed. Again, the leader should be patient and allow the group to express itself. Bring the group together and reflect on the process by reviewing the successes and/or disappointments that lead to this point. Recognize achievement of the group and the individuals that enabled the success. Resist the urge to “put this one behind us,” and focus on the next challenge. Allow the celebration to take its course, just as allowing the clouds to dissipate in the Room of Denial.

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It’s Support not Service

By Vincent “Bo” Bogdanski

A new department administrator calls the central office to get an explanation as to why an air compressor needed for one of the college building’s air conditioners was disapproved in the institution’s purchasing system. The central administrator explains that the purchase was not disapproved, but the use of a sponsored program fund was inappropriate. The exasperated response from the department administrator: “You are supposed to be a service organization and yet you do nothing but prohibit me from doing my job.”

Since I have been associated with research administration, I have heard that the research administrator works in a “service” organization, and the job is to provide “customer service” to the Principal Investigator (PI). This service concept seems to be accepted as a fact throughout the research administration community, and using the term “service” is second nature. I propose that the unfamiliar term “service” as a standard for using a familiar term with those who are either inexperienced as to the mission of research administration or unfamiliar with the expected outcomes of the research administrator. Just like the new department administrator who had a preconceived notion of service (see the case above), many who we ‘serve’ also bring these inaccurate definitions to bear when dealing with the research administrator.

I trust that those who describe research administration as “service” do not intentionally mislead but instead have not considered the ramifications of using a familiar term with those who are either inexperienced as to the mission of research administration or unfamiliar with the expected outcomes of a well-managed research administration organization. Furthermore, using the familiar term “service” leads to unanticipated definitional outcomes which impair research administrators from fulfilling their daily functions because of unrealistic expectations of the constituencies.

It occurred to me that a prior experience may provide some insight and allow me to recommend a more appropriate and accurate term to describe the purpose of research administration activities. That term is “support.” I was the manager of a group which accounted for most non-appropriated (self-generated) funds collected on a military installation. I supported the Officer’s Club, golf course, bowling center, youth center, child care operation, hobby shops and the like. Note that the facilities I supported were “service” organizations, places where military members had a choice of using, not using or paying for alternative recreational opportunities in the civilian community. The key word is “choice.” My group on the other hand was mandated by the Air Force to support all of these service activities. None of these organizations could hire another accounting firm or do the accounting themselves. For compliance purposes, my group was directed to “support” these organizations.

I do not mean to suggest there is an equal comparison between research administration and my experiences above. Research administration does not support service organizations at institutions. However, the role of research administration is similar. Principal Investigators do not have a choice because central administration has mandated a research administration matrix for your institution. Under that defined matrix, the research administrator, no matter what their specific function (i.e. departmental, pre, post or other), supports the institution and the PI in the research enterprise. Nor do I suggest that there are no elements of “service” while performing “support.” Yet, I think that describing research administration as “service” is unfair to the research administrator and gives the wrong impression to university constituencies.

During a meeting defining OMB Circular A-21’s handling of administrative costs, a college official says to Central Administration, “Let’s not talk about what we can’t do, because as a service organization you need to think outside-the-box and recommend ways to avoid the difficulties of the Circular.”

If research administration were truly a “service” organization, this college official would have been correct in his or her expectations. However, A-21 contains accounting principles which are accepted in the research administration and accounting communities. Thinking outside-the-box is a worthy effort if your objective is to make the sale and satisfy the customer. However, if your objective is to maintain compliance, achieve consistency and keep the institution from potentially being assessed a penalty, the college official’s definition of “service” is inaccurate.

I have developed the attached matrix which provides indicators of what encompasses “support” as opposed to “service.” I do not mean to imply that elements on either side of the matrix cannot cross over to the other side, but instead to suggest that these factors are more dominant to one side of the matrix or the other. Nor do I propose that this list is exhaustive. Generally, consistency and compliance dominate “support” while customer choice and flexibility are characteristics of “service.” I believe it is worthwhile to address a few of the factors in detail.

“Service” focuses on a single customer on an individual basis. “Support” is more complicated. Every decision requires the research administrator to consider what is consistent within the institution policy as well as the needs and desires of individual departments, colleges, institutes and centers. Then the PI’s needs must be considered. Often enough there are conflicts between the needs and desires of some of these various constituencies. Even more importantly, decisions which are perceived as deviations from norm can often have potential long-term impacts on an institution. Other constituencies can learn of the supposed inconsistency and want similar treatment. If the inconsistency is recommended from higher levels, the decision may lead to a change in policy or practice which may become the new norm. This on-going analysis followed by recommended decision may easily lead one or more of the constituencies to be “unhappy.” If research administration is “service,” this is unacceptable; if it is “support,” this is not necessarily optimal, but is still within mission objective.

An associate vice president for research tells the director of the Research Office that “The Research Office is too slow in processing proposals because research administrators want the PI’s to make changes to proposals which the PI’s perceive as really not necessary. The principal investigators want better service from the Research Office.” Although the director was relatively new in this job, his reputation as a reliable and competent administrator preceded him to the
Current job. He was a speaker at regional meetings and considered a good source of information as attested by fellow NCURA members.

One key to a successful support organization is proper management involvement. Understanding the role and operation of any research administration support organization is absolutely necessary to providing appropriate supervision. Managers must be visible, active, supportive, encouraging and objective when dealing with issues associated with “support.” Those managers who are not involved tend to lack empathy, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the research administrators role. Managers who do not take the time to learn what their support organizations actually achieve merely have a general knowledge of result of the support organization’s efforts without an appreciation for the individual professional within the organization. Sometimes managers come from the research labs and initially have preconceived and often inaccurate perceptions of the purpose of research administration. When management combines lack of empathy with a concept of “service” versus “support,” the research administrator is in a very uncomfortable and confused position, not truly understanding their true role and function within the institution’s overall research enterprise.

There are at least two positive actions managers need to accomplish to assist research administrators or administrative organizations. First, management must have and be knowledgeable about a well-written and concise policies and procedures. The local research community needs to be aware of the contents and location of these policies and procedures. Managers must articulate these policies and procedures as the basis for routine decisions and minimize exceptions to policy. Secondly, the old adage, “praise in public and scold in private,” could be modified to say, “praise the work of the support organization to the constituency and keep any admonitions as private as possible.”

Why these two actions? To emphasize the support organization’s contribution to the institution is consistent with the ethical and compliance standards that are embodied within the whole institution. If instead the management minimizes the contribution of “support,” they decentralize the compliance and ethical standards to individual labs, departments or colleges, thus allowing for various interpretations of what is acceptable compliance and ethical conduct. This is not to say that “support” creates the compliance and ethical standards but only reinforces the standards that management considers important for the institution’s research enterprise.

“It is your job to get me 100% of my salary,” said the research associate professor to the department administrator. The professor was writing a grant proposal while currently being ‘fully’ supported on two federal awards equal to 100% of their time.

A “service” provider would have accommodated. A “support” provider would have a well-developed explanation for the difficulty with the demand, providing both the institution’s policy and the reason for that policy. The research administrator would know they were on firm ground and be ready to move to the next issue.

“Support” or “Service”: they are more than mere words.

Bo Bogdanski is a senior research administrator at Colorado State University. He has been a speaker at national and region NCURA workshops and concurrent sessions, is a faculty member of SPA II and is a former member of the NCURA Board of Directors. Bo has sixteen years university research administration experience after a 22 year career in the Air Force.
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Emmanuel College
Graduate and Professional Programs
A quick read at only 77 pages (plus resources, bibliography and index), this little book will be of significant value to quite a few doctoral students and faculty members, especially in the arts, humanities, the less experimental social sciences and related professional schools. It will also be useful to faculty members in most disciplines at primarily undergraduate institutions. Overall the book seems more suited to those preparing projects, as opposed to research proposals, and the main example used by the authors throughout the book is, in fact, an instructional project in history.

The authors stress that successful proposal development starts with a good idea. That concept alone is worth the price of the book and needs to be repeated to inexperienced faculty members again and again. They present a method of idea development that involves the use of “verbal sketches” that “move forward multiple idea and project alternatives” through an iterative process. This is excellent advice.

Once the idea has been developed, the authors turn to sponsors—how to identify them, how to approach them, and most importantly, how to learn from them. One of their keenest insights warns proposal writers that “program officers . . . want to be engaged by ideas that produce a level of excitement and provide vision for a project or program . . . much of what they receive in written and oral form lacks vision, clarity, and appreciation of the funder’s programmatic directions” (p. 32).

The chapter on proposal writing stresses that a proposal is a “repetitive art form that proceeds in sections from greater generality to greater specificity as it elaborates an idea as a project” (p. 37). It uses the project in history as an example, and that choice severely limits the value of the book to those in the empirically based disciplines or those using scientific or quantitative methods. For example, the chapter never mentions hypothesis testing, experimental controls, the use of pilot data or data analysis—all of which must be addressed in a scientific proposal. The chapter does discuss “evaluation,” which reinforces the project orientation of the book.

The book includes a chapter on “Managing a Funded Project” that apparently assumes a faculty member submits a proposal for funding and then lays the idea aside entirely while waiting for a funding decision from the sponsor. That assumption is inconsistent with life at a modern research university where active faculty are nearly constantly funded and always working on their research whether an individual project has been funded or not. The book seemed quaint in suggesting that “we would do well to spend some time and effort updating our working knowledge of related research in progress or formally reported in publications” as a first step after receiving an award notice.

In spite of that limitation, the book still offers insights into the award management process, not the least of which is the concept of the PI as CEO. I also found useful the concepts of using the proposal as a “touchstone” for implementation and realizing that any good project will lead you in directions you never expected to go. These are all useful concepts for faculty members and graduate students.

There is a large potential audience for this book, even though I did not find it especially suitable for all disciplines. For that audience, readers will find a surprising amount of wisdom concentrated in just a few short pages. If I could choose one concept from the book that conveys the essence of successful idea development and might be the best predictor of whether a project proposal is funded, it would be this gem on page 7: “An idea makes a novel and useful connection between significant need and purposeful action.” Scholars need to hear that. Arnold Shore and John Carfora should be commended for telling them.
As we discussed in the first two articles in this three-part series, in spite of the fact that no one really likes to be audited, many internal auditors can be helpful and consultative. In the first article, we gave you an overview of the internal audit department’s key responsibilities, the types of projects that they perform, and with whom they work within an institution. In the second article, we discussed how to interact with internal auditors when you are the subject of an audit (that is, how to “survive” an audit). You will recall from our previous articles that typically the internal audit department, in conjunction with management and the audit committee of the Board of Trustees, develops the annual internal audit plan and decides who will be audited and when. However, in the process of developing the annual internal audit plan, the internal auditors usually remain open and receptive to input about specific potential audit areas. If you provide timely and insightful information to your institution’s internal auditors, you likely can influence the internal audit plan and proactively engage your internal audit department….using their “powers for good!”

So, do you have a problem in your department? Maybe one of your laboratory technicians has suddenly started talking about his brand new boat, raising suspicions that this influx of funds may be coming from ill-gotten sources. Or maybe you are spending an inordinate amount of time in running shadow systems to track your costs because your institution’s financial reports are not adequate for your needs. Whom do you approach with your questions and concerns? Your supervisor? A peer at another institution? Your mother? Well, let us suggest that you consider contacting your own internal auditors to get a fresh perspective on the situation.

When would be the right time for you to step in and help to harness internal audit’s capabilities for your benefit? The internal audit department can serve as an invaluable, objective third party. If you are looking for unbiased thoughts and potential solutions, turn to your internal audit professionals as a great resource any time you:

• Suspect fraud or misuse of resources.
• Need to identify best practices and/or compare issues with your institution’s peer group.
• Implement a new system or process.

Now, when you make that call to the internal auditors, how do you get them involved? Like every group within your institution, internal audit has limited resources and cannot possibly review everything at the institution. In order to focus internal audit’s attention on an area that you believe may be of high risk to the institution and/or your department, you will need to:

• Give details and specifics of the issue, including hard evidence (such as copies of questionable invoices), if available.
• Provide information in an unbiased and objective manner; discuss the issue in terms of what is best for the organization, and avoid sounding like the matter is personal (even though the situation, of course, may involve the health of your department!).
• Explain potential outcomes from the current situation, and what could happen if it were to continue unabated (e.g., if your grant is up for renewal or you know that federal auditors are coming in the next three months to perform a review).
• Consider calling your institution’s anonymous “whistleblower” hotline, especially if you should have any reason to worry about retribution.

To give you more ideas of how you might engage internal audit, here are just a few examples where we have seen a department or group within an institution proactively engage internal auditors and achieve a positive outcome. Of course, details have been changed to protect the innocent (and not-so-innocent).

Case A: Investigation of Suspected Fraud

A university employed a long-standing, prestigious faculty member who had several major research grants from federal and private funding sources. This faculty member and his research team operated in a semi-autonomous research institution within the university, without the full benefit of the internal controls that were operating in more closely watched departments. One researcher working with this faculty member developed suspicions regarding the faculty member’s research conduct and spending of funds. The employee contacted his supervisor, and rather than investigating themselves, the research institution reached out to the internal audit department to perform a thorough investigation of the situation.

While the faculty member was on administrative leave, the internal auditors were given the authority to investigate the laboratory. The internal auditors examined documentation for the purchase and delivery of dozens of items, interviewed researchers, and reviewed documents related to research compliance, such as Institutional Review Board protocols. As it turned out, the faculty member had recently gone through significant changes in his personal life. These changes seemed to have led him to begin stealing funds from his grants and using the funding to pay for personal items. Using institution and federal funds, the faculty member purchased expensive presents for family members, furniture for his home, fiction novels, and leisure travel. Upon this discovery, the internal auditors further worked to categorize, classify, and determine an amount misappropriated (i.e., stolen) from external funding sources. The internal auditors then worked with the institution’s internal and external legal counsel to prosecute the faculty member, determine the amount that the institution needed to repay the funding agencies, and make an insurance claim for the lost resources.

The internal auditors’ objective viewpoint allowed them to come into a small research community and investigate in a way that a closely connected individual, such as the lab manager or the department chair responsible for overseeing the laboratory, would not have been able to do.

Also, the internal auditors had the forensic accounting expertise to quantify the monies lost, and had experience in communicating regularly and effectively with legal counsel. This helped the investigation to go much more smoothly.

Case B: Independent Research Compliance Assessment

A research institution had significant federal grants, but management of the research function was unsure of the institution’s level of compliance with relevant financial regulations. Specifically, management was concerned that an external audit from a major funding agency would uncover
significant issues. To proactively address the concerns prior to the arrival of outside auditors, management of the research function reached out to the internal audit department to perform an independent assessment of financial research compliance at the institution. The internal auditors selected a sample of grants and, for each grant, reviewed documents, interviewed researchers and administrators, and performed audit testing to assess compliance in the following areas:

- Effort reporting
- Allowability of costs charged
- Charging of clerical and administrative costs
- Subrecipient payments
- Payments to human subjects

Bringing in the internal auditors enabled management to get a fresh perspective and receive objective feedback without any of the individual researchers feeling “picked on.” Especially given that the grants selected for review were selected randomly, and that any findings in the report were not attributed to specific researchers, the research group felt that the work was being done for the greater good of the entire institution. This work resulted in the making of updates to outdated policies and forms, providing additional training in troublesome areas like effort reporting and cost charging, and removing from grants several unallowable costs that an external auditor would have cited as findings.

**Case C: Payroll System Implementation**

An institution was interested in implementing a comprehensive payroll and time charging system. While the institution had tentatively decided on the new system and vendor, management had some concerns and decided to bring in the internal audit team to perform a third party review of the system prior to implementation.

The internal auditors participated in requirements gathering interviews with the key stakeholders at the institution. The auditors also reviewed system specifications to assess the suitability of the system in relation to the institution’s needs and stated requirements. In addition, the internal auditors provided project quality assurance for the implementation of the new system, including reviewing progress and updates at key milestones. After implementation was complete, internal audit reviewed the system’s functionality compared to the requirements given to the vendor to assess the effectiveness of the implementation. As a result of the internal audit review, management avoided potential problems in the implementation of the new system. Ultimately, management was able to successfully utilize the new system to effectively and consistently handle the institution’s payroll and time charging requirements.

**Case D: Research Administration Infrastructure Review**

The research management at an institution engaged internal auditors to assess its research infrastructure and provide recommendations for the future growth and sustainability of research at the institution. The internal auditors met with key research operations employees, research faculty, and the Deans and Chairs of departments that either had significant research or were actively pursuing funding opportunities. Through these interviews, the internal auditors were able to understand the types of research conducted at the institution, what support or resources were available to faculty, and what the research community viewed as necessary to achieve and support research growth. Specifically, the internal auditors focused on the areas of developing and submitting proposals, monitoring financial compliance, allocating resources, compensating faculty, and developing and maintaining policies and procedures.

The internal audit group provided observations to the institution’s provost related to existing gaps and compliance concerns, as well as additional policies that would be needed as research expanded. The internal auditors also helped the institution to further define and qualify its research vision and to develop specific, measurable goals to track progress. Management then worked with the internal auditors to design a “roadmap” to lead the anticipated growth in research activity, including a prioritization of recommendations to strengthen the research infrastructure at the institution.

As these examples illustrate, there are ways in which you can proactively engage your internal audit department to work with you and your department in a consultative manner. Remember, internal audit is part of your institution, and they are on your side. Given the choice, you would likely prefer to work with internal audit to manage risks and address issues rather than receive findings from an outside regulatory body or sponsor. And do not forget, …collaborating with internal audit to get in front of issues may help to keep your institution off of the front page of your local newspaper.

Raina Rose Tagle is a Partner at Baker Tilly Beers & Cutler, PLLC. She leads the higher education and risk advisory services practice, providing internal audit, sponsored research compliance, financial and operational risk management, fraud investigation, technology risk consulting, and organizational governance services. With nearly 20 years of experience, Raina’s expertise includes enterprise-wide risk assessment, internal control design and evaluation, sponsored research compliance, business process reengineering, cost accounting, and systems implementation. Raina is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Information Systems Auditor whose presentations for NCURA, the Association of College and University Auditors, and other industry associations have included topics such as American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants compliance, enterprise risk management, organizational governance, managing conflicts of interest, and developing research compliance programs.

Kimberly Ginn is a Senior Manager at Baker Tilly Beers & Cutler, PLLC. Kimberley is a Certified Internal Auditor who consults with higher education and research institutions on internal audit, research compliance issues, and grants administration processes. She has over ten years of experience and routinely conducts grant and compliance audits of higher education institutions, academic medical centers, and other not-for-profit entities. In addition, Kimberly has experience in conducting investigations regarding theft of federal funds on grants and contracts with a focus on investigating financial and research misconduct.

Ashley Deihr is a Manager at Baker Tilly Beers & Cutler, PLLC. Ashley is a Certified Public Accountant and Certified Fraud Examiner who focuses on higher education and internal audit consulting. Her experience includes assessing compliance with Office of Management and Budget Circulars and other government regulations, as well as providing advice on implementation of best practices and performing risk assessments. She regularly conducts investigations regarding suspected theft or misuse of funds on grants and contracts.
**Departmental Watch**

**Responsible Conduct of Research**

It is the role of departmental research administrators to understand and carry out post award responsibilities, one of which is the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). Although the on-going role of ensuring research compliance primarily lies with the principal investigator, the departmental research administrators must understand, promote, and carry out responsible conduct of research on all research projects. Thus it is critically important for research administrators to be knowledgeable about federal regulations as well as their own state and local regulations to be able to identify situations where there may be a conflict and how to offer the best solutions. The Public Health Services policy on the instruction for RCR recognizes training in the following core areas: 1) Data acquisition, management and sharing; 2) Mentor/Trainer responsibilities; 3) Publications and responsible authorship; 4) Peer review; 5) Collaborative science; 6) Human Subject (IRB); 7) Research Involving Animals (IACUC); 8) Research misconduct; and 9) Conflict of interest.

Many individual institutions offer trainings on RCR. Departmental research administrators should enroll in these trainings to increase their knowledge about RCR and thus better serve their principal investigators. Information can be obtained online from the Office of Research Integrity (ORI), and the US Department of Health and Human Services (responsible conduct of research).

http://ori.dhhs.gov/education/
http://ori.dhhs.gov/publications/studies.shtml
http://ori.dhhs.gov/education/products/ucla/chapter2/page04b.htm

**eRA Watch**

As we near Halloween, the Electronic Research Administration Neighborhood has tricks and treats for you when you stop by. Costumes optional.

There are tricks and tips on using the Adobe forms for Grants.gov applications. And there continue to be pdf issues with various sponsors, for example the DOD budget pages and applications to Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). We explain what those are.

Are you having trouble keeping track of all the agency systems? We were too. So we assembled a system spreadsheet with the information. This will always be a work in progress so if you see that a system is not yet on the list, please let us know and we’ll add it.

In addition to sponsor systems, many institutions want to invest in an eRA system to assist with the research administration lifecycle. To help you get started, we invited a number of vendors to submit a brief description of their products and services as well as contact information. See the list on the neighborhood website.

Finally, although we have no chocolate …there is another sweet we can offer. Our next on-campus interview will be with Mark Sweet, Director of Electronic Research Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**International Watch**

As research administrators in an expanding global environment we need to remain current on the developments and opportunities that impact international research administration. The NCURA International Neighborhood is updating its Resources page to provide you with more tools and links to assist you in your international endeavors. Also, this year’s AM52 will have a rich offering of International concurrent sessions and solution discussions. The Neighborhood Breakfast Roundtables are an excellent opportunity to network with your colleagues and you are encouraged to join us on Monday, November 1 and Tuesday, November 2 from 7:30 – 8:15 AM. Come join us for a lively discussion over coffee or international tea!!

**Pre Award Watch**

Any university that has more than $10 million dollars in current active Federal contract and grant awards may take notice of a new Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) clause, FAR Clause 52.209-7 – Information Regarding Responsibility Matters, and groan internally (or perhaps audibly, depending on the day) as they begin to first read the requirements of the clause.

The new clause, which was finalized and formally issued in April 2010 and is to be included in new contract solicitations and contract awards, requires that any proposer with more than $10 million dollars in current active Federal awards represent that the information it has entered in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System...
(FAPIIS) is current, accurate, and complete as of the date of submission of the proposal.

And just what is FAPIIS? In a nutshell, it’s a database that contains past performance information of all Federal awardees, and within which records are kept for six years. For Federal contract awards, the agency’s Contracting Officer is required to review a proposer’s record in FAPIIS to aid in the determination as to whether the proposer is, in one word: responsible (see FAR 9.1 for the full story).

Before calling in the eRA gurus for investigation of this new electronic system and what will be needed to be done to ensure proper compliance and upkeep, universities should breathe a sigh of relief; thankfully, most institutions will find that additional action is not needed to comply with this new requirement. As it turns out, maintenance of an active registration in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database is all that is needed for the necessary information to filter into FAPIIS.

Kevin Stewart is a member of the Pre-award Neighborhood Committee and serves as Senior Sponsored Projects Officer, University of California - Santa Barbara

Compliance Watch

Changes to the I-129 Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker

In February, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced proposed revisions to the I-129 Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker form and instructions. Among the proposed changes was a new requirement that the petitioner (sponsoring institution) complete an export certification for certain visa application types, most notably H-1Bs.

Forty-six of the 54 comments USCIS received were related to the inclusion of the Deemed Export Acknowledgement section. Most of the 46 commenters expressed the belief that collection of this information exceeds the authority of USCIS. In response, USCIS stated that it has worked with the Bureau of Industry & Security to address commenters concerns and has modified that section of the form and instructions.

While the newly revised and renamed Part 6 Certification Regarding the Release of Controlled Technology or Technical Data to Foreign Persons in the United States is an improvement on the original, it still creates an additional burden for institutions of higher education in that it requires completion of an export assessment for each H-1B visa applicant. Such an assessment will require a thorough description of individual’s expected work assignments which will prove difficult for university research appointments which are typically broad and flexible. One thing that isn’t clear is whether or not a later change to the information provided in Part 6 would constitute a material change requiring re-filing of the I-129.

The bottom line is that if your institution isn’t currently coordinating H-1B applications with your export control office it might be time to start!

Kelly Hochstetler is the chair of the Compliance Neighborhood Committee and serves as Director, Office of Export Controls, at the University of Virginia.

PUI Watch

Networking through NCURA on Forty-three Cents a Day

The following conversation was overheard at a recent NCURA conference:

Networking Newbie: What are the benefits of NCURA membership for research administrators at PUIs?

Seasoned Sage: Predominantly undergraduate institutions often have fewer people to manage their sponsored programs portfolios, so we need all the help we can get from peers at other institutions. It is especially important for folks who are in one-person offices. They have no colleagues on their campuses, so they have to depend on friends at other institutions for information and advice on the comprehensive scope of PUI responsibilities — everything from application systems to post-award compliance and export controls.

Newbie: What if my budget is tight — is it worth the investment?

Sage: Membership in NCURA is the first thing you should budget for. Even if you can’t attend any conferences, you get mailings and access to the NCURA website, which includes the member database and lets you sign up for one (or more) of the Neighborhood listservs. The PUI listserv allows me to ask other PUI research administrators my questions about issues research intensive institutions never even have to think about. My institution pays for my membership but if your institutional budget can’t cover your dues, remember that it’s less than $3 a week to pay on your own. How many of us blow $3 a day on soda or over-priced coffee? Skipping one such purchase each week would allow you to save up enough to pay your own membership dues.

Newbie: How can I make the most of my membership?

Sage: Participate and volunteer. First, visit the NCURA website regularly and use the resources in the PUI Neighborhood’s library. Second, sign up for the PUI listserv, and participate. Third, make time to follow up with new contacts. Fourth, volunteer in some capacity, such as at the registration desk at a conference. Fifth, borrow from other PUI research administrators. We are a very generous group. And remember, if you are an NCURA member, you are not alone — even in a one-person office!

Pamela Napier and Sally J. Southwick are members of the PUI Neighborhood Committee. Pamela serves as Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, Western Kentucky University. Sally serves as Director of Grants and Sponsored Research, Northern State University.

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This year the NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected four veteran NCURA members to receive the Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes members who have made sustained and distinctive contributions to the organization.

**2010 Award recipients are:**

**Denise J. Clark**, Assistant Vice President for Research Administration and Advancement, University of Maryland College Park. Denise currently serves as NCURA’s Immediate Past President, member of the Board of Directors, member of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, member of PRA IV Program Committee, Fundamentals Faculty and a member of the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) leadership team. She has served on many regional and national program committees and is well-known throughout the organization as a speaker, workshop faculty, and an NCURA TV and webinar faculty participant. Denise has served on the Professional Development Committee and as NCURA Secretary 2006-2007. She is a chapter author of the AIS publication “Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Management Practices” (co-sponsored by NCURA) and has served as a LDI Advisor. In addition, Denise has served on the Region II Steering Committee and was the 2007 recipient of the Region II Distinguished Service Award.

**Patrick Fitzgerald**, Associate Dean for Research Administration, Harvard University. Pat, a Past President of NCURA (2004), currently serves on the 52nd Annual Meeting Program Committee, is a traveling workshop faculty member and serves on the Region I Advisory Committee. He is a chapter author of the AIS publication “Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Management Practices” (co-sponsored by NCURA). He has served on the NCURA Board of Directors, the Financial Management Committee, the Professional Development Committee and the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee. In addition, Pat has served as an NCURA Newsletter/Magazine contributor and is well known for his service as a member of the Grateful Deadlines band! Pat was the 2010 recipient of the Region I Merit Award.

**Vivian Holmes**, Assistant Director, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. Vivian currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee. She is also a member of the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) leadership team and is a member of the FRA Traveling Workshop Team. In addition, Vivian serves on the Region I Advisory Committee. A previous LDI Advisor, Vivian also has served on the NCURA Board of Directors and was co-chair of both the FRA IX Conference and the 45th Annual Meeting Program Committees. Vivian is an active presenter, moderator and workshop faculty, both nationally and regionally, and was the 2008 recipient of the Region I Merit Award.

**Jane Youngers**, Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Jane currently serves on both the Fundamentals Workshop faculty and the NCURA TV faculty. An NCURA Past President (1989), Jane has served on the NCURA National Executive Committee and was Chair of the Neighborhood Advisory Group. In addition, she has served as Program Committee Co-Chair of the NCURA FRA X Conference and the 46th Annual Meeting. Jane is a well known speaker, presenter and workshop faculty at both national and regional meetings, and she is past Chair of Region VII. She has been instrumental in authoring and editing several publications including NCURA’s “Regulation and Compliance, A Compendium of Regulations Applicable to Sponsored Programs”, Atlantic Information Services (AIS)”Managing Federal Grants: A Guide for Colleges and Universities” (co-sponsored by NCURA and NACUBO); the AIS “Managing Federal Grants Newsletters” (co-sponsored by NCURA and NACUBO) and the AIS “Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Management Practices” (co-sponsored by NCURA). Jane was the 2002 recipient of the NCURA Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award.
Each recipient above has made a tremendous contribution to NCURA in countless ways over the years. These summaries only touch the surface of their innumerable contributions to NCURA over their careers.

The Distinguished Service awardees will be recognized at the 52nd Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, November 1, 2010.

**Joseph F. Carrabino Award**

The Joseph F. Carrabino Award was established in 2003 by the NCURA Board of Directors to recognize a Federal partner who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either by a single innovation or by a lifetime of service. The NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected Joe Ellis, of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), as the recipient of the 2010 Joseph F. Carrabino Award.

Joe currently serves as the NIH Director of the Office of Policy for Extramural Research Administration (OPERA) where he provides leadership and oversight for grants management policy and compliance, intellectual property and OMB clearance to both the extramural research community and to NIH extramural staff. Through policy development, expert guidance, analysis, outreach and related information dissemination in these fields, Joe promotes stewardship of NIH extramural funds in support of health research.

Prior to this position, Joe served as the Chief Grants Management Officer of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. During his 30 year tenure with NIH, Joe also has served as Chief of the Grants and Contracts Management Office at the National Institute on Aging.

Joe is well respected throughout the research administration community. As Marti Dunne, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and Administration, New York University, reflects, “The Director of OPERA serves as the ultimate authority in the determination and implementation of all business and administrative management policies affecting NIH grants; OPERA is the ‘go to’ place of those of us who need policy clarification or guidance. Joe is the recipient of a plethora of inquiries every day; and his answers are always well thought out, decisive and timely.” Kim Moreland, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, University of Wisconsin-Madison, adds, “[Joe’s] quiet sense of humor is often a bright spot in any conversation, and his willingness to explore opportunities with the university community allows us to realize the rewards of a collaborative discussion.”

Joe also gives generously of his time to outside organizations which include NCURA, FDP and COGR. As Carol Blum, COGR Director of Research Compliance and Administration, writes, “Mr. Ellis always comes to the table with an open mind and an unfailing willingness to find a solution or approach that ensures that the research gets done and the administrative tasks can be achieved. He clearly recognizes that NIH goals can only be met if the partnership remains a true collaboration. Without losing sight of his responsibilities to the Federal government, Mr. Ellis has been a stalwart representative of the research community in inter-agency tasks. His collaborations with his Federal colleagues have helped to bring reason and clarity to ‘common’ rules.”

Jean Feldman, Head, Policy Office, National Science Foundation and 2003 recipient of the Joseph F. Carrabino Award adds, "Joe’s efforts, as part of the National Science and Technology Council’s Research Business Models subcommittee to standardize Federal policies as they relate to the research enterprise has resulted in improved dialog among the Federal research agencies in ways to help eliminate burden on the recipients of federal research funds. Joe has been an active and engaged participant in standardization activities such as policies and procedures for use in catastrophic events (Hurricane Katrina), conflict of interest, interim research reporting and standard research terms and conditions."

In summary, Marianne Woods, Senior Associate Vice President for Research Administration, University of Texas at San Antonio, offers, “Joe cares deeply about research in this country... He has worked tirelessly in providing guidance on federal issues.” Yale University’s Andrew Rudzynski, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, and Alice Tangredi-Hannon, University Research Compliance Officer, jointly acknowledge, “Joe’s contributions, both behind the scenes and publicly are legendary. This industry is fortunate to be able to rely on Joe to be a champion of sound and well-grounded improvements in a complicated environment.”

On his award, Joe says, “We are in a time of unparalleled opportunities for significant advances in knowledge through research. At the same time we face the prospect of limited fiscal resources while addressing expectations for unprecedented transparency in the conduct and reporting of research results, and making those results rapidly available for the benefit of the human condition. As individuals contributing to this exciting and critical enterprise, we must rely on our partners in research administration to address these and other expanding requirements and goals. While this partnership between research administrators and federal staff is well recognized as essential to ensure that federal investments in research are effective, efficient and compliant; this principle is in many ways grounded in and now reinforced by the programs of NCURA."
NCURA has for more than five decades played a central role in ensuring and reinforcing research administration’s role as the keystone facilitating universities research programs at every stage from application through close out. Over the years, I have enjoyed and benefited professionally and personally from numerous opportunities to participate in NCURA sponsored programs. While these programs are essential to support the profession of research administration, I have gained more personal satisfaction from the numerous and long standing friendships with NCURA members across the country.

Accordingly, receiving the Joseph Carrabino Award from NCURA is a genuine honor which I am humbled and honored to receive.”

As recipient of the 2010 Joseph F. Carrabino Award, Joe will be recognized at the 52nd Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, November 1, 2010.

Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award

Jerry Fife, Vice Chancellor for Administration at Vanderbilt University, is the seventeenth recipient of the NCURA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration, NCURA’s most prestigious award recognizing one member each year who has 1) made a significant contribution to the research administration profession and 2) demonstrated noteworthy service to NCURA. Jerry, a research administrator for over 30 years, has served at Vanderbilt University since 1998.

Jerry is renowned throughout the research administration community both for his extensive knowledge in the field and for his commitment to giving back to his profession through his involvement in such organizations as NCURA, COGR and SRA. An NCURA member since 1987, Jerry was the recipient of the 2007 NCURA Distinguished Service Award. Since his membership, he has served as NCURA President (2005), a member of NCURA’s Board of Directors, a faculty member for both NCURA TV broadcasts and NCURA traveling workshops, FRA Conference chair, an NCURA Magazine Contributing Editor, Co-Editor of Federal Grant News for Colleges and Universities, an LDIA Advisor, a Peer Reviewer and a member of a variety of program committees.

Laura Wade, TcSUH (Texas Center for Superconductivity at UH) Research Center Administrator at the University of Houston and NCURAVice President during Jerry’s presidency, recalls, “During his presidency, NCURA held the first leadership convention that brought together regional officers/leaders with the Board. As a result of this convention there were several ideas implemented immediately, including the Board approval of a full-time regional and volunteer coordinator [position] to facilitate the needs of the regions as well as disseminate information. Jerry implemented quarterly conference calls between national and regional officers that provided an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and information. Of course I have to mention his many years of service providing great music at the annual meetings as a member of the NCURA Soul Source and No Cost Extension Band”

Dennis Hall, Vice Provost for Research, Dean of the Graduate School, Professor of Physics and Professor of Electrical Engineering at Vanderbilt University speaks to Jerry’s university service: “I know I speak for many when I say that Jerry is a much-valued colleague here at Vanderbilt. Jerry is a delightful and dedicated collaborator. He brings to his work the perfect combination of experienced wisdom, attention to detail, and sense of humor. It is actually fun to work with Jerry, even on effort, audits and the myriad other F&A-capped administrative opportunities the federal regulations provide. We respect him both for what he does and for who he is.”

Co-nominators for this award, Robert Barbret, Director of Sponsored Programs, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; Gunta Liders, Associate Vice President of Research, University of Rochester; and Jane Youngers, Assistant Vice President of Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, and NCURA Past President, agree that “perhaps most important in terms of significant contributions to the profession of research administration is [Jerry’s] role as a mentor. Mention Jerry’s name to anyone and you will hear how he has helped them with this issue or that.” Garry Sanders, Vice President of Sponsored Programs Administration at The State University of New York, concurs, “Jerry has always been ready to assist and advise on a range of preaward and postaward business matters, always willing to share best practices and approaches to our typical research administration challenges.”

Anthony DeCrappo, President of the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR) wrote: “Jerry’s breadth of experience and technical knowledge in all research administration issues is exceeded only by his great capacity to share his expertise with others in our profession, as evidenced by an unbroken string of service with the national and regional NCURA programs and the COGR Board of Directors and Committees.”

On his award, Jerry reflects, “As I look at the previous recipients of this award, I am humbled and honored to receive this award.”

The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration will be presented on Monday morning, November 1, 2010, at the 52nd Annual Meeting Keynote Address.
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DECEMBER 2010

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