On the Cover  As we close out another year, the cover highlights 2011 as a year of extremes. And we will face additional challenges in the year ahead. As this issue goes to press, we are all concerned about the failure of the Congressional “super-committee” to come to an agreement on a budget strategy. The impact on Federally funded research, and on higher education in general, will certainly be significant. Ultimately, we can all hope that policy makers will recognize the role of research for our future prosperity and support continued investments in the research enterprise.

In the meantime, however, research administrators will need to look for new ways to facilitate research at our home institutions. This issue features guidance in the assessment of departmental research offices, strategies in the use of social media for improved communication, and techniques for become more efficient and effective as research administrators, among others.

On a more personal note, this issue marks the completion of my three-year term as co-editor of the NCURA Magazine. As I look back, I can’t help but express my appreciation to all of my NCURA colleagues: co-editors, contributing editors, and all of the authors that I’ve worked with during the past three years. A special thank you goes to Jim Casey for his leadership as senior editor and the NCURA staff who have done so much to make the NCURA Magazine a huge success. It has been my privilege to work with all of you.

On behalf of the NCURA Magazine team, our best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and peace and happiness in the NewYear.

Jerry Pogatshnik
Co-Editor

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A Rearview Mirror Review

By NCURA President Judy Fredenberg

All will agree that a lot has happened in the last few years. The New York Times recently declared the recession over, yet many of our institutions continue to adjust to national, regional, and local economic challenges. How will federal domestic spending change in the future? How will our institutional research programs be impacted in coming months and years? How will we help position our institutions to strategically prepare and respond? There are economists among us who may well have erudite responses and calculated projections to these questions. Many of us, however, accept that the unknown is simply part of our experience and, as a result, prepare for a variety of scenarios since we don’t know what’s around the next corner. This image is a perfect segue to reflecting upon my NCURA presidency.

The last year has been a delightful, unanticipated side excursion along the road trip of my professional career, a way point in GPS terminology. While some folks may begin their careers with map in hand, mine has been a journey filled with many unplanned way points, each unique, but none with such a heightened sense of pride and accomplishment.

The phrase “road trip” conjures up images ranging from speeding along an interstate to a bumping over a back road. When driving in rural America, there’s an interesting phenomenon that many of us know firsthand: As the distance between vehicles diminishes to the extent that occupants can easily see each other, both drivers raise their right index finger off the top of the steering wheel. Barely visible over the dashboard, it’s a simple greeting through bug- and mud-splattered windshields that is done without much conscious thought, if any at all.

Yet if drivers were to reflect on this gesture, they may recognize and acknowledge that it offers a sense of comfort and connectedness. This small movement of one finger communicates a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and the ubiquitous understanding of “neighbor,” regardless of race, religion, color, socio-economic background. In a word, it communicates community. It’s an unspoken “got-your-back” when – literally – no one knows what’s around the next corner.

Long before accepting the nomination for vice president/president elect, I was often asked about my NCURA journey and path to leadership. Serving as NCURA president certainly was a culmination of volunteering for regional meetings and committees and national involvement, all over a variety of stepping stones held firmly in place by many colleagues who helped me grow professionally. I would be remiss if I didn’t take this opportunity to collectively thank them … and you know who you are!

Because of NCURA, these are individuals with whom I share a sense of belonging and camaraderie. These folks encouraged me to consider accepting the nomination for NCURA vice president/president elect, and these colleagues have responded to my calls and emails, offering advice and input, responding with an unspoken “got-your-back.”

We’ve all heard the joke about the tourists who pull over along a country road to ask a local for directions. When hearing the destination, he offers a detailed verbal map before finally concluding in exasperation, “I guess you can’t get there from here.” I suggest that any journey is possible, as demonstrated by my enjoyment of the last twelve months, a year of service, responsibility, and friendship. Way point aside, this excursion was an honor and, undoubtedly, the capstone of my career.

And along every mile of this journey, I have experienced a sense of belonging and camaraderie: We met in a lobby, worked on a committee, passed on an escalator, attended a reception, shared a cab, rode an elevator, sat together during a meal event. We experienced the ubiquitous understanding of “neighbor” and an unspoken “got-your-back,” and it is with great confidence that if I should need directions or help changing a proverbial tire, I know my NCURA neighbors will offer a hand.

So as you continue – or begin – your own NCURA road trip and our virtual paths cross via this medium, I lift my right index finger slightly in a gesture of acknowledgement and recognition. Travel safe!

Judy Fredenberg is the Director, Research and Sponsored Programs, University of Montana
Call for Officer and Board Nominations

Vice-President/President Elect

At-Large Members of the Board of Directors

The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee is pleased to present the opportunity for all members of NCURA to nominate (or self-nominate) candidates to serve as the next leaders for our organization. We urge you to consider individuals for the following important positions:

- Vice President/President Elect
- Two At Large Board Members

NCURA provides many opportunities to volunteer within our professional organization – currently at a membership that exceeds 7000! By expanding your involvement, you are afforded a wealth of enriching experiences. Being active and involved in NCURA can be as simple as considering whom to nominate for these positions, and then making that nomination. In addition, if you are interested in these positions and would like to submit your name for consideration, we are waiting to hear from you.

For a detailed description of the current responsibilities of these positions, please visit http://www.ncura.edu/content/volunteer/opportunities/.

Terms of these positions will begin on January 1, 2013

For information on this year’s required nomination materials for each position, please visit http://www.ncura.edu/content/volunteer/current_calls.php.

Please email nominations to: nominations@ncura.edu.

All nominations and supporting materials (candidate’s statement of interest and current resume/cvta of 1-3 pages, etc.) from the nominees must be received electronically on or before March 9, 2012.
THE POWER OF KUALI-COEUS

DEVELOP & SUBMIT PROPOSALS ELECTRONICALLY

ROBUST AWARD MODULE CONTAINING ALL AWARD ACTIVITY

OTHER PRE- AND POST- AWARD FUNCTIONALITY

TRACK AND MANAGE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

MANAGE IRB & IACUC PROCESSES

CREATE CUSTOM REPORTS

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.

COEUS 2010

Connecting, Collaborating, Converging

View Our Roadmap to the Future at www.coeus.org -OR- www.kuali.org/kc

For more information
contact Stephen Dowdy, Coeus Program Director
at coeus-info@coeus.org
Call for Nominations: 2012 NCURA Awards

The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee is pleased to announce the Call for Nominations for the 2012 NCURA Awards.

Recognizing the contributions of our colleagues is one of the highest honors we can bestow. Additionally, nurturing diversity expands the energy and creativity of our membership and builds a stronger volunteer organization. Now is the time to acknowledge an extraordinary mentor, collaborator, or friend, and also identify a candidate for the minority travel award.

**Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration**

This award is given annually to an individual who has made 1) noteworthy contributions to NCURA, and 2) significant contributions to the profession of Research Administration. [Note: Current National Officers and NCURA Standing Committee (FMC, NLDC and PDC) Chairs and Vice Chairs are ineligible for nomination for this award.]

*Deadline for nominations: March 9, 2012*

**Distinguished Service Award**

This award is given to up to five individuals who have made significant contributions to NCURA. [Note: Current National Officers and NCURA Standing Committee (FMC, NLDC and PDC) Chairs and Vice Chairs are ineligible for nomination for this award.]

*Deadline for nominations: March 9, 2012*

**Joseph F. Carrabino Award**

This award is given to a current, or former, federal employee who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either through a single project, activity, or innovation, or by a lifetime of service.

*Deadline for nominations: March 9, 2012*

**Catherine Core Minority Travel Award**

This program supports travel-related costs to attend the NCURA Annual Meeting for up to four individuals from under-represented groups who would not otherwise be able to attend this meeting.

*Deadline for applications March 7, 2012*

For more information on these awards, please visit [http://www.ncura.edu/content/volunteer/awards/index.php](http://www.ncura.edu/content/volunteer/awards/index.php)
Patent Reform Under the America Invents Act

By Robert Hardy

In September 2010, Congress passed and the President signed the America Invents Act (AIA; P.L. 112-29). The AIA makes the most extensive changes to U.S. patent law in over a half century. The biggest change is to change the U.S. patent system from a “first-to-invent” system to “first inventor to file,” which harmonizes the U.S. system more closely with that followed in the rest of the world. Other important changes include providing additional mechanisms for post-grant review of patents, removing the ability to challenge a patent based on failure to disclose the “best mode” of practicing it in the patent application, expanding the ability to claim a prior commercial use as a defense to claims of patent infringement (although this defense may not be claimed against university-owned patents), and providing the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) with the ability to set its own filing fees.

These changes are based on recommendations in a number of reports, including the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) 2004 report, A Patent System for the 21st Century. Enactment of the legislation was a six-year process in which the university community was heavily engaged. The higher education associations, including Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), Association of American Universities (AAU), and Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) strongly supported the patent reform legislation based on the NAS recommendations. Not all universities agreed. Changing to the first-inventor-to-file standard was particularly controversial. Some felt that the effect would be to benefit large companies and disadvantage independent and small business inventors, including those from universities. However, the associations believed the benefits of harmonization outweighed these concerns. Protection of foreign patent rights is important to many U.S. universities, and this requires that a first-to-file standard be followed anyway. In addition, on occasion the first-to-invent system has led to lengthy and costly “interference” proceedings, to establish priority of inventions among competing claims. Under a first-inventor-to-file system, these challenges will be totally eliminated (and replaced with objective “derivation” proceedings when another inventor claims the first inventor to file derived the invention from him/her).

An important consideration for universities is the provision of a grace period for scientific publications. Previously U.S. patent law provided a broad one-year grace period for publications describing an invention before a patent application had to be filed. Under the AIA, public disclosures by an inventor or by another who obtained the subject matter directly or indirectly from the inventor still qualify for the one-year grace period before a patent application must be filed. While this change has been criticized as narrower than the old grace period, the flip side is that the date of the disclosure or publication becomes the effective date for purposes of first to file. It now fully protects the inventor from later disclosures or patent filings by others during the period between the disclosure and the actual patent filing by the inventor. However, there is no counterpart to the U.S. grace period in foreign patent law, so filing patent applications prior to any public disclosure remains essential to preserve foreign patent rights.

Under the first-to-file system, the importance of the ability to file provisional patent applications is likely to increase. These provisional applications are streamlined applications that require only a description of the invention and do not require formal patent claims or other supporting materials required for regular patent applications. However, any subsequent claims must be supported by the description in the provisional application. The filing date of the provisional application is considered the filing date for any subsequent patent application that claims the invention disclosed in the provisional. The provisional application...
lication automatically expires in one year if not incorporated in a subsequent non-provisional application. Universities have varied widely in their use of provisional applications, but with the change to the first-to-file system and the increasing importance of foreign patent rights in today’s globalized economy universities are likely to make greater use of this mechanism.

While the US Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) has been given fee-setting authority, unfortunately it still must deposit fees collected in excess of appropriations in the U.S. Treasury. These fees will be deposited in a special reserve account which is supposed to be available only for PTO purposes, but its use by PTO still must be authorized in annual appropriations. One of the main goals of the patent reform effort was to provide more resources to PTO, which has struggled with a significant and growing backlog of patent applications. The AIA did give PTO an authority to collect a 15% surcharge (effective immediately) on all patent fees to be deposited in its appropriations account. It also authorizes PTO to impose additional fees for prioritized examinations.

There are a number of significant provisions in the AIA of particular relevance and benefit to universities. These reflect the heavy engagement of the university community in the legislative process and the recognition by the Congress that universities are important patent stakeholders. There is a carveout for university inventions from assertions of the prior user right defense against them as mentioned above, although the carveout does not apply if the research leading to the invention could not have been conducted with federal funds. The Act also provides that non-commercial use of patented subject matter by a nonprofit entity such as a university constitutes prior commercial use for purposes of a defense to infringement. The AIA also maintains the Cooperative Research and Technology Enhancement (CREATE) Act of 2004 protections for inventions resulting from joint research agreements. The importance of maintaining the grace period for publications was discussed above. In addition, institutions of higher education will be able to claim “micro entity” filing status with a 75% fee reduction once PTO establishes a new fee schedule (Currently universities are entitled to claim “small entity” status and a 50% fee reduction).

Despite these benefits, there are a number of concerns. University technology transfer offices will need to work closely with their inventive faculty with regard to timing of their scientific publications and journal articles that might disclose inventions. While this previously has been important for foreign patent rights, its importance now will be exacerbated under a first-inventor-to-file system. Technology transfer offices also must be careful in assuring that disclosures made in the course of the licensing process remain confidential and can be clearly traced back to the inventor, consistent with the narrower grace period provided by the AIA. The Act also provides that “No patent may issue on a claim directed to or encompassing a human organism.” No guidance is provided as to the meaning of these terms. While PTO has long banned patents on human organisms, this language could be viewed as broader. Might it extend to claims involving certain methods of treating human diseases? These and other ambiguities in the Act will need to be resolved over time through court and administrative actions.

The AIA will be phased in over an 18-month period. The change to the first-inventor-to-file system will not be effective until March 16, 2013. In the meantime, U.S. patent law will continue to follow the first-to-invent standard. PTO has an excellent chart on the effective dates of the various changes in the patent law at their patent reform implementation website: http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/aia_implementation.jsp.

The AIA makes many other changes in patent law of less direct relevance to universities, and also calls for a number of studies. Information on these changes and related upcoming events also can be found at the above website. Much optimism has been expressed that the AIA changes will allow inventions to be brought to market sooner and with greater certainty of patent protection, leading to new businesses and new jobs. Time will tell if this optimism is justified.

Resources:


Robert B. Hardy is Director of Contracts and Intellectual Property Management at the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), where he has lead COGR responsibility for university issues pertaining to federal contracting and technology transfer policies and regulations. Prior to coming to COGR in April 2001, Mr. Hardy was with the National Science Foundation (NSF) for over 30 years; he received NSF’s highest honor, the NSF Distinguished Service Award. Mr. Hardy holds a B.A. degree from Gettysburg College and J.D. from Catholic University.
NCURA 53rd
ANNUAL MEETING

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

2011 Award Winners
Front row: Beth Seaton, Kerry Peluso, Heather Offhaus
Back row: Ed Herran, Pat Green, Mark Herbst

2011 Executive Committee
Front row: Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director; Judy Fredenberg, President, University of Montana. Back row: Dan Nordquist, Vice President, Washington State University; Barbara Gray, Secretary, Valdosta State University; Dave Richardson, Immediate Past President, The Pennsylvania State University. Not pictured: Mario Medina, Treasurer, The University of Texas at San Antonio

AM53 Program Committee
Seated: Kallie Firestone, Co-Chair; Dan Nordquist, Program Chair; Bruce Morgan, Co-Chair
Standing: Steve Hansen; Denise Wallen; Beth Seaton; Suzanne Rivera; Heather Offhaus; Jennifer Crockett; Rosemary Madnick; Leslie Schmidt; Toni Shaklee
Not Pictured: David Clark; Nancy Daneau; Mark Davis; Cynthia Dwyer; Joe Gindhart; Norm Hebert; Joseph McNicholas; Suzanne Liv Page; Kevin Stewart; Angela Wisdon

NCURA Magazine
2011 NCURA Board of Directors  Seated: Dan Nordquist, Washington State University; Judy Fredenberg, University of Montana; Barbara Gray, Valdosta State University, Standing: Dave Richardson, Pennsylvania State University; Jill Frazier Tincher, University of Miami School of Medicine; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA; Ralph Brown, Colorado School of Mines; Georgette Sakumoto, University of Hawaii; Tom Egan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Josie Jimenez, New Mexico State University; Tony Ventimiglia, Auburn University; Debbie Newton, University of Tulsa; Betty Farbman, New York University; Samantha Westcott, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles; Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan Medical School; Csilla Csaplar, Stanford University; Steve Smartt, Vanderbilt University. (Not Pictured: Antoinette Lawson, University of Maryland, College Park; Mario Medina, The University of Texas at San Antonio; Craig Reynolds, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor)

Eric Haseltine, Keynote Speaker; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director; Judy Fredenberg, NCURA President; Rhianna Quinn Roddy, Executive Director, Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund; Dan Nordquist, NCURA Vice President

Breakfast Roundtables
Past NCURA Presidents
Seated: Clark McCartney, Julie Norris, Dennis Barnes

NCURA 53rd ANNUAL MEETING

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS
Catherine Core Minority Travel Award

This year NCURA received an impressive pool of applicants for the Catherine Core Minority Travel Award. This award is available to minority applicants who, because of institutional financial constraints, could not otherwise attend the NCURA Annual Meeting. The award recipients receive up to $1,500 toward travel-related expenses associated with attending the Annual Meeting. This award, however, is not only to assist in the financial aspects of attending the meeting, it also offers a wide variety of services and opportunities for the awardees to interact with their peers and colleagues from other educational institutions around the country.

The 2011 award recipients are:
Lucy Cort, Oakwood University
Justin Lepscier, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Ankur Mathur, New York University
Rhonda Williams, University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (N&LDC) eagerly anticipates the participation and leadership that our award recipients will bring to future NCURA activities. Here’s what this year’s award recipients had to say about their Annual Meeting experience:

Lucy Cort, Oakwood University: “I brought back so much information from NCURA’s 53rd Annual Meeting that I need to take some time to sift through all of it and decide what I need to implement right away and what can wait for a little while longer.”

Justin Lepscier, University of Wisconsin-Madison: “I was amazed at the number of topics and sessions that were available. A few of the sessions that stood out for me were Effort Reporting Fundamentals, The Washington Update, Departmental Administrator and Advanced Effort Issues. I volunteered at the Region IV [Regional Corner]. Volunteering I thought was great in that I was able to meet so many people in a short amount of time.”

Ankur Mathur, New York University: “As I went through each session and learned from the presenters, I was astonished with the similarity between the issues brought by the presenters, the other participants and what I’m currently facing at work as well. Even though I’m in a Central Office, I attended some Departmental specific sessions and I’ve been able to advise the department I work with based on the knowledge gained from those sessions.”

Rhonda Williams, University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center: “Attendance at the NCURA Annual Meeting assures continued growth as a research administrator. I learned valuable information that I can use…and share with fellow co-workers. …Ms. Core, thank you for allowing me to participate in the legacy you have set forth for me and others to develop and grow in the ever-changing field of Research Administration.”

The application for the 2012 Catherine Core Minority Travel Award is now available, and we look forward to many outstanding applications in 2012.
Getting Involved With Staff
Hire, Train, and Keep Training

By Joann Waite

How does a small private university located amidst large state institutions get funding? How does it stay compliant with federal regulations? How does it even know if it is compliant? How do the research administrators in a PUI survive? Here’s the answer: hire the right people. But who are the right people? I believe it is those who live our mission and are outgoing, pleasant, and team players; seek growth opportunities; and have a high level of emotional intelligence and “get’er done” work ethic.

Ideally, one would like to hire staff that understand research administration and excel in “customer service.” At a PUI however, it is often difficult to hire staff who meet both these criteria. So in hiring, it is often best to focus on finding someone with skills that are most difficult to teach and rely on training to “fill in the gaps.”

In the May/June 2011 issue of the NCURA Magazine Lauren Robertson and Susan Zipkin talked about certain innate characteristics that cannot be taught. The first such characteristic is communication and this is a priority when hiring. We all see the requirement, “excellent verbal and written communication skills.” But this is the skill that can be the hardest to determine until the candidate is actually in the job. There are, however, a couple of steps you can take to gain insight into the candidate’s communication skills. First, do they understand or “get” you, their supervisor? This is tested through the course of interviews and, hopefully, through the evaluation period typically allowed by your human resources policy. You can give a candidate a written test, you can interview him or her several times, but the true test comes when the candidate is under what I call RAP or research administrator pressure. We all know that there is nothing like the pressure of being a research administrator wedged between the PI, the funding agency and the institution. Hiring someone who can handle stress and communicate professionally in times of RAP is my number one priority. I find that giving a written “test” both in an email scenario and in a letter is one tool for testing written communication skills.

Part of the art of “excellent verbal and written communication skills” is listening. One common thread is the skill (many call it an art) of listening. Research administrators should be skillful communicators with an emphasis on listening to themselves (through their inner voice), as well as to others (Spears, 1998). Many theorists talk about the importance of listening in order to be a good leader, but what about a great research administrator? The purpose of engaging others in common ideas is an effort to begin “listening to others in the field … and listening to what emerges from a forward-oriented constellation of core players.” (Scharmer, 2009, p. 379) Listening is key for those of us who lead as research administrators. The authors explained that even those with experience will still require training specifically for departmental administrators. The authors explained that even those with experience will still require training in institutional processes. So, whether you hire a rookie or an experienced person, training will be needed. Train your staff and provide them the opportunity for growth. Engaged leaders are necessary for engaged staff and innovative organizations. How do we continue training ourselves and our staff in times of budget crunches?

Members who work at Predominately Undergraduate Institutions (PUI) have to maintain a level of expert knowledge in various fields, which at times can be overwhelming if we are left to ourselves. On a daily basis we handle everything from strategies for keeping our institutions compliant with the host of regulations and requirements, to grant management for which larger institutions have specialists. But there is hope, because we are not alone. We are members of an organization that has experts in areas of external funding and all that comes with those dollars. I have found that the most effective way to maintain my knowledge and to train my staff for the success of our university is through networking and member participation through volunteering. Professional associations that care about the professional growth of the membership at all levels of an organization provide many training and educational opportunities. NCURA offers training at regional and national meetings that address current issues relevant to research administrators at all levels. At these concurrent sessions, workshops, and discussion groups, it is important to be really present and engaged. Don’t simply sit in the seat; listen to the presenter and learn from her and the questions posed by the other attendees. Leave your laptop, Blackberry, iPhone, or whatever gadget you have in your room (in the safe!) and be present. Ask questions, go to the dinner groups, and volunteer at the next meeting.

How do we PUI research administrators continue learning in our fluid environments? Budgets permitting, we join associations, attend
conferences, and read RFPs, guidelines, journals and other information until our eyes are crossed. Our professional success depends on a solid foundation and the appropriate and required tools in our kit. We don’t want to reinvent the wheel. Networking with colleagues at NCURA meetings and finding answers to questions is the solution. By having a strong network, you can find an expert on compliance, legal issues, and funding organizations who are willing to share their knowledge. I believe a research administrator at a PUI needs to have an abundance of experts on which to call. The people I meet and with whom I have discussions are my professional lifeline. I appreciate and thank my fellow research administrators at larger universities. Mostly, I appreciate the mentoring I receive from NCURA, as well as from other colleagues and institutions.

While “in-house” trainings are an important part of staff development at many institutions, there are challenges in offering and developing effective programs at PUI’s. As a result, we rely on the programs offered through our professional organizations, many of which are available at little to no cost. So stay engaged. Attend professional meetings, volunteer, be present through listening and learning from those at the meetings, and make the most of the network you develop.

References


Joann Waite is the Director of Sponsored Research and Programs at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, began her research administration career in the Oregon University system. She has bachelor’s degrees in Marketing and Psychology from Oregon, a master’s degree from Gonzaga in Organizational Leadership, and is completing her Ph.D. in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga. Joann’s responsibilities at Gonzaga include policy development and implementation, pre-award and post-award non-financial activities, and implementation of an undergraduate research program. She conducts workshops for faculty on proposal preparation and does private consulting on organizational leadership and building proposal teams.
University research administrators will once again enter a new year filled with the anticipation of the release of new federal regulations and the fulfillment of our institutions’ obligations to existing regulations. As a primary example, all institutions must address the requirements of the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) new financial conflicts of interest (FCOI) regulations within 365 days after its original release date in the Federal Register (August 2011). The complexity and breadth of the requirements prove once again that the research administration world is continuously evolving and challenging, so we must establish individual resolutions and professional goals for ourselves in order to be successful.

Dr. Heidi Grant Halvorson, a Harvard Business Review writer, recently described *Nine Things Successful People Do Differently*, which can easily translate to *Nine Things Successful Research Administrators Do Differently*.  

“In establishing your list of daily goals, in addition to your routine responsibilities and specialties that require us to individually establish, review, revise, and perhaps even eliminate our goals. Coordinate closely with your supervisor and/or your colleagues if you find your goals a constantly moving target.” According to Dr. Halvorson, “If you don’t know how well you are doing, you can’t adjust your behavior or your strategies accordingly.”

**Nine Things Successful Research Administrators Do Differently:**

1. Get specific
2. Seize the moment to act on your goals
3. Know exactly how far you have left to go
4. Be a realistic optimist
5. Focus on getting better, rather than being good
6. Have grit
7. Build your willpower muscle
8. Don’t tempt fate
9. Focus on what you will do, not what you won’t do

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Get specific  
A successful research administrator is a multi-tasker who provides prompt customer service to their colleagues, faculty, and sponsors. In addition to our routine responsibilities and special projects, we constantly encounter unexpected inquiries, requests, and urgent deadlines at any time throughout our work day. At the start of each day, we should set specific daily goals for ourselves for those tasks we believe we can realistically accomplish, while still allowing flexibility and room for the unexpected events. If you are working on a long-term project, you should break down the task into smaller increments which can be part of the list of daily goals. In addition to establishing specific goals, pre-award research administrators must pay specific attention to detail in all aspects of our jobs, such as a thorough proposal review prior to submission to the sponsor and a careful review of award terms and conditions.

Know exactly how far you have left to go  
Part of creating and achieving your goals is to be realistic when establishing the list of goals and to constantly monitor your progress. As a research administrator, it’s easier to set and achieve goals that have hard deadlines in which everyone is working together towards the same result, such as a proposal submission date or a new federal regulation requirement. However, we face many responsibilities that require us to individually establish, review, revise, and perhaps even eliminate our goals. Coordinate closely with your supervisor and/or your colleagues if you find your goals a constantly moving target. According to Dr. Halvorson, “If you don’t know how well you are doing, you can’t adjust your behavior or your strategies accordingly.”

Be a realistic optimist  
To be successful, research administrators must be confident in their ability to achieve their goals. Be a positive thinker when setting personal goals in order to increase your level of creativity and sustain your motivation. Be a realist and don’t underestimate the amount of time it will take to achieve your goal. Achieving goals takes time, patience, and persistence, which can all be driven by your optimism. Dr. Halvorson states, “Studies show that thinking things will come to you easily and effortlessly leaves you ill-prepared for the journey ahead, and insignificantly increases the odds of failure.”

Focus on getting better, rather than being good  
As research administrators, we routinely find ourselves stepping outside of the four corners of our job descriptions.
to tackle a problem. Successful research administrators recognize the need to be more than just proficient in core job duties; we must adopt the mindset of lifelong learners as we continually refine our knowledge, skills and abilities. As James Casey noted in his article "Observations on Building Offices of Opportunity," "any research administrator worth his or her salt knows that staying current in the field is a professional necessity." This translates not only to the need to stay current on emerging policies and regulations that affect the research community, but to continually grow and evolve in our skills and abilities to address situations, solve problems, and better facilitate the forward movement of research. Additionally, the lifelong learner approach proves to be beneficial even on a more holistic level, as Dr. Halvorson notes that "people whose goals are about getting better, rather than being good, take difficulty in stride, and appreciate the journey as much as the destination."

### Have grit

Dr. Halvorson defines grit as "a willingness to commit to long-term goals and to persist in the face of difficulty." Research administrators are subjected to change on a daily basis. At the same time, this is a profession that experiences frequent turnover. Many of us spend time training new staff only to lose them to another office on campus or to another institution. As result, this leaves the remaining staff filling in the gaps and feeling overburdened with the additional workload. Then, we hire new staff and begin the training process all over again. Do you ever ask yourself why you continue to stay, when so many others are making career changes, either by moving up the ladder or out of the profession altogether? In Lauren Magruder’s recent article entitled "Turnover and Retention: Why Do Many Leave, But Some of Us Stay?", she shared an article written by Oscar Grusky that studies employee commitment. It seems that investment plays a major role in the life of a research administrator. According to Magruder, "it is not always what a person gets out of a job, but what they have personally invested that creates commitment...long-term research administrators may stay because we have personally invested in the field and it may be in the form of advanced training and certifications." If this describes you, then you possess the characteristic of having grit.

### Build your willpower muscle

A successful research administrator is a master of multi-tasking and juggling multiple (and at many times conflicting) priorities. As we continually reassess and reprioritize the tasks at hand on any given day, we can on occasion fall into the habit of pushing that one task that we ‘d rather not do further down our priority list. Before we know it, that low-priority task that we’ve been avoiding has become our top pressing issue that needs immediate attention. Tying in to the principle to Seize the Moment in (2) above, it turns out that by doing exactly those tasks that we don’t want to do, we are not only achieving greater efficiency in our work, but we are making it easier for ourselves in the future when faced with similar circumstances. In other words, we are strengthening our willpower “muscle." Dr. Halvorson defines the concept of willpower as a muscle, and confirms this idea for building willpower by instructing us to “take on a challenge that requires [us] to do something that we’d honestly rather not do,” and notes that “it will be hard in the beginning, but it will get easier, and that’s the whole point.”

### Don’t tempt fate

Regardless of the level of our dedication to a task and strength of our willpower “muscle”, we must, as research administrators, recognize that even our willpower is a finite resource, and there are instances where no amount of individual willpower alone will fully address the pending inquiry, the last-minute request, or the same-day deadline. It is important for us to have the perspective to recognize when we need to ask for additional time and/or resources, and/or enlist the assistance of our colleagues and/or supervisors.

### Focus on what you will do, not what you won’t do

In research administration, it is easier to focus on what you won’t do or can’t do rather than what you will do or can do. As research administrators, when you are working with your faculty, try focusing on what you will do for them versus what you won’t or can’t do. Admittedly, it is sometimes very difficult to do this. Too often, we spend a great amount of energy focusing on what we won’t or can’t do, such as change a policy or federal regulation. We should use this energy and focus on what we will do for them. In other words, look for a more creative or outside-the-box opportunity to demonstrate what you will do for you faculty and not the other way around. In the end, it becomes a win-win for both you and faculty.

### Conclusion

Whether it’s a new federal regulation, a revision to an institutional policy, or even just a problem issue on your desk — there will always be some looming responsibility on the horizon that a research administrator must prepare for while handling all of the day-to-day tasks. But we should take heart in and draw from Dr. Halvorson’s message that “decades of research on achievement suggests that successful people reach their goals not simply because of who they are, but more often because of what they do.” There are undoubtedly additional tools, tips, and techniques out there that keep successful research administrators current, proficient, and diligent. Let these nine “things” be your baseline guide for your approach to what you “do” in 2012 — and let us all celebrate our successes! ■

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DECEMBER 2011

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NCURA’s annual Financial Research Administration (FRA) conference will be here before you know it. The FRA program for 2012 is packed full of essential fundamentals, expert panels, hot topics and smaller venues for in-depth discussions on a variety of issues and topics critical in today’s world of financial research administration. There are an array of interesting sessions and discussion groups planned for the conference as well as wonderful full-day and half-day pre-conference workshops that enable the attendee to learn more detailed knowledge on the essentials as well as burning issues. The program committee has done an excellent job of developing an appropriate mix of sessions (ranging from basic to advanced), that are well aligned with the needs of conference attendees. With over 100 educational sessions and 20 pre-conference workshops there will be something for everyone regardless of experience level. In addition, there will be ample time to connect with colleagues – all to ensure you come away with greater knowledge and understanding and a network of colleagues willing to share best practices.

FRA 13 will take place at the Swan and Dolphin Resort in beautiful Orlando, Florida. The property is a Starwood AAA four diamond resort conveniently located in the heart of Disney. Once you finish sessions for the day there will be plenty to do in Disney’s Epcot Resort area located steps from the hotel. So, mark your calendar and make plans to attend the information packed conference in sunny Florida this coming March.

You won’t be disappointed! The preliminary program and registration will be available in early December.
Pre-Conference Workshops

- Post Award Basics
- Financial Compliance Issues in Research Administration
- Risk Assessment: Theory to Practice
- Moving Up and Moving On – Developing Managers
- Surviving Audits
- Financial Conflict of Interest
- Effort Reporting – Why is it so Complicated?
- Starting a Clinical Trial Office
- Preparing an F&A Proposal and Negotiating an F&A Rate – Introduction to the Process
- Financial Research Administration Compliance – Problems, Perceptions and Potential Solutions
- University F&A Proposals – Federal Review and Complex Negotiation Issues
- Developing, Managing and Monitoring Service Centers
- Implementing Federal-wide Reporting Requirements
- Beyond the Basics of Subrecipient Monitoring
- Contracting Issues
- A-21 and A-110 Overview
- Costing for Medical Institutions/Hospitals
- Developing Education Programs
- Bridging the Gap Between Central and Departmental
- Institutional Policy Development & Implementation

Session Sampling

- OMB A-21 Taskforce Update
- Surviving Adverse and Qualified Audits
- Issues in Subrecipient Monitoring
- F&A Cost Recovery Distribution: Different Models, Challenges, and Opportunities
- NIH Top 10 Post-Award Topics
- Effort Reporting: From Commitment to Confirmation
- Effectively Managing the Middle: Representing Your Institution While Supporting Your Faculty
- Service Centers: Operational Issues and Challenges
- Implementing NIH FCOI Regulations
- The F&A Proposal From a Departmental Perspective
- Reviewing Financial Reports with PIs
- Creating and Implementing Research Administration Career Ladders
- Avoiding, Managing and Writing Off Bad Debt
- ARRA Update
- Cost Sharing Compliance
- Current Issues in A-133 Audits
- Risk Tolerance - Keeping Stewardship, Eliminating Unnecessary Bureaucracy
- Implementing New Financial and Grants Management Systems
- Improving Efficiency in Research Administration
- P-Card Fraud
- Department Self-Audit
- FAR Post-Award Issues
- Closeout Issues
- NSF’s New Award Cash Management System

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Kirsten Yehl, Administrator, General Internal Medicine, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Workshops
Jill Frazier, Director, Medical Research Administration and Office of Research Education & Training, University of Miami School of Medicine
Susan Sedwick, Associate Vice President for Research and Director, Office of Sponsored Projects, The University of Texas at Austin
Another year is coming to a close. That means all those end-of-the-year tasks are soon to be added to our to-do lists. When I started to add “organize to-do list” to my to-do list, I realized changes were desperately needed. Big changes. Better changes. Sustainable changes. This article will give you some tasks to consider for the end of the year in electronic research administration (eRA), and share some tips from my journey for a better way to get it all done whether you’re in eRA or not.

**What to Do**

The end of the year (or the beginning of a new one) is a good time to review and update a myriad of things in the electronic systems we use. Here are 15 actions to consider:

1. **Numbering:** Update the system for the new year, new month.
2. **Reporting:** Update and total your reports for the year’s metrics—system items such as issues addressed, questions answered, sponsors and users added/deleted, etc. Or office activity items such as proposals submitted, awards received, expenditures, etc.
3. **Checking passwords and URLs:** Are they still working or have they expired? Has the website’s address changed?
4. **Archiving:** Export any data that should be archived.
5. **Backing up data:** Check all systems, desktops, laptops, etc. You know you should do it. Please start before you get burned by a system crash. Don’t learn the hard way like I did.
6. **Verifying security:** Are your firewalls still impenetrable?
7. **Renewing software licenses:** When are they due? Allow at least a month’s time to ensure there are no gaps in service or support.
8. **Upgrading software:** How often will software upgrades occur this year? Schedule the year out if you can to ensure the right resources are available. Or give your technical and testing resources a heads-up that you’ll need them in July or September. Be sure to schedule testing time, as well, to ensure that the system is working as anticipated after the upgrades.
9. **Purchasing hardware:** Is it time to purchase new hardware? Have budget approvals been given, or are they still needed?
10. **Training:** Plan sessions for new users. Do you train in quarterly workshops or one-on-one as users come onboard? Do you have materials ready?
11. **Reviewing the issues found in the past year:** Are there audit reports you can create to monitor these situations and be alerted before they happen again? Or catch them before they affect activity reports? Are you testing for them after each system patch or upgrade?
12. **Reassessing your procedures:**
   a. Document system issues, decisions, changes, upgrades, patches, etc. You want to document everything that you do on the system— the what, when, why, and who.
   b. Training materials— Are the screenshots accurate/up-to-date? Has the business process changed? Have the steps in the software changed?

Here’s a tip: rather than showing the entire screenshot in your documentation, capture only the part referenced in your instruction step. This will limit the number of screenshots you’ll need to update because full screens change more often than partial screens, and you may get lucky that your smaller part has not changed. Keep in mind, however, that shots of the entire screen are helpful when users open the page, to confirm (and provide comfort and confidence) that they are in the right place.

13. **Inspecting your user list(s):** Deactivate those who have left your organization. Be cautious about deleting them outright if they are connected to historical records. Limit access or deactivate them instead.
14. **Professional development:** What new geeky things do you want to learn next?
15. **Plan for next year:** What will you do differently to make it top this year?

**How to Get It Done**

Now that you know the what, it’s time to tackle the how, when, and who. In these times when we’re all asked to do more, a natural tendency is to give up our free time to get it all done. Work longer, faster, harder. To retain control of my to-do list, I’ve tried working through lunch hours, coming in earlier, staying a bit later, working weekends and vacation days. It wasn’t working. Worse — although done, the work sometimes is not up to my usual standards. I was frustrated, exhausted and overwhelmed.

I started seeking a better way. I found three books that have helped me re-imagine my workday, gain more productivity, and put life back into my life. All of them have many tips. Here, I’ll share my top three takeaways from each. I encourage you to review the books yourselves for even more benefits.

First is David Allen’s *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*. My top three takeaways:

1. Make a list of all you want to do—your goals and end results to achieve. Include personal as well as professional goals. Get everything out of your head in a ‘mind dump’ to a list.
2. What is the next action for each item? Don’t worry about planning out ALL the steps right now… just think of the next one and estimate how long it will take.
3. Do it, delegate it, or defer and schedule it. I especially like his two-minute rule: can I complete this task in the next two minutes? If ‘yes’, then do it. If ‘no’, then delegate it or defer it to a later time. If deferring, get the task on your calendar NOW. Then forget it until that scheduled time.
One of my biggest daily tasks is the struggle to manage my email inbox. I am able to read all the important emails and complete immediate tasks. However, many messages remain there to act upon later. Allen’s method works for me. I know it WILL get done . . . if not now (two-minute rule) then next Tuesday from 4-5 p.m. or whenever scheduled. Watch his explanation on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qo7vUdKTlhk&feature=related or visit his blog at http://www.gtdtimes.com/. He also offers some free podcasts on iTunes.


(1) Check/respond to email only twice per day. My first thought was that I could never do that. But then: Wouldn’t it be great if I could do that? Why couldn’t I do that? How can I do it? Here’s how: I revised this to my three busiest email times: 9 a.m., 1 p.m., and 4 p.m. I ran it by my boss for a reality check; it was okay with her. It’s working well, and I’ve had no complaints.

(2) Create tomorrow’s to-do list at the end of each day. This eliminates the question, “Where to start?” when you look at your master to-do list.

(3) Stop multi-tasking. Select one thing and focus on finishing it. Eliminate distractions by turning off your email, closing your door, and putting your phone on voicemail while you work. When I tried this, I found my productivity rose significantly. Knowing exactly what I was to accomplish with action steps to complete each task led not only to completion in the time allowed, but also to a wonderful sense of progress. Visit http://fourhourworkweek.com/ for more.


Schwartz et al. write that the more hours we work, and the longer we go without real renewal, the more we default into behaviors that reduce our own effectiveness: impatience, frustration, distraction, and disengagement. These take their toll on our work, our bodies/minds, and others with whom we interact. Have they been secretly filming me?

Schwartz et al. suggest that the real issue is not the number of hours we spend at work, but the energy we bring to the work, and the value that results. My top three takeaways:

(1) Multi-tasking is not sustainable. We are not our high-speed computers, working continuously, running multiple programs simultaneously. We are most effective when we move from periods of great focus to intermittent rest. Then repeat.

(2) Rather than a multi-tasking marathoner, springboard to a sprinter’s mentality. Did the hare actually have it right, NOT the tortoise? The research shows, they say, that we accomplish more in less time with 90-minute, focused work sessions. Then get up and walk around a bit for refreshment, renewal and recovery.

(3) Focus on energy management, not time management. The real value is not in the number of hours we sit behind our desks. It is the value that we generate while we’re working. Managing our time to get more time doesn’t matter if we don’t have the energy to do anything during that found time.

Have I perfected these things yet? No, I remain a student. My hope in sharing these tips and insights with you is that they’ll help you gain more balance in your life, reduce some stress, and decrease the times you feel overwhelmed. They did for me. Try them, and let me know the results. Or share what works for you with the NCURA era Neighborhood community at ncuraera@lists.ncura.edu, or write your own article for the NCURA Magazine.

References:

Terri Hall has worked in research administration for thirteen years, and is currently the Director of Electronic Research Administration (eRA) at the University of Notre Dame. She also chairs the NCURA eRA Neighborhood. Comments, questions, and feedback can be sent to Terri via email: Hall.74@nd.edu or (574) 631-7378.
Today’s university technology transfer model is built on the assumption that inventing faculty will remain employed by a single university for the long term, if not for life. In the face of harsh economic realities, if universities eventually buckle to public pressure and hire faculty according to renewable, short-term contracts, research administrators would need to revise – perhaps dramatically re-vamp – their university intellectual property strategies. Outside academia, the switch to a mobile faculty workforce could introduce unintended negative consequences to our nation’s university technology transfer capabilities.

A frequently overlooked benefit of faculty tenure is that it introduces long-term stability into the university innovation ecosystem. This stability is crucial for two reasons. First, tenure gives university faculty another variant of academic freedom — the freedom to pursue exploratory and open-ended basic scientific research. Bold, game-changing research is risky and sometimes yields nothing but a dead end; yet if given time and support, can yield much greater social rewards. Second, to become commercially viable, university patents typically require years of faculty inventor involvement, a professional commitment to an uncertain outcome that mobile faculty would not be able to make for several reasons.

At most universities, patents and commercial patent licenses remain the cornerstones of the formal university technology transfer process. Unlike other modes of open knowledge exchange employed by university research faculty, patents represent a unit of intellectual property that belongs to the university to which they were disclosed. If an inventor leaves a university, her patent remains behind. At first glance, the knowledge captured in university-owned patents appears to be an appealingly cut and dried unit of knowledge that can be readily transferred between parties. In actuality, the knowledge in university patents is not easily transferrable without the continued involvement of its inventor. Placing patents into university custody is a viable model of technology transfer only if university inventors remain at the same university and are able to commit to the long development timeframes needed to bring the patented knowledge to commercial fruition.

To check these thoughts with people who manage university patent portfolios and research activities, I spoke to two research administrators and a technology transfer specialist. While the presence of a mobile teaching workforce is already well-documented in discussions of university tenure, I learned that most university research divisions manage the commercialization process for a growing number of mobile inventors. Clearly, graduate students and postdocs have long been a significant source of valuable inventions. A second mobile faculty workforce is that of researchers whose temporary positions are funded by “soft money” grants that expire after a few years. The number of mobile university inventors remains small. Michael Pazzanni, Vice President for Research and Graduate and Professional Education at Rutgers University, estimates that roughly five percent of the inventing faculty at Rutgers are funded by soft money.

Howard Grimes, Vice President for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School at Washington State University, points out that university faculty are not that easy to move around as many people think, especially faculty who are very productive. Grimes said, “the big inventors have a big infrastructure around them that would make it challenging for them to move every three to five years. The inventors who disclose a lot of inventions tend to earn lots of money in research grants, have large numbers of graduate students, and lots of expensive lab equipment. If a prolific inventor decided to change universities, the move would not happen quickly, which would leave us time to figure out the best way to handle the inventor’s invention disclosures, patents and maybe startups.” Collaborative research grants are also pushing university research managers to adjust and clarify their patent management strategies. Pazzanni
notes that since “many federal research grants require collaboration across universities, a lot of the intellectual property Rutgers handles spans multiple institutions, which is almost like having a mobile faculty workforce.” At Rutgers, to maintain continuity, some departed faculty continue to develop inventions managed by Rutgers by consulting with the company commercializing their research. At Washington State, Grimes encourages faculty to connect with companies early in the research process before inventions and patents become a reality. “If a university has correctly set up the initial terms and expectations of that partnership, regardless of changes to the situation, the original university should still be in a very good position.”

Mobile inventors make a user-friendly technology transfer process more, not less important. Lee Taylor, Technology Licensing Specialist at the University of Hawaii technology transfer office, has found that researchers paid by soft money grants are frequently his most productive inventors. In his experience: the better the inventor’s relationship with the technology transfer office, the smoother the transition when they come and go. “If a technology transfer office has a habit of involving the inventors closely in the commercialization process, things will go more smoothly. Transparency and trust are key.”

If the numbers of mobile university inventors were to remain small, an adept research administrator may be able to compensate for any introduced disruptions. I wonder what the impact would be, however, were the entire university research ecosystem to shift to a corporate, at-will mode of employment. Perhaps we would discover an unforeseen side-effect: given its reliance on proprietary forms of knowledge exchange, today’s formal university technology transfer process may not be conducive to a mobile faculty workforce.

True, one could make a convincing case that university-owned patents are a minor channel of university knowledge exchange and a relative late-comer to the game of university knowledge sharing. Most channels of university knowledge do not involve long-term contractual commitments, for example academic publishing, faculty consulting, student matriculation and conferences. At least in theory, a mobile faculty inventor could continue to publish, teach and network from a variety of different employers without missing a beat. In addition, most tenured faculty today do not formally disclose inventions to their university employer, much less work to bring their patented inventions to commercial fruition.

What makes university research special is that it tackles big, unanswered scientific questions that in the short term may have little immediate commercial or social application. Abolishing university faculty tenure may introduce an unintended negative consequence of depriving inventions of the lengthy nurturing they need from their faculty inventor in order to spring to life. Lee Taylor says the biggest challenge he faces with departing faculty inventors is if the inventor has lost interest in the inventions he has “left behind.” Taylor says, “an uninterested inventor can be a disincentive to the technology transfer staff since the level of inventor’s interest plays such an important role in bringing an invention to market.” According to Taylor, if an inventor leaves in the middle of the patent prosecution process, “we would likely continue to pursue the patent, but perhaps in a narrower scope.”

If university researchers were hired and fired with the same frequency as those in the private sector, university patent portfolios could lose their commercial and social value. With every faculty transition, future universities might accumulate yet more abandoned patents of diminished commercial potential. To maintain the commercial value of their patent portfolios, universities would face operational challenges in working closely together to share patent costs and coordinate common, mutually agreeable licensing terms. Building a patent portfolio would become an even costlier and more unpredictable practice than it is today.

More serious issues could arise if a departed inventor chose to continue to spend his new university’s resources to develop a patent owned by his previous employer. His new university might perceive the inventor’s ongoing involvement as a conflict of interest or a conflict of time. After all, the financial beneficiary of the inventor’s efforts would be his prior university. In fact, unless special arrangements were made between the old university and the new university, the inventor’s new university would receive no financial compensation at all. A similar challenge could develop with a university startup if a former university were to remain the owner of a significant chunk of equity, making it the primary beneficiary of the startup’s success.

Another potential downside of a mobile faculty workforce could be meeting the demands of star faculty in employment negotiations, an arena in which public universities would find it difficult to compete with private universities. Imagine if technology transfer terms were on the negotiating table. A star faculty member could demand a much larger share of patent royalties than the standard 30% cut given by most universities today. A star faculty could negotiate favorable startup terms, permitting the university to take only a small, pre-agreed upon percentage of equity. Additional negotiable perks could include asking for dedicated technology transfer staff resources, demanding flexible intellectual property clauses in consulting engagements, and the use of a generous patent budget.

Switching gears, to play devil’s advocate for a minute, perhaps the technology transfer process would survive the abolishment of tenure and in response, evolve to meet the operational challenges introduced by a mobile faculty workforce. For example, universities could ease their operational burdens by moping their inventions into a common patent pool. In fact, a mobile faculty workforce could bring university technology transfer strategies full circle, back to the days before the passage of the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 — an outcome whose interpretation depends on whom you ask. The Bayh-Dole Act gave universities the option to own and commercially license the patents resulting from federally funded research. If university patents were to lose their commercial value in the absence of a committed faculty inventor, perhaps universities would decline to invest in obtaining patents, and instead, revert to placing university inventions into the public domain.

In these tough economic times, faculty tenure may appear to be an outdated luxury. Yet, a stable faculty workforce may indirectly aid our ailing economy by increasing the downstream commercial and social value of university patents and startups based on university research. Rather than justifying tenure as a protector of academic freedom, university administrators should articulate its value as a critical component of a vibrant university innovation ecosystem. By demonstrating the contribution of a tenured faculty workforce to the technology transfer system, university research administrators might better convince an increasingly skeptical public that maintaining the tenure system is good for everybody, not just for professors.

Melba Kurman is the CEO of Triple Helix Innovation, an organization dedicated to the advancement of innovative university technology. She writes the Tech Transfer 2.0 blog and is a frequent speaker and contributor on university intellectual property strategy and 3D printing.
A little over eight years ago my professional life was forever changed when I was hired as the Director of the Office of Research Resources (ORR) at Columbia University School of Nursing. Although I had been employed in the field of research administration (RA) for over seven years, this was a true promotion, both in terms of job responsibilities and scope of work. I was no longer an administrative assistant, and I no longer worked primarily with one faculty member conducting medical research. I was brought into this position with very little infrastructure and even less administrative structure. The office had no clear vision or mission statement and, early on, I referred to myself as the “Director of me” since I had no support staff. This was a rare opportunity to be the master of my own fate since this newly created office was completely mine to either turn into a wild success or a dismal failure.

2003-2005: Getting Started

The first two years as Director of the ORR were some of the most challenging of my life. With a pre-award mantra of “providing all levels administrative support for grant preparation to allow PIs to focus on the science,” I developed a mission statement, conducted an “open house” for school faculty, and assisted three junior faculty members in submitting their first NIH grant applications – all within the first month of hire. Because most of our nurse researchers did not have administrative support, I decided early on that the ORR should offer a full-range of services, including gathering and formatting biographical sketches, paginating paper applications, developing budgets, drafting justifications, and uploading all electronic applications. In addition to single-handedly running all pre-award aspects of grant submissions for the 8-10 junior and senior faculty members who submitted regularly, I also was charged with all post-award financial, tracking, and reporting duties. This aspect of the job was brand new to me, and at the end of the first week I went home wondering what I had gotten myself into. It was a case of trial by fire since the school’s active research portfolio at the time included several NIH R01s, R21s, and R03s as well an NIH P20 Exploratory Center grant and a T32 Institutional Training grant. Additionally, the school had a healthy assortment of HRSA training grants, scholarships, and a sprinkling of foundation and industry grants. Although I had a tremendous supervisor who I still rely on for support to this day, I had very little guidance or assistance with post-award aspects and performed much self-education. Most of this came from attending research administrator forums offered bi-monthly by our medical center’s Sponsored Projects Office and extensive policy reading on the Internet.

Somehow I made it through that first month, complete with an unexpected gift of a bouquet of flowers saying, “Thanks!” The faculty was pleased, and it was apparent they had no similar previous support. As new applications were proposed, I slowly adjusted to working with a wide variety of nurse researchers with an array of interests and personalities. I continued to develop official office policies and a detailed list of standard operating procedures. As the number of successfully submitted applications increased, the level of trust between me and faculty members did as well, something I have found to be a key element to success. At the same time, the school’s grants database showed an increase in something more valuable: the number of funded projects. By the end of my second year as Director of the ORR, it was no longer feasible for one person to handle all pre- and post-award aspects of the school’s sponsored projects. Thankfully, we were financially able to split my role into two positions, with my focus remaining on pre-award functions.

2006-2008: Sponsored Projects Growth

The expansion of the ORR coincided with a steep growth in sponsored projects funding obtained by our school faculty. In these three years prior to the recession in the fall of 2008, our research portfolio was booming. Funding trends from the inception of the ORR in 2003 through
2009 show a substantial increase in both the average annual number of grant submissions (Figure 1) and in the total budgets of funded applications (Figure 2) per calendar year.

It is notable that during this time frame there was no corresponding growth in the size of our faculty, or in the number of current faculty who regularly submit grant applications. I consider these metrics to be the strongest evidence for an argument in favor of a school or department creating an RA office dedicated exclusively to supporting faculty members in gaining research funding. Our faculty has indicated that support provided by the ORR has at times allowed them to double the volume of their grant submissions in a single year. With our continued success, in 2007 I became a member of NCURA with the school’s financial support, and I attended my first national meeting. Then, in 2008, I presented my first NCURA case study at the 50th annual meeting. This was another turning point for me, and I feel that my involvement with NCURA has truly turned what I used to consider a “job” into a “career.”

2009-2011: NCURA and Administrative Support

Along with my experience in RA, my participation in NCURA continued to expand, and in 2009 I presented a case study on establishing an office of research resources at the school or department level (1). This case study, which focused on aspects for consideration in creating an office such as ours, included a group discussion of points of view of the administration, faculty members, and RA office staff. Table 1 details the elements to be considered when beginning the process.

If your school or department is considering creating such an office, these questions would be critical to planning and designing steps for implementation. In addition, one of the best peer-reviewed articles on the topic was published in 2003 by Froman et al. (2), and it provides an in-depth look at the process and a step-by-step model that could easily be replicated.
Table 1. Elements to Consider in Creating a Departmental Research Administration Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of View</th>
<th>Elements for Consideration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Administration</td>
<td>• What physical space, computer, or other capital resources would need to be provided?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How many staff members would be required and what would be the minimal experience/education?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is an appropriate start-up and annual operating budget?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Is there a need for periodic evaluations of office performance and its impact on the school or department’s funding?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Members</td>
<td>• What overall services and continuing education training would the office offer?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How would the office enable research faculty members to be more productive and successful in grant writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How would the workload be distributed between PI, departmental office staff and RA office staff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>RA Office Staff</td>
<td>• What senior faculty member(s) would supervise the staff and what type(s) of support would they provide?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What policies would need to be established and how would they be enforced?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How would time management and great deadlines be handled?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How would the office interface between the school or department and the medical center’s sponsored projects administration office?</td>
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</table>

Additional involvement in NCURA over the past three years has also given me the opportunity to pursue my love of writing. As a contributing editor for the past two years, I’ve written articles based on a wealth of personal experiences and with a goal of sharing strategies for coping with universal challenges in RA. When the ORR hired new staff and split its pre- and post-award functions, we dealt with growing pains and were faced with a large gap between these facets. After several years’ work at improving the communication and work flow between our two offices, my colleague and I published our successes in “Researchers’ Relationships with Pre-award and Post-award Offices: Bridging the Gap” in the September/October 2010 issue of NCURA Magazine. In addition, an article in the December 2010 issue presented our school’s successful pre-award strategies for promoting researcher compliance with internal grant deadlines (4) which was so well-received that I was subsequently invited by the NCURA 53rd Annual Meeting program committee to lead a discussion group on the topic (5).

Finally, in the fall of 2009 I was able to hire a pre-award administrative coordinator and assume a supervisor role for the first time. During the past two years I have been able to develop my leadership skills and become a mentor. An article in the January/February 2011 issue of NCURA Magazine details my experience expanding the ORR pre-award personnel by one, demonstrating the challenges and successes of both the Director and the “New Kid on the Block” during our first year working together (6). It was a pleasure to co-author an article with the Laureen, and a big part of my mentoring her has involved encouraging and supporting her active participation in NCURA.

2012 and Beyond

The world of RA is ever-changing, even at the microcosmic level. Last year our school gained a new Dean, and she has begun strategic initiatives to grow our school in all areas, including research. This has led to a renewed focus on collaboration between our clinical and research faculty, a renaming of our office to the Office of Scholarship and Research (OSR), and a whole series of new services such as internally-organized mock reviews, bi-monthly research excellence seminars, and a database manager available to faculty conducting research. On a personal level, I’ve reaffirmed my commitment to this career by going back to school in the part-time MPH program in Health Policy and Management at the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University. Already, my class in Organizational Behavior and Management has provided me with new tools to improve the OSR’s functionality and interpersonal relations in order to enhance our level of customer service. I have also recently been elected to lead a manuscript with faculty members that will describe the school’s process of revising and expanding its research focus, a follow-up to a previous article from 2005 (7). Eight years ago I would have never dreamt of being involved in a major medical center school at this level, and to have an outlet for sharing strategies and successes with NCURA colleagues continues to be professionally and personally rewarding.

As the availability of funding becomes tighter and the research environment more competitive, to grow a school’s research enterprise, an Office of Scholarship and Research could be just what the doctor ordered.

References


Kristine M. Kulage, MA is Director, Office of Scholarship and Research, Columbia University School of Nursing and Biomed Corner Contributing Editor of NCURA Magazine.
The field of research administration has long used transactional level metrics on throughput for the rationalization of administrative positions, but where do financially-focused benchmarks belong when reviewing the viability and robustness of our institutions’ research enterprises? The question is a significant one at all institutional levels, and many in the Department Research Administrator (DRA) role are becoming increasingly and acutely aware of not only the implicit requirement on faculty and units to do more science with less resources, but also of the obligation to be able to talk about those resources in a concrete way to strategically plan for the future.

Interest in supporting research has not shifted. Theoretical and applied advances in every discipline continue to be encouraged and supported in academic institutions. What has evolved is the approach to evaluating that support. With tightening resources, research enterprises at institutions have begun taking a business-like, strategic approach. At many institutions, academic leadership has embraced metrics to represent business intelligence that can inform strategic plans around research. Key performance indicators or metrics have been developed at institutions to evaluate units based on financial measures and resource use. As this discussion matures, there are several concepts that a DRA may encounter and should become familiar with in order to help inform the conversation in the best interest of the unit or faculty member.

Central to the discussion of metrics is recognition of the propensity of metric descriptors to be lagging (reflecting what has been done; for example, research expenditures) rather than leading (conveying a reasonable projection of what might happen; for example, research awards). During the years of increasing federal budgets, watching expenditures after-the-fact was a reasonable performance measure. However, with the concern that federal research budgets will grow tighter, it will no longer be sufficient to look back at past expenditure behaviors. For example, through fairly simple projection models, there is opportunity to demonstrate the potential award pipeline for a unit. In the chart, the dark blue reflects what has been committed by sponsors; the purple represents projects currently pending and eventual support (with a success rate applied since not everything is funded); and white anticipates what the overall total may be for a year based on past performance. While these numbers may fluctuate, it does give a glimpse into the potential, in this case, for a slight decline of the award pipeline and a need for the DRA to inform leadership and plan accordingly. Identifying which metrics indicate a definitive trajectory may give time for a strategic plan to be developed and executed within the unit.

If participating in the conversation about standardizing metrics that will be used to evaluate across multiple units, consider whether the proposed calculation behind the metric is producing truly comparative data. If the institution evaluates the ability to support facilities as indirect costs recovered per square foot of assigned space, do you include dollars that are sent to subcontracts at other institutions? Do you agree to restrict the expenditures to only on-campus projects? Working through the behavior of the metric components - in this example, how space is assigned and how and where expenditures flow compared to the activity you are intending to measure - may lead to a calculation that is truly comparative and more easily benchmarked among units.

It is also important to recognize what underlying behavior is being targeted when discussing...
data and performance benchmarks. For instance, a metric regarding annual faculty effort recovered on sponsored projects might be represented as the amount of effort supported by external funding as a percentage of total institutional effort. However, such an approach does not take into account other required faculty responsibilities, resulting in a calculation that may be artificially low and might not represent the true opportunity for improvement. To walk through the math: A faculty member with a nine month appointment who spends two calendar months on sponsored research, one calendar month on institutionally funded research, and six calendar months teaching would be artificially penalized if the metric calculates out of the whole appointment (2/9 or 22.2%). However, if the six months of teaching time is non-negotiable, then the true metric is the calculation of externally sponsored effort out of available research time (2/3 or 66.7%). Understanding the context of the performance being benchmarked will change how the metric is represented and influence the entire resulting conversation.

DRAs should consider taking a proactive stance and introduce financially-focused metrics as part of the ongoing conversation with unit leadership. Similar to compliance issues, metrics are best talked about early and often to become an integrated language in the culture. For instance, if space decisions are partially driven by a research program’s financial return on investment, proactively providing a multi-year trend of the indirect dollars per assigned square foot in tandem with the description of the ground-breaking work being done will likely strengthen any arguments for additional space. Conversely, know the material and audience when deciding whether it is appropriate to talk about or measure at a specific level. Consider, for example, the influencing factors that make some academic pursuits return fewer indirect dollars per square foot assigned (perhaps they use instruments that take up a large amount of space) and that are better described by restricting the square footage used in the calculation to a modified amount of total square feet assigned minus the equipment footprint. The DRA has the unique ability to bring a dose of reality into the measurement and representation of the metric based on knowledge of the program rather than relying on the absolute definition of the calculation.

People are naturally skeptical of whether metrics are actionable. When incorporating metrics to garner resources or contributing to metric development that will influence institutional discussions, there are four characteristics of the data and metrics that will lend credence to the information being presented:

- **Recognized Source of Data** – Having a clear disclosure of the source of data or common agreement on acceptable data generation will immediately influence how the metric discussion is received. Utilizing recognized data sets in a specific institutional environment is imperative. And if using metrics to lobby for resources, investigate and understand the flaws in the data set (every data source contains one or more drawbacks) in order to waylay concerns early.

- **Transparency** – Providing a brief description of the calculation will give the reviewer a way to reproduce and validate the assessment. Also, if reviewing the metric has become part of the culture, then review openly when it displays a positive or negative trend. Being willing to produce and discuss the metric results, regardless of the trajectory, should offer more leverage when seeking additional resources during a positive trend. It establishes trust that the metric will continue to be reviewed, and preemptively addressed, in the case of a future negative trend.

- **Balance** – Providing what is known in a larger context will be more helpful than displaying only a key metric that is a means to an end. Like transparency, context contributes to a fuller discussion rather than a narrow decision point. The key metric may be most heavily weighted in the discussion, but demonstrating multiple related metrics and other (quantitative or qualitative) considerations will help provide context and demonstrate the overall environment and financial health of the issue being considered.

- **Focus** – Developing a ratio metric that provides a view into the primary resource needed in tension with another secondary resource will be more compelling and versatile than describing only the needed resource. Every metric developed as a ratio then has two opportunities for improvement. In the example of indirect dollars per square foot of assigned space, either increasing dollars or reducing space will contribute to the same ratio improvement and either, or a combination of both, may be an answer to dwindling resource issues. The ability to drive the conversation immediately to the root of the issue and express in combination with other valued resources will help place emphasis on the overall impact and opportunities for leveraging.

Metrics that are transparent, balanced, focused and based on known source data make possible an environment of consistency and shared understanding. Having agreement regarding the “One Version of the Truth” allows discussions to happen at many levels with one common understanding of the data. This is invaluable for a DRA to understand. If there is agreement on the implication of a metric it is easy to point to the “One Version of the Truth” and call the conclusion obvious. If there is disagreement on a metric, it allows the DRA to start the discussion beginning at the common interpretation and then introduce elements of the situation’s reality to make for a compelling argument.

There will be those who argue strenuously that you can’t measure the success of great science in such base financial terms as effort recovery, dollars per square foot, or awards in a pipeline. They are absolutely correct. Even the H-index and similar attempts to quantify researchers’ scientific impact are unlikely to ever be able to measure the true significance of their science; they are at best rough proxies. Nevertheless, subscribing to the hypothesis that resources are becoming scarcer, and recognizing that most institutional resources are either held or monitored by “bean counters,” it becomes a very marketable (and necessary) skill to be able to count the beans!

Heather Offhaus serves as the Director of the Grant Review & Analysis Office at the University of Michigan Medical School in the Office of Research and considers herself a Bean Counter. She has been responsible at the school for the development and oversight of key business intelligence metrics in research for over a decade as well as leading the pre-award grants office. Heather is currently on the NCURA DRA Traveling Workshop Faculty, serves on the Board of Directors and on the Region IV board, and is a recipient of this year’s Distinguished Service Award.
Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn...oh my! If we were to say social media is not a new phenomenon would you believe me? Social media is really what the web was intended for since its initial development in the 1970s. If you understand where the web has been, you may be able to further conceptualize where the web is going; thus making better decisions regarding the social media services you may utilize in an attempt to reach your audience, and have your voice heard by other users who are affiliated with the same social media services.

In the 1980s, a Bulletin Board System (BBS) was created by Ward Christensen and Randy Suess. According to Layton, Scott, and Zydyk (2000), the BBS was “dedicated to the sharing or exchange of messages or other files on a network.” Essentially, the BBS was an online community where authorized users chatted with one another, uploaded software, and were able to obtain the most up-to-date news regarding current events. Although many of the BBSs have vanished from established countries that now depend on the World Wide Web, Layton et al. acknowledged at the time their assessment was provided that BBSs were “still fairly common in parts of the world where the internet is less established and is still valued by many with Internet access for its ability to foster a sense of community.” Ironically, BBSs were one of the first places where major file sharing occurred, not Napster. But back then the data rates and music encoding were so bad that it really was not an issue.

In the 1990s, people began creating their own homepages: the precursor of the modern weblog. By 1995, most universities and departments had their own webpages, and the Internet began to grow at an exponential rate while incorporating e-commerce, email and ability to search for almost anything imaginable. If you ever feel a bit nostalgic, perhaps you may be interested in watching Sandra Bullock’s 1995 movie, The Net; it highlighted the power of technology and the affect it has on our everyday lives. As many of us may recall, our transition into the 21st century was met with much success regarding the emergence of the dot com era. However, as competition grew many companies vanished overnight and people were a bit puzzled and may have thought, What is next for the Internet? “The current trend toward social media can be seen as an evolution back to the Internet’s roots since it re-transformed the World Wide Web to what it was initially created for: a platform to facilitate information exchange between users.” (Andreas & Haenlein, 2009.)

Social Media
Making It Work for You
By Erin E. Bailey, Timothy R. Schailey and Garrett M. Steed
What is Social Media?

As previously mentioned, social media is not a new idea, but it is not always clear to some people as to how many infinite numbers of functionalities social media can afford. Social media is all around us; it is now the way to stay connected with family, friends and colleagues. It provides a platform for users to share their opinions, keep abreast of current events, and disseminate information to a multitude of users through various means. Social media activities involve networking online through words, pictures and videos. It is also redefining how we relate to one another while simultaneously allowing users to be further connected to the organizations which vie for the opportunities to earn a user’s business. Most importantly, social media is about dialog – two way discussions bringing people together to discover and share information (Solis, 2008).

There are actually 27 different types of social media sites, but most social media falls into one of six categories: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual games and social worlds (Kaplan 2009). As research administrators who are users of different types of social media we will focus on three areas: blogs, content communities, and social networking.

How to Choose?

There are lots of places to put your content, but choose wisely; if you do it correctly, your media site will be visible for an indefinite period of time. Owyang, Tran and Jones (2011) would suggest to choose an option that gives you the flexibility to perform the day-to-day functions of your job while maintaining an active presence on your personal site. Being active and committed is very important and one of the biggest reasons companies fail at social networking is because they are not prepared for the relationship which must be cultivated between the customer and product provider.

There are times when the most popular social networking site may not be the right site for a certain individual. In a recent article published in The Chronicle of Higher Education, Young (2011) asserted that “Many professors have decided to reserve Facebook for personal communications rather than use it for teaching and research.” Even if you have spent hours on your Facebook page, you could find people reading it but not commenting on conversational threads or requesting friendships.

Concerns with Social Media

Is social media cost effective? Yes, from a financial perspective. However, social media does take a lot of time. It is imperative for interested developers to do their homework, and be sure they are creating a site conducive not only to personal desires, but interesting enough to attract a particular audience. Many companies jump on the bandwagon without the proper analysis, planning, and evaluation of their social media marketing needs and efforts. Before starting on your social networking journey, the following should be evaluated:

1. What tasks need to be completed to get the site up and running? Will it be done independently or as a team effort?
2. Who are the beneficiaries? Who is the target audience?
3. Can you have loss of control? Can two way dialogue end up disseminating negative information?
4. What is the time commitment? Are there resources available to keep the sites up-to-date? If you are not going to have time to maintain the accuracy of a developed site, it may not be worth the constant maintenance.
5. Will there be technology overload? Is it realistic to keep up with entire social media sites?
6. How will people know your site is official? Many social media sites do not have a mechanism to perform a background check on individuals that choose to create sites – be proactive and do regular searches for the organizations name and see what populates.

Blogs

The first and the oldest social media site (if you don’t count the old BBS) is the blog. The main focus of a weblog is content. To this day, many blogs are still text, but some have incorporated photos and other illustrative content. The first time the term weblog appeared was in 1997 when Jorn Barger called his website a weblog which was quoted in the article entitled It’s the links, stupid (2006). Blogs are the social media equivalent of personal webpage from the early 90s (Andreas & Haenlein, 2009). Blogs are by far the most common form of social media; it is a great way for an individual to propel his or herself into the spotlight, it is also a great tool to utilize when seeking to disseminate information to all affiliates especially within the research administration profession.

Continued on page 30
NCURA’s mission is to “serve its members and advance the field of research administration through education and professional development programs, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and by fostering a professional, collegial, and respected community” (NCURA – About Us, 2011).

**Step 1: Getting Started**  NCURA wanted to expand the opportunities for members to come together, in addition to in-person events and education. The organization found the answer in creating a Professional Networking Platform where content is king and collaboration is the name of the game. NCURA is preparing the launch of its new space where members can share and connect in a way that to date has just been a part of the in-person NCURA experiences. At the July 2011 Board of Directors meeting, there was unanimous approval to move forward with the investment of NCURA’s Community Platform. NCURA President, Judy Fredenberg said, “That’s great...and...what can we do now? Can we post short training pieces that people can benefit from now?” The NCURA staff had a video camera in a plan to shoot member testimonials, and they quickly revamped that plan to shoot research administration topic pieces onsite at the PRA 5 conference beginning that very day. If you were in attendance at that meeting, you may have seen individuals from the NCURA office recording segments before and after sessions with various members of NCURA. According to a telephone conversation with Tara Bishop, Associate Executive Director, once a speaker finished his/her session, the individual would be approached and as if he/she would offer a 2-3 minute snippet of the key points or other information regarding issues that we encounter as research administrators. Tara went on to say that the production team from NCURA’s national headquarters also filmed at the most recent Annual Meeting, with our faculty at traveling workshops, and wherever a member is within close proximity to the NCURA office, NCURA will usually ask that individual to supply some information surrounding a topic in research administration.

**Step 2 and 3: Audience and Control** At this point, individuals charged with making executive decisions at the NCURA office did not know what they were going to do with all this great content, but they knew who the beneficiaries were going to be – research administrators. NCURA recognizes that research administrators require the most up-to-date information regarding many aspects of the profession in an effort to keep apprised of the latest information surrounding our profession. As Ms. Bishop stated, “There is always time for what is important…and for our members, continuing the education and conversation is important.”

**Step 4: Time and Resources** “I sent an email to the staff to find out who wanted to volunteer to work on identifying opportunities to shoot pieces with faculty and then produce these videos in house, in addition to their responsibilities.” Ms. Bishop went on to explain, “One of the keys to social medial platforms is getting the champions on the bus who want to be there! Working in the social media realm is not a ‘task’ that can be assigned...it is an opportunity for the person who wants it. You don’t need a lot of people on the bus, just the people who can’t wait to board! With that, our full meetings staff joined on to shoot video, and NCURA Meeting Coordinator Zhana Edmonds also joined the production end, unpacked the new Mac NCURA invested in and from there we just figured it out!”

**Step 5: Overload** Based upon the quantity of videos and an understanding of their members, NCURA made the call to release a video each week, and NCURA YouTube Tuesdays was born. It was important to be able to deliver on the promise we would make and once a week was a sustainable objective with bonus videos when we the video segment cupboards were full from a fruitful shooting opportunity.

**Step 6: Make it Official** NCURA does a great job co-branding everything they do. YouTube Tuesdays was no exception, they used their normal email channel to cross advertise the new site. Engagement via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook has increased substantially. From the call to action by President Judy Fredenberg in July 2011, and a commitment to make time for what is important, NCURA has collaborated with over 40 NCURA volunteers to produce more than 30 training pieces and to date has over 26,000 views from our launch of YouTube Tuesdays just one week after the July 2011 Board of Directors meeting.

NCURA plans on expanding their space in the online world, in their Professional Networking Platform which is in production and will launch in January 2012. Currently NCURA uses Facebook and YouTube as resources for research administrators, and at the time this article when to press, Ms. Bishop stated they are going to have live Twitter feeds going on during Annual Meeting 53 along with the camera recording more videos for YouTube Tuesday. Using Social Media is an opportunity to serve, educate and advance the profession of research administration.
Content Communities

The main purpose of a content community like YouTube is to share media between users, which is unlike blogs or social networks, and that focuses on the author or another person. YouTube is a great example of a content community. Are you seeking to identify information regarding the many aspects of research administration? Chances are if you do a search on “YouTube” you will come across NCURA’s “YouTube Tuesdays,” read the attached case study. YouTube has become the place to watch and share videos over the web. Videos can be easily uploaded and can be viewed on the Internet, through social websites, via emails or on cell phones.

Social Networking Sites

The primary focus is on the user and the users connections. This is distinguished from a blog primarily because they are more about the user’s personal interactions with society rather than a topic or ongoing story. The sites we are most familiar with are:

**Facebook** – Connects people with family, friends, and colleagues. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload photos, share links and videos, and share information. When Facebook launched the fan pages concept in November 2007, many universities jumped at the opportunity to create an official Facebook presence for their university. As of January 2008, there were 420 universities taking advantage of this new feature as stated in the article entitled, *How Higher ed is using Facebook Pages* (2008). The fan pages of Facebook are similar to a business profile. This page can include information regarding the organization, photos, discussion boards, upcoming events. People can become a fan of the organization which will now show up on that individuals personal profile page. This fan page is now is a virtual market for others to visit.

**Twitter** – Twitter is like instant messaging. A user can send short messages (up to 140 characters) to their Twitter friends. Users can also follow the updates of friends they follow, send them direct messages, reply publicly to friends, or just post questions or comments as their current status (*Connecting With Your Customers: A Guide to Social Media*, 2007). Twitter is a way to market a business and obtain fast feedback.

**LinkedIn** – According to the company’s history, LinkedIn (n.d.) is the world’s largest professional networking site on the internet. As of August 4, 2011, 120 million professionals across the globe regularly utilized the service to keep abreast of changes within an individual’s industry, network with colleagues who work within the same field, and most importantly, offers the greatest control to ensure one’s professional character is not desecrated. The value of LinkedIn is that it enables members to form new relationships that may not have otherwise been made. It should be noted that communication on LinkedIn is only exchanged between members and is not open to everyone.

**Google+** – Emerged as the newest venture within social networking and seems very promising. According to an article published in *USA Today* by Scott Martin (July 2011), “Early reviews of Google+ are mostly favorable. Many say Google’s concept of letting people group...
those they interact with into different social circles is a key differentiator from Facebook.” So far, users who have participated in the Google Plus experience have identified some interesting attributes of the program. For example, one female user finds the program to be predominantly used by men. However, Desmond-Harris (2011) comments that the program is “easy enough, multiple personality friendly, stalker friendly, and not overwhelming.”

As stated within Connecting with your Customers: A Guide to Social Media (2009), almost one in ten businesses are already using social media to connect with customers. Of those that are using social media, 73% percent use Facebook, 33% use Twitter, and 27% use LinkedIn, while other popular social media channels being used include: Bebo, MySpace, YouTube, Plaxo, Academy and Qype.

Social media is a very effective tool for relationship building. If utilized correctly, social media can be very effective. Social media is a very effective tool for relationship building. Done right, social media can be very effective; however, it is important to remember that in order to prosper, these programs take effort, planning, and ongoing leadership.

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Peggy Lowry

Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award Acceptance Speech

Peggy Lowry received the Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award at NCURA Annual Meeting on Monday November 7, 2011. This is NCURA’s most prestigious award, given each year to a member who has made a significant contribution to the profession and demonstrated noteworthy service to NCURA. The following is her acceptance speech.

Thank you. I am deeply honored to receive this award.

I would like to thank the many people who have:
• served as a mentor to me (whether they knew it or not),
• provided advice,
• guided me into opportunities,
• and shared the pain and the joy of this most interesting profession of research administration.

However, that list would encompass a large number of you in the audience and a number of people who are not here, and would exceed my time. So, let me just say thank you friends. You have taught me much and I am grateful for your open sharing.

That long list of people is topped by one name, that is my husband Don, who has been a constant supporter for the past 40 years, whether it was laughing over a success or crying over a challenge. Don, thank you.

Forty years is coincidentally about the same timeframe for my career. Looking back in time brings a new perspective on how much our profession has changed.

• I was around when offices converted from typewriters to computers. A few of you might recall those computers, the ones with the 5 1/4” floppy disc. And the monitor that weighed 50 pounds and took up most of your desk.

• I was around when proposals were typed. And yes, I do mean typed on typewriters. Then typewriters were upgraded to Selectric Typewriters that allowed you to backspace and make corrections with whiteout tape and you no longer needed that messy bottle of whiteout liquid......

- And then there was sending the proposal to the sponsor. There was a time that the proposal had to be photocopied, at least 30 to 50 copies. That was a time when there were no page limits, no font size restrictions, and no margin requirements. You can imagine the length of those proposals.

- At that time the proposal was delivered by truck to the sponsor. The deadline was not when the button was pushed, but rather when it was at the door of the sponsor. A lot of money was spent in overnight delivery services.
in Research Administration

- I was around when the only acronyms we needed to learn were the federal agency’s: NSF, NIH, NOAA. Now there is a whole new language in our profession as well as in our lives. I needed to find a 10 year old to tell me what exactly a BFF or FOAF or GGL means.
- I was around during the significant discussions about whether or not research administration was a profession. OMG! I’m not sure what we were thinking at the time. Of course we are a profession. But during that period of our history everybody had not quite reached that conclusion.

Clearly much has changed in the past 40 years. We have become a strong, vibrant community. And so, who are we really and what role is ours in this profession of research administration? There are many roles that help to define who we are and what we do. I would like to share just a few:

- We are often diplomats. As diplomats, we recognize that we are not isolated from the environment surrounding us. Nor are we immune to the internal intricacies existing within each of our complex organizations. Each day we balance expectations, needs, and relationships of multiple partners:
  - our faculty,
  - the sponsors of our research,
  - our collaborators,
  - our own institution’s staff and administrators.

We are sensitive to how we deliver our message and how we nurture our conversations.

We are tradesmen. We have progressed through our apprenticeship and now serve as masters of our trade. Our gathering places are the professional organizations or the networking opportunities through which we actively participate. Through these venues, we sharpen - our skills,
- our knowledge, and
- our understanding, that are the tools of our trade.

- We do a little housekeeping. We keep and care for our “home” that is our office. We understand the importance of regular cleaning, seasonal cleaning, and having the right tools for our cleaning.

- We know when there is a “spill” in our otherwise clean home that we need to immediately tend to it. While this can disrupt our schedules and may require obtaining new tools, it is tending to those spills in a timely fashion that ultimately keeps our home in order.

- We serve as translators. We do not expect our faculty to know the intricacies of the language that is our daily life. And yet, we have to find ways to speak our language in ways that it can be understood. At times we have to translate our language with others who are part of or touch our own profession:
  - with our counterparts at department or central locations,
  - between pre- and post-award, and
  - with our senior leadership.

- Occasionally we have the role of magician. Not because anything we do is magical, but it is at those times that we have the opportunity to solve problems, to remove an impediment, to be creative. Our magic comes from our ability to look at issues from different perspectives and to find that unusual, but acceptable, path.

- As research administrators we hold a paradoxical role of being both teacher and student. As a teacher, we carry out one of our fundamental values by sharing our experiences with others, so they may benefit. We are in a unique position to shape the future of our profession by our actions today.

And, at the same time, due to the fluidness of the research enterprise, we are students. Students, in the sense that we must learn as our profession changes, we must adapt to fit new directions, and we must identify ways to assist our research to flourish within a rapidly changing environment.

Through our role as both teacher and student, we also learn, and teach, responsibility and accountability. We do the right thing, even if that path is the most difficult.

I have used but a few phrases to describe the broad set of roles that we play: diplomat, tradesman, housekeeper, translator, magician, teacher and student. These roles, and many others, constitute our profession.

It is a source of pride to be a member of a profession where colleagues have an abundance of passion and heart for what they do and are willing to engage in all aspects of research administration.

I am honored to be part of this profession and am humbled to receive this award.

In closing I would like to say TYVM, TYFAYS and WTL. And, if you don’t know what that means, you will need to find a 10 year old to help you translate that.

Thank you.

Peggy S. Lowry retired in June 2011 after close to 40 years in research administration. She currently serves as an NCURA Peer Reviewer and assists part-time in coordinating the program. Her career responsibilities included oversight for pre-award and non-financial research compliance. Peggy has given over 200 national, regional, and local presentations and workshops, served on numerous national NCURA committees, and twice served on their Board of Directors.
Why do you think US research management professionals should be interested in the state of the profession in developing countries?

I think this is important both from a self-interested and moral standpoint. Most US research offices – certainly those at research-led institutions – will be involved in collaborative arrangements with developing country universities at some point. If all parties don’t have a common understanding of the terms on which they are working, there is a risk of delay and misunderstanding. The implications of these – say financial overspend, loss of intellectual property or breach of confidentiality – will not be confined to one party only. Also, because we ultimately are all in this business for the public good, sharing our expertise and listening to that of others are two important ways through which we can fulfill our social obligations.

What are the main issues for research managers in Africa and the US, and how do they differ?

It’s important to recognize that these are not only differences of expertise – although this represents a big part of it – but also of the whole way in which organizations operate. We have to remember that African universities took a huge knock in the 1980s and 1990s – much greater than any of us in the US or UK can imagine, although our international aid policies were in part responsible. One result of this was the reinforcement of a culture where individuals had to fend for themselves. This in turn led to what has been described as a “deinstitutionalization of research” – a situation in which the research which did take place was generally undertaken by individuals with little internal regulation.

Most research management officers at African universities are new. As in the early days of research management in the UK, research offices tend to be run by former, or current academics, rather than professional administrators; this idea of research management as a career is only just starting to emerge in Africa. As well as the need to develop their knowledge base, research offices face two key problems. The first is how to gain recognition and respect within their organizations. There is still an element of skepticism about how “managers” can help researchers in areas that have traditionally been the province of “academics.” The second is external recognition – both with funding bodies and collaborators. If research managers are to fulfill the expectations of their universities, they need to be seen as important players by the organizations they are trying to represent their universities to.

These problems – and particularly the need to convince reluctant academics that we have something to offer – are not completely unfamiliar in the US context. In the US, however, the position of research administrator/manager is usually backed up by several years of experience and a regulatory and compliance framework at both institutional and government levels. In Africa, this is much less so.
How can research management professionals in developed countries best help the advancement of the profession and professional colleagues elsewhere?

A very practical way to help is through recognition. When US universities are negotiating collaboration or research agreements with developing countries, they should actively ask who the appropriate management authority is, and thus at least make sure they are dealing with a university rather than an individual. During such projects, they should take time to maintain regular contact with the administrators concerned, even if only by e-mail. Contact of this nature can have a huge impact on developing a shared professional ethos. All of this is even more so for funding bodies. Where active research offices exist, these can play a vital role in getting funding opportunities to the right people and it makes sense to use them!

Sharing of materials is also a key factor. The ACU maintains an index of policy documents which is widely used by universities in developing countries for nurturing and promoting their own procedures. Indeed, if you have good practices to share, why not take a few minutes to give them wider exposure? You can email us at policy@acu.ac.uk with examples of policy documents you are using at your own institution, and we will catalogue and promote them through our online library. (We’re overhauling the front end of this library at the moment, but you’re invited to browse the existing site at http://research-africa.net/#/focus-acu/).

The other way is to listen. It is important to recognize that US and other “northern” solutions don’t offer a ready-made solution to Africa’s research management problems. What their systems need most from us is engagement rather than formal training. In this respect, it is really encouraging that professional research management associations have been established in Southern, West, East and now in Central Africa. Their development as independent organizations is crucial. If you ever have the opportunity to contribute to their discussions, please do so! In addition to sharing expertise and hearing from other colleagues from differing cultures, you’ll learn a lot as well.

John, please tell us about future directions the Association of Commonwealth Universities is looking at exploring? What does ACU see in the future for international research collaborations?

There is still a huge amount to do in the area of research administration! It is vital that the new regional associations described above take root, and we at ACU will be focusing on this during the final year of our RIMI4AC (Research and Innovation Management for Africa and the Caribbean) project supported by the European Union’s Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. We are concluding a project for the Carnegie Corporation of New York which has helped five African universities convert training into robust structures. And we’re starting new projects such as a five year program for the UK Department for International Development which will help 24 African universities to better feed their research into community and policy use, and a project for the European Union ERASMUS program to better network African doctoral students. We’re also developing an agenda for research management in other areas of the developing Commonwealth. Given the strength of their research, for example, it is surprising that relatively little has been done in India in the area.

More generally, these are exciting times for the ACU. Our centenary year is 2013, and despite today’s economic downturn our membership is at its highest level ever. I think this reflects not only growth in the sector, but also the fact that developing and developed county universities see the value of collaboration more strongly than ever before. In the particular area of research collaboration there is still a need to work out how this new opportunity can be harnessed. For example, could developed country universities that host African doctoral students do more to help in their early careers when they return home? And why is the huge number of electronic journals now available at universities in developing countries so under-utilized? These are two examples of practical problems that we are addressing through a range of projects at present. Indeed, whatever the next two years will bring, it won’t be boredom!

Dr. John M. Carfora is Associate Vice President for Research Advancement and Compliance at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and co-author of The Art of Funding and Implementing Ideas: A Guide to Proposal Development and Project Management (Sage, 2011).
As I write this article it strikes me that a great thing about being Chair is that there are many times throughout the year that you reflect on the people around you and how very often you get to say “thank you.” This time of year is very busy, and there are many people to thank.

THANK YOU to the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, for their efforts during the recent Region I election. I am pleased to announce that Karen Woodward Massey, who has led the Curriculum Committee to great achievements the past two years, has been chosen as our Chair-Elect, and Donna Smith, who worked diligently on last year’s Program Committee with distinction, will assume the role of Treasurer-Elect, and Kris Monahan, who has developed a strong development and mentoring program in her work as Chair of the Volunteerism and Membership Committee for several years, will serve as Regionally-elected Member of the National Board of Directors. And…THANK YOU to all of the members of Region I who participated in the election process.

THANK YOU to the Awards Committee, for their work in choosing three deserving individuals as recipients of the Travel Awards to attend the Annual Meeting. The recipients of the awards are: Melissa Gordon from University of Massachusetts Medical School, Christine Hempowicz from University of Bridgeport, and Love Nickerson from Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Congratulations to all.

And THANK YOU also is extended to everyone in the National Office for all of their efforts toward the success of the Annual Meeting.

As 2011 draws to a close and we look forward into 2012, the right place to start is to welcome our new officers and thank those who are moving on to new adventures in NCURA. We welcome: Chair Jared Littman (St. John’s University), Treasurer Erin Bailey (University at Buffalo- SUNY), Secretary Magui Cardona (University of Baltimore), Chair-Elect Brian Squilla (Thomas Jefferson University), and Treasurer-Elect Greg Slack (Clarkson University). We thank: Secretary Anne Albinak (Johns Hopkins University), Treasurer Mary Holleran (West Virginia University), Past Treasurer Holly Benze (Johns Hopkins University), and Past Chair Alexandra McKeown (Johns Hopkins University).

Activities we are looking forward to during the year will first be focused on the Spring Meeting in Gettysburg, PA, April 22 to 25: Marching Through Time: The Ever-Evolving World of Research Administration. Information on the workshops and sessions, the keynote speaker, the hotel and related activities are, at the time of this writing, still in development but were (as you read this) announced at National and details have gone out to Region II members. To summarize: Plan to come to Gettysburg!

Region II will be giving two travel awards for the Spring Meeting. Recipients will receive $500 toward their travel expenses, will be introduced during the Business Meeting, and will be required to provide a report on their experience. Nominees must be research administrators from Region II, cannot have previously attended a Spring Meeting, and demonstrate their financial need for the award. An announcement will be out in early January with application details.

The Region II Distinguished Service Awards will be given to one or two individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to NCURA through service and leadership on the Regional or National levels. Again, an announcement will be out in January with details concerning submitting a nomination.

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

It’s not an overstatement to announce that the 53rd Annual NCURA Meeting held from November 6-9, 2011 at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC was a Huge Success. Many Region III Members conducted workshops, led discussion groups or were presenters which focused on the thematic topic of “the research administrators expanding role.” All NCURA Members benefited from the exceptional talent and knowledge shared from our Region III Members. Much kudos also extends to ALL Region III Volunteers who donated their time and talent in making the meeting a success. Robyn Remotigue, Volunteer Coordinator for Region III, solicited and pulled-together those individuals who provided their time and talents. If you’re interested in volunteering in any capacity next year or at the upcoming Regional Meeting, it’s a great way to...
get involved and also do some networking. Contact Robyn at robyn@spa.msstate.edu to learn about other exciting opportunities to serve at future events.

The next major and exciting event is the Spring Meeting, May 6-9, 2012. We will be returning to the site of our 2009 meeting, at the Bay Point Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, located in beautiful Panama City Beach, Florida. Watch for more information to come and get ready for another excellent regional opportunity for professional development and networking. Last year, our region had its first mentor/mentee program that was spotlighted at the regional meeting. If you’re interested in being a mentor to someone new in the region, please contact Robyn at her email referenced in the preceding paragraph. The new folks appreciated this outreach to them and the effort to welcome them into the region.

Our Regional Travel Award winners had an opportunity to attend the “party” at the Annual Meeting in Washington, DC in November. Congratulations to Judith Brauer, representing North Georgia College and State University and Christy Davis, representing Mississippi State University for their fine work. Their respective institutions may be proud to enroll such fine students. We envision their experience at the meeting a huge imprint and more than a memory in their future career endeavors. Notably, there were many well-qualified and excellent nominees who made it a particularly difficult task for the Membership & Awards Committee to wade through all the applications and reach a consensus this year.

The results of our Regional Elections are out. Congratulations to Rodney Granec, University of West Alabama, incoming 2012 Chair Elect; to Laura Lebwater, Kennesaw State University, incoming 2012 Secretary; and to Jill Griffith, Medical University of South Carolina, incoming 2012 Treasurer Elect.

As we move into the winter months, many of us Midwesterners will turn to staple items like coats, boots, chili, crock pots, road salt, shovels and more! This movement to winter months also marks the Regional Board’s push to complete work for the calendar year, as well as support the Spring Regional Meeting.

Region IV will continue to work on offering a variety of professional development opportunities that occur in a nurturing setting, where we will be able to share day to day research administration challenges and learn best practices. As we discussed at the Annual Meeting, the Board met in the summer and outlined some key areas to work on for 2011-2012. They are:

- Continuing the initiative and work of the Mentoring Program Task Force. Recommendations have been given for the Region to provide 3 areas of mentoring: guiding/navigation, mentoring for leadership and mentoring for the workplace.
- Continuing the initiative and work of the Website Task Force. Recommendations have been given for the Region re-design of the website. In addition, there are proposals to enter the social media world through Facebook and Twitter.
- Working to define volunteer roles in the Region to better assist with volunteer recruitment.

Mark your calendars: Next year’s spring meeting in St. Louis (April 14, 2012 – April 17, 2012). Anyone wanting to volunteer or to participate, should contact Jeff Ritchie jeffrey.ritchie@aurora.org, who is Chair-Elect and Program Committee Chair.

David Ngo is Chair of Region IV and serves as Managing Officer, Research and Sponsored Programs, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

REGION V
Southwestern
www.ncuraregionv.com
https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=78596532073&v=wall

Congratulations: Melissa Tran, MD Anderson and Esmeralda Teran, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi have each been awarded the inaugural Joan Howeth National Travel Award.

Region V is gearing up for the joint Spring Meeting with Region IV in St. Louis April 14-17th 2012. Kathleen Harris, Texas Tech University, Chair-Elect and Co-Chair of the Program Committee for the Spring Meeting, has identified the Region V program committee members. They are as follows:

Workshops: Katherine Kissmann, Texas Engineering Experiment Station, Texas A&M University System, kkissmann@tamu.edu
PUI: Katie Plum, Angelo State University, kplum@angelo.edu
PRA: Jane Zuber, Texas A&M University System, jzuber@tamus.edu
DRA/Medical: Scott Davis, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, scott-davis@ouhsc.edu

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Jeremy Forsberg is Chair of Region V and serves as the Assistant Vice President of Research at The University of Texas at Arlington.

REGION VI
Western
www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura

The membership of Region VI really Did it Live, Did it Now and Got Involved at AM53 in Washington DC. With so many strong presenters, moderators, workshop leaders, and volunteers, I was so proud to be a part of such an active Region. Thanks to everyone who helped make the meeting a success and special thanks to Volunteer Coordinator Melissa Mullin for organizing the Region VI New Member Reception and to the Regional Leadership team for a wonderful hospitality suite. It was great to see so many new members at the Annual Meeting, as well as getting to know the members in Region VII and the International Region!

I would like to congratulate Nicole Burelli (University of Southern California), James Hawes (Cedar Sinai Medical Center), Theresa Tom (Stanford University), and Barbara Inderwiesche (University of California, Irvine) who received $1,000 travel awards to attend the national meeting. Committee members were impressed with their strong commitments to participation in NCURA, and to research administration as a career. Thanks to Travel Awards Committee chair Kevin Stewart for his service and commitment.

As this is my last Regional Corner article, I would like to close with a few words of thanks and appreciation:

To the 2011 Regional Officers and the members of all of the regional committees, thank you for your outstanding service to our Region.

To Mich and Joseph (2011 Treasurer and Secretary), thank you for all of your support, efforts and teamwork…we definitely learned our responsibilities of NCURA regional officers on the fly and will be stronger leaders, as a result.

To every member of Region VI, our Region can only continue to thrive and grow through your efforts as a volunteer. Please consider volunteering as an officer, committee member, presenter or volunteer at a meeting – you will learn and develop so many new skills and grow as a research administrator.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to the membership for allowing me to have the honor of being chair of our region. I look forward to working with each of you in the future.

Jeri Muniz is the Chair of Region VI and serves as Executive Director for the Department of Contracts and Grants at the University of Southern California.

REGION VII
Rocky Mountain
ncuraregionvii.asu.edu

Greetings from Montana. As I write this, it is hard to believe that the national meeting is only a month away. I’m sure we have created another set of NCURA memories. I hope you all enjoyed sharing the hospitality suite with region VI and also our newly created International Region.

We were able to award two travel awards to the national meeting this year. I sure hope that you were able to meet Johanna Eagan, University of Colorado-Boulder, and Patty Haisch of the University of Montana. My thanks goes out to Candycce Lindsay and Kimberly Page, the co-chairs of the Region VII travel award committee for all of their hard work. As you read this we will have a new Chair Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and Member-at-Large. Thanks to all of you for taking the time to vote! I also want to thank Winnie Ennenga and Deb Murphy, our wonderful co-chairs of the nominating and elections committee.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2012 joint regional meeting to be held at the Hilton Waikoloa Village on the Big Island of Hawaii, April 15 – 18, 2012. Vicki Krell, Arizona State University, and Rosemary Madnick, Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute, will be co-chairing the meeting. Please think about volunteering and getting involved. You will get so much more out of it than you ever put in.

Happy Holidays!

Tim Edwards is Chair of Region VII and serves as the Accountant for the College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Montana.

INTERNATIONAL REGION
http://www.ncura.edu/content/regions_and_neighborhoods/international.php

The International Region had its first Business Meeting during the NCURA 53rd Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Regional Chair, Jose Mario Leite convened the meeting at which those in attendance looked to begin designing the activities of their region. The group will continue their conversation over the regional listserv and all members of the International Region are encouraged to participate.
Is NCURA a Part of Your Training?

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“I try to get all new staff to Fundamentals within the first year. They come back with great enthusiasm about what they are doing and the new things they’ve learned. The experts in the field are the ones doing the teaching, and the quality of presenters is always strong. Fundamentals brings people out of their own cubicles and gives them an understanding of how different institutions address common problems.” - Kim Moreland, University of Wisconsin-Madison
eRA Neighborhood Watch

Preparing for GrantSolutions.gov

Grants.gov is one of 24 Federal cross-agency E-Government initiatives aimed to improve access to services via the internet. Because of its success as an application system, a post award management system was needed. It’s GrantSolutions.gov (https://home.grantsolutions.gov/).

GrantSolutions.gov started with three partner agencies in 2004 and now has expanded to 17 agencies. It is available to all Federal grant-making agencies as part of the Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB) initiative. This new system will include all aspects of post award management including financial reports, Conflict of Interest, Research Ethics, Effort Reporting, and more.

According to GrantSolutions.gov, the system covers the grants management life cycle from pre-award (yes, applications too) to financial and compliance reporting. It also provides flexible mechanisms for customization of program-specific and performance reports. Finally, it will interface with Grants.gov and other external systems.

Though it is still in the early stages of development, with lots of bugs to be worked out, it looks to be finally a system that we can all use and hopefully will serve us well. Let’s stay in touch over the NCURA eRA listserv to keep the bumps and bruises that often accompany a new system to a minimum.

Pei-Lin Shi has been working in the research administration for over ten years. Serving as a member of the eRA Neighborhood Committee at NCURA, she works as a Grant Coordinator, Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Texas at Brownsville.

Pre-Award Neighborhood Watch

As Research Administrators, we are challenged on a daily bases to make things happen. Our theme for the 53rd Annual Meeting is “Do it live, Do it now, Get involved” which is how Research Administrators are expected to exist. In the day of social media “Do it live” is the real time response to the many issues that we face each day. The many fires that we defuse, counseling sessions that we conduct and the deadlines that we dare not miss are illustrations of how we keep it live. “Do it now” is a clear depiction of our reality. As if we are starring in our own Reality show “The Life of a Research Administrator.” Our days are compromised by getting it done “NOW” – whatever it is! “Get Involved” is what we do every day. Although, getting involved sometimes means taking risks with the many decisions that we make every day! The fear of failing often stops us from getting involved, but do not be afraid of failing it does not define you. It is our responsibility to stay the course and fight the fight – so take the challenge!

Interested in this topic make sure you checkout our December podcast at http://www.ncura.edu/content/regions_and_neighborhoods/neighborhoods/podcasts.php.

Sharon Y. Martin is a member of the Pre-award Neighborhood Committee and serves as a Grant Administration Instructor at California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Departmental Administrator Neighborhood Watch

Wearer of Many Hats

Departmental Administrators, in the world of research administration, provide a multitude of services for the faculty and staff in their departments. Faculty and staff in departments rely on their Departmental Administrators to provide guidance and assistance in the world of research administration. For this reason, Departmental Administrators wear many different hats. Services for faculty can range anywhere from proposal preparation to answering a question such as “Why can’t I charge a membership fee to my grant?” Departmental Administrators need to have a broad grasp of both research and university policy and procedures. By having a broad grasp of research and university policy and procedures, Departmental Administrators are able to take care of the needs of their faculty and staff. They know who to go to on campus to get a solution to a question a faculty or staff member may have. They have the knowledge to answer questions such as: 1) what types of costs can I include in my proposal budget; 2) what type of paperwork needs to be processed for me to hire a postdoctoral researcher on my National Science Foundation project; or 3) what is effort reporting and why do I have to do it. Sometimes questions may have nothing to do with research. Faculty members rely on their Departmental Administrators to take care of the day-to-day administration of their projects so they can concentrate on the research. Instead of being confined to one area in the world of research administration, the Departmental Researcher is able to gain knowledge in a multitude of areas. They are able to wear many different hats during the course of a day. This is what makes the job of the Departmental Researcher both interesting and rewarding.

Lauren L. Beastall is Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Research, CLAS, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Virtual Communities of Professional Interest

http://www.ncura.edu/content/regions_and_neighborhoods/neighborhoods/index.php
Elizabeth Adams, is now Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Research, Evanston campus at Northwestern University.

Alice Martini Doyle, formerly at the California Institute of Technology, is now the Assistant Director of Pre-Award Services in the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects at Loyola Marymount University.

Carlo Eradell, is now the Senior Administrative Manager for the Cardiac MR PET CT Program at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Kathleen Hogue Gonzalez, Vice President for Research Administration at Children’s Hospital & Research Center Oakland, and an NCURA member since 1993, retired effective November 1, 2011.

Diane Meyer is now leading Pre-Award Services for the College of Engineering through the Engineering Research Institute at Iowa State University.

Pamela Napier, previously of Western Kentucky University, is now the Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia.

David Ngo has accepted a promotion to Managing Officer of Research & Sponsored Programs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Susan Ross, previously at Northwestern University is now the Post Award Director, Sponsored Projects Administration at Columbia University.

Tony Rufo has been appointed as Director of Research Administration at the newly formed non-profit research entity, Steward Research & Specialty Projects Corporation, a subsidiary of Steward Health Care System LLC.
ONLINE TUTORIALS
- A Primer on Clinical Trials - 7 week program
- A Primer on Federal Contracting - 8 week program
- A Primer on Subawards - 7 week program
  2012 enrollment periods coming soon!

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
FUNDAMENTALS OF SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
January 30-February 1, 2012 .........................................................Miami, FL
SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION LEVEL II WORKSHOP
January 30-February 1, 2012 ........................................................Miami, FL

NCURATV 2011 DVD WORKSHOPS
ABC’s of The Federal Cost Principles ..............................................Available on DVD
Managing Interactions and Potential Conflicts with
University Spin-Offs and Other Small Businesses ............................Available on DVD
The Fiscal Aspects of Human Subjects Compliance ......................Available on DVD
International Collaborations: Negotiations and Compliance............Available on DVD

NATIONAL CONFERENCES
13TH ANNUAL FINANCIAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION (FRA) CONFERENCE
Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL ..........March 26-28, 2012
6TH ANNUAL PRE-AWARD RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION (PRA) CONFERENCE
Vancouver, British Columbia..........................................................July 18-20, 2012
54TH ANNUAL MEETING
Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC .................................November 4-7, 2012

DEADLINES FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .........................December 9, 2011
Submission of Articles to Co-editors ...........................................December 16, 2011
Submission of Advertisements ..................................................December 16, 2011

Additional information for authors can be found at:
www.ncura.edu/content/news/newsletter/author_instructions.php

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