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Human Capital – Here and Abroad!

By Dan Nordquist, NCURA President

The situation in Greece (as well as Spain, Italy, and Portugal), sure seems like an opportune moment for us to discuss a Human Capital theme in the NCURA Magazine, particularly the topic of investing in people. Our friends in Europe are experiencing troubling times. We all are hoping for the best for our European friends (many of which are NCURA members) whom we recently visited during the International Network of Research Managers Society (INORMS) 2012 congress in Copenhagen, Denmark. The host, Danish Association of Research Managers (DARMA), did a fantastic job organizing the meeting with a great program and professional development and networking opportunities (excellent work John Westensee and crew). INORMS 2014 will be hosted by NCURA, SRA, and the Canadian Association of University Research Administrators (CAURA), so we have our work cut out as we would like to meet or perhaps exceed their performance. I believe we are up to the challenge with the theme being “Enabling the Global Research Enterprise from Policy to Practice”. The meeting will be held in Washington, D.C., April 10-13, 2014 (http://inorms2014.org/). Dave Richardson, Penn. State University, will be the NCURA point person.

But back to Human Capital and investing in people. As I have said many times, the NCURA tagline “supporting research together” not only means connecting with each other here in the states, but also globally. At over 7,000 members, we are the world’s largest (and oldest) professional society for research administrators (or managers – as we are often referred to outside the U.S.), which invokes upon us a leadership role to be active in our world and to engage in it. That is why we are taking on the hosting duties of INORMS 2014. In addition, NCURA submitted its first grant proposal under the BILAT USA project where NCURA is working within a consortium of European entities to disseminate information regarding FP7 and Horizon 2020 and WE WERE FUNDED!! (100% proposal success rate.) We are having a kickoff meeting at the adjournment of AM54. We are also currently working with representatives from several countries to present training programs, in those countries. In addition,

Denmark Trip – Leslie Schmidt

As my plane lifted off the ground here in the US I wondered to myself, how different could the research environment be on a different continent and would the research administration function be different as well? I was intrigued and excited to start my visit to the University of Copenhagen where I would be immersed in a two week learning opportunity offered by NCURA and EARMA (European Association of Research Managers and Administrators). All the advice I had received told me to “check my assumptions at the door” which seemed like sage advice from my predecessors. I would honestly try to keep an open mind about all ideas, concepts and models presented to me. I was a “newbie” in a foreign land with everything to learn and a number of wonderful people at the University that were more than willing to share their knowledge and expertise with me. Really, what could be more fun and challenging than to learn about an entirely new aspect and perspectives of a field that I have been immersed in for nearly 25 years? This is “Doing it Live and Getting Involved” at a whole new level!

Forsknng & Innovation, that’s Research and Innovation in Danish and where I spent much of my time meeting many new colleagues engaged in all aspects of research administration. I quickly learned

Continued on page 23

Switzerland Trip – John Hanold

I completed my Switzerland visit between May 7 and May 16, and it was fantastic! The office that hosted me (EU GrantsAccess) provides grant support for the two major educational institutions in Zurich: the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH Zurich) and the University of Zurich. (Albert Einstein was affiliated with both of these institutions at different stages of his career.) ETH Zurich is a lot like a land grant university, established by the Swiss government in 1855 with an emphasis on engineering and applied sciences. The University of Zurich is the largest university in Switzerland (25K students), supporting a large medical faculty in addition to every other traditional faculty you would expect at a major university.

My hosts scheduled a very rich experience for me, setting up meetings with the tech transfer offices of both universities, the VPR offices of both universities, and several other related offices. I also met with some government officials who were able to discuss the contours of the new Horizon 2020 program, and the challenges associated with U.S.-European research collaborations. We also visited an ETH “branch campus” (Hönggerberg), the Paul Scherrer Institute in Villigen, and the

Continued on page 31
On the Cover

Human Capital

People. Mentors. Sponsorship. Teamwork. Job families. Wearing many hats. Investing. Professional education and development. With these key words and phrases in mind, the importance of human capital in the field of research administration cannot be underestimated; it is the heart and soul of academic research institutions. In this year’s Green Issue, we examine the essence of human capital, ways for improving individuals’ skills and abilities, strategies for overcoming obstacles, and opportunities for growth available to our research administration workforce.

People. Nancy Daneau and Michael Hadijargrou demystify the essence of human capital in research administration and the numerous interpersonal and leadership factors which affect it, emphasizing that “one size does not fit all” for achieving an organization’s mission and goals.

Mentorship. Through the analogy of “no one is an island,” Sarah Lampson highlights why mentorship is crucial to research administration, both from the mentor’s and mentee’s point of view, and describes how it is truly a valuable investment in human capital.

Sponsorship. Similar to mentorship, in the first of a series of three articles, Donna Edmondson and Maggie Floyd shine the light on sponsorship from the staff perspective. Readers will enjoy their discussion of professional development and leadership opportunities, particularly for women in research administration.

Teamwork. Nathan Haines from the Huron Consulting Group provides strategies for using metrics in order to improve team performance among research administrators.

Job families. Elizabeth Adams, Gretchen Talbot, Annette Czech, and Amy Kitzman describe Northwestern University’s implementation of a “research administration job family” in order to achieve an alignment of different units for efficient, compliant, and collaborative institutional operations.

Wearing many hats. Reporting on a session presented at this year’s NCURA Region I Conference, Christine Hempowicz and Linda Crocker reveal the many hats that research administrators at Predominately Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) must wear and how to best perform the balancing act of covering multiple roles.

Investing. NCURA President Dan Nordquist looks at opportunities for investing in human capital globally and reports on the success of NCURA’s fellowship program with the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA). John Carfora also reviews several resources available to research administrators for expanding their knowledge base in international topics and issues.

Professional education and development. Tom Wilson argues for the importance of continuing education in the field of research administration to enhance human capital and advance the scholarship of our profession, highlighting NCURA-funded degree granting programs and opportunities for publication.

This edition of NCURA Magazine does an excellent job of covering many of the important aspects related to human capital, providing insight, guidance, and practical solutions to commons issues faced by research administrators. Thanks to all of the authors for their contributions – human capital at its best!

Kristine Kulage, Co-Editor
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The Essence of Human Capital in Research Administration

By Nancy Daneau and Michael Hadjiargyrou

The essence, health, viability, and success of any organization, be it a private corporation, non-profit, university, even government, is in the way that its employees are treated. If employees are treated with respect, fairness, appreciation, understanding, flexibility, and are compensated equitably, financially and with good benefits, they will feel valued, be more productive, acquire a sense of belonging, and possess strong allegiance to the organization. Employees should not be thought of as commodities that can be “bought”, “used”, and “discarded”, but rather as assets in human capital. But what exactly is human capital and how does it relate to research administration?

What is Human Capital?

Human capital has been defined in various ways. Coff (2002) offers a very restrictive definition of human capital by referring to “knowledge that is embodied in people”1, whereas a much more encompassing definition is offered by Wikipedia; it is “the stock of competencies, knowledge, and personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value”2. The United States General Accounting Office (GAO) defines human capital as “people”3. But the GAO also follows its definition by stating that “people are assets whose value can be enhanced through investment” and the “organization’s human capital policies must be aligned to support the organization’s ‘shared vision’—that is, the mission, vision for the future, core values, goals and objectives, and strategies by which the organization has defined its direction and its expectations for itself and its people”3.

We are sure that there are additional variations on the definition of human capital. Regardless, this team of a research administrator and faculty member uses the terms “people” and “human capital” interchangeably, where human capital does extend beyond the individual’s knowledge and it includes his/her technical expertise, abilities, interpersonal relationships, and personality, especially responsiveness and adaptation to dynamic work-related, personnel, and organizational evolutionary changes. More importantly, we believe all aspects of human capital are interrelated and therefore the metrics of human capital are intrinsically linked to the productivity and ultimately the success of any organization.

If this is true, the goal of any organization should be to utilize those assets efficiently to maximize their impact so the organization’s success (as a measure of productivity or performance) can then be proportionally amplified and replicated. But how does any organization, particularly a research administration operation, go about “right sizing” its human capital and utilizing what is available to it in order to be “successful” and achieve its mission, core values, goals and objectives, strategies, and vision for the future?

Three Factors to Enhance Human Capital

As an organization evaluates the human capital it currently has or learns what it needs, leadership experts suggest there are three factors that commonly enhance human capital1. First, an organization needs visionary leaders who assess the landscape related to employee commitment, morale, and motivation and who promote continuous improvement models. Second, key to the environment is a network of relationships and trust amongst colleagues that must be well understood so that collaboration and creativity can provide co-workers the opportunity to exercise influence. Third, culture and leadership styles must become important foci because hiring and employee development (beyond skill sets) affords an organization the flexibility it needs to adapt and respond to a dynamic and changing environment4.

These factors are critical foundational components in the strategic development of an organization’s most important asset—its employees. Successful leaders conduct early and continual assessments of their organization’s human capital and respond accordingly. Given the current landscape of the ever-changing field of research administration, leaders must continually refine and set metrics by which to evaluate their “assets”. Knowledge, skill set, character, integrity, priorities, reputation, experiences, professional affiliations, and association memberships are just a few aspects of an individual to be considered carefully in relation to human capital components necessary for team building. Regardless, an employee who is transparent, trustworthy, and never compromises on the delivery of the best service and support within the organization validates the underpinnings of the organization’s human capital.

Recruitment, Retention, and Leadership

Recruiting the best and brightest and retaining competent employees is a challenge but as experts agree, top talent and people in critical roles are always in demand, and they are expensive and difficult to replace. Investments in recruitment and retention must be given top priority to solidify long term commitments from employees and in order to meet the organization’s mission and critical objectives. Failure to invest in the recruitment and retention of the best and brightest will only serve to send the wrong signal throughout the organization, one that simply says, “We are unwilling to invest!” Similarly, the devaluation of human capital can result from the loss of an individual that is well respected and admired within the organization as workforce morale can suffer because the harmony of the work environment is disrupted.
Leaders interacting and connecting with employees directly is equally important to a research administration office that seeks to stabilize and strengthen organizational and interpersonal relationships as well as promote enhanced human capital. Leaders within the organization who are visible, optimistic, and confident and who communicate with their employees, even when there aren’t major milestones to report on, promote feelings of mutual respect which engenders loyalty and trust. Managers who provide intellectual stimulation and active mentoring/guidance in the workplace foster a collegial, entrepreneurial environment which helps the organization realize process improvements and efficiencies to gain a competitive advantage.

Evaluation

Every organization should periodically examine itself under a microscope, evaluate all of its assets to identify gaps, and plan resource requirements and allocations to achieve its mission and critical objectives. The combination of: a) the need to identify knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors required to support the organizational mission; b) the ability to measure the extent to which employees have them; and c) the wherewithal to identify gaps and implement training programs to address those needs all play a key role in how the organization develops its human capital. This is also a critical measure of the organization’s success or failure. Part of the iterative and evaluative process by which employees can further seek growth is through the conduct of a performance evaluation. There are personal and professional development benefits (e.g., knowing their own strengths and weaknesses) to employees who participate in the process on an annual basis and those individuals are more suitably positioned to improve their performance and help to achieve organizational and institutional goals.

Stress Management

Without a doubt, as the world of scientific discovery continues to increase in diversity and complexity, the only constant in research administration is change. The fast pace of information and instantaneous communication flow places stress on human capital within our organizations. Stress levels of individual employees and groups within the workforce must be managed. Organizations should aim to capitalize on a “work hard”, “play hard” culture if it expects to be able to proactively respond to the equally fast-paced work ethic of the faculty it serves. An organization that is proactive in mitigating negative impacts to its human capital is one that recognizes the need for stress management and deals with it in a direct manner. Organizations focused on team building and promoting work/life balance for its employees benefit from strong human bonds and a collegial and entrepreneurial environment.

Organizational Structure

Given today’s complexities, another factor to be considered which plays a significant role in the management of human capital is organizational structure. Is a centralized or decentralized model best? Clearly, there are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches that arise and each organization must decide how to approach this aspect of operation depending on the responsiveness of its workforce. For example, if the organization recognizes early on that its workforce possesses the appropriate knowledge, skill set, character, integrity, priorities, reputation, and experiences to achieve success, then it can certainly support a more decentralized model and foster independence. In contrast, if the organization evaluates its human capital and identifies substantial weaknesses and gaps, then clearly it needs to take a centralized approach to management to ensure that its workforce is appropriately mentored and trained and costly mistakes are avoided. Implementation of centralized and decentralized management can and have been converted from one to another as workers become well trained, productive and independent by gaining confidence in their work and as the human capital of an organization develops specialists and generalists.

References


One Size Almost Never Fits All

So how does your research administration office “right size” its human capital to achieve its mission, core values, goals and objectives, strategies, and vision for the future? One size doesn’t fit all, but the exploration (a SWOT [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats] Analysis) of your institutional/organizational culture and beliefs about human capital and the assets to the organization remains at the core of both the questions and answers. While this article focuses on research administration, the same can be very easily applied to academic departments and yes, even down to individual principal investigators training the next generation of scientists.

This team of human capital comprised of a research administrator and faculty member leaves you with inspirational words from Lowell Milken that both capture the essence of our philosophy and leave us hopeful for the future of science and those who dedicate themselves to advancing it: “There is something inherently optimistic about the fact that we can create and foster what our society [organization] most needs in order to flourish. And in this age of uncertainty, it’s a good thing to know that far from being finite and nonrenewable, the world’s most important resource—human capital—is limitless and generative. It is up to each of us to make the most of the opportunity”.

Nancy Daneau serves as the Associate Vice President for Research and Deputy Operations Manager for the Research Foundation for SUNY at Stony Brook University. Nancy is a Certified Research Administrator with over twenty years of experience providing research administration service and support at public and private research universities including those partnered with federally funded research and development laboratories. Nancy is a member of the Board of Directors, National Council of University Research Administrators and has served as an active faculty member, volunteer, and mentor for the professional organization since 1997.

Michael Hadjiargyrou is Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, Orthopaedics and Genetics at Stony Brook University. Previously, he has served as Graduate Program Director and Associate Vice President for Research. He is a member of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology and serves on the Editorial Board of a number of scientific journals.
Using Metrics to Improve Team Performance

By Nathan Haines

The use of metrics to find bottlenecks, measure efficiency, increase accountability, and make operations more competitive has been a recurrent theme in management courses and literature. It is a well-placed idea. The use of metrics brings meaning and understanding to tasks large and small. Research administration units are no exception. Metrics create meaningful information to measure and improve performance. When used effectively, metrics are a powerful tool to

✓ motivate teams to achieve desired outcomes,
✓ define business processes and responsibilities,
✓ manage stakeholder expectations,
✓ monitor the impact of new processes,
✓ improve decision making and prioritization, and
✓ evaluate team and individual performance.
Motivate Teams to Achieve Desired Outcomes

Too often, especially without metrics in place, teams establish ambiguous goals such as “improve investigator support.” An undefined goal such as this one does not help a team understand what exactly they should do to achieve the desired result. Instead, use a more specific goal that incorporates metrics; e.g., “reduce clinical trial agreement execution time by 50% in 2012.” A clear and measurable goal allows progress to be tracked and shared.

Define Business Processes and Responsibilities

Implementing metrics requires a determination of what to measure, which, in turn, requires an organization to identify its desired outputs and encourages it to define business processes for delivering them. Defining business processes and measuring performance through the use of metrics helps identify the causes of inefficiencies. It is common for organizations to discover that personnel have different understandings of processes, roles and responsibilities.

Manage Stakeholder Expectations

Investigators are often dissatisfied with the support they are receiving based on impressions that a process is not working properly. A common example is account set-up. Upon receipt of an award, many investigators expect an account to be set up almost instantly, without appreciation of the work required of administrators.

Our award set-up process was causing investigator frustration because of a significant backlog and set-up cycle times taking as long as two months. We started tracking and measuring our incoming award volume and set-up queue and discussed with our team how to better prioritize work. Over a few months, managers were able to understand the factors that were primarily causing the backlog to form and worked with staff to improve the process. In conjunction with this work, a clear cycle-time expectation was set by executive leadership. As a result, over 90% of our awards are set-up within 10 days of receipt in our office, up from 50% in 2011. We want to keep improving, so we have agreed to a new goal to set up 85% or more within less than five days of receipt.

Moira Kiltie,
Assistant Vice President for Research,
University of Oregon

Metrics enable clear communication of process goals and current status to stakeholders. For example, compare the following two statements:

We understand that you are dissatisfied with account set-up timelines. We are working hard to address your concerns.

Last year, only 20% of award accounts were set up within five business days. We recently created a new process, and last month 54% met this goal. Our office is continuing to improve this process so that 85% of awards meet this goal by year end.

The second example sets solid measurable goals that clearly set expectations and demonstrate progress.

Monitor the Impact of New Processes

As a new process is implemented, metrics confirm that the change is working:

Using data to capture processing times for key steps in the award setup process, UW-Madison was able to quantify its baseline performance and identify ways to improve the process through workflow, IT, and training enhancements. The outcome of the initiative was an overall reduction in award setup times by over 60%. On an ongoing basis, UW-Madison has been able to maintain fast award setup times as a direct result of monitoring goal vs. actual performance data in this area on a monthly basis.

Kim Moreland,
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, and Director, Research and Sponsored Programs, University of Wisconsin

It is hard to justify an investment in technology, additional staffing, in even business process improvement by saying, “This investment will have a significant return.” It is much easier to justify investments with metrics that define important, specific and measurable benefits. An investment might improve investigator satisfaction, speed clinical trial start-up, control staffing costs, reduce billing errors, or increase regulatory compliance.

Evaluate Team and Individual Performance

Metrics allow leadership to objectively track results against goals. Let’s compare the research finance offices of two institutions: Alpha and Beta.

Alpha has been operating in the same “business as usual” manner for the past six years. Management and staff are both frustrated with the office’s performance. Many of the delays are blamed on people outside the office. Large backlogs exist, and work product is often delivered late. Office and individual employee performance is not measured in any meaningful quantitative or even qualitative way. Investigators and institutional executives speak negatively of the office.

MADHUBHAN CHAUDHARY/REUTERS

Beta has been utilizing metrics and analytics to better measure differences in complexity across research portfolios that impact individual and team workload. To address this challenge, they developed a regression-driven approach to identify and weight the pre- and post-award elements which drive the complexity of a research administrator’s, faculty member’s, or department’s portfolio. They are now using metrics resulting from this analysis to inform decisions related to human resource management, workload assignment and balancing, training and certification requirements, and performance outcomes. This allows the business office to be able to identify and assign tasks to the office in a manner that is most beneficial.

Our institution has applied metrics and analytics to better measure the differences in complexity across research portfolios that impact individual and team workload. To address this challenge, we developed a regression-driven approach to identify and weight the pre- and post-award elements which drive the complexity of a research administrator’s, faculty member’s, or department’s portfolio. We are now using metrics resulting from this analysis to inform decisions related to human resource management, workload assignment and balancing, training and certification requirements, and performance outcomes. This allows us to be able to identify and assign tasks to the office in a manner that is most beneficial.

James D. Luther,
Assistant Vice President,
Financial Services, Duke University

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In contrast, Beta exemplifies a collaborative work environment. Management and staff say they feel challenged in their daily roles and stimulated by working with their colleagues to deliver high and improving levels of service. Customers collaborate with office management and staff to address backlogs and delays. Work product is usually delivered on time. Performance is measured with quantitative and useful metrics. Investigators and institutional executives speak highly of the office.

The above scenarios actually describe a real-world example of the same office, before and after leadership implemented a process for tracking key operational metrics.

When I arrived at UCLA in 2009, annual employee turnover in our post-award office was close to 25%. The office had significant backlogs in many areas, and customer complaints were numerous. This office has undergone a complete turnaround as a result of new leadership, improved business processes and the hard work of dedicated staff. Within one year, on-time submission of financial reports improved more than 50%. Financial report and invoice backlogs decreased 51% and 72%, respectively. This was achieved without increasing FTEs during a period of time when volume increased 18%. The invoice backlog reduction alone improved unbilled receivables by $35 million. Creating a monthly metrics report at the onset of our efforts allowed us to track progress, validate the effectiveness of process changes, and celebrate our successes along the way. We have worked hard to create an environment within our research administration in which employees strive for excellent performance, benefit from opportunities to learn and grow, and have fun.

Marcia Smith, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, University of California, Los Angeles

Next Steps and Conclusion

If your institution sounds similar to Alpha but Beta is attractive, you have already taken the first step. As you get started, a gradual implementation will likely work best, so as to not overwhelm your team. Ambitious, long-term goals can be achieved, but individuals often view these as unrealistic. Instead, explain the long-term direction but focus on monthly goals.

Begin by using metrics to identify your greatest opportunities. Focus on the most important projects and only those you can address comprehensively. In other words, avoid the common mistake of trying to do too much at once. A focused approach will allow you to more quickly implement successful, lasting, and measurable improvements.

To illustrate this point, a research institution had identified several opportunities in its post-award office, including improved billing and collection of research receivables. The institution put in place improved reporting, including a monthly management report to track receivables. The report split receivables into “billed” and “unbilled” categories, and implemented a separate tracking for letter of credit (LOC) accounts. The office decided to track eight metrics. Each month, the entire office discussed its progress. After six months of tracking, accounts receivable older than 120 days were reduced by 75%. In addition, unbilled receivables were reduced by more than 50%.

The results we achieved in a short period of time were dramatic. Metrics created a clear understanding of our situation and allowed us to quantify the improvement, which was significant. As an example, we realized a $27 million decrease in accounts receivable during the first two months of our project. Furthermore, after several years, the university continues to use the processes and metrics that were put in place.

Ray Pinner, Vice President for Finance and Administration, University of Alabama-Huntsville

Seek the input of different stakeholders who are involved in the day-to-day work. It is important to track the right metrics, since tracking the wrong ones or putting excessive emphasis on any one metric could incentivize undesired behavior and result in unintended consequences.

For example, one institution made a concerted effort to decrease its financial reporting backlog. It did so by putting a team in place to submit all past-due reports prior to a certain date. Good progress was made. However, the focus on reducing the existing backlog distracted the office from ongoing work, and on-time report submissions decreased, resulting in a new backlog. Hence, leadership must provide guidance and underscore the continued importance of all business processes even when the metrics focus on a specific area. Thoroughly contemplate the impact of the metrics when you establish them, to prevent counterproductive incentives. Success may come through trial and error, so close observation is critical; think about what is working and what is not, and adjust accordingly.

By simply increasing transparency, metrics often trigger positive cultural change and improvement; however, the opposite is also true, so careful consideration should be paid to how metrics are shared. For example, a central post-award office at a large research university disseminated individual metrics to the entire team (i.e., each team member was able to see how the other team members were performing on an individual basis). This level of transparency caused strife among team members by creating unhealthy competition. To remedy the situation, leadership changed course and began sharing metrics by team rather than individual, which helped promote a sense of teamwork and increased motivation to become more productive as a group. Ultimately, your goal should be to create a collaborative and positive dynamic: teams working toward shared goals.

Author’s Note This article was developed from publications by the same author in the June and July 2012 issues of the Journal of Clinical Research Best Practices.

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In a previous role I reviewed and negotiated an average of 580 clinical research agreements per year for 4 years. That is all I did all day, every day and I certainly became an expert with all that practice. I did not think I needed a mentor because I had created a network of peers for mutual support and assistance when issues arose. Fortunately for me, I developed a strong mentoring relationship with an external counterpart even before I realized how much I could gain from a mentor. The coaching, support and expertise my mentor provided inspired me so much I went on to start a national inter-professional mentorship program for those in clinical research careers. Fully engaged in our busy, specialized roles, research administrators can easily miss opportunities to collaborate and grow through a mentorship program, but it is so beneficial it deserves our serious consideration.

Mentors can improve our career confidence, increase our professional independence while easing isolation, facilitate our growth, help us advance our careers and develop our investment in our roles. Mentorship creates collaboration, reduces stress by providing support, exposes you to a different perspective and improves productivity. Our field and our institutions are rewarded by the satisfaction, self reflection and education a strong mentoring relationship affords.
Finding a mentor

Decide what you are looking for in a mentor. Do you want general career advice, an expert in a particular aspect of your job, insight on developing certain skills beyond your current role but necessary for advancement, someone to provide feedback, help setting goals or someone to help you network and raise your professional profile? Do you want a formal mentoring relationship with set meetings for a finite time period or do you prefer a more fluid, informal relationship? Do you want someone internal to teach you about your organization’s culture and hidden job requirements or do you want the increased privacy and different perspective an external professional would bring? Being able to articulate what you are looking for will better position you to recruit a mentor.

If you have access to a formal program that matches mentors and mentees then that is usually an efficient way to find a mentor; however, do not rule out the value of approaching candidates directly. Ask a conference speaker, an author or someone you know and admire. Request assistance from your professional organization or seek someone through your contacts and groups on LinkedIn. If that person cannot meet your needs he or she may agree to at least meet once for a brief information interview or recommend someone in his or her network. Don’t limit your search to only the highest level of an organization, it is often the staff doing the day to day work in the field that are most aware of job openings, educational opportunities and career development support networks and the most willing to invest in you and your growth.

Becoming a Mentor

As well as finding a mentor for yourself, consider your opportunities to be a mentor through the career continuum. A clear way to demonstrate your leadership skills is by mentoring someone new to research administration. Mentoring strengthens research administration as a profession by helping one person at a time. Whether you mentor one person or a small group, you will be having a positive impact on someone else’s career and life and add an interesting and rewarding dimension to your career. You can find a mentee through professional organizations, your university’s alumni association, at a conference or recruiting a student or volunteer to your office.

The Mentoring Relationship

You and your mentor create and re-define your unique relationship. Some mentors feel they are providing measurable value when a mentee has a regular, recurring meeting with specific questions. Others prefer informal lunches or coffee breaks to talk about whatever is going on at a particular institution or recent changes in the field. Some people prefer in-person mentoring but a strong relationship can also be developed by email and telephone calls.

My mentor brought a unique skillset to our relationship. My roles in research have been strictly administrative but my mentor had a clinical background which gave her a richer perspective on risk, ethics and the impact administrative policies have on researchers. Her role was broader than mine and acquainted me with a variety of careers in our field and the skill sets that made each position distinct. My mentor works at a different institution, has extensive experience and knowledge of opportunities to share with me. Over the years she has given invaluable encouragement and support by (i) providing me with access to workshops at her institution (ii) sharing information on webinars to broaden my expertise (iii) forwarding articles and recommending other readings (iv) advising me of conferences (v) widening my professional network by introducing me to external researchers and senior administrators I would not normally meet (vi) assessing my abilities and helping me identify goals (vii) attending a webinar I co-lead and providing me with positive, constructive feedback (viii) urging me to think in a longer term way about current aims and accomplishments (ix) critiquing my resume (x) be willing to assist me by providing a professional reference.

How Your Institution Benefits

I have privately mentored people who have approached me in complete confidence, and I encourage managers not to be threatened by employees that report to you seeking mentors. A mentor does not replace or diminish a supervisor’s role but enhances staff expertise and professionalism. If your staff members learn new skills, set higher goals and have a strong sense of ownership over their professional development, this will empower your entire team. Being mentored and mentoring demonstrate a strong commitment to research administration and align well with the educational mandate of academic institutions. Employees that have strong support networks have more job satisfaction and are less likely to get discouraged or burnout. Mentors inspire passion and engagement — something we all want for our teams.

Completion of Your Mentoring Partnership

When your mentoring relationship ends because of the time period agreed to or it has reached maturity and you simply have been in touch less frequently, take the time to thank your mentor or mentee for his or her contribution to your career and outlook. Reflect on your successes and how you can further contribute to creating a mentorship culture in research administration. Whether you want to mentor someone else or suggest another mentee to your mentor, you will be advancing our profession and build strong, collegial relationships that will continue throughout your lifetime.

Sarah Lampson, BA (Hons) is the Clinical Research Agreements, Contracts and Grants Specialist, Cancer Research at Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation. Sarah chairs a mentoring program through Network of Networks, a national initiative to enhance Canada’s research capability and capacity. In 2011, Sarah co-authored a book on career management in research administration, Steer Your Career: A Research Administrator’s Manual for Mapping Success. She has been ably and generously mentored by Mary Jane Syles of St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton, Ontario for many years.
Expectation-based Efficiency and Quality Improvements in Research Administration: Multi-Institutional Case Studies
Transforming Research Management Systems at Mayo Clinic
Developing an Institution-wide Web-based Research Request and Preliminary Budget Development System
Managing Risk and Uncertainty in Large-Scale University Research Projects
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We work in a business where clarity is king. We dislike nebulous terms and conditions, abhor spelling errors, and loathe the incorrect use of words like “principle” instead of “principal,” or “insure” rather than “ensure.” Because this issue of the NCURA Magazine focuses on human capital, it affords a perfect opportunity to distinguish between capital and capitol.

As any research administrator worth his or her lovingly crafted, organic artisanal sodium chloride will do, I turned first to the Internet for official guidance and definitions. Because, after all, if it’s on the Internet it must be true. (In the next installment of NCURAbly Pedantic, I hope to share how I plan to earn millions by simply emailing my personal bank account information to a Nigerian investor in need of some discrete financial assistance.) For today’s purpose, here’s what I learned *:

**CAPITAL**
A. a building in which a state legislative body meets; B: a group of buildings in which the functions of state government are carried out; when spelled with a capital “c,” it refers to the building in which the U.S. Congress meets in Washington, DC.

**CAPITOL**
A. (1): a stock or value of accumulated goods; (2) accumulated goods devoted to the production of other goods or calculated to bring in income; B. capital letter, especially an initial capital letter.

From the definitions above, it is clear that the proper term is, indeed, “human capital,” not “human capitol.” That is unless one actually means “a legislative building constructed of people.” Although tempting at times, I generally do not recommend the use of these construction materials as it tends to put a damper on employee morale and hardly ever meets local building codes (likely some countries excepted). On a related note, one should also guard against inferring from the similarity of the two words that they are in any way related — a casual perusal of today’s newspaper headlines strongly suggests that human capital in the Nation’s Capitol is about as hard to find as a PI who understands effort reporting. But, I digress.

With this foundation established, let’s turn to the corresponding investments in this capital: encouraging healthy lifestyles; building and maintaining relationships; managing stress; providing romance tips and the resulting parenting advice; and offering experiential motivational opportunities. But really, I ask, is all this necessary?

If lucky, many of us grew up on vegetable investments ... the “stick” half of the proverbial carrot/stick approach. And look at us now! We turned out okay, didn’t we? (That was purely a rhetorical question. Please don’t answer.) So why are we so namby pamby about the concept of staff investment and motivation?

Few will argue that what motivates people is a paycheck. I suggest that people aren’t any more productive if they’re fed and nurtured. You want happy? Give at home; but at the office, let’s return to brass tacks. Like today’s superheroes and cell phone data plans, we should work faster, harder, stronger. I am confident that someone who’s been working 12-hour days for weeks on end will communicate as thoughtfully and carefully with a perturbed PI as the employee who has been molly coddled with such extravagances as lunch breaks and dental care.

Rest and healthy snacks are overrated; we need to return to the workforce fuels of yesteryear: coffee and cigarettes. Join me! Or become a part of the human capitol.

* Usage of capital vs. capitol [http://www.50states.com/tools/use.htm](http://www.50states.com/tools/use.htm)

NCURAbly Pedantic is written by long-standing NCURA members, all under pseudonym protection.
VIVIAN HOLMES, Director of Sponsored Research Operations, Broad Institute of MIT & Harvard, was elected Vice President/President Elect of NCURA. Having joined NCURA in 1992, Vivian has been an active member for many years at both the regional and national levels. Vivian currently serves as the Workshop Co-Chair for this year’s 54th Annual Meeting Program Committee. Other activities include Post Award Track Leader for FRA13 Program Committee, and Leadership Team member for the NCURA Executive Leadership Program. Vivian has also served on the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee and in 2010-2011 was the Vice Chair and Chair of this committee. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors from 2002-2006, she was Co-Chair of the 45th Annual Meeting Program Committee in 2003. Vivian received the NCURA Distinguished Service Award in 2010 and the Region I Merit Award in 2008. As Vice President, Vivian will be responsible for the 2013 Annual Meeting in August 2013. When asked for her thoughts about being the incoming Vice President/President Elect of NCURA, Vivian responded, “The benefits of teaching and learning through NCURA have had such a significant impact on my professional development I am delighted and honored to serve as NCURA’s next VP/President Elect. I look forward to planning and collaborating with all my NCURA colleagues to continue the tradition of excellent programming while providing new and exciting opportunities for our members.”

DENNIS PAFFRATH, Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration, University of Maryland, Baltimore, is elected to the NCURA Board of Directors. An NCURA member since 1994, Dennis has served on numerous NCURA Program Committees including his current service on the 54th Annual Meeting Program Committee. Dennis was a participant of the 2011 NCURA Executive Leadership Program and currently serves on the Region II Steering Committee (2012), and also is Chair of the Region II Professional Development Committee (2011-2012). Upon learning that he was elected to serve on the NCURA Board of Directors, Dennis offered, “this is a very exciting opportunity to not only learn more but to give back to this fantastic organization.”

SUZANNE RIVERA, Associate Vice President for Research, Case Western Reserve University, was elected to the NCURA Board of Directors. Suzanne joined NCURA in 2002 and is a graduate of the NCURA Leadership Development Institute in 2005. Her service on NCURA Program Committees includes the 2012 Pre-Award Research Administration Conference Workshop Co-Coordinator, Annual Meeting Program Committees in 2009 and 2011, and Region V Spring Meeting Program Committee in 2008. Suzanne also served on the Region V Executive Committee 2009-2010. When asked about her upcoming service on the NCURA Board of Directors, Suzanne replied, “I am so delighted to have been given this opportunity to serve NCURA at the national level. I have benefitted greatly from NCURA’s many wonderful professional development programs over the years and I am eager to participate in its leadership during my term as a Board Member.”

Both Paffrath and Rivera will begin serving on the Board of Directors on January 1, 2013 and will serve for two years. Holmes will take office on January 1, 2013 and will serve for one year after which she will succeed to a one-year term as President of NCURA.

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Have you ever thought about the word sponsorship? What does it mean? Have you ever thought about how you have been able to advance in the field of research management? As staff and faculty in academia, the perspective of this article and the two subsequent articles in *NCURA Magazine* will address how several women have had leadership opportunities because of sponsors, what that meant to each, and how it has helped them advance in a university setting. We seek to stimulate conversation in the field of research administration; a field once dominated by men but is now predominantly women. This article is from our perspectives as university staff. The second article is from the faculty perspective and the last article will be a combined effort from the authors of the first two articles.

In our careers sponsorship has been a part of our leadership path. But we note, however, that it has not always been obvious. After reading *The Sponsor Effect: Breaking Through the Last Glass Ceiling* by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Kerrie Peraino, Laura Sherbin and Karen Sumberg (Harvard Business Review Research Report 2010), we had the proverbial “a-ha moment.” Maggie Floyd and I began thinking about our life in academia; life as a student, a work study, a staff member and finally as a manager. We thought about how our careers have evolved and that a lot of it was hard work and perseverance, but an undeniable part of the equation was that we have had a sponsor at each evolutionary step. Someone who took notice of our abilities and helped us develop as leaders.

After several conversations, we came to realize that as staff, our career paths unfolded in very similar ways. Our experiences were virtually identical. We each had support from a male role model, both of whom happened to be faculty at our University. We were thrust into leadership roles for which neither of us had a lot of experience, yet afforded opportunities outside the normal job duties to develop our leadership skills. Our sponsors invested their time in our abilities and we invested time to make it happen. The authors (of *The Sponsor Effect*) define this type of sponsorship as “relationship capital.” They describe a sponsor as someone who “doesn’t just believe in you; a sponsor believes in you more than you believe in yourself. He’ll toss your hat in the ring before you would. Sponsors take calculated risks.
on you (Hewlett et al. 2010, p. 5).” Our sponsors decided we had the potential to move up in the University and they were willing to provide us the opportunities.

Currently, we both hold managerial positions within our organization yet neither of our educational backgrounds included a focused development of leadership, mentoring or sponsorship skills. We believe that it is a much more common experience in our field for leaders to find themselves propelled into positions of responsibility without receiving formal training on how to lead. In many ways, leadership was the ultimate “trial by fire” experience for us and many of our colleagues. We know that if hard work and a good sponsor put you in a position of leadership, then structured leadership development can serve as the catalyst for continued advancement and higher levels of professional effectiveness.

Another common experience shared by the authors was participation in the Leadership UTSA Program (at The University of Texas at San Antonio) as part of the 2011-2012 cohort. This leadership development program was the result of close collaboration between the UTSA Division of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Our Provost and the Vice President of Student Affairs invested time, energy and resources to sponsor this impactful program. Leadership UTSA was designed to bring a cross-section of staff and faculty together (nominated by their Vice President) for monthly meetings to examine various leadership topics such as organizational culture, people, change management, resources, strategic planning, and decision-making. Participants also engaged in various self-reflection activities and completed a comprehensive 360° assessment. We had the opportunity to observe our organization through in-depth divisional presentations designed to give us a broad institutional perspective. Finally, Leadership UTSA participants were paired with an experienced executive level leader from one of the divisions within our university for a structured mentorship experience.

Structured leadership development programs such as Leadership UTSA coupled with broader acceptance and practice of sponsorship holds great potential for professional advancement of women in academia. Participation in this type of structured leadership development cultivates knowledge, skill and confidence necessary to take purposeful action toward advancing in a career path that empowers staff and faculty to have a greater positive impact on the mission of your organization. Most of the participants experienced a profound level of growth and significantly broadened perspective about their role in the organization’s mission. Maggie’s mentorship experience with UTSA Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Gage Paine, provides a powerful example of this growth. Through the mentorship process, Maggie witnessed an experienced executive build bridges as she educated others about her division’s mission. She learned how effective listening and questioning skills were as critical to sound leadership as solid decision-making. Maggie also experienced a particularly intense moment of inspiration upon observing how woman-to-woman mentoring engenders change, empowers, nurtures, challenges, validates and uplifts talents that might otherwise remain ensnared within male-centric professional structures.

Donna’s mentor for Leadership UTSA was Dr. Marianne Woods, Senior Associate Vice President for Research Administration. Through her experience, Donna observed a top-level administrator promote participation from junior management by inquiring about divisional operations and projects. It was the thoughtful discussions and the cultivating of team members to develop problem-solving skills that were most poignant. Dr. Woods offered solutions, but also listened, which is crucial for anyone in any leadership position. Hewlett et. al states that “sponsorship can’t be forced... but it can be fostered by setting up the playing field (The Sponsor Effect, 2010).” As a sponsor and a mentor, Dr. Woods very vividly set up the playing field through directed engagement and the open exchange of ideas.

As a result of the Leadership UTSA experience, participants described having a better understanding of various leadership concepts, improved leadership skills, broader institutional perspectives and a much wider network of supportive colleagues. Toward achieving these outcomes, we feel that the following components of the Leadership UTSA experience should be part of any structured leadership development program: (1) There should be ample opportunities for collaboration with colleagues; (2) Education about the organization, its values and mission is critical for cultivating what Dr. Gage Paine called “an insatiable curiosity about your organization (LUTSA, 2011);” (3) Sponsors should make every effort to create a supportive and confidential environment where authenticity is encouraged and the free and open exchange of ideas applauded; and (4) Effective interpersonal connections are much more likely to develop in a relaxed atmosphere where fun is highly valued.

From our perspective, we found sponsorship critical to acquiring positions of leadership within our institution. However, we also found that professional success within each new role required more than simply building technical knowledge or subject-matter expertise. According to Hewlett et al., sponsorship does work by taking root, growing and seeding “itself anew to spread a culture of advocacy (The Sponsor Effect, 2010).” Our professional success relies heavily upon developing solid leadership skills. Professional growth cannot happen without hard work, purposeful development of leadership skills, cultivating synergistic relationships and contributing to supportive professional networks that transcend divisional boundaries.

**References**


Donna D. Edmondson (left) is currently the Associate Director of Academic Publications and Graduation Coordination in the Office of the Registrar (OR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio. She is a member of the Student Affairs Education Team, a certified True Colors facilitator, and a recent graduate of Leadership UTSA. Prior to joining the OR in 2004, Donna served as a Legacy: Hands on the Past Program Coordinator at the UTSA Center for Archaeological Research, as well as a Staff Archaeologist. She received her Master’s degree in History in 2007 and currently teaches as an Adjunct Instructor at Texas A&M-San Antonio.

Maggie Floyd (right) is the Director of Supplemental Instruction at The University of Texas at San Antonio. She has served in progressively responsible positions with the SI program for the past twelve years. During this time, Maggie developed expertise with collaborative learning, student development, program administration, personnel management, recruiting, training, and program assessment. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice and Master of Public Administration degree from UTSA. She completed the Leadership UTSA program in April 2012 and along with Donna currently serves on the planning committee for the 2012-2013 cohort.
Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award

David Mayo, Director of Sponsored Research at the California Institute of Technology, is the 2012 recipient of the NCURA Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award. This award recognizes a current or past NCURA member who has made 1) noteworthy contributions to NCURA, and 2) significant contributions to the profession of Research Administration. First awarded in 1994, this award is NCURA's highest honor.

David's contributions to NCURA are many, spanning his eighteen years as a NCURA member, and include Vice President/President Elect 2007-2009, service on the National Board of Directors, Professional Development Committee, Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, and also his numerous contributions to the international research community through his involvement in the International Research Administration Neighborhood, the Ambassador Corps, the EARMA/NCURA International Fellowship Working Group and numerous presentations and workshops.

Judy Fredenberg, University of Montana, shares, “I have known David for two decades. Active in Region VI, a renowned presenter at both regional and national levels, and an NCURA past president, his engagement in and contribution to NCURA and the profession are admirable and noteworthy. He is thoughtful and inclusive. David is always willing to help out NCURA and his research administration colleagues – even it it’s at the last moment – and he always appears calm and unflappable, making it look incredibly easy. I, like many, routinely reach out to David for advice from extra compensation to Marie Curie Fellowships to the topic for which David is best known, the FAR.”

From California Institute of Technology, Richard Seligman offers, “David’s rise in the research administration profession has been nothing short of meteoric. His knowledge of the “stuff” of research administration is legendary. He is recognized as one of the country’s leading experts on the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), all aspects of electronic research administration, administration of federal contracts and subcontracts, to name just a few.

David’s professional contributions have extended beyond NCURA to include the Federal Demonstration Partnership, and, more recently the University-Industry Demonstration Partnership. In every professional activity with which he has been associated, he has demonstrated stellar performance. His skills as a lecturer, teacher, and writer on a variety of research administration topics are highly sought after by program planners throughout the country.

The profession of research administration is filled with highly gifted, talented people who devote their working lives to a very noble calling. This award, however, is for “outstanding achievement”, and because of this, the number of people who have earned this designation is rather limited. As I look at the past recipients of this award and think of their contributions to research administration, there is no doubt whatsoever that David is a perfect fit for that august group.”

Dianne Horrocks, Idaho State University, adds, “David has been a tireless contributor to our profession for many years presenting both regionally and nationally. David’s contributions to our profession are not only visible in his service to NCURA, but he has also served as a mentor behind the scenes to numerous colleagues sharing advice and support over the years. He has become a friend and someone I know I can contact for information and counsel. His opinion is widely regarded and he has established both a national and international presence through his service and volunteerism.”

David Richardson, Pennsylvania State University, and a past President of NCURA, writes, “Within the field of research administration, David has influenced everything from our basic understanding of the federal acquisition regulations to the fundamental concepts associated with proposal submission and budgeting of cost sharing . . . His service to our organization is unparalleled and his impact upon the field of research administration is far beyond the wisdom that he has shared in his many workshops and sessions. As President of NCURA, David initiated efforts to have the impact of our organization expand beyond the borders of the United States. He has chaired our Ambassador Corps since its inception in 2010 and has worked to improve the value of membership to our international members. As for the field of research administration, one of David’s greatest contributions is his capacity and zeal for absorbing new and complex regulations and then summarizing them for public consumption. David’s unselfish readiness to assist his fellow research administrators has endeared him to many and is evidence of his worthiness to receive NCURA’s highest honor.”

Denise Wallen, University of New Mexico, summarizes, “His noteworthy service to NCURA is personified by his stellar leadership, creative thinking, mentoring of new and emerging leaders, training, and serving as a role model that inspires all who meet him. It is easy to see how David has touched so many lives through NCURA in regional, national and international venues. Over the years his contributions have impacted so many of our members and institutions.”

About his award, David shared, “I was completely flabbergasted when Dan Nordquist informed me that I had been selected to receive NCURA’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration. I am truly honored and humbled by the award, and I truly appreciate the support and opportunities that NCURA has given me in my research administration career.”

David Mayo will receive the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration on Monday, November 5, 2012, at the 54th Annual Meeting Keynote Address.
This year the NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected five veteran NCURA members to receive the Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes members who have made sustained and distinctive contributions to the organization.

Each recipient has contributed to NCURA’s success in numerous ways and for many years. The following summaries provide a snapshot of their service and contributions in addition to the many presentations they’ve each made at regional and national meetings and conferences over the years.

2012 Award recipients are:


**Barbara Cole**, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, University of Miami. Barbara serves on the Social Media Task Force and is a member of the SPA Level II Traveling Workshop faculty. She served as the NCURA Treasurer, 2009-2010, and on the Board of Directors during this same time. In addition, she served as Chair of the Financial Management Committee, 2009-2010 and was a member of this Committee 2006-2007 and 2011. Her service also includes the FMC Subcommittee on Development, 2009-2010, LDI Advisor, 2009, NCURA TV faculty, 2008 and 2011, Leadership Convention, 2008-2010 and the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, 2002-2003. Barbara’s service on program committees includes the 54th Annual Meeting Program Committee, 2012, FRA VIII Conference Program Committee, 2007 and the 45th Annual Meeting, 2003. Barbara’s regional service includes Region IV Treasurer, 1995-1997, and service on committees in both Regions I and IV as well as serving on the Region I Fundamentals Faculty.

**Francois (Franc) Lemire**, Director of Grants Administration and Compliance, American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry. Franc’s service over the years has included the FRA IX Program Committee, 2007-2008, member of the International Neighborhood Subcommittee, 2007, NCURA Research Management Review editorial Board member, 2006-2008, Chair of the Predominantly Undergraduate Institution Neighborhood Committee, 2002, member of the Electronic Neighborhood Committee, 2002, and member of the National Finance and Budget Committee, 1998-1999. In addition, Franc served as Chair of Region I Spring Meeting Program Committee in 2008, was Chair of Region I in 2009, and served as Region I Treasurer in 2003. He served as the Coordinator for the Region I Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop, 1995-1996 and is currently a member of the Region I Advisory Committee. Franc is the 2011 recipient of the Region I Distinguished Service Award.

**Michelle Vazin**, Director, Office of Contracts and Grants, Vanderbilt University. Michelle currently serves on the Board of Directors, 2010, 2012-2013, and also was Co-Chair of the FRA13 Program Committee, 2012. Following her completion of the LDI class of 2010, she served throughout 2011 as a Magazine contributor, a NCURA TV presenter and also on the 53rd Annual Meeting Program Committee. Michelle’s service also includes membership on the FMC Subcommittee on Development, 2007-2009, NCURA Podcast, 2009, 51st Annual Meeting Program Committee Co-Chair, 2009 and FRA VIII Program Committee, 2007. In addition, Michelle served as Region III Chair Elect/Chair, 2006-2007 and was Chair of the Region III Meeting Program Committee, 2006.

**Susan Sedwick**, Associate Vice President for Research and Director, Office of Sponsored Projects, University of Texas at Austin. Susan has served on the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, 2011, the Board of Directors, 2008-2009, and the Professional Development Committee as Vice Chair and Chair, 2006-2007 and member, 1997-1999. She served on the FRA12 Program Committee in 2011, the PRA IV Program Committee in 2010, and the Senior Summit Program Committee in 2008. She has served as a Research Management Review author in 2009, the NCURA/AIS Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies & Recommended Practices author on Export Controls, 2007, NCURA Micrograph author, 2007, NCURA Newsletter Contributor, 2005-2007. Susan also has been an Online Chat featured speaker in 2007, an LDI Advisor in 2007, and served on the Membership Committee, 1995-1997. Susan also has served on many Region V Meeting Program Committees.

The Distinguished Service Award recipients will be recognized at the upcoming 54th Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, November 5, 2012. Please join us in thanking them for their service and their contributions!
Mary Santonastasso received her Bachelor of Arts-Psychology degree from Catholic University in 1978 and Masters of Public Policy degree from Princeton University in 1999. She current serves as the Director of Institution and Award Support, Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management, NSF. Mary provides executive leadership to the NSF Grants Policy Office, the Awards System Office, and the Cost Analysis, Audit Resolution, and Post-award Monitoring and Oversight Branch. She leads the NSF post-award monitoring program, and the underlying risk identification and mitigation strategy; that has been benchmarked by other federal agencies. Through this effort, NSF fulfills its financial stewardship role for an active portfolio of $20 billion in federal financial assistance. Beginning in 2004, Mary assumed the co-lateral duty as the Managing Partner for the Grants management Line of Business, a cross-agency initiative sponsored by the Office of Federal Financial Management, Line of Business, a cross-agency initiative initiated by the Office of Federal Financial Management, Office of Management of Budget. This high profile, high value initiative has set policy for government-wide financial assistance processes and technology efforts.

**Joanna Rom**, NSF Deputy Director, Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Management, shared with us that “throughout her lifetime of service, Mary has exemplified the ideals of this award as an effective advocate for the research community, and as a public servant of the highest integrity. Of special note is Ms. Santonastasso’s role as innovator. Research.gov is a singular achievement and lays the groundwork for a unified portal for grantees that builds on (and takes the lessons learned from) grants.gov. As NSF lead as co-managing partner of the Grants Management Line of Business (GMLOB), Mary has been the key proponent in the development of re-search.gov. Research.gov, led by NSF, ‘improves customer service for the research community by increasing access to information and services while streamlining and standardizing business processes among partner agencies. Research.gov is also a transparent source for information about federal research spending and outcomes for the general public.’”

**Cynthia Hope**, The University of Alabama, offers “During Mary’s career of service, she has steered NSF into positions of leadership in facilitating Government-University relationships, such as Research.gov while continuing to foster NSF’s individual outreach to the University community. Her leadership within NSF, particularly through changes and challenges of the past several years, has helped keep the agency a ‘favorite’ among university research administrators.”

**Pamela Webb**, University of Minnesota, adds “Mary has also been a major force in national efforts to achieve a ‘common face to the government’. Mary has often worked behind the scenes, working on such projects as ResearchGov and serving as NSF’s representative on a number of key government-wide grants management committees, including co-leading the Grants Management Line of Business. She is an avid facilitator of the Research Performance Progress Report, and is pushing to create standardization across federal agencies. I am delighted that she is serving as NSF’s representative on COFAR [Council of Financial Assistance Reform], especially at a time when they will have such a major role to play on grants reform and changes to the OMB Circulars.”

**Denise Clark**, University of Maryland, College Park, adds “Mary has been instrumental in bridging the gap between the federal agencies and the awardees. She has a shared vision with her awardee community, one which portrays an integrated approach to research administration. That approach is simple – the role of research administrators is to streamline the administrative processes in an effort to reduce unnecessary burdens on the researchers. In order to accomplish this, it is imperative that the research administrator community is properly trained and educated on federal regulations. Mary is a conduit for this and works closely with awardees to make this vision a reality. Her demeanor is calm and approachable and her warm smile is inviting and welcoming.”

**Richard Seligman**, California Institute of Technology, sums it up “Mary personifies the very attributes that brought about the creation of the Carrabino Award in the first place: diligence in fostering and maintaining government-university relationships. She is a high ranking federal grants management official who remains open and approachable by rank-and-file research administrators. She is always willing to answer questions about NSF and provide assistance to those who are seeking information so that they can ‘do things right’.”

On her award, Mary shares, “It is truly an honor to be recognized by NCURA with this, the Joseph F. Carrabino Award - given what it signifies and knowing the cadre of past award recipients and their accomplishments. Universities and federal sponsors are important partners in the U.S. research enterprise that advances the overall intellectual welfare and economic prosperity of our country. Research administration is that complementary institution-federal partnership, supporting researchers and their work. I am proud of the service that I and my colleagues provide to these important endeavors. Thank you NCURA!!”

As recipient of the 2012 Joseph F. Carrabino Award, Mary will be recognized at the 54th Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, November 5, 2012.
Research administration has become much more complex since I first started my career at the University of Arizona Health Science Center as an Accountant I in 1978. The regulatory environment alone has expanded well beyond what anyone could have imagined working in research administration nearly 35 years ago. It has become very difficult to remain an expert in all areas of research administration, yet it is very important that a leader in our profession have some idea of how decisions that are made, for example, in pre-award could affect post-award administration, technology transfer, research compliance, etc. Your success in the future of our profession will very much depend upon your knowledge in all areas of research administration.

A graduate degree in business administration, law, technology transfer, or science is very helpful, but those disciplines will not give you the knowledge or experience specifically tailored toward success in research administration. Realizing the need for graduate programs in research administration, the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) offered two grant opportunities to start the development of graduate programs in research administration. My institution (Rush University) was awarded a NCURA planning grant and an NCURA Implementation Grant. As a result, our Master of Science in Research Administration (MSRA) Program is currently enrolling students to launch the graduate program in September of this year. Other graduate programs at Emmanuel College in Boston and the University of Central Florida are also underway.

All three programs are offered online allowing you, as a student, to have a graduate educational experience regardless of your geographical location. So why should you choose to become a graduate student in research administration? The Emmanuel College brochure says to “Become the dynamic leader the field of research administration demands.” An article published by two authors from the University of Central Florida in Research Management Review last year notes that “Graduate professional programs in research administration are needed to prepare highly skilled research administrators who will help the nation meet its growing demand for research innovation and economic growth.” I agree with both statements and add that a graduate degree in research administration will provide the foundation needed to assume professional leadership in your chosen profession of research administration and no other graduate degree will give you the same core competencies needed to excel in our profession.

In the academic environment that many of us work in, an advanced degree and scholarship are pivotal to advancement. For this reason, the Executive Committee overseeing the curriculum development of our MSRA Program at Rush University felt very strongly that we include a requirement for a research project. Our research project courses are offered over three academic quarters and may very well be the first scholarly paper written by an MSRA student. This writing experience is critical to the future development of students in the profession of research administration. Not only will this scholarly writing experience give you the tools to communicate effectively in the workplace, but it also will allow you to publish in a professional journal like Research Management Review.

Publications and oral presentations are critical paths to further the professional development of the practice of research administration and advance the scholarship of our profession. Perhaps at some point in the future I will be writing an article about a doctoral program in research administration at Rush University and you will be one of our first students enrolled in the program.

By Tom Wilson

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FRA & PRA 2013
Back-to-Back in New Orleans

FRA 2013
Making Connections & Creating Harmony

The 14th annual Financial Research Administration Conference will be held March 10-12, 2013. The program committee is co-chaired by Patrick Fitzgerald (right), Associate Dean for Research Administration, Faculty Arts and Sciences, Harvard University and Dennis Paffrath (left), Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration, University of Maryland, Baltimore. Conference tracks will include Audit/Financial Compliance, Costing/F&A, Departmental Administration, Federal, Post Award, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions, and Special Interest/Hot Topics. Stay tuned for details and the preliminary program this fall!

PRA 2013
Supporting Research...Together

The 7th annual Pre-Award Research Administration Conference will be held March 13-15, 2013. The program committee is co-chaired by Christa Johnson (left), Assistant Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Research Services, Washington University in St. Louis and Toni Shaklee (right), Assistant Vice President for Research, Oklahoma State University. Conference tracks will include Compliance, Departmental, Developing Research Initiatives, Federal, Human Capital, International, Medical/Clinical, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions and Senior Management. Stay tuned for details and the preliminary program this fall!
NCURA 54th Annual Meeting Workshops

NCURA’s 54th Annual Meeting (AM54), Honoring Old Traditions and New Beginnings, will serve as a time for each of us to reflect on what makes this the premier professional development event and how this meeting will connect us to a new era for the event. The workshops scheduled for this year’s meeting will meet the needs of a wide variety of members in order to fulfill the meeting’s theme — from those members who are experts in their respective knowledge fields and need a safe forum to exchange senior-level policies or ideas, to members who need to brush up their older skills in order to venture to the next level of research administration, or to newer members who are seeking basic knowledge and forming relationships with respective research administrators that will continue throughout their careers.

AM54 workshop sessions will offer something for everyone — from beginners to experts, pre-award to post-award, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions to medical schools and other universities, and basic to complex compliance topics. The workshops will cover a wide range of subjects on several levels and in various formats — a focus on the nuts and bolts of the federal circulars; writing proposals; managing change; creating training programs; complying with regulations; or preparing for audits are just a small sample of the topics that will be addressed.

Thirty-five (35) workshops will be held and will include five (5) full-day, comprehensive sessions on pre-award, post-award, departmental administration, negotiations, and, for the first time as a full-day session, export controls. Through creative scheduling, we have paired morning and afternoon workshops on topics such as Federal Acquisition Regulations, clinical studies, and grantmanship, offering basic and/or intermediate morning sessions that will lead into more advanced sessions in the afternoon for those who want to delve more deeply into these issues.

Another brand-new workshop offering will be an International workshop on research and innovation in the European Union entitled “Getting Ready for Horizon 2020”, which will be led by our colleagues from the University of Zurich. In addition, an entirely new concept will be presented in “SAFE” (Senior Forum for Executives). This workshop is designed as an interactive forum for senior managers where registered participants will create their own agenda by submitting topics and questions in advance. These discussions are confidential, so everyone can feel SAFE in participating.

You’re invited to take a closer look at the descriptions available at http://collaborate.ncura.edu/Annual54/Education/Program/ and in order to select the workshop(s) that are right for you. Registration for AM54 is well under way, and spaces are filling up quickly. You don’t want to miss the opportunity to Honor Old Traditions and New Beginnings!

Kay Ellis is AM54 Workshop Co-Coordinator and serves as Export Controls Officer, University of Arizona.

Vivian Holmes is AM54 Workshop Co-Coordinator and serves as Director of Sponsored Research Operations for the Broad Institute of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University.

Workshops

SUNDAY, November 4, 2012
FULL DAY WORKSHOPS
8:30 am – 5:00 pm

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<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Pre-award Fundamentals</td>
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<td>Workshop 2:</td>
<td>Post-award Basics</td>
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<td>Workshop 4:</td>
<td>Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Dealing with Troublesome Terms from Non-Profits, Foundations and Industry</td>
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<td>Workshop 5:</td>
<td>Export Management and Compliance Program</td>
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<td>Workshop 6:</td>
<td>International Workshop for our International Attendees (How to Work with US Funding Agencies and US Institutions)</td>
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<td>Workshop 7:</td>
<td>Financial Compliance – What are the Things You Need to Know</td>
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<td>Workshop 8:</td>
<td>Change Management: The Peep Principles – There is No I in Team, but There is EI in Successful Change Management</td>
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<td>Workshop 9:</td>
<td>Industry Contracts – How to Prepare For and Survive the Adventure</td>
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<td>Workshop 10:</td>
<td>Introduction to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)</td>
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<td>Workshop 11:</td>
<td>Putting Together a Proposal – Grantmanship</td>
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<td>Workshop 12:</td>
<td>Training Programs 101: Engage, Develop, and Implement!</td>
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<td>Workshop 13:</td>
<td>Effective Presentations (FREE)</td>
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<td>Workshop 14:</td>
<td>Implementing &amp; Managing Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Education Programs</td>
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<td>Workshop 15:</td>
<td>Earning Your SPURs – Sponsored Programs Ultimate Reporting Workshop</td>
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<td>Workshop 16:</td>
<td>The Alphabet Soup of NIH Training and Career Development Awards</td>
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<td>Workshop 17:</td>
<td>An Interactive Senior Forum for Executives: AKA SAFE</td>
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<td>Workshop 18:</td>
<td>Surviving Audits</td>
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<td>Workshop 19:</td>
<td>A Primer on the OMB Circulars - “A” is Not Only for Apple</td>
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Human Capital  
Continued from page 1

we are looking to launch a Fellowship program with the South African Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) beginning in 2013.

Our fellowship program with the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) has had continued success. See where our NCURA fellows visited in Europe:

When asked about their experiences, I asked both Leslie Schmidt and John Hanold for a quote and they gave me their story (see sidebars).

We are working to include other areas of the world. As we have mentioned in a separate article in this issue, NCURA rolled out its NCURA Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration: Global Edition Traveling Workshop where David Mayo, CalTech and Bob Andersen, UW-Madison presented at Qatar University. We have also invited Dr. Tracey Swift, Director of Research and Innovation Services, the University of South Australia, a representative from the Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) to be on our PRA 2013 Program Committee. I will be attending their annual meeting in September, so good things are happening with the Aussies.

Back to INORMS for just a moment — I am quite enthusiastic about this group and see it growing as time goes. So much so that when we met as a Board, we decided we needed an Operating Principles Document. So with the help of Jim Hanlon (SRA) and Ian Carter (ARMA-UK), we created such a document that is now ready for further review. The world is getting smaller all the time bringing us even closer to each other enabling us to support research— together.

So much uncertainty in the world — will we have a euro? We have healthcare now, but will it go away in November? Is the price of oil going up, down, up again? Will we have effort certification or not (had to throw that in there)? Is it possible to repeal the FCOI regulations? (Ok., that one too). Even with all this uncertainty, I believe one thing is certain — investing in Human Capital both here and abroad will bring back a solid return to our institutions.

Dan Nordquist is Assistant Vice President and Director, Office of Grant and Research Development at Washington State University.

Leslie Schmidt  
Continued from page 1

that they were eager to introduce me to the concepts and details of managing awards from the European Union, which was one of my most immediate goals as my university had recently been awarded its first EU award. My schedule included time with a dean, department head, the director of the EU central office, the director and staff of the Technology Transfer Office, the Rector’s Office, the EU Ministry and a trip to Lund University in Sweden. At the end of each action packed day my head was filled with thoughts and ideas for new ways of doing business and I really questioned how my institution has structured certain aspects of our daily business. I discovered that total immersion in a new environment can be quite refreshing and help refocus worn out business models.

Week two of my fellowship was spent attending the INORMS (International Organization of Research Managers Society) Conference which was held in Copenhagen this year. It is hard to describe how intriguing it was to be one of 445 participants from 39 different countries around the world, all sharing ideas about research administration. My new friends have names like Kristel, Antti, Outi, Pia, and Bohdan… a true melting pot and vast range of research management experiences, from an office that started just two years ago with no grants to institutions that aspire to be the number one research institute in the world. It was truly fascinating to fully recognize that our profession is worldwide and gaining mass with...
Northwestern University is a private, nonprofit institution employing approximately eight thousand total staff and faculty and administering over half a billion dollars a year in sponsored programs. While “research administration” is reflected in the titles of approximately one hundred staff, it is projected that approximately one thousand staff actually perform some research administration function regularly. Thus, the development of a research administration job family had the potential for high impact at the University.

What are Job Families?
Job families are powerful tools in organizations that articulate the range of duties performed by a functional group of employees. Job families provide connection and coherence between job levels within a particular business function, as well as between larger business functions themselves. A job family additionally provides a career ladder for employees and facilitates the process of grading and posting positions for managers. A research administration “job family” was developed in-house at Northwestern University with existing full-time staff and resources. This process was accomplished on a part-time basis, over eight months involving approximately sixty employees in eight of the schools/major departments across University campuses in Evanston and Chicago, Illinois.

Since 2009, the Human Resources-Compensation Division at Northwestern University has created twelve job families for its most significant areas of business. The job families provide clearer definition, differentiation, and clarification of jobs, job evaluation, and salary grade assignments; provide for a hierarchy of progression from one level of job to another within a specific function (e.g., administrative support, research technology, research administration); define associated duties, responsibilities, and education and experience requirements, and simplify the process of creating job descriptions and promoting employees. Turn-around time of transactions (promotions and posting of new jobs) has been decreased from a previous average of six days to one day.

By Elizabeth Adams, Gretchen Talbot, Annette Czech and Amy Kitzman

The Development and Implementation of a Research Administration
Additionally, stronger job descriptions attract stronger candidates.

**A Job Family in Action**

Offices at the central, school, and departmental levels at Northwestern collaborated in the implementation of the research administration job family and used it as a platform for change shortly after its completion. The goals of the implementation were to enhance the central, school and departmental units’ organizational structures as well as increase the quality and efficiency of transactions as they relate to research administration. However, because of the importance of sponsored programs to many units within the University, the overarching goal was to become higher performing organizations.

When the research administration job family was completed at Northwestern in August of 2011, it was the intent of the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and the Office of Sponsored Research in Evanston to clarify roles and responsibilities in research administration; increase the visibility of research administration; attract and retain talent in research administration; evaluate how research administration relates to other business functions within the University; confirm reporting lines; and to provide a foundation for improved professionalism, learning, and roles and responsibilities across the entire organization. It is unlikely that these objectives would have been accomplished without job families.

**Creating a Research Administration Job Family**

Four full-time individuals in the Northwestern University Human Resources-Compensation Division were involved on a part-time basis in the Research Administration Job Family Project. A steering committee comprised of four director-level, senior research administrators representing the major research organizations on campus (the fields of Chemistry to the Classics. Currently, research interests range broadly from topics in the schools of medicine, arts and sciences, engineering and research centers) met three times for a total of six contact hours. Additional detail was provided by four focus groups comprised of a broad swath of research administrators on campus. The involvement of the full range of research administrators at the University conveyed the transparency of the project to the Northwestern Community, which was essential to the success of the project.

**Procedure**

Northwestern’s Human Resources-Compensation Division began the broader job family project three years ago. The first step in the job family project was to determine the primary functions within the University (e.g., marketing, information technology, research administration, etc.). Once functions were identified, Northwestern University’s four thousand job titles were then grouped by function. For example, if the job title included “accounting” or “finance”, the job was placed into the financial job function. The table above summarizes this data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Number of Employees (Approximately)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Technologist</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Study</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Administrator</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administrator</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2570</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each function was deemed a job family. Northwestern set priorities under the job family project by beginning with functions that would impact the most employees, starting with the Administrative Support Job Family. As of today, the functions/job families highlighted in pink above have been created, as well as additional job families that were not originally envisioned.

Northwestern has employed two different approaches to create job families. If a given business function pervades the University, carrying with it compliance risks - such as research administration or finance - a steering committee comprised of senior managers (as described above) guides the creation of the family. If the function is specific to only a few units (such as animal technicians or business intelligence jobs), Human Resources-Compensation works directly with the unit managers to develop those job families. Combinations of these 2 approaches are used for other families.

For the research administration job family, the steering committee provided an overall framework that included general grade levels of jobs (a total of five levels, including one nonexempt and four exempt levels) and associated factors/responsibilities (complexity of programs, pre-award, post-award, financial, compliance, and supervision). Additionally, the necessary education, experience, competencies, and on-going training were determined for each grade level of research administrator.

Focus groups composed of all levels of research administrators were hosted by HR-Compensation to more finely tune the duties/responsibilities recommended by the steering committee. The finalized Northwestern University Research Administration job family—which addresses research administration in departments, schools, centers and programs—may be viewed at the following link: [http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/compensation/job-families-descriptions/job-families/ResearchAdministrator%20Job%20Family.pdf](http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/compensation/job-families-descriptions/job-families/ResearchAdministrator%20Job%20Family.pdf)

**Department and School Implementation**

The Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences is large and diverse, encompassing sixty-seven distinct departments and programs, and overseeing $111 million annually in sponsored programs including its related research centers. There are six hundred fifty faculty members in the College, and their research interests range broadly from topics in the fields of Chemistry to the Classics. Currently,
the titles and responsibilities of staff performing research administration functions vary significantly throughout the College. Staff may be involved in pre-award and/or post-award research administration. Reporting structures for research administrative staff are also complex and may involve both direct and indirect reporting lines. That is, staff may report directly to faculty, business administrators or to the Dean's Office. They may additionally have indirect reporting lines to the Dean’s Office or department leadership.

When the College became involved in the development of the Research Administration Job Family it was immediately evident that this family would create an opportunity for improvement and change. The College determined that it would adopt a “soft rollout” of the job family: to make opportunistic changes during times of employee turnover.

The College’s first opportunity for implementation occurred in Spring, 2012 in the Life Sciences business office, an umbrella administrative unit for the Molecular Biosciences and Neurobiology departments. Historically, the departments had been served by two separate research administrators who only understood pre-award, rarely collaborated, had little or no back-up support, and reported to 2 different Assistant Chairs. For these reasons, turnover had been significant in these positions.

The College conducted a thorough review of the two departments, and the positions within the two departments, and made the decision to utilize the new Research Administration Job Family — it was decided to upgrade the job descriptions and change the reporting structure. The College had confidence that over time the job family would be a critical piece of a larger, successful implementation. Once the plan was formulated in detail it was presented initially to department chairs and, once approved by leadership, to all staff. The following outcomes are a direct result of implementing the job family:

**Lower turnover rate:** research administration jobs are now more intelligently interconnected, creating the beginning of a bona fide community of research administrators

**Career ladder:** provided a clear path for professional growth for research administrators

**Job satisfaction:** created a culture in which there are clear job peers, as well as information sharing and collaboration

**Organizational redundancy:** established a structure that provides back-up support for administrators

**Knowledge expansion:** researchers are now expected to develop expertise in the full life cycle of a grant

**Reporting structure:** established consistency and clarity

**Operational efficiency:** standardization, resulting in knowledge more readily shared as well as streamlining

**Compliance:** all of the above increase compliance levels

### Office for Sponsored Research Implementation

The Office for Sponsored Research is a stakeholder in strong department and school-level research administration. Why? Because strong department and school-level research administration result in higher-quality, higher-efficiency transactions reaching the central office. These transactions are also more compliant and less resource-intensive. To encourage—and maximize—the success of the recent job family-related changes in the College, the Office for Sponsored Research (OSR) developed a pilot program with the College and the Life Sciences business office focusing on training and workflow. The pilot program provided the opportunity for all three units to formally discuss specific areas of research administration, and exchange feedback on organizational improvements. The session topics were: Roles and Responsibilities, Proposal Development and Submission, Progress Report Development and Submission, Award Setup and Management, Subcontracts and, lastly, Cost Sharing. The pilot program is currently prompting OSR to develop more training materials (such as checklists) specifically written for department and school administrators. The pilot program also provides an opportunity for OSR to make some changes to workflow on a limited, trial basis, with the aim of broader rollout over time. These changes, such as streamlining proposal review and subcontract issuance, as well as transitioning dated paper-based forms to user-friendly electronic formats, are meant to complement the new research administration roles developed by the job family.

The alignment of units undertaking research administration at different levels of an organization is critical. A research administration job family provides a platform for that alignment, and is the cornerstone of efficient, compliant and collaborative operations in institutions conducting sponsored research. A Research Administration Job Family also offers career development opportunities for staff, providing an essential structure within which extremely valuable skills may be fostered.

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**Elizabeth Adams,** Executive Director of the Office for Sponsored Research at Northwestern University, has been in research administration for 13 years, at both Northwestern and the University of Chicago. She has worked at the program, center, department, school and central levels of university management. Elizabeth presented at both the 2012 and 2011 National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) Region IV conferences. She has degrees in English and Psychology from Emory University.

**Annette Czech,** Compensation Consultant, returned to her alma mater in 2009 having graduated with a bachelor’s degree in economics from Northwestern University. Hired specifically to coordinate and manage the development of job families for the University, she brings with her over 20 years’ experience in the field of human resources specializing in compensation and human resource information systems.

**Amy Kitzman,** Associate Center Administrator at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine, began her research administration career at NU in 2007. Her background includes an undergraduate degree from University of Iowa in Business Administration. Amy’s responsibilities at NU include department administration, pre-award activities and post-award activities.

**Gretchen Talbot,** Director of Research Administration for Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, began her career at Northwestern in 2005 as the Business Administrator in the Department of Chemistry. In 2007, she assumed the role of Director of Finance & Budget for the College of Arts and Sciences for 4 years. She has been Director of Research Administration for nearly 2 years. She has bachelor degrees from Syracuse University in both management and communications and an MBA from DePaul University. She recently became a Certified Research Administrator.
May 1, 2012, saw the debut of NCURA’s newest traveling workshop when NCURA members David Mayo, Director of Sponsored Research, California Institute of Technology and Robert Andresen, Assistant Director, Research and Sponsored Programs at University of Wisconsin-Madison flew to Doha, Qatar and presented the Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration: Global Edition. The workshop, developed by a team of veteran and highly respected NCURA faculty: Jane Youngers, Assistant Vice President for Research Administration, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio; Dave Richardson, Associate Vice President For Research, The Pennsylvania State University; David Mayo; and Rob Barbret, Director of Sponsored Programs, Emeritus, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor was presented at Qatar University, with attendees from the university, along with the Qatar Research Foundation, American University in Beirut, Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University and Cairo University.

When asked about some of the major differences between the traditional NCURA Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration and the new Global Edition, Andresen and Mayo stated, “The workshop looks at research administration from a broader perspective than the federal circulars. The emphasis is really on the underlying principles and best practices in managing sponsored awards. When U.S. federal policies are mentioned, they are used as examples for comparisons to the models that exist in other regions of the world. The workshop presents a great opportunity to have a dialog about the benefits and risks in managing sponsored awards under various models and policies.

The two and one-half day workshop was well received by attendees with requests for additional NCURA programming. NCURA member, Moumen Hasnah, Associate Professor of Medical Physics and Director of the Office of Research, made the initial request to bring this workshop to his campus and was pleased with the results, “We are, in Qatar University, very pleased to be the first institution in which to hold NCURA’s International workshop outside the States. Our experience with you was wonderful and fruitful, and the feedback we are receiving from participants proves the success of the workshop.”

When asked about Fundamentals: Global Edition, NCURA’s President, Dan Nordquist, Assistant Vice President and Director, Washington State University, stated, “Individuals and entities worldwide want NCURA training. Developing Fundamentals: Global Edition ensures we don’t leave anyone out, so we can truly say we support research…together.”

NCURA’s Executive Director, Kathleen Larmett noted, “NCURA is the first and largest association for research administrators in the world. Providing quality educational programs for research administrators, regardless of borders, is part of our core mission and responsibility.”

NCURA’s new workshop is in the process of reserving dates for the remainder of this year. Interested universities can send their request to NCURAglobal@ncura.edu.
Added Value for the Research Enterprise:
Investing in Proposal Development

By Pam Vargas

This issue of the NCURA Magazine examines human capital, the cornerstone of a service environment such as the one within which we operate. Human capital is the combination of skills, education, experience, and problem solving that generates income and value and enables an individual to be a productive worker.

A Wikipedia entry further describes human capital as the competencies, knowledge, social and personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value. The entry further states that human capital is an aggregate economic view of human beings acting within economies, which is an attempt to capture the social, biological, cultural and psychological complexity as they interact in explicit and/or economic transactions.1

Of course, not all income or value is financial. While grant funds brought in are an important element of the research enterprise, the knowledge gained and other services provided through grant funding is often the most valuable asset gained.

The entire grant-seeking process is currently full of challenges, from less funding being available to the number of increasingly complex applications, which often include multidisciplinary teams and multiple organizations. Challenges can also be seen as opportunity, though; and the pre-award area of research administration has seen opportunities for research or proposal development specialists become more common. Indeed, as funding becomes more competitive, the investment in people with a research or human capital, to help our researchers and our institution, or even another department, may make money, you need to spend money.” Strategic investment is important. The investment in people, or human capital, to help our researchers and our institutions increase the potential for successful grant proposals, is indeed encouraging for the entire research enterprise.

I’ll admit, my true love has always been the pre-award side of research administration. While I have performed non-financial post Award duties and also have a tremendous respect for those who manage the financial side of the grant, and have even supervised those who perform that important function, I really enjoy helping a researcher shape a proposal. I like to edit. I like to write. I’ve been told that I follow rules and guidelines to a fault. (Okay, so maybe I would be a good accountant…) While I am not currently a research development specialist, it’s an area I could easily see myself in sometime in the future, and I am finding more opportunities to indulge in these types of activities, especially being at a predominantly undergraduate institution.

A large amount of human capital accumulation is achieved through on-the-job training, both within and outside of the organization, and the area of research development is no exception. For people in these positions who have either come up through the faculty ranks, been research administrators, or both, the investment in their previous on-the-job training is now being realized in yet another way. While research administrators with PhDs and faculty experience have generally garnered much respect from researchers, who view them as peers, those of us with research administration experience can also bring relevant experience to research development offices.

While some skills are useful only to one employer or in a particular position, other types of skills have much broader applicability. Knowledge of individual faculty expertise, for example, is specific to a particular employer because it applies to the activities of a particular institution. Moving to another institution, or even another department, may make much of that knowledge irrelevant, or at least will require the person to take time to learn about the competencies of the new department or organization. These kinds of skill investments are called specific human capital and differ from investments in general human capital. General human capital investments are seen as more applicable to another field, institution, or department. Budgeting skills, for example, can be applied at any institution and in a variety of professions.

In addition to the experience gained directly on the job, there are of course many opportunities for training outside of the place of employment, such as networking through professional organizations. We’re preaching to the choir here, I know, but it bears repeating that having a network of colleagues upon whom we can call for advice saves a lot of time and reinventing, and makes us more valuable assets.

Research development positions are an investment in the training and development of our researchers as well. Like other research administrators, the people in these positions relieve the researcher of some of the burdens of submitting proposals. They also provide knowledge and expertise of sponsors, proposal writing, team development, relationship development and more. And those of us who have worked in other areas of research administration know that a well-thought-out proposal not only increases the likelihood of funding, but also eases the process of managing the award when one is received.

In this time of reduced budgets, it is often common to see positions eliminated and new positions not created. It is encouraging, though, that some institutions are following that old adage that “to make money, you need to spend money.” Strategic investment is important. The investment in people, or human capital, to help our researchers and our institutions increase the potential for successful grant proposals, is indeed encouraging for the entire research enterprise.

Pamela Vargas is the Executive Director of the Research Center at Kutztown University. She serves as Pre-Award Contributing Editor for the NCURA Magazine and has previously served as Co-chair of the Pre-Award Research Administration Conference and Chair of Region IV.

References

NCURA is pleased to offer this timely DVD Workshop.

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Presenters: David Richardson, Associate Vice President for Research, Pennsylvania State University; Jilda Garton, Associate Vice Provost for Research and General Manager, GTRC/GTARC, Georgia Institute of Technology; Denise McCartney, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, Washington University; Lillie Ryans-Culclager, Director of Contracts, SRI International

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NCURA Magazine: So, tell us what goes through your mind when you watch an episode of Pan Am? How real are the situations and do they mirror your experience flying for TWA?

Kay Ellis: Watching Pan Am brings back lots of memories. You may have noticed in the terminal building passengers dressed up to travel. It was so different in the sixties; flying was more elegant, the food service was deluxe, and “flight attendants” were admired and treated with a high level of respect. It was difficult to become a flight attendant “back in the day,” and we wore our uniforms with pride. We also had a weight check each month, but we were not required to wear girdles like Pan Am required. If you were over your limit, you were put on “weight check” and had to lose two pounds a week until you reached the weight required for your height.

I was based in Boston right out of training and then started flying international flights. I passed the Spanish language test which allowed me to fly a strictly international schedule. One bone I have to pick with the Pan Am show is that the captain is so young! An international captain is typically a very senior pilot who has been flying for years. The program didn’t show a lot of food service, but in first class, TWA served dinner in courses including carving chateaubriand at your seat! There was a wine/drink cart, appetizer cart, entrée cart, dessert and liqueur carts. As on the Pan Am show, flight crews typically would hang out together on layovers (overnight stays at a destination city). We would go out to dinner, sightseeing, shopping, or see a play together. Flight crews were scheduled on a monthly basis, so you would work with the same people on every flight unless someone “traded” flights. No one asked me to be a spy like on the Pan Am program (thank goodness!), but I met many dignitaries, movie stars, and rock bands on first class overseas flights. Oh, the stories I could tell!

NM: It sounds like those were exciting times for you. We’d love to hear some of those stories you mention, but we understand that part of your “job description” was the ability to be discreet, so we won’t press for the details. Having said that, you must have learned leadership skills, early on, in order to successfully work with so many interesting and, what must have been at times, challenging individuals. How do those skills translate from the 60s to today’s world? What advice would you give to those just entering today’s workforce?

KE: Each month my flight schedule would change as well as the individuals I worked with. I learned early on that you have to work together as a team to put out a quality service. Of course that was not always easy because, let’s face it, in real life we don’t always like or get along with everyone we meet. I learned to listen. You have to be able to hear, respect and understand the other person’s point of view whether or not you agree. I found that many difficult passengers just wanted someone to listen to them and hear them out. This is a skill I developed while at TWA that has translated well into my current position. We all have to work together, respect, and listen to each other in order to reach the common goal. Unfortunately, on some flights I ran into people that no matter what I said or did there was no pleasing that person. We all know the type - it exists in all careers. At some point I would just firmly cut off the conversation and walk away. In the electronic world of today, it’s easy to get carried away with back-and-forth email discussions that go nowhere and both parties end up mad and frustrated. It’s best to “walk away” from this type of email...
From all over the world, I have come to appreciate other cultures. For KE:

Traveling outside the U.S. and meeting and working with people search administration profession?

How this experience helps you in your current career in the re-

During this time, I gained the leadership skills and confidence to work

With an international flight I would guess that at 30,000 feet and with-

It usually pays off!

NM: That’s good advice for everyone. I would guess that at 30,000 feet and without an easy exit, you quickly learn what works best. With an international flight schedule, you also needed to excel at understanding many different cultures. In today’s age of globalization, you are obviously way ahead of the curve. Can you tell us how this experience helps you in your current career in the research administration profession?

KE: Traveling outside the U.S. and meeting and working with people from all over the world, I have come to appreciate other cultures. For example, one unusual experience I had occurred during a flight to Tel Aviv, and a group of people insisted on kneeling on their rugs in the galley/lav (lavatory in flight attendant speak) areas for prayers that had to be conducted at a certain time of day and facing a certain direction. Obviously they got in the way of the food service and not to mention the lines of people for the lavs! We decided to delay the service out of respect for their prayers. It was an inconvenience for us, but for them it was essential. Today I work with many international PIs, graduate students, and post-docs, including some from China and the Middle East. Even those who have become a U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident Alien still have the cultural values they grew up with instilled in them. As an export control officer, I often have to tell people they can’t have access to certain technologies or equipment, or at least not without a license. To be honest, I think sometimes my gender can be a problem, depending on the person’s nationality. I try to show respect and understanding of how they feel, while at the same time remain firm in my stance - not always an easy task! I am sure it’s not easy for them either.

NM: You just gave us a great picture of some of someone who is fast, fluid, and flexible. The skills you developed at TWA certainly transferred well to research administration. Can you give us any other similarities between working with passengers and working with PIs?

KE: When you are at 30,000 feet you can’t just walk out of the “room;” you have to deal with it. The passenger can be upset because he missed his flight connection, his bag doesn’t fit in the overhead bin, he doesn’t like his assigned seat, the food, the crying baby next to him, or the fact you just cut off his drink supply, and the list goes on and on! Given the resources I had at 30,000 feet, I tried my best to fix whatever negative situation would arise. When I had to deal with an unhappy passenger, I usually was able to talk to the person and work with them to resolve the issue.

For example, if I couldn’t move a passenger to a different seat, I would invite the person to come back to the galley and talk with me or at least offer to buy him a drink. A friendly conversation and a nice gesture often did wonders.

Of course, at times there was no pleasing some passengers, and similarly today, there are certain PIs whom you can never please. Whether it was a passenger then or a PI now, they just want to be heard and know that you understand their viewpoint. With all of today’s compliance and regulatory requirements, PIs get frustrated because they think all the rules and regulations interfere with their research and they often think export controls don’t apply to their project. I prefer to talk to them in person or on the phone rather than email to make a more personal connection. When they realize I’m friendly and really want to help them, they usually calm down and work with me. I have developed some great working relationships with PIs over the years by being friendly and not negative about the situation. I try to be as understanding as possible but also point out to them that I am there to help them stay compliant. Eventually I am able to bring most PIs around to my way of thinking (the compliant way)!

I don’t want to make it sound like every flight was a nightmare with awful passengers! On longer flights, it was a pleasure meeting and talking to interesting and diverse people. I really enjoyed talking to people, and it helped me as well as the passengers pass the time on long, overseas flights. Today I really enjoy talking to and working with most of the PIs. I have built friendly, strong working relationships that make it much easier to get my job done.

NM: We know that one of TWA’s slogans was “Up, Up and Away…” If you had to come up with a slogan to hang in your office, what would it be?

KE: “Up, up and away, compliance with Kay: export compliance has never been easier!”

Reporting for NCURA Magazine. Kathleen Larmett, Managing Editor.
The Power of Personality and Politics at Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs)

By Christine Hempowicz and Linda Crocker

“Dear Fellow PUIers,” the listserv posting starts out, “does anyone have a policy and forms for….? If so, would you be willing to share them?”

Or,

“I know what OMB circular A-110 says, but my faculty member insists…. Have any of you had a similar situation? How did you resolve it?”

There may be few responses (a tell-tale sign that most listserv members are in the same situation), or perhaps a string of “I would be interested in the same – thanks!” Fortunately, we are blessed with peers willing to share their expertise, advice, and wisdom through posting a response, and sometimes through a personal follow-up phone call. Interestingly, regardless of the posting’s content, there seems to be an overall situation and critical question, “How do I make this work at my institution, given x, y, and z?”

In a conversation with a colleague last January, we discussed how in the small or single-staffed offices of non-research intensive Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) Research Administrators must still cover all the same bases as the research intensive institutions, with little support and significant time constraints. We also explored the idea of how critical, in this environment, the Research Administrator’s (RA) personality and awareness of institutional politics are to success. This discussion led to the recent session bearing this article’s title at NCURA Region 1’s annual conference. Participants wrote challenging scenarios they have faced on notecards and we brainstormed strategies as a group. After the conference, additional PUI RAs were interviewed by phone in order to identify personal characteristics that we deem to be beneficial to our success.

Whether generalists, pre-award specialists, or post-award specialists, all RAs need to possess the same expert knowledge of the rules and regulations that govern sponsored research. Our institutions, large or small, are required to comply with OMB circulars, the funding agency’s assurances and certifications, and myriad regulations for human subjects and animal research, export controls, and technology transfer to name a few. However, the staffing levels and infrastructure of research administration are driven in large part by the research level of the institution. A research-intensive enterprise has central and departmental RAs, offices for specialized services, and multiple staff dedicated to award financial management. RAs at non-research intensive institutions must,
perhaps, rely more on their personal skills and the institution’s informal organizational network to achieve the same goals. The task can be daunting, especially when the newly-hired RA has been charged with the job of starting up and staffing the entire operation.

Even the long-time RA can be challenged to operate effectively when the major campus culture is focused on teaching. Kulakowski and Chronister (2006) explored the role of campus culture on the research administration enterprise, saying “what a research administration operation does, its very functions and activities, is highly dependent on what the ‘organization’ perceives are its core values” (p. 42). Depending on the level of buy-in from senior administration to the newest faculty to other administrative offices, small office RAs must be able to convince, advocate for, and persuade colleagues within a unique culture that is not focused on research. Chances are, whether they realize it or not, even seasoned RAs at non-research intensive colleges and universities must size up the power relationships within their workplace to find ways to accomplish their goal. The “power” of the individual’s personality and their knowledge of institutional politics become essential to success.

The RA at a PUI is often the only one, or among very few, who is knowledgeable of federal rules and regulations. To then try to establish and/or update policies and practices, or address an area of non-compliance, can be challenging. A second-career RA who had been a school psychologist applied her understanding of the change process to a research administration start up. “I had to ask people to do more work for no extra money and little recognition, and with delayed reinforcement.” She worked hard to “sell” behavioral change for a better outcome, using the language of administrators and faculty to build collegiality. A few years later, she continues to make the rounds, meeting face-to-face with faculty, their chairs, and administration to personally ask, “What do you need? How can I be of assistance?” She strives to instill enthusiasm, commitment, and integrity in a professional environment.

While there is no one-size-fits-all personality type in research administration, certain characteristics may be advantageous, such as assertiveness and the ability to size up a situation quickly and work under pressure to deadline. Via telephone interviews conducted after the session, PUI RAs described their important on-the-job personality skills as: diplomatic, very flexible, forthright, jovial, high energy, respectful, reflective, visible, enthusiastic, professional, friendly, approachable, and helpful. One PUI RA says that she chooses to relate more as a “park ranger” rather than as a “police officer,” which is echoed by those who see their role in part as “cheerleader” through the proposal development process.

When PUI RAs were asked to submit a particularly difficult situation for discussion at the NCURA Region I conference session, the scenarios varied, yet all were probably relatable to the group. While some included rules and regulations-type issues, ultimately all delved into the dynamics of interpersonal relations. One wrote, “Knowing an area was non-compliant, bringing this to the attention of a superior with the authority to address it, but then nothing happened to fix the problem,” while another wrote, “Trying to educate upper leadership on the difficulties of things like the intersection of lobbying and federal research grant review processes, only to have my expertise and perspective dismissed.” Other issues not specific to research administration were, “Working with someone who sees everything as black and white when I see a lot of grey,” “Working with a passive aggressive peer who talks badly behind my back and tries to make me look bad to PIs and upper management,” and “Learning to fit into a new work environment.” An issue that may be more prevalent at a PUI is the expectation to perform non-research administration tasks, which can cut into the precious time of the single or few staff who are able to perform the research administration duties. While efforts in trying to resolve difficult issues like these are not always successful, the group offered some proactive thoughts regarding the benefit of face-to-face meetings to resolve issues:

✔ Gather buy-in from stakeholders before presenting an idea or policy;
✔ Establish your own relationships with the people with whom you interact;
✔ Know when to confront and when to ignore; and
✔ Establish your own reputation for honesty, credibility, reliability, and accuracy.

RAs at PUIs may be part of the final decision to submit an application, but final say usually rests with the provost or vice provost, sometimes requiring sign-off from the vice president for administration and finance or budget office. People skills become critical to navigate this process. An RA at a private PUI explains, “You need to know the roles and responsibility of others - who has power and who has influence.”

We are the cheerleaders, coaches, diplomats, directors, facilitators, translators, experts, monitors, communicators, and compliance officers for our institution’s research administration. Each of us must find ways to work effectively with faculty, staff, students, and administrators who might value our skills but can be annoyed with the litany of rules and regulations we enforce as we sift through the fine print of the funding announcement or grant award. We long for early collaboration and sufficient time to cross all the t’s and dot all our i’s before the submission deadline but are often denied the luxury.

So what does this all suggest? That at PUIs, without extensive infrastructure or resources, the individual RA’s personality, people skills, and awareness of the internal power infrastructure become crucial to success. We are happy to say that in our journey of meeting and talking with PUI RAs, we have been impressed by the number of confident and committed people who show the best of what can be and is being done in small offices every day. ■

Reference
Research Administration
investment in human capital:
Amy M. Brusk, MAB, CRA is a member of the
Departmental Community. She graduated from
Kansas State University in 2004 with a B.S. in
Animal Science and in 2009 with a Master of
Agribusiness degree. She began her research
administration career in 2007 as a Grant
Specialist for the College of Veterinary
Medicine at Kansas State. I received my
Certified Research Administrator (CRA)
credential in 2010. Currently she oversees
both the pre and post-award activities for the
Clinical Sciences, Veterinary Diagnostic
Laboratory, and Veterinary Health Center
Departments in the College of Veterinary
Medicine.

How does your institution invest in their research administrators
(do they provide additional training, promote NCURA and
attending the conference or regional meetings etc.)
Kansas State encourages research administrators to attend professional
development activities, whether it’s through National Council for University
Research Administrators or other sponsored program administration
conglomerates, by covering expenses for conferences and training
opportunities. They also support those who would like to sit for their
Certified Research Administrator (CRA) exam, offered by the Research
Administrators Certification Council, by often paying for the exam fee.
Those of us who have already taken the exam are encouraged to provide
study support to those who are preparing for it. In addition, Kansas State
is supportive of and will cover the expense of applicable online training.
I recently completed the NCURA “Primer on Clinical Trials” seven week
tutorial because one of my departments has started to see an increase in
veterinary clinical trials.

When hiring research administrators,
what type of background does your department look for?
A background in an accounting or a business-related field would be
preferred, though not necessarily required, as someone once took a
chance on me with only a B.S. in a science-related field; however, at the
time I had applied for the position I’m currently in, I had already started
graduate school for my master’s degree in a business-related field. In Kansas it is difficult to
find people with research administration specific credentials, so we look for a
background with relevant skill sets (organizational skills, time management, etc.)
and then train them.

How do research administrators in your institution advance in their positions?
There is no strict ladder for advancement; however Kansas State has a natural progression
of positions depending on where you start.
We’ve had employees start as a Database
Manager or Project Modification Specialist and
after gaining some experience have moved up to
become a full-fledged Grant and Contract Specialist. From here there’s
potential to advance into an Assistant Director position and eventually a
Director position. We also have an Intern program for graduate students
in an MBA (or related) program of study who work as a Contract Assistant
focused on contract review and negotiation. These interns could move
into a full time position as a Grant Specialist. Lately it has been difficult for
Kansas State to provide advancement opportunities that are more than just a
title change, due to the overall economic environment.

Does your institution have “go to” research administrators
who can provide training or mentoring to other research
administrators?
We have several experienced research administrators who are inevitably
pestered with questions several times a day from those of us that are newer
to the field. My supervisor, Lisa Duer, has been working in research
administration for many years and trained myself as well as several of my
co-workers. Our Assistant Vice President for Research, Paul Lowe, is
also a knowledgeable resource and does a great job making sure he’s
available to his team. Both Paul and Lisa received their CRA certification
and were excellent mentors when I was studying for the exam. We don’t
have a research administrator whose sole responsibility is providing
training, but our Pre Awards office is very good about keeping us
informed of training opportunities.

Do you feel the initiatives your institution provides to research
administrators helps to retain them?
Absolutely! This is reflected by the fact that the turnover in our research administration team is very low. Employees in this office have been with Kansas State an average of 15-20 years. Our research administration team has an independent working environment in which successes are recognized. Both Paul and Lisa stay away from micromanaging, stepping in when they need to, but allowing their employees to solve their own problems and acknowledging our hard work.

**What challenges do you face as a research administrator?**

Balancing the workload between our pre and post-award responsibilities is always a challenge for those of us at Kansas State who are Departmental Research Administrators. Since there’s been a decrease in public funding for university research, the number of proposals being submitted has increased, but the percentage of those proposals that are being funded has not paralleled that increase, thus faculty continue to submit more proposals out of a desperate need for funding. Also, the complexity of the research programs faculty are seeking funding for has increased, which usually means subcontracts, complicated budgets, and international collaborations.

**What makes an effective research administrative team?**

Highly motivated individuals who are detail-oriented, dedicated to a high level of “customer service”, and have the ability to manage multiple deadlines under pressure. Also, employees who work well with others is key considering research administration is most certainly a team effort.

**If you had one piece of advice to give to a new departmental research administrator, what would it be?**

Learn to manage your time effectively. Some days will be proposal-heavy, other days will be focused on closing out awards, but all of your time during the day must be used as efficiently as possible in order to stay on top of the huge range of responsibilities of a departmental RA.

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**Leslie Schmidt** is the Assistant Vice President for Research, Office of Sponsored Programs at Montana State University.

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**Dr. John W. Hanold** is the Senior Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Programs at The Pennsylvania State University.
In keeping with this issue’s theme of human capital – which as an economist I see as those professional competencies, skills and knowledge capital acquired through education, training and experience – this brief article focuses attention on several developments and resources of value to research administrators interested in furthering their knowledge of timely issues in international research administration. Let’s begin…

**The first item** is also the most recent, and pertains to a two-day inaugural *Global Summit on Merit Review* hosted by the National Science Foundation (NSF), which convened at NSF headquarters from May 13-15, 2012. The heads of research councils from a number of research-intensive countries participated, and the meeting, which was coordinated by Dr. Subra Suresh, director of the National Science Foundation, formally established the Global Research Council (GRC). The principles for scientific merit review endorsed by the summit leaders address such themes as: expert assessment; transparency; impartiality; appropriateness; confidentiality; and integrity and ethical considerations. This is clearly an exciting global initiative, and I believe the best and most up-to-date way for learning about and keeping abreast of the GRC’s work is by (1) reviewing Dr. Suresh’s (2011) Editorial in *Science Magazine* [http://www.nsf.gov/news/newsmedia/globalsummit/science_editorial.pdf]; (2) visiting GRC’s website [http://www.GlobalResearchCouncil.org/]; (3) examining the Summit’s *Statement of Principles for Scientific Merit Review* [http://www.nsf.gov/news/newsmedia/globalsummit/gs_principles.pdf]; and (4) reading NSF’s May 15 (2012) Press Release [http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=124178]. The Global Research Council’s next summit I hear is planned to convene in Berlin in 2013, and is scheduled to be co-hosted by Germany and Brazil.

**The next resource** – titled *Assessing Europe’s University-Based Research: Expert Group on Assessment of University-Based Research* (2010) – is a report of the European Commission. In brief, this work is intended to help “identify the parameters to be observed in research assessment,” and provide a framework to “analyse major assessment and ranking systems with a view to proposing a more valid, comprehensive methodological approach” for facilitating the measurement, assessment and evaluation of university-based research (p. 10). This report – which you can download as a free PDF at [http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/assessing-europe-university-based-research_en.pdf] – includes valuable sections on (1) Characteristics of Research Assessment; (2) Measuring University-Based Research; (3) A Proposed Framework for Research Assessment; and (4) a solid Conclusion, valuable appendices, an extensive bibliography, and in-depth country-specific and global case studies of the research assessment experience.

**The third resource** – titled *Research Universities and the Future of America: Ten Breakthrough Actions Vital to Our Nation’s Prosperity and Security* (2012) – is report of The National Academy of Sciences that you can either purchase as a paperback or download as a free PDF at [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13396]. This is an outstanding collection of data, perspective and insight for effectively addressing one question put before the National Research Council by the U.S. Congress:

> What are the top 10 actions that Congress, the federal government, state governments, research universities, and others can take to assure the ability of the American research university to maintain the excellence in research and doctoral education needed to help the United States compete, prosper, and achieve national goals for health, energy, the environment, and security in the global community if the 21st century? (Foreword, p. x)

**The fourth resource** – titled *The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities* (2009), by Dr. Jamil Salmi – is a publication of The World Bank and you can download a free PDF at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079956815/547670-1237305262556/WCU.pdf]. Once again we have an outstanding report, and one that continues a theme articulated in the World Bank’s *1998/99 World Development Report*, which proposed four strategic dimensions for guiding countries in the move toward a knowledge-based economy: (1) an appropriate eco-
nomic and institutional structure; (2) a strong human capital base; (3) a
dynamic information infrastructure; and (4) an efficient national innova-
tion system (p. 2). The 2009 Report by Dr. Salmi focuses upon world-
class universities, and looks at the power of higher education (referred to
in many international reports as “tertiary education”) to contribute to na-
tional and global economic development from the perspective of “excel-
lence in research and scholarship at its most competitive levels”
(Forward, p. x). The report asks and explores some timely questions,
such as: (1) What does it mean to be a world-class university; (2) Why
does a country need a world-class university (or universities); (3) What
should be the role of government in enhancing the resources and further-
ing the work and stature of such institutions; and (4) What steps can in-
dividual institutions of higher learning take to transform themselves into
world-class universities. To put our respective aspirations into perspec-
tive, there are over 4,300 institutions of higher learning in the United
States, and over 17,000 worldwide (including the USA). Most global
rankings tend to focus interest only upon the world’s top 100.

The final resource – titled Examining Core Elements of Inter-
national Research Collaboration (2011) – is a publication of The Na-
tional Academy of Sciences that you can either order in paperback or
download a free PDF at
http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13192. This publication is a
summary of a workshop I co-chaired with James Casey that brought to-
gether a number of internationally recognized experts around several
themes: (1) Creating an Environment for Productive International Col-
aboration; (2) Cultural Differences and Nuances; (3) Ethics; (4) Re-
search Integrity and the Responsible Conduct of Research; (5) Risk
Management; (6) Intellectual Property; (7) Export Controls; and (9)
Legal Issues and Agreements.

In sum, human capital can be defined as those professional competen-
cies, skills and knowledge capital acquired through education, training
and experience. This brief article focuses our attention upon several de-
velopments and resources of value to research administrators interested
in furthering their understanding and knowledge of timely issues in in-
ternational research administration.

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vancement and Compliance at Loyola Marymount University in Los
Angeles. John is co-author of The Art of Funding and Imple-
menting Ideas: A Guide to Proposal Development and Project Man-
agement (Sage, 2011), and a 2007 recipient of NCURA’s
Distinguished Service Award.

Jill Griffith, previously Grant Administrator at the Medical University of South Carolina, is now Associate Director of Research for
Cancer Medicine at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Robert Holm, previously the Director of the Institute for Research and Scholarship at Butler University, is now the Assistant Di-
rector, Sponsored Programs Education at Auburn University.

Vivian Holmes, is now the Director of Sponsored Research Operations, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard.

Francois (Franc) Lemire, previously the Director of Sponsored Programs at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, is now the Direc-
tor of Grants Administration and Compliance at the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry.

Denise Moody, previously Assistant Director of Grants and Contracts at Princeton University, is now the Program Manager of
Research Policy in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University.

Jeffrey Ritchie, formerly Grants Management Analyst for Aurora Health Care, is now the Director of Sponsored Programs at
Lewis University.

Rachel Wurth is now the Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects at Bellarmine University.

Susan Zipkin, previously Director, Radiology Research Finance at Brigham & Woman’s Hospital is now the Director, Post-Award
Administration, Office for Sponsored Programs at Boston College.
NCURA Recognizes Its Campus Liaisons

Almost one year ago, NCURA announced the Campus Liaison program — partnering to share NCURA’s education and resources with your campus. Approximately 200 members have joined this partnership in order to share with their campus colleagues, via their campus listsevs, upcoming NCURA educational offerings and resources related to conferences, traveling workshops, TV programming, NCURA Bookstore offerings, and more. NCURA recognizes the Campus Liaisons, and their institutions, listed below who make this partnership a continuing success! If you do not see your campus listed and would like to volunteer (or appoint a member from your campus) to join the Campus Liaison program, please contact Kathleen Larmett at Larmett@ncura.edu or 202.466.3894.

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Youngstown State University  
Edward Orona

Summer Reading List

We asked members of the NCURA Magazine Editorial Board what books are in their beach bags this summer.

**Carol Blum**, Council on Governmental Relations

*The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* by Siddhartha Mukherjee;  
*Van Gogh: The Life* by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith;  
*The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present* by Eric Kandel

**John Carfora**, Loyola Marymount University

*The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA’s Clandestine Service* by Henry A. Crumpton;  
*Medicine and the Market: Equity v. Choice* by Daniel Callahan and Angela A. Wassuna;  
*The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict* by The Arbinger Institute

**Jim Casey**, University of Texas at San Antonio

*Car Guys vs. Bean Counters: The Battle for the Soul of American Business* by Bob Lutz

**Kristine Kulage**, Columbia University

*Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith* by Robert Barron

**Debbie Smith**, University of Tennessee Health Science Center

*11-22-63: A Novel* by Stephen King;  
*The Outlander: A Novel (P.S.)* by Gil Adamson

**Craig Reynolds**, University of Michigan Medical School

*One Minute to Midnight* by Michael Dobbs;  
*Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* by Walter Isaacson

**Pam Vargas**, Kutztown University

*Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder* by Richard Louv;  
*A Romantic Education* by Patricia Hampl

**Andre Walker**, University of Chicago

*Run to Failure: BP and the Making of the Deepwater Horizon Disaster* by Abrahm Lustgarten

**Tom Wilson**, Rush University Medical Center

*Private Games* by James Patterson and Mark Sullivan

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*Car Guys vs. Bean Counters: The Battle for the Soul of American Business* by Bob Lutz

**Kristine Kulage**, Columbia University

*Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith* by Robert Barron
A person makes thousands of decisions every day and those decisions are complicated by risk—the possibility of loss or injury—and uncertainty—the indefinite likelihood of future events. Decision makers for organizations face particularly challenging questions about what risks are worth taking for societal advancement and financial growth. During its most recent gathering, leaders from the National Academies’ Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) considered when, why, and how to consider risks and uncertainties.

People’s perceptions and prior experience play a significant role in decision making. Individuals are good at tracking what they see, but they may not be able to undo the effects of biased information they receive. People may not know what they want, especially when facing novel questions. Under stress, people tend to revert to previous actions with which they have the greatest familiarity and comfort. However, efforts like communicating risks can help people to make better choices.

One meeting session delved into decision making for catastrophes. Research has shown that during disasters, individuals and groups are quite effective at self-organizing appropriate response actions. On the other hand, organizations may fall short by putting too much emphasis on pre-established procedures without sufficient deference to “on-the-ground” information. Utilizing adaptive planning, where multiple scenarios and management measures are modeled, can help organizations to improve their responsiveness to catastrophic risks by identifying flexible yet robust strategies.

Insurance serves well in many cases to cushion disaster losses; however, insurance markets are tested when dealing with low probability-high cost events because:

1) consumers have very limited personal experience with such events; and
2) correlated losses pose challenges for insurers.

It was suggested that an organization’s senior management and board help set the tone for what risks an organization is and is not willing to take and what the consequences will be if those standards are breached. Analyzing aggregated risks is a strategy that may help organizations make decisions that address multiple and correlated risks.

The GUIRR members in attendance heard from several federal government leaders about how they address risks and uncertainties. These speakers described how developing long-term strategies can be difficult when budgets change annually and attention spans are short. Further, legislation can have unintended effects, but the U.S. government has instituted new initiatives for evaluating the performance of federal rules and is taking steps to adapt rules to function better.

Presenters from industry spoke to the increasing complexity of the business environment, particularly in terms of new financial instruments, changing environmental and health care regulations, and the growing size of major players. Changes in the business environment can increase uncertainty about whether risks are being well managed and companies may overlook new risks when they push into different markets. At the same time, companies advance through innovation so they strive to balance innovation prospects with risk. Good communication between the different players exploring new ventures helps to address risks early in the development process.

For a more expansive written recap of the June 19-20, 2012 GUIRR meeting and access to the various guest presentations, visit the GUIRR website at www.nas.edu/guirr under “Past Meetings.” All online presentations are posted with speaker permission.

Any opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not represent the positions of the GUIRR or the National Academies.
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