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March 15-17, 2014 ~ San Francisco, CA

15th Annual
Financial Research Administration Conference

March 18-20, 2014 ~ San Francisco, CA

8th Pre-award Research Administration Conference
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On March 1, 2013, President Obama signed an order initiating sequestration, requiring the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to cut 5 percent or $1.55 billion of its fiscal year 2013 budget. http://www.nih.gov/news/health/jun2013/nih-03.htm. This is just one example of the continuing global economic trend toward leaner financing for research endeavors. To ensure that the research enterprise not only survives but continues to thrive, it is essential that we, as administrators, do our part to develop innovative ways of “doing more with less.”

This edition of NCURA Magazine highlights several perspectives on the idea of “doing more with less.” From the financial perspective, NIH’s own Sally Rockey (Rock Talk) enlightens readers on current efforts at the NIH to keep funding great science in tight fiscal times, and Carolyn Elliott-Farino provides tips on maximizing facilities and administrative (F&A) cost return. From the human capital perspective, David Ngo describes ways managers can help employees cope with the prospect of “doing more with less;” Terri Hall and Sherie Donahue present creative solutions from the eRA Community to avoid crumbling under the weight of daily work; and Timothy Schaible, Erin Bailey, and Angela Henke emphasize the importance of keeping employees positive, engaged, and productive in spite of budget cuts and downsizing. From the negotiation perspective, Sarah Lampson and Katie Porter provide best practices in getting contracts executed quickly, and Sherylle Mills Englander provides the top 10 tips on negotiating efficiently with industry funders. From the organizational perspective, Tim Patterson and Rob Rubens suggest transforming your research administration office structure to maximize productivity, and from technological perspective, Suzanne Fournier offers ways of embracing technology to increase output.

Thanks to all the authors and editors for their diligent work and sharing such a rich resource of expertise and insight in this issue so that research can continue to thrive!

Kristine M. Kulage
Co-Editor

Kristine M. Kulage is Co-Editor of NCURA Magazine and Director of the Office of Scholarship & Research Development at Columbia University School of Nursing (CUSON) in New York City. With over 17 years of experience in research administration and six years as an active member of NCURA, Kristine is grateful for all she has learned from fellow colleagues on how to “do more with less.” A former college composition instructor, she is excited to be leading CUSON’s first faculty Writing Workshop this summer to help expand the school’s scholarly and research endeavors. Kristine looks forward to completion of her MPH in Health Policy and Management at the Joseph P. Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University this December. Kristine can be reached at kk729@columbia.edu

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Message from Your President

By Patricia Hawk, NCURA President

While NCURA has undertaken new beginnings with the Annual Meeting move to August and moving the FRA and PRA conference to spring, there is another exciting new beginning I want to highlight. NCURA is now the sole publisher of Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Recommended Practices. This comprehensive reference guide covers all major areas of sponsored research and includes over 20 chapters written by well-respected administrators known for their unique expertise. This 1800+ page two-volume publication walks through fundamental principles and practices; features sample policies and procedures, practical tools and supplementary materials. The guide is a terrific onboarding resource. Work has already begun to both refresh and update this publication.

The Professional Development Committee began a review of the existing chapters earlier this year, and while they knew that information would have to be updated, chapter topics also needed to be reviewed for relevancy. As an example, Electronic Research Administration is no longer a new endeavor and leadership development is a new chapter which began in January. Moreover, as part of the annual subscription there are quarterly updates to supplement the primary content; one was just released in July. Examples of some of the update topics include information on the proposed OMB Uniform Guidance for Federal Assistance (you may have also heard this referred to as the Super Circular or the Omni Circular), how to work effectively with internal audit, as well as information on the upcoming NIH requirement to use electronic FORMS-C. In addition, a searchable CD is issued every October. As with all NCURA publications members receive a discounted rate. I encourage you to order your office copy.

Summer won’t be “slow time” for NCURA’s officers. We will be working to draft a global strategic plan. Some of my travels as President included visits to both the Canadian Association of University Research Administrators (CAURA) and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA). CAURA is one of NCURA’s co-hosts for INORMS 2014, and ARMA is analogous to NCURA, but based in the United Kingdom. Attending these meetings not only gave me the opportunity to meet a lot of new people, it convinced me that NCURA is wise to develop a global strategic plan.

If I closed my eyes during a session at either the CAURA or ARMA meeting, I could have been sitting in a session at an NCURA meeting. The issues we talk about are the same, but they might have slightly different names, e.g., open access vs. public access. Ethics and research integrity is something I heard at both meetings. I even attended a session where they were discussing how pre-award and post-award offices can “get along better.” Doesn’t this all sound familiar?

Research is global; our researchers don’t stop at the U.S. borders for collaborators or research performance sites. If we—as research administrators—are going to support our faculty, then we need to “get global” too. I will be very excited to work on this as an NCURA summer project. Stay tuned for updates in the fall.

But perhaps AM55 is the biggest NCURA summer event! I am very much looking forward to the 55th Annual Meeting, and know it’s going to be a fantastic meeting. Vivian Holmes and her program committee have put together a fantastic program and some new types of activities.

I look forward to seeing you at AM55. Happy summer everyone!!!

Patricia Hawk is NCURA President and serves as the Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at Oregon State University. She can be reached at Patricia.Hawk@oregonstate.edu
As Congress continues to grapple with a variety of contentious issues, some members have reached unanimity on questions of transparency and accountability. The House of Representatives’ Oversight and Government Reform Committee approved a new (and much improved) Digital Accountability and Transparency (DATA) Act (HR. 2061) on May 22, 2013. Co-sponsored by Committee chair, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Committee Ranking Member Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), you will recall that the DATA Act aims to provide the public with “consistent, reliable, and searchable government-wide spending data” on contracts, loans, and grants.

The new DATA Act is markedly different from the bill that was passed by the House in the 112th Congress (H.R. 2146). A Senate version first introduced by Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) in the 112th Congress, which never left committee, has been reintroduced—with revisions—by Senators Warner and Rob Portman (R-OH) as a companion measure, S. 994.

What will the new and improved proposed DATA Act(s) do? It expands the information available on USAspending.gov through the mechanism of amendments to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA). It will include all Federal agencies’ spending data while maintaining current recipient reporting for contracts, grants, and loans. It requires the Department of Treasury to establish government-wide financial data standards and directs the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to review the existing Federal award recipient financial reporting to identify opportunities to reduce compliance costs based on the new financial data standards. The legislation also will establish a pilot program to evaluate alternatives for consolidating financial reporting for Federal award recipients.

The three-year pilot program would include recipients that collectively receive more than $10 billion in federal funds and have received funds from multiple agencies in the form of contracts, grants, and sub-awards. The goal of the pilot is to evaluate consolidated financial reporting and its ability to increase transparency while reducing the compliance burden on federal award recipients.

The DATA act purports to promote other useful government activities. With the data aggregated, the Department of Treasury will use the data to prevent improper payments, and Federal agencies can analyze the data to prevent waste, fraud and abuse. And all of this information will be available to the interested public, including Congress, for review.

There may be sufficient momentum for passage of this legislation that addresses an area of real frustration for lawmakers: where’s all the money going? And from the recipient community perspective, it doesn’t propose anything new in the short-run except a review and potential streamlining of financial reporting—a good thing—and a suggestion, through the pilot, of future consolidated reporting.

While discussions proceed on the DATA Act(s), there’s been lots of chatter about a non-event—an April 17, 2013, release of a discussion draft of legislation entitled the High Quality Research Act, drafted by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) and focused on making changes to the way in which the National Science Foundation (NSF) selects which grants to fund. What the discussion draft proposes is for the Director of NSF to certify that every grant funded by the agency would meet three criteria. The award: (1) is in the interests of the nation’s health, prosperity, or welfare, and secures the national defense by promoting the progress of science; (2) is the finest quality and ground breaking, and addresses questions of utmost importance to society at large; and, finally (3) is not duplicative of other research projects being funded by the Foundation or other Federal science agencies.

The draft legislation has not been introduced, and many think it will not be introduced, at least in its current form. However, it does suggest that the scientific community needs to recognize that Congressional members are not uniformly understanding of the value of research in tight financial times, and the community needs to be able to assure the public that the research it supports is contributing to their health, welfare, etc. Always a tall order. What rattled the community further was the immediate release of a letter from Rep. Smith, who is also Chair of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, to NSF’s Acting Director Cora Marrett, questioning the intellectual merit of five specific grants that were funded by the agency. Ranking Committee Member Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) quickly challenged Smith with her own letter arguing that “Interventions in grant awards by political figures with agendas, biases, and no expertise is the antithesis of the peer review processes. By making this request, you are sending a chilling message to the entire scientific community that peer review may always be trumped by political review.” Discussions continue.

This whole activity followed by, just a few months, the passage of the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013 that included an amendment authored by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) limiting NSF funding for political science research projects to those projects certified as “promoting national security or the economic interests of the United States.” Tied to the extension of the continuing resolution through September 30, 2013, - funding the government for the remainder of the year - the amendment became law on March 26, 2013. The research community is acquainted with challenges to support for specific projects whose titles or abstracts appear to support research which an individual member of Congress finds questionable. To limit – not prohibit – an entire category of research is more unique. If Congress continues to fund the Federal government through continuing resolutions, this limitation on political science research could linger past the current fiscal year.

Much of this closer scrutiny of spending results in part from the reductions required by the Budget Control Act of 2011—the sequestration. Much has been written and said and will be written and said about sequestration, but it’s difficult to measure the impact. Most agency research budgets were cut by 5.1%—a cut for the entire fiscal year that has to be absorbed by September 30, 2013. There were increases in some research funds with the passage of the final continuing resolution in March, but those increases generally built on the sequester-reduced budgets—seeming gains but effective losses. Agencies have taken varying approaches to their budgets. NSF is reducing the number of new awards across its directorates; the
National Institutes of Health (NIH) has allowed each institute or center to address the reductions in a manner that best meets its research portfolio. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) instituted a 6% reduction and eliminated cost-of-living adjustments on non-competing grants, with some exceptions. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) is funding competing and non-competing grants at 94% of the award or continuation amount. All the institute and center funding strategies are available at: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/financial/index.htm#strategies.

What has been immediately noticeable is the limited travel of Federal employees to conferences and other meetings, which is unfortunate because everyone benefits from their presence and participation in professional scientific and management meetings. Travel restrictions and the furlough of employees have disrupted inspections, audits, and other government activities (stop smiling).

Transparency and accountability—caution and vexation are the result. Maybe it’s time for me to consider a different occupation? Do you want fries with that burger? N

Carol J. Blum is Director for Research Compliance and Administration at the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR). Before joining COGR in 2001, Carol served Ohio University for ten years as associate vice president for research after three years at the Ohio Board of Regents as director of graduate and special programs. She holds a PhD in history from the University of Cincinnati. She has recently begun exercising the right side of her brain in art classes and continues to volunteer at the Washington Literacy Council and Washington Area (Reproductive Health) Clinic Defense Task Force. Carol can be reached at cblum@cogr.edu
This is a time of unprecedented scientific opportunity in biomedical research. We are at a pivotal point where our ever-increasing understanding of living things, coupled with astounding technological advancements, allows us to open new pathways to discovery like never before imagined. NIH, in partnership with the biomedical research community, is substantially advancing the understanding of human biology and underlying causes of disease, and is making incredible progress in turning this knowledge into real improvements in human health. For example, HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention strategies produced through NIH research may enable us to realize the first AIDS-free generation in over 30 years. So how do we try to keep up this momentum at a time when NIH’s budget has been flat or declining, and is likely not to increase substantially in the foreseeable future?

It is essential that we at NIH strive to support as much high quality science as we can with the funds we receive. As conscientious stewards of taxpayer dollars, we have always paid attention to supporting only the highest priority research, but over the past few years we have put even more effort into developing tools and new procedures to ensure we’re using our funds most efficiently.

Funding Great Science in Tight Fiscal Times

By Sally J. Rockey

Identify and manage funding overlaps

It is important to identify any overlap between NIH-funded research and the research funded by other sources. NIH has administrative policies in place at the pre-award and post-award stages that are designed to monitor and manage potential overlap in funding. After the two-stage NIH peer review process, if an application is recommended for funding, it then undergoes administrative review. Prospective grantees provide additional documentation as part of the Just-in-Time procedure on Other Support to determine if there is budgetary, scientific, or commitment overlap (see the NIH Grants Policy Statement http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps_2012/nihgps_ch2.htm for more information). This includes all existing and pending financial resources — whether Federal, non-Federal, commercial or organizational — available in direct support of an individual’s research endeavors. This includes, but is not limited to, research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and organizational awards. Remember, overlap is not necessarily a negative and it might be absolutely necessary, but we want to manage it correctly.

We also monitor duplication of effort in the post-award phase, and this is described in the progress report instructions http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/2590/phs2590.pdf. NIH grantees are required to respond to the question, “Has there been a change in the other support of senior/key personnel since the last reporting period?” when submitting their annual progress report. If a previously active grant has terminated and/or if a previously pending grant is now active, a grantee should respond “yes” and must explain the changes as well as provide updated Other Support material with the progress report.

Encourage scientific collaborations

Collaborations among NIH-supported investigators often are of great scientific value when investigators combine their ideas and efforts to study complex biological problems. In addition, these collaborations can lead to more efficient use of resources, as different people in the group bring expertise and resources that do not need to be developed by their collaborators. NIH encourages these collaborations and is building tools to facilitate connections among investigators.

Information about all NIH-funded projects is posted on the public RePORT web site http://report.nih.gov/ and includes Principal Investigator (PI) contact information to allow investigators to connect with others working in their field. Universities can also provide PI profile information to RePORTER in bulk, and integrate RePORTER information into their own websites. We recently created a tool to make identifying related research and investigators even easier. Each project information page on RePORT has a “Similar Project” tab which displays up to 100 other projects similar to the selected project. (Similarity is based on the degree of overlap among the project keywords — the set of project terms in the description...
for each project information page.) Another newly developed tool simplifies the search for NIH-supported investigators who are located close by. The “Nearby Projects” tab displays organizations and projects within 20 miles (currently available for US projects only). We are continuing to design tools - such as these that use research project data - to help the research community network and connect scientifically.

Engage the community in a discussion on how best to use our funds

In October 2011, NIH initiated a dialog with the research community concerning various possibilities for managing NIH resources most effectively in austere times. NIH Director Francis Collins and I presented options to multiple stakeholders, we posted related data on the NIH RePORT web site http://report.nih.gov/UploadDocs/Ways%20to%20Manage%20Final.pdf and I discussed this topic on my blog, Rock Talk http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2011/10/17/how-do-you-think-we-should-manage-science-in-fiscally-challenging-times/

The options discussed included retaining the current way of managing NIH funds, reducing or limiting the size of awards, limiting the number of awards held by a single PI, limiting the amount of funds a PI can hold, and limiting PI salaries. We established a dedicated mailbox for comments and readers also commented on the blog post. We received almost 350 comments on these options.

Although we did not implement all these options in their proposed forms, the feedback was considered in the development of a policy of Special Council Review for researchers who receive $1 million per year in direct costs in support of NIH Research Project Grants http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-12-140.html In assessing applications from these well-supported PIs, the Institute or Center’s Advisory Council is asked to consider if the application provides a unique and highly promising research opportunity that is distinct from the PI’s existing projects.

Train the future biomedical research workforce effectively and efficiently

In addition to supporting the best biomedical research, it is imperative that we ensure that the future biomedical research workforce - including those who will make tomorrow’s great breakthroughs - is well-trained, diverse and sustainable. Therefore, we need to base our training initiatives on the best data available on the workforce and its needs.

To that end, over the past two years the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director (ACD) has been engaged in two extensive studies of the biomedical research workforce. In the first study, a working group of ACD chaired by Dr. Shirley Tilghman (Princeton) and I examined the future of the biomedical research workforce in the United States. The ACD asked us to recommend actions to ensure a diverse and sustainable biomedical and behavioral research workforce. Together with a modeling sub-committee composed mainly of labor economists, we defined the major issues facing the biomedical research workforce, gathered data on the current workforce, listened to the perspectives of various biomedical research stakeholders, and solicited input on the major issues from the public through a Request for Information (RFI). Our findings and conclusions were presented to the ACD in June 2012 http://acd.od.nih.gov/bwf.htm including a snapshot of the current biomedical research workforce and recommendations to the ACD about funding and training of graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. Our conclusions were that biomedical research training is taking too long, and we are not preparing our students for the full complement of research and research positions they will hold. NIH leadership accepted the majority of the recommendations.

We quickly solicited additional input from the community http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2013/02/21/your-chance-to-weigh-in-on-the-biomedical-research-workforce-initiative and implementation is under way.

In a parallel effort, the ACD formed a special working group on diversity in the Biomedical Research Workforce. The working group was asked to provide the ACD with concrete recommendations on ways to improve the retention of underrepresented minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons from disadvantaged backgrounds through five critical transition points: (i) entry into graduate degree programs; (ii) the transition from graduate degree to post-doctoral fellowship; (iii) the appointment from a post-doctoral position to the first independent scientific position; (iv) the award of the first independent research grant from NIH or equivalent in industry; and (v) award of tenure in an academic position or equivalent in an industrial setting. The working group reported to the ACD in June 2012 and made recommendations in four main areas: the workforce pipeline, mentoring across career stages, infrastructure support, and peer review http://acd.od.nih.gov/dbr.htm A major focus of the recommendations was to give a diverse group of students an excellent research experience at the undergraduate stage, to pique early interest in all that a career in biomedical research has to offer. Implementation of these recommendations is also underway.

Putting the recommendations of both these reports into effect will have a profound impact on how NIH supports recruitment and training of the investigators of the future, ensuring that our programs are tailored to the needs of the workforce. Even in these tight times, we must keep our pipeline of future researchers strong.

These are just a few examples of what we’re doing to effectively manage during tight times. But one of the most important aspects of all the initiatives I have described above is that all of them have been crafted in collaboration with the biomedical research community. The scientists conducting the research and the research administrators, who are providing the apparatus for stimulating the most creative science imaginable, are how this enormous enterprise keeps on rocking. Organizations like NCURA help keep our eyes on the prize, which is to improve the health of our nation and the world. Thanks for all you do to make it happen. N

Sally J. Rockey, Ph.D. is the Deputy Director for Extramural Research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and also serves as the director of the NIH Office of Extramural Research (OER), the focal point for policies and guidelines for extramural research administration within NIH and in partnership with the biomedical research community. Dr. Rockey engages in active outreach about research administration and NIH activities in many forums, such as her blog — Rock Talk http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/rock-talk/ and Twitter @RockTalking
The theme of the magazine this month is Doing More With Less, the mantra of research administrators at most predominantly undergraduate institutions (PUIs). As a public PUI, Kennesaw State University (KSU) does not have the infrastructure or budget of fellow University System of Georgia (USG) institutions - UGA (Georgia), Georgia Tech, or Georgia State, let alone private research institutions (and some elite PUIs). KSU was founded as a two-year college 50 years ago; and when it became a four-year university in the 1990s, the focus was still on teaching. Although KSU faculty had been quite successful in obtaining National Science Foundation (NSF) Course, Curriculum, and Laboratory Improvement (CCLI) grants, as well as Department of Education Teacher Quality grants, it was not until the mid-2000s that faculty started having success in receiving research grants from NSF and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). At about this same time, the University started to emphasize the importance of research, while still highly valuing teaching and service.

While research started to become a more important component of the promotion and tenure process, the University had limited resources for release time for faculty or start-up packages for new hires. KSU had always been a place where people did more with less. Whether it was the Board of Regents’ asking KSU to test drive new processes or assume some USG administrative duties with no additional resources, or faculty having to teach seven or eight courses per year and making time for grant proposal writing and intramural research, employees at the university consistently did more with less.

There is a downside to always doing more with less – you are expected to continue doing more and more with no additional resources. As you regularly increase your output, it becomes ever harder to convince those with the purse strings that you actually need more resources. On an individual level, think of the employee who regularly assumes additional tasks. Before long, her job duties have expanded exponentially, and she is starting to run out of steam. How does she tell her boss that she needs help, that she has too much work to do? “What do you mean you need help? You are doing an outstanding job. You get everything done well and on time.” This employee has done such a great job doing more with less that she has shot herself in the foot. She has effectively increased the list of her job duties with no commensurate increase in salary or promotion. Should she have spoken up sooner and declined some of these additional tasks?

For a university, what does it mean to do more with less regularly? On the face of it, one is to be commended for being efficient; but if that efficiency is not rewarded with more resources, is that a hollow commendation? How does it affect a university’s potential to increase its research portfolio when it is administratively efficient, when it does more with less?

One area that is potentially negatively affected is the facilities and administrative (F&A) rate because the rate is calculated on the basis of the institution’s previous year’s expenditures. If the institution had low administrative expenditures in the prior year, this would be reflected in the F&A rate calculation. Since its federal awards do not meet the $10,000,000 threshold that would dictate use of the long form, KSU uses the short form to calculate its rate. The base is total direct costs (TDC) less capital equipment and subaward amounts in excess of $25,000. This is in contrast to the modified total direct costs (MTDC) described in A-21 that the long form yields. The short form TDC rate only excludes the capital equipment and subaward amounts.

The short form is less taxing to prepare (no space survey required) and considerably less expensive than the long form, which makes it more appropriate for PUIs. It is, however, not as precise as the long form and sometimes yields seemingly unjust results. This fact was brought home to us this spring as we finalized our F&A rate proposal—we were surprised and dismayed that the rate had decreased since the previous proposal. Research activity has increased; we have two beautiful new
promotion, has the university shot itself in the foot by being fiscally prudent and administratively efficient? One would hope not, but what is a conscientious PUI to do? It receives (and has always received) modest budget allotments from the state and is unable to increase tuition, and therefore has limited resources available for capital improvements, library expenses, staffing, or start-up packages. Funds are posed first to meet the instructional needs of a large public undergraduate student population and growing number of graduate students, and secondarily to invest in the facilities and non-instructional personnel. The institution is caught in the proverbial catch 22 — it needs to increase its spending on research in order to recoup higher F&A on sponsored research. With limited state resources and no ability to raise tuition, where does an institution find these additional resources to devote to the research enterprise?

While an institution can bemoan the lack of state resources and tuition, most institutions have some latitude in how they spend their funds. Should a PUI that is trying to increase its research activity and has prioritized it for new hires spend more strategically on its library and research facilities? Should it hire departmental staff to help with administrative tasks, thereby freeing up time for faculty that they can use to conduct intramural research or prepare grant proposals? Should it invest in an electronic grants-management system that would streamline proposal submission and award management?

These are difficult decisions for any institution to make because most have competing interests all vying for the same limited resources. Public institutions in particular have a public service mission, so it is difficult to cut back on public service, even when no or limited F&A costs are provided. Such projects contribute to the denominator, but very little to the numerator. However, were the institution to decline these activities, it could run afoul of its governing body or state legislature. More importantly, institutions of higher education are not driven by the bottom line and don’t base decisions solely on economics. Decisions are made to support the mission.

Student learning is paramount, and while faculty who are engaged in research bring implicit benefits to their students, including opportunities to conduct research, the many interests competing for limited resources can all claim that they are critical for student learning. Global learning is just one area that demands resources and the costs to be a globally engaged institution are not insignificant. How should an institution prioritize its spending?

Research administrators don’t usually have the ability to dictate strategic spending at their institutions, but sponsored programs personnel can raise the issue with senior level administrators and make them aware that how the institution chooses to spend its money can have a profound impact on its ability to increase its research activity. Improving the institution’s research resources will facilitate faculty research, increase faculty competitiveness, and strengthen proposals in the area of institutional environment and resources. Moreover, increased spending on research indirect costs will eventually yield a higher F&A rate, which will allow the institution to continue to devote more resources to research.

Lest one get carried away with the thought of a ballooning F&A rate, the idea is not to increase administrative spending just to spend more money and be less efficient. Rather, because F&A rates are currently determined by documented expenditures (presuming the Office of Management and Budget does not adopt a flat F&A rate for all institutions), if an institution with a relatively low F&A rate but aspirations of increasing research opportunities for its faculty and students wants to maximize its resources for this pursuit, the institution needs to make a strategic investment that considers F&A return.

Carolyn Elliott-Farino is the Director of Contracting and Grants Administration at Kennesaw State University. She is responsible for award negotiations and the daily operations of the KSU research foundation. Carolyn is active on the Magazine, in the PUI Community, and in Region III, and completed NCURAs LD1 program in 2009 and ELP in 2013. You can reach her at cellio12@kennesaw.edu
When I started my career in research administration in the 1980’s, the operations were far more manual and paper-based. The departmental office of that time required a lot of staff, stuff, and space. Picture a typical day preparing for a grant deadline. You have just re-typed the proposal budget for the umpteenth time on your IBM Selectric typewriter and checked the figures on your 10-key adding machine. The Principal Investigator has just returned the latest typed version of the research plan with the final changes marked in red to the secretary, so she can prepare the submission copy. Later that evening, you and two other staff members will prepare the final version for shipping. One person will manually page number the original, another will photocopy the original, and the third will collate (remember, the copier will duplicate only one page at a time) on the conference room table. Then, all three of you will check each page of each copy before packing them all in a shipping box and calling the courier service.

Meanwhile, an administrative assistant is typing up the human subject protocol, recently hand-drafted by a research coordinator. Another secretary has just received the stack of paper ledgers to be reviewed, copied and placed in various faculty mailboxes. An editorial assistant is formatting papers for journal submission, making sure each meets the formatting regulations of the specific journal.

As you look around the office, you notice that the walls are lined with shelves that are overflowing with binders of pending proposals, active awards, and financial reports. Beneath the shelves, a dozen filing cabinets house duplicate copies of every proposal and publication and all the human and animal protocols for the department.

Fast-forward thirty years and you find increased competition for grant funds and reductions in funding levels have made it necessary for investigators to submit increasing numbers of proposals just to maintain funding for their research. The evolving complexity of regulatory compliance has increased the post-award management burden. Stricter regulations on the use of grant funding to support administrative activity have resulted in decreasing funds for administrative staff. At the same time the pre-award volume and post-award requirements have intensified, funding for staff support has dwindled.

How does a departmental research administration office survive, and indeed thrive, in the current reality? How does an administrator do more with less? Throughout my career in research administration, the pressure to do more with less has always been there. In my most recent career move, I went from an office with a staff of six to a one-person pre- and post-award shop. Now, as in the past, my key strategy to do more with less is to embrace technology.

Less Staff, Stuff, and Space

Changing technology is a constant in the world of research administration. With the introduction of email, electronic spreadsheets, word processing software, and high-speed copying and scanning, less and less staff time has been needed for budget preparation, form completion, and all-around communication with investigators. Further, electronic templates have cut the time for required research narrative editing. As investigators have become increasingly comfortable with computers and various software packages, they have preferred to finalize their own research plans and publications, reducing the need for traditional secretarial positions. Advances in copying and scanning technology have cut the time required for duplicating final copies. These changes have paved the way for electronic images of hard copy documents and the electronic grant package.

In my experience, electronic research administration (eRA) systems, electronic federal portals (e.g. Grants.gov and NSF Fastlane), and an increasing number of non-federal online grant submission systems (e.g. proposalCENTRAL) have created significant time savings. They have cut countless hours of staff time previously required for numbering pages, duplicating, checking and packaging copies, and coordinating shipping. These tools have not only enabled the office to function with fewer staff members, but also significantly reduced supply costs, inventory and storage costs, and shipping costs. In short, we now need fewer staff and less stuff.

Less stuff equals more space. With eRA systems and more sophisticated financial reporting systems, an increasing number of records, documents, and data can be made available online. All of these resources have reduced the need for hard copy records and the space they occupy, and the space savings can always be put to good use. For example, research project space always is at a premium in units recruiting faculty. In my own experience, eRA and accounting systems provided the opportunity to re-evaluate the space needs for my research administration operation. Since I no longer needed space to store hard copy proposals, financial reports, or financial transactions, I
required only about half of the allotted office space. So, I was able to move to a more efficiently-sized space and at the same free up much-needed space for faculty support.

Professional Development and Training at Your Desktop

Technology-enabled productivity gains combined with shrinking budgets have reduced the number of staff needed in a research administration office. However, the pressure to maintain technical competence has increased. Today, research administrators must be fluent in numerous online eRA systems. They also need to stay current with the increasingly complex nature of pre- and post-award compliance issues and with the latest policy and procedure developments at their own institutions. This is a tall order for departments with little or no budget to support staff travel for professional development.

Here again, technology offers a solution. Distance learning and asynchronous education are by now commonplace at nearly every institution. The same systems that enable an online version of Biology 101 can also facilitate professional development, education, and training opportunities in research administration. For example, federal agencies like NIH and NSF offer webinars on a variety of topics including submission processes and new or revised agency policies. Professional organizations like NCURA also provide live webinar training opportunities, as well as online archived training sessions and DVDs, to bring training within reach of even the most modest budgets and constrained schedules. For maximum cost-effectiveness, consider watching webinars with at least two other colleagues to share the learning experience.

Time Management and the New Relationship of Home and Office

For better or worse, the pressure to get more done has shattered the barrier between work and home. Some may view the broken boundary as a negative development. However, technology can make possible more strategic time at home during the hours of the traditional work day, while allowing a research administrator to be available when needed. One can take a laundry break, for example, instead of a coffee break. Smart phones, laptops, tablets, web-based systems, online submissions, remote access software can all be used to re-define work hours and work location. Colleagues can now “flex” the day to accommodate child care needs more easily, while still meeting their professional obligations. Moreover, these technological developments can help retain valuable staff members. In the past, an illness, a move, a change in child care arrangements, or the challenge of long distance care for elderly parents probably would have resulted in the loss of an experienced and valued team member. Now, with the use of technology, departments can offer more options to staff members to create innovative and positive solutions to these situations.

Conclusion

The research administration office of today would be scarcely recognizable to the administrator of thirty years ago. Yes, we are doing more with less staff, less stuff, and less space. We also are doing more with more technology. Technology has helped make our offices more efficient, while providing flexible ways to stay up-to-date and balance work and home life. It is the solution to the riddle of “do more with less.” Embrace it!

Suzanne Fournier is Assistant Dean for Administration and Director of Grants and Contracts at the School of Social Service Administration at The University of Chicago. She can be reached at s-fournier@uchicago.edu

Jill Mortali’s Desk

As I sit here at my desk pondering life and my career, I hope that I am not getting too jaded as I advance in years in the field of research administration (these years do not equate to me actually aging because one year in the field is like seven years or dog years or something). The reason that I worry about getting jaded is that history repeats and I have to categorize events. Sometimes these events are categorized into “I have no one to blame but myself.” A classic example is the never-ending cycle of pining for a new grants system, working for years to garner support and make choices for the ultimate, end-all system. When analyzing this choice, I obviously shouldn’t have paper piling up on my desk, but I do start piling up the emails on what systems work and don’t work from all my research administration colleagues. For maximum cost-effectiveness, consider watching webinars with at least two other colleagues to share the learning experience.

Jill Mortali is Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects at Dartmouth College.
Gunta Liders, Associate Vice President for Research Administration of University of Rochester is the 2013 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.

In her 26 years as an NCURA member, Gunta has made many contributions to the organization. Her services include fulfilling the roles of Secretary on the National Board of Directors, Treasurer of Region II, Chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, member of the Traveling Workshop Faculty, presenter at national and regional conferences, and participant in the Leadership Development Institute. Gunta has also enhanced NCURA’s educational offerings through her authorship of NCURA publications, serving as a moderator and panelist on NCURATV and taking the lead role as Editor of the latest edition of A Primer on Clinical Trials for the Research Administrator.

When speaking of her work, Gail Norris of University of Rochester says that Gunta is, without doubt, one of my most trusted and respected colleagues at the University. Her work is consistently of the highest quality. She has knowledge of the research enterprise at the University that is incredibly broad and deep. Moreover, she has excellent relationships with her colleagues in peer institutions, so if we are faced with an issue of first impression, she is able to use her network as a resource. I know that she also willingly serves as a resource for her colleague institutions within NCURA as well.

Jerry Fife of Vanderbilt University shares that Gunta is one of my “go to” people when I need assistance. She provides guidance on a number of research related topics through personal contact and numerous sessions and workshops and NCURA TV programs which she has taught…Gunta’s service to NCURA, COGR and FDP demonstrates her commitment to research administration.

When speaking about her leadership, Ara Tahmassian of Boston University says, A hallmark of a good leader is the ability to mentor and inspire others; a trait that comes naturally to Gunta. Her willingness to share her knowledge and experiences and mentor those new to the field is legendary. Over the years she has been a greater mentor and resource of information for so many, myself included. I have turned for help on so many more occasions that I cannot remember the count. Watching Gunta at various forums spend time explaining issues and following with the phrase “contact me you have other questions” or “I can send our procedures,” is an inspirational experience.

Denise Clark of University of Maryland College Park shares that Gunta has been and currently is one of the most dedicated, knowledgeable, and collegial research administrators in the country. Throughout her career she has been guided by a well-grounded set of core values and principles and has conducted herself with the utmost integrity. Her service to the profession is immense, with notable contributions and volunteerism to not only NCURA but also COGR and FDP… Gunta is not only deserving of this prestigious form of recognition but is a perfect candidate to receive NCURA’s highest honor, the Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration award.

Jane Youngers, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, offers, “While many have made significant contributions and have had substantial impact on research administration, I can’t imagine anyone who has done so with such talent, humor, and grace. We are all made better by her knowledge and friendship.”

On receiving the award, Gunta states, “I am honored to have been selected as this year’s recipient of NCURA’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration. To be recognized by my peers is truly a humbling experience, as I regard so many of my NCURA colleagues as outstanding professionals.”

Gunta Liders will receive the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration on Monday, August 5, 2013, at the 55th Annual Meeting Keynote Address.
The 2013 Award recipients are:

**Judy Fredenberg**, Director, Research and Sponsored Programs, University of Montana. Judy currently serves as a member of NCURA's Traveling Workshop Faculty and Ambassador Corps. Her volunteer services also include Vice President and President of NCURA (2010-2011), Chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, Vice Chair and Chair of the LDI Leadership Team, and member of the Professional Development Committee. As a recipient of this award, Judy states, “I am honored to be a recipient of this award. It’s particularly meaningful as it has been renamed in tribute to Julia Jacobsen, a founding officer of NCURA. When I consider her contribution to NCURA and the profession, and that of prior recipients, I am truly humbled to join their ranks as ‘I stand on the shoulders of giants.’”

**Barbara Gray**, Director of Sponsored Programs & Research Administration, Valdosta State University. Barbara most recently served as NCURA Secretary (2010-2012) and At-Large member of the National Board of Directors. She has also held the positions of Region III's Secretary-Treasurer, Chair-Elect and Regional Chair. At the national level, Barbara has chaired several task forces and working groups, served on NCURA's Traveling Workshop Faculty and was a member of two Annual Meeting Program committees. She has also presented many times at the national and regional level. Barbara shares, “I am truly honored to be a 2013 recipient of NCURA's Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. This award is very special to me in that it affirms the trust my colleagues have placed in me over the years as they gave me so many opportunities to serve and lead. The naming of the award this year in honor and memory of one of our early founders, who gave so much of her time and talents (and even her kitchen table!) to make NCURA a success, makes it even more treasured. We hear many times throughout life that ‘the more you give, the more you receive,’ and that has truly been my experience in NCURA. By volunteering and serving, I learned so much that guaranteed my professional success. But, more importantly, I have developed lasting friendships with some of the greatest people in the world! I thank each and every one of you for your trust, your support, your steadfastness, and this very great honor.”

**Stephen Hansen**, Dean and Professor Emeritus, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Steve currently serves on NCURA’s Peer Review Team and has taught in various forums, including NCURA’s Traveling Workshops, NCURA-TV and workshops and concurrent sessions. He held the positions of NCURA President (1997), Chair of the Professional Development Committee, member of the Advisory Board for the Report on Research Compliance, member of the Annual Meeting Task Force, and Chair of the Annual Meeting Program Committee. He has also served as the Chair of Region IV and a member of its Executive Committee. Steve has authored numerous articles and publications for NCURA. Steve shares that “NCURA has enriched my professional life in numerous ways. It has given me the opportunity to learn about the profession of research administration and introduced me to a vast network of knowledgeable and supportive colleagues. I can say without any hesitation that participating in NCURA helped me advance in my career. I learned as much about research administration by serving on NCURA committees and making presentations at its meetings as I did by reading articles and attending sessions. I am humbled and honored to receive a Distinguished Service Award for my efforts.”
**2013 Joseph F. Carrabino Award**

The Joseph F. Carrabino Award, established in 2003 by the NCURA Board of Directors, is named after the late Joe Carrabino, NSF Grants Officer. This award recognizes a current or former Federal partner who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either by a single project, activity, or innovation, or by a lifetime of service. The NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected **Sally Rockey**, National Institutes of Health, as the recipient of the 2013 Joseph F. Carrabino Award.

Sally Rockey received her Ph.D. in Entomology from The Ohio State University. She currently serves as the NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research and Director of the Office of Extramural Research. In these roles, Sally provides overall leadership for NIH extramural research and training policy and operations at the National Institutes of Health. She works to identify the needs and opportunities for advancement in extramural research and solves complex problems that include multiple high level representatives across NIH, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Government and the extramural community. Sally also develops and implements major policies at the National level and serves as a member of the NIH Executive Council.

Michelle Bulls, Director, Office of Policy for Extramural Research Administration, NIH, and Joe Ellis, Senior Analyst for the Office of Extramural Affairs, NIH, share,

Dr. Rockey has been an innovative leader in federal assistance research administration for over 25 years... In 2005, to the great gain of NIH and the extramural research community at large, Dr. Rockey brought her energy, creativity, and leadership to NIH; first in the role of Deputy Director of the Office of Extramural Research (OER), and now as the NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research and Director of the Office of Extramural Research. Throughout her outstanding NIH tenure, she has become highly respected for her steadfast and progressive vision for federal grant-making policy and the need for developing policies that foster scientific freedom and creativity, while ensuring scientific integrity, transparency, and accountability. Dr. Rockey's leadership continually balances the critical requirements with the goal of minimizing administrative burdens associated with NIH and federal award supporting the conduct of research at Universities and other institutions.

In addressing her positions within NIH, Carol Blum, Director of Research Compliance and Administration, COGR, states,

In her role as Deputy Director of the extramural research program at NIH, Dr. Rockey has sought innovative ways to examine the

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**Norman Hebert,** Director International Research Administration, Brown University. Norm is a member of NCURA’s Ambassador Corps and has presented for numerous workshops and concurrent sessions. He previously served on the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, the Professional Development Committee, the Annual Meeting Program Committee and chaired the 6th Annual Pre-Award Conference. In his remarks on receiving the award Norm expresses, “I am extremely grateful to the NCURA Board for acknowledgement as one of this year’s recipients of the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. I have been fortunate over the years to have the generous support and encouragement from individuals and institutions that I have worked for—all who have understood and appreciated the unique training and professional development offered by NCURA. I am thankful, too, for the NCURA members themselves, for the generous and patient ways they network with peers, inform members and contribute to their future professional development. Thank you all so much!”

**David Richardson,** Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Director of Sponsored Programs, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dave currently serves on the National Board of Directors and has taken an active role in NCURA’s international efforts as a member of the Global Working Group, assisting with coordinating the INORMS 2014 conference and taking traveling workshops abroad. Dave served as NCURA’s Vice President and President (2009-2010), Vice Chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee and Chair Elect then Chair of Region III (2004-2005). He also sits on the 2013 Pre-Award Conference Program Committee and continues to present at the national and regional level. In reaction to the award, Dave says, “I’m humbled to receive the 2013 National Council of University Research Administrators’ Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. Having the opportunity to volunteer and give back to an organization that has given me so much is an honor. From volunteering to assist with the handing out of registration packets to serving as an officer, I’ve sincerely enjoyed every moment of my service to NCURA and I remain forever grateful to the many opportunities to expand both my personal and professional knowledge of research administration. I wish to thank those who supported my service to NCURA and to my many collaborators who volunteered alongside me for this recognition would simply not have been possible without their support.”

The Distinguished Service Award recipients will be recognized at the upcoming 55th Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, August 5, 2013. Please join us in thanking them for their service and their contributions!
partnership, communicate its results, and advocate for the conduct of life-saving biomedical research at the nation’s colleges and universities. As Director of the Office of Extramural Research, she has engaged in thoughtful and on-going discussions and deliberations on how to make the partnership effective and efficient in light of increasing demands for accountability and transparency. Dr. Rockey and I have engaged in lively discussions on the best path to achieve these goals and I can’t think of a more open, collegial and committed partner for those debates.

Mark Herbst, Senior Staff Specialist for Research and Grants, Department of Defense, reflects on his collaboration with Dr. Rockey when she co-chaired the A-21 Task Force, which the Office of Management and Budget and Office of Science and Technology Policy charged with recommending ways to reduce burdens and costs for academic research. He says, Dr. Rockey’s effectiveness as an advocate proved invaluable to moving recommendations successfully through a diverse group of individuals. As a testament to her success, public statements made by officials of the Executive Office of the President credited the Task Force for some of the proposals put forward in a Federal Register notice on Government-wide grants reform, proposals that unquestionably will reduce burdens and costs for research institutions and researchers.

Gil Tran, Office of Management and Budget, shares that Sally is a tireless and enthusiastic leader in many of those projects, with the superb capability of balancing the interest of the Federal Government for accountability and the interest of academia for simplicity... Because of her dedication to the research community, her never-ending effort to improve research administration, I believe she is the most deserving person to receive this prestigious award.

In her own words, Sally says, “I am truly honored to receive the Joseph Carrabino Award. Throughout my long career of research administration I have found no better partner than the Universities, with whom I have had both challenging and rewarding adventures. NCURA’s recognition of my work is humbling and gives me even more pride in all we have accomplished together.”

As recipient of the 2013 Joseph F. Carrabino Award, Sally will be recognized at the 55th Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, August 5, 2013.

“Collaborate Conversations”

We picked our favorite Collaborate Community conversation topics over last couple months to make sure you don’t miss any of the juicy gossip...we mean professional development! Popular recent topics:

Financial Research Community – “Health Savings Account Employer Contributions”, posted by Shannon Fisher, Kansas State University, is trying to tackle the complex issue of lump-sum payments on grants, related to health savings accounts.

We have a cross-post for Pre-Award and PUI, where Catherine Caldwell asked a multi-part question about grant transfers and its impact on F&A, subcontracting, and budgeting. Catherine is from the University of Detroit Mercy.

In the Subcontracting Community, there was some discussion about subcontract administrator position descriptions. If you have any to share, check out Collaborate!

Jennifer Easley from Mississippi State University inquired about faculty Grant Writing Workshops in the Pre-Award Community.

In the International Community, Scott Niles from Morehead State University asked a question about “European Research Administration” and the differences between European and United States processes.
Ann, we have missed you, what have you been doing over the last several years?

Thanks for asking. It’s nice to know I’ve been missed.

As time has gone by, I’ve become fascinated by preserving things—by making jellies, things like that. Sometimes I tour the county fairs. Have won a few ribbons. My pride and joy is the one I got for a concoction I put together from a mélange of leftovers from my previous entries. To celebrate the big moment in this year’s federal regulations simplification scene, I called it “FAR in a Jar.” Got honorable mention. The judges liked the bitter taste—kind of sharp marmaladish.

For our newer readers, could you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got your start?

My start in the NCURA Newsletter? It goes way back to the 1980’s, when Frea Sladek and Eugene Stein at San Diego State University became editors of Grants Magazine. They asked my mentor, Bob Lucas, to do a column about the funny things that happened in the sponsored programs office. It was to be patterned after “Life in These United States” a column that ran in the Reader’s Digest. Bob agreed. He called his column “Grins in the Grants Office.” A few of your current readers may remember it.

After he had written about 40 columns, Bob gathered them into a book—The Grants World Inside Out—which the University of Illinois Press published in 1992. It covered pretty much the gamut of activities in a typical university sponsored programs office.

Since it probed the underbelly of what really goes on in university research administration, it became popular in grants offices. I’ve heard that some offices, after orienting new employees to procedures and laying out sheets of “best practices,” give them a copy of this book and say “Now if you want to know what really goes on around here . . . read this.”

Anyway, while Bob was putting that book together, he put me in charge of a Q and A section, handing me the thorny issues too prickly for him to handle. When Allen Sinisgalli, then Editor of the NCURA Newsletter, saw my work, he was smitten as if by a Love Potion. He asked me to do a column for the Newsletter, which I did for the next ten years.

The pressure was intense. People bringing me problems they couldn’t confide in their provost. Frazzled from the stress, I took a sabbatical in 2000, and a year later opted for early retirement. I haven’t looked back since, mostly because the place where I am now has no windows.

Ann, are you seeing anyone?

Frankly, what with my cats, and my preserves, and a few cats I’ve preserved, I don’t have much time left to be looking. That’s not to say I don’t have some friends who’ve been looking for me. One fixed me up with this guy who seemed a perfect fit. I mean, can you believe this, he had a column just like mine, and with a similar name—Grant Landers. He was, as I recall, at VPI. What I especially liked about him.
was that he had no moustache, so there was none of that brusha-brusha thing when we . . .

you know.

At first it was blissful. We finished each other’s sentences. Before long, we were starting each other’s sentences. Pretty soon, we were saying exactly the same thing, simultaneously beginning to end.

But I got tired of it all, bored really. It was like taking a shower with yourself. Eventually it ended. Because of our mutually generated speech impediment, it was hard to tell who did it. But it ended. I’m okay about it now. It’s nice to talk without an echo. (Grant, if you’re out there, would you text me?)

Do you have a few words to share with us about the direction in which research administration is going?

Until we get something like Stepford Faculty Members, I think the issues will remain the same. They’ll just come in different guises and we’ll address them in different ways. We still have deadlines that test our resilience, although FedEx is no longer the shining knight that slayed the “last-minute” dragon. Indirect costs are all they have ever been except that finally they’ve been redubbed Facilities ‘n’ Administrative Fees. La meme chose. (Sighs.)

What do you think about the super circular?

Whose heart didn’t leap when they first saw the proposed regulations in the Federal Register? Mine perhaps? Fact is, I was suspicious right from the beginning. Like why would the Feds want to do something so obviously helpful? Didn’t they already have the right formula? Lots of circulars, strength in numbers? Hadn’t all the conflicting regs simply solidified our roles as the master interpreters? Sounds just a bit like job security.

Now I could be wrong too. I’ll wait till I see the final regs. In the meantime, I’ll take the e pluribus, you can keep the unum.

Ann, I know I’m not supposed to ask this, but really how old are you?

No straight answer, but a hint: As far as I am concerned, the age-old question “Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I’m sixty-four?” will always be an age-old question.

What were some of your favorite letters?

I like the one that has probably been read the most. It was reprinted in the popular guide for new academics, Advice for New Faculty Members, written by my friend, mentor, and colleague Robert Boice—a book I heartily recommend to all new faculty members.

The query Boice quoted was from a college professor who wrote tersely. “I wrote a proposal but I didn’t get a grant. What gives?” To which I replied: “The directness of your letter suggests that you may have an overly simple idea of what’s involved in writing a grant proposal. It’s a myth that all you have to do to get a grant is to write a proposal. In fact you have to think, search, analyze, discuss, draft, trim, phone, edit, revise, amplify, consult, rewrite, polish, review, budget, send, wait, negotiate, redo, rebudget—and perhaps then you get the grant. . . . Go back over this checklist and see if maybe you haven’t skipped a few steps.”

Over the past ten years, that letter has been read by thousands of new faculty members throughout the country. If you have noticed an upward trend in the quality of proposals among your newbies, that entry may have helped.

Who were some of your favorite folks to respond to?

You know, I didn’t get as many letters as you might think. I wrote it off to the fact that we were all busy, and few had the time to send me letters. There were a few exceptions, of course, but they were from the type who shouldn’t be corresponding with anyone. My responses to those are in my private letters, and shall remain so.

Were you ever able to help anyone with their personal issues?

If there’s anything we know about research administrators, it’s that we’re all professional. We can’t have personal issues because we have to be strong so our faculty members can be strong when they battle such perilous issues as filling out time and effort reports.

Do you want to tell us who you are?

Who am I? Don’t you have any easy questions? I’m tempted to hide behind Walt Whitman’s copout, and say that “I am multitudes”—perhaps Miss Piggy inside a Martha Stewart getup? or a kind loving man CRA-ed into a woman’s body? or a modern day Ganesha with an elephant’s head grafted onto a Ryan Gosling body? But the fact is that I really am Bob Lucas. Just plain old Bob.

Do you have any more questions? This is not where I would like to end this interview.

Just one more. Will we be hearing from you in the future?

Getting back to the echo and the preserving themes, Bob has been thinking of pulling my letters together and reissuing them as a collection. He wants to do it because a fan of The Grants World Inside Out once told him that sometimes, after a rough day of struggling with export control, he takes the book down and reads a few chapters before leaving the office. It is his non-alcoholic attitude adjustment hour. Bob figures if it worked for him, he may have saved a few strokes or nervous breakdowns here and there, humor being the best medicine (another Reader’s Digest column, by the way).

If he puts all the letters together in one place, they might also provide the same solace. The book will surely be a lot cheaper than 45 minutes with a shrink or the co-payment for Zoloft.

Editor’s Note: Readers, I have asked Ann if we could reprint several of her letters in subsequent issues and she has gladly agreed. Be ready for your heart and mind to be edified. Also, I keep asking her about getting a photo of Bob, maybe we will get that down the road.

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A Four-Stage Approach to Maximizing Your Organizational Structure and Business Procedures

By Tim Patterson and Rob Rubens

If yours is like most other institutions, your research administration office feels the growing pressures of the current environment: flat federal research funding since 2004,1 greater complexity of federal regulations, ever-increasing federal reporting and transparency requirements (including ARRA, FFATA, DATA, etc.), annual audits, federal investigations, a highly diverse funding portfolio with more intricate funding mechanisms, and high demand for excellent customer support.

On top of that, you likely face difficult decisions on how to address these issues while balancing internal challenges such as operating budget reductions, a push for improved processes on a tightened spending plan, staff turnover, an ongoing need for training and education, and meeting service level expectations, all while keeping day-to-day production levels steady.

No problem, right?

So this would seem to be a particularly tough time to transform the operations of your research administration office. However, if your institution wants to get maximum productivity from that office, now is precisely the time to be measuring output against goals and thinking of how to improve those numbers.

The prospect of change, especially in the face of the many pressures of research operations, may seem overwhelming. But when broken down into stages, it is less intimidating. The following is a four stage approach to face and conquer the overhaul of a research administration operation:

1. Vision and Planning: Conduct a visioning exercise that considers the core aspects of the research administration infrastructure and supporting processes and defines performance targets and goals. Who do we want to be? Are we meeting those goals?

2. Discovery: Perform an in-depth assessment of the current infrastructure against your vision and identify opportunities for improvement.

3. Design: Create a roadmap for transformative change.

4. Implementation and Operational Support: Provide oversight and operational support throughout the implementation and after deployment to ensure the sustainability of project goals and results.

Vision and Planning: The initial steps in any organizational assessment or process redesign – determining if there is a need and deciding where to start – are often the most challenging. So, where do you start and how do you know it’s time to take action? Negative customer feedback, comments from process owners about increased workload or processing time, staff turnover, pending system implementations, and audit findings or concerns can serve as drivers to start a review.

Time should be another factor for consideration. If an organizational review has not been conducted in the last 3 to 5 years, it’s time to do one, especially with the ever changing landscape of research administration. Over time, certain processes can become overly manual, time consuming, or redundant with other procedures. If business procedures are undocumented, consistency from one staff member to another grows to become an issue, particularly if there has been turnover.

Put pen to paper and create a vision for your office. Even though you may modify this slightly as you go, you should establish upfront where you hope to take your organization. Focus on your office’s mission statement and ask: where do we want to be 6, 12, 24, 48 months from now? This is not the place to write your business goals; those are the outcome of pursuing your vision and holding your organization accountable for its values. Here is where you draft four or five guiding principles that describe why, how, and what your research organization performs. Empower others who are part of this transformative process to assist in drafting the vision. When drafting: be specific; be actionable. Then, begin asking the more finite questions to get started:

- What are the core responsibilities of your office?
- What is your office’s mission statement? Are you following it?
- Have you established performance goals, and are you managing to them?
Who are you serving? Are you meeting their needs?
How long does it take for work to flow through your office?
How many different sets of hands are involved with each process?
Whose hands are they?

Once leadership has identified the need to take action, consensus should be obtained from key stakeholders and individuals charged with change management. Buy-in is critical. Not having a thoroughly vetted and agreed-upon plan can create or exacerbate a number of future roadblocks, including scope creep, time mismanagement, unclear goals, unrealistic expenditures, poor resource utilization, increased backlog, etc.

Proactive project planning and management is paramount to successful execution of any operational review. A documented project plan should list key tasks, establish milestone dates for completion, and assign individuals or groups as responsible for completing each task. Project plans should also be flexible enough to allow tasks or steps to be added as part of the discovery step (highlighted below) and realistic enough to allow for the completion of day to day tasks. Don’t forget, your regular business doesn’t stop, slow down, or pause to allow time for this review to take place. Your office still needs to find a way to get the work done; hence, managing expectations around the amount of time required to complete the review is important. Also, make sure to account for items that might impact the work plan, such as month-end close, year-end close, holidays or vacation time, infrequent but relevant steering committee meetings, and certain sponsor driven deadlines.

**Discovery:** The second stage involves assessing the current infrastructure, including performing an in-depth evaluation of the workload, creating a task inventory of the items your office is responsible for completing, identifying possible processes that would benefit from an improvement in workflow or automation, and noting unnecessary or institutionally over-regulated or overly complicated practices.

If you sense that it takes too long to complete a certain task or to review, approve, and process a particular document, it probably does. How do you test that? Internal tracking metrics, detailed process mapping — which will highlight areas of inefficiency or redundancy — and survey responses from campus customers will validate or disprove that concern.

Who performs this discovery step? A workgroup should be established with mixed representation of process owners, key stakeholders, and other change management personnel to research and collect data. This group should meet with primary customers, as appropriate, to better understand concerns, to isolate pain points, and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Before anyone takes a deep dive into data mining or analysis, carefully review the inventory of areas targeted for review. Establish what the group would like to better understand regarding your organization’s role in each of these areas, and prioritize the work plan accordingly.

Be careful to avoid the trap of “paralysis by analysis.” Try not to take on so much at one time that the workgroup loses sight of its goals. Operational improvement takes place over time and tends to be cyclical with recurring evaluations. It’s not something that will be completed in a week.

Many institutions do not have accurate or current metrics available to evaluate operational or personnel efficiency. These numbers should, however, be one of your outcomes from this initial assessment. You want to have answers to questions like:

- Are we meeting service level expectations? Moreover, have we taken time to establish service level expectations that we can then manage to?
- Does the staff have the support they need to do their jobs? This includes clear process documentation, tools and templates, systems, training, etc.
- What type of workloads do individuals at similarly-sized institutions process?

By gathering an inclusive and representative data set for work completed over a period, for example the past twelve months, you can begin to evaluate your organization’s efficiencies – and sometimes lack thereof.

**Design:** This stage requires answering questions such as: What did the workgroup discover as part of its review? What opportunities for change would you rank as being the highest priority, easiest to implement, or have the greatest return on investment? What are the obstacles that will prevent you from being successful?

Once the workgroup has an inventory of the opportunities available for change, begin brainstorming potential solutions and meet with your key customers, as appropriate, to further discuss the impact and benefit of the suggested enhancements and changes. These might include revised workflow, streamlined approvals, opportunities for automation, or even reassignment of duties or tasks.

Next, narrow your immediate focus to one solution or change, and obtain consensus from key decision makers on the proposed approach. Assuming there is support and buy-in for the suggested changes, identify a desired implementation date. Think about the steps that will have to be completed prior to that date. Are there tools, process maps, checklists, etc. that need to be created or modified? Are there training implications for the staff and/or the campus community? If so, how will you roll out the training? Who will conduct it? Who will attend? Obviously, training needs to be completed in advance of the implementation date, and time must be allotted for it.
Who else might be impacted? A communication plan should be drafted to notify other affected individuals of the pending change, implementation date, anticipated benefits, and any process modifications involving them. Other impacts to consider in your communication plan may include shifts in workload, reassigning staff to different areas, and redefining roles and responsibilities for the unit.

As you complete plans for your first solution or change, start to build long term plans for subsequent changes, and begin the process over again: think through the impacts and steps necessary for success.

Implementation and Operational Support: Implementation of change is not easy, but should not be feared. An implementation is likely to be successful if it is thoughtfully planned with open communication, transparency, and support. Employees will require training, ongoing support, and perhaps most important, time to adjust. In the short term (a.k.a. the stabilization period), productivity may suffer, but gains in operating efficiencies, quicker turnaround times, and increased customer support will make up for it in the long term.

How do you survive those first few weeks or months? There may not be much of an impact. To the extent that there is, institutions may consider allowing overtime hours for select staff members or hiring temporary assistance to augment existing staff to guard against productivity letdowns and allow for this stabilization and adjustment period to pass. Additional training or retraining may also be needed to ensure staff members are performing tasks as outlined.

Make sure to establish a series of milestone dates to track progress against newly established goals. Plan to communicate the progress to key stakeholders and impacted customers, and make sure to take time to celebrate the accomplishments with the process owners. This will make future changes smoother and more welcoming for the staff to handle.

Conclusion: Transforming an organization and effecting organizational change are not simple tasks. However, thoughtfully moving through each of the above four stages with adaptation to one’s unique institutional settings will achieve the goals you set out to accomplish. Remember to adjust your plan as you go; each setting is different and typically involves a myriad of moving parts, which will not be the same throughout the course of the project.

Transparency, communication, "staying the course," and celebrating wins are a few of the most important factors to ensure success and build or restore rapport along the road for organizational change. Are you ready for it? Good luck!!

1 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)  http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd

Olaf Svenningsen’s Desk

In two words: Ketchup Effect. Research support has grown “organically” at SDU during the past 5 years as external funding has doubled (Danish universities still get most of their funding directly from the government), meaning that there has been a frustrating lack of coordination and transparent processes. This past year, we have finally consolidated the organization of research support. However, now everything comes at once, hence the Ketchup Effect: We have launched major projects revising and streamlining the entire grants process, fixing the web pages, designing grantsmanship training for junior researchers and much more, and all those projects are piling up on my desk at a worrying rate. And the scientists keep writing proposals!

Olaf Svenningsen is Head of Southern Denmark Research Support, at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, Denmark

Tim Patterson is a Senior Director in the Higher Education and Life Sciences practice at Huron Consulting Group. Tim has close to 18 years of experience working in areas such as university operations and research administration with an emphasis on grant and contact administration, compliance with cost accounting standards, operational improvement, training development, and audit resolution. He has presented at a number of regional and national NCURA conferences. Tim can be reached at tpatterson@huronconsultinggroup.com

Rob Rubens, CPA, CFF (IL), is an Associate in the Higher Education and Life Sciences practice at Huron Consulting Group. Rob has experience leading teams in areas related to process redesign, compliance, and finance. He has developed project frameworks, assisted with central office reorganizations, and conducted trainings for multiple higher education institutions. In addition, he is a member of NCURA and the AICPA. Rob can be reached at rrubens@huronconsultinggroup.com
This edition of *NCURA Magazine*’s theme is “Doing More With Less.” NCURA realizes that with today’s tight budgets, all our members are feeling the squeeze to continue their professional development. Thanks to the generosity of two of NCURA’s long time members, our organization has been graced with the opportunity to establish an education scholarship fund to support continuing professional development for members.

As stated in the National Council of University Research Administrators’ Articles of Incorporation, the Council is organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes and to assist individuals with professional interests in the administration of sponsored programs (research, education and training) primarily at colleges and universities. One of NCURA’s objectives is to maintain a prepared group of research administrators in the future. The LDI (Leadership Development Institute) and ELP (Executive Leadership Development) were critical in moving forward in this sector. Just as importantly, toward this goal, in 2008 NCURA committed funds to support the establishment of a discipline specific Master’s degree in Sponsored Programs Administration. This resulted in the creation of programs at both Rush University Medical Center and the University of Central Florida. Other on-line programs, such as Emmanuel College’s also grant this degree, and another university will soon bring a Master’s degree on-line.

The next logical step in member professional development support was to ensure we address the issue of fewer resources at a time when many facets of research administration are evolving and changing. New regulations and increased transparency have contributed to a rapidly changing environment in which we all work. It is more critical than ever that our members are able to maintain their currency in the field to be successful and protect their institutions.

NCURA received a challenge financial gift from past president Jerry Fife, Vanderbilt University, with the intent of starting an Education Scholarship Fund. The purpose of this Education Scholarship Fund is to provide financial assistance to support continuing educational and professional development needs for NCURA members.

A task force has been appointed by the Board of Directors and is actively identifying goals and objectives to raise the funds necessary to support and manage this initiative. All funds will be raised without impact to either dues or registration fees. Currently the task force is looking at approaching private foundations, conducting fund raisers, and encouraging individual members to contribute.

Stay tuned in for more information and activities!  

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

**Pam Whitlock** (Chair)  
University of North Carolina at Wilmington (emeritus)

**Bob Andresen**  
(NCURA Treasurer)  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

**James Casey**  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Jerry Fife**  
Vanderbilt University

**Kathleen Larmett**  
NCURA

**Kim Moreland**  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

**Kris Monahan**  
Providence College

**Patricia Hawk**  
(NCURA President)  
Oregon State University

**Peggy Lowry**  
Oregon State University (emeritus)

**Suzanne Rivera**  
Case Western Reserve University

**Even a Little Makes a Difference**

*Pam Whitlock*, Educational Scholarship Fund Initiative Chair, University of North Carolina at Wilmington (emeritus), and NCURA Past President.
For most of us, managing a career is a lifelong process. Whether we have just graduated from college and started our first position, or have spent 20+ years in the workforce and are looking forward to retirement, we constantly need to assess our place in our career and plan for the next steps. This is no easy task, however. We do not have crystal balls to warn us of downsizing, boredom or burnout, or an opening for our dream job. But we can be proactive and plan for the progression of our careers that often go hand-in-hand with the stages of our personal lives.

This article discusses several pivotal milestones as we journey through our careers and how to optimize these milestones in order to achieve personal and professional goals. While it is important to note that these are generalizations and not everyone has the same experiences in each decade, there is great value in reflecting upon each decade of your career.

**Your 20s – Your Energy Level is at its Peak, Use It!**

Career planning in our 20s often focuses on short-term goals, such as finishing a college degree in a desired field, landing that first post-college job, and establishing a professional reputation. But to advance in that first job or to obtain a different position often requires long-term career planning. Now is the perfect time to assess where you want to be in the next five years and determine how to get there. Sometimes this requires additional education. Most higher learning institutions do not have majors in research administration. Consequently, special courses or certificate programs may be needed to learn the many regulations and requirements of our field. If aiming for a management position, now is the time to determine if advanced degrees or other areas of knowledge are necessary for achieving this goal.

Another important aspect of long-term career planning is having the right people show you the path and guide your way. Critical to achieving your career goals is finding a mentor with the experience, wisdom, and network to help you become more accomplished in your current position, to break into a new field, or advance to the next level in your organization. Reach out to colleagues whom you admire and want to emulate, and establish positive relationships from which you can seek advice and guidance.

**30s – You Still Have Energy, Use It!**

With several years of solid experience behind us, we likely have gained enough confidence in our skills and in ourselves to share our knowledge with others. Now is the time to start presenting at professional conferences and serving on committees and boards of directors. Take what you have learned from specific successes, such as implementing a new compliance system, and share the outcomes and best practices in articles, case studies, and Webinars. Keep building and fostering your network by co-presenting and co-authoring papers. In essence, you are gaining respect for your experience.

But our 30s may also present many problems with work/life balance. We buy homes, start families, and may even start caring for aging parents. The
immediacy of technology increases work demands, and we may find that in order to maintain our capital in the workplace, we should respond to emails up to the moment we go to bed. This is often the point where we check our career compass and wonder if the career goals we set in our 20s need tweaking in order to accommodate our personal lives. Job burnout may become a factor, and we may feel that acquiring that MBA or special certification isn’t worth pursuing. Relying on a mentor and other close colleagues helps keep our career goals in perspective during this time.

We may need to break them down into smaller pieces or extend them in order to meet more pressing demands, but we can accomplish them!

40s - Change Course

This mid-life decade often represents the midpoint in our career, which is a good time to look back on the goals we have accomplished and to look ahead to the goals we have yet to complete. We have become experts in our field, and entry-level colleagues are seeking us as mentors. We also have become “salty dogs,” having weathered administrative changes, budget cuts, and numerous changes to federal regulations. At this stage we often have 15+ years left to work and may start to feel that “itch”—it might be time to change course and do something different. With an established reputation and respect from our colleagues, now is the time to venture into new, perhaps more highly visible areas such as higher-level management or administration, or developing high-level programs and services for faculty. If we had to put off obtaining degrees or additional education in your 30s, now is a great time to pick up where we left off.

One of the greatest obstacles to attaining our professional goals (and even personal ones) during this time is ourselves—we often use this decade as an excuse not to explore new avenues or complete unfinished goals because now we are “too old” or it’s “too late.” We need to remind ourselves to stop using these excuses and to not allow them to creep into our life (a good mentor won’t let us get away with such negative thinking either).

Any goal can be achieved as long as we have the motivation and commitment to see it through.

50s - Give Back

In this decade we acquire the gift of hindsight—congratulations! Using this hindsight is not only a great advantage to ourselves, it is particularly beneficial to those around us and for those we are mentoring. Here, we learn that we CAN do the things that we “could have” or “should have” done after it took us half a lifetime to figure them out. “I should have trusted my instincts and taken that job offer” or “I could have been a great director of research if only I was less afraid” turns into opportunities to take someone under your wing and offer much-appreciated advice or tips to avoid pitfalls and missteps.

We will also most likely experience a new-found freedom in the workplace, since we may have achieved some goals and may be less likely to feel as if we are still “clawing our way to the top.” There are positive and negative aspects of this milestone—while it’s easy to feel like resting on our laurels, complacency or dejection can quickly creep upon us. Complacency can lead to stagnation and thus less willingness to take risks or grow further in our careers; succumbing to past failures or missed opportunities can lead to a loss of confidence and optimism, and thus falling into a rut.

Think of this decade as the time for “do-overs” and overcoming obstacles once believed insurmountable. To battle complacency, consider teaching opportunities for conferences, seminars, or courses. Publishing is another avenue to wholeheartedly pursue, as some publications will require proven results from months or even years of background information. We also may have lifelong colleagues who have travelled many roads. It is time to tap into these colleagues, as they provide thoughtful insights and can help to motivate and inspire.

Beyond the 50s - Don’t Slow Down!

As you reach what is often called the “golden years” and begin to think about retirement, remember that you are not retiring from being active. If there is one thing that research administration has taught us, it is an ever-changing and dynamic field, and we must remain actively involved in order to remain relevant in the field. Fortunately, there are many ways to remain active in this phase of our careers.

Pursue activities that will tap into your experience and knowledge—consider serving as faculty member in the NCURA “Traveling Workshop Faculty” program or apply for NCURA’s International Fellowship. These great opportunities allow you to share your hard-earned research administration experience while receiving travel stipends and an opportunity to spend a little time in a ‘bucket-list’ city even as you may be drawing retirement. Also consider leadership roles on task forces and committees to help shape the future.

You have a wealth of experience to draw on. Share this valuable resource with others.

Another useful exercise is to go back to your childhood and remember how you answered the question, “What do I want to be when I grow up?” Now bring this phrase into your future and ask yourself, “What do I want to do when I retire?” Begin to look at those individuals you admire and respect, and ask yourself, “Would I like to do what they are doing?” The best way to help you make these decisions is to talk to colleagues and ask how they arrived there. Tap into your network and find someone to introduce you, or research their background and send them an invitation via LinkedIn or NCURA’s Collaborate.

Conclusion

Regardless of our age or stage, understanding how our career can ebb and flow throughout the decades is important for long-term career satisfaction and our well-being. Personal and professional satisfaction can be achieved with thoughtful strategic planning, the support of good mentors and colleagues, and our own personal commitment, optimism, and determination to attain our goals throughout the decades.

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“The team has made our priorities their priority, throughout.”

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See us at Booth 400-401 at the NCURA Annual Meeting or visit www.huronconsultinggroup.com/highereducation.
Top 10 Tips on Negotiating Efficiently with Industry

By Sherylle Mills Englander

University-industry collaborations are in an exciting phase, reaching new levels of activity across the country. There are many advantages to both sides in working together - universities are able to provide companies with high quality research on targeted projects on an as-needed basis, while introducing the company to some of the country’s best and brightest emerging scientists and engineers. Companies provide streamlined funding opportunities (no formal proposals or nine month peer view periods), potential jobs for graduating students and an opportunity to work on exciting projects that are not necessarily fundable through traditional federal sources. At times, getting that research agreement in place can take significant effort. In this time of doing more with less, an increase in new industry contracts can quickly become a big challenge. How do you get negotiations with industry accomplished in the most efficient manner? Perhaps these Top 10 Tips can help:

1. Did the company send the right agreement? If the agreement does not seem to make any sense or will require hours of detailed revisions, ask yourself whether the company sent the right template. Perhaps the company sent a private consultant agreement, the agreement they use to purchase “widgets,” or, in the case of life sciences, a clinical trial agreement instead of a basic research agreement. In these situations, it is much more efficient to call the company negotiator to request the right template or send your own research agreement for consideration rather than spend hours converting the proffered draft into the “right” agreement.

2. Know when to call and when to email. If you are dealing with overarching principles or complex ideas, if you need to understand why certain terms were included or if you need to know the other side’s expectations, it is usually most efficient to talk on the phone. And before the start of any complex negotiation, a “kick off” teleconference is invaluable to establish rapport and understand the expectations of each side. In contrast, if you are choosing more precise wording or making a series of minor modifications, sending a revised draft via email will be sufficient. If you try to email about complex ideas, or if you get on the phone describing routine or minor changes, you lose efficiency.

3. Identify true “dealbreakers” up front, before detailed redlines. As a breed, negotiators hate using the word “dealbreaker” since it pretty much ends the normal give and take and changes the dynamic to a “take it or leave it” scenario. That said, if you are truly faced with one or more dealbreakers that your university simply cannot accept, it is better to get on the phone and identify the dealbreakers up-front to see if the company has any flexibility rather than spend hours on detailed redlines, only to have the deal fall through after all that work due to fundamental principles. (Of course, let your PIs know if you are in this situation to prevent them from receiving a shock!). And, sometimes, a project is so close to the company’s “crown jewels” that it is simply not appropriate for the open, decentralized university environment. Again, better to know that at the beginning.

4. Know WHY a change is requested and articulate it. Instead of relying on a citation of university “rules”, provide an explanation, with examples, of why the contract term causes significant problems in the university environment, how it can create unreasonable or undesired results, or how it can cause legal angst for the university. Typically, a negotiator does not feel particularly compelled to change standard terms just because the other side has decided to make a unilateral rule about it. Most university policies and practices are based on logical, reasonable rationales and the practical realities of the university research environment – know the rationales and realities and educate your counterpart about them to give the company negotiator a logical basis to make the requested change the first time you request it. And, if you get a change from a company negotiator that you do not understand, ask them for the purpose of the change before getting wrapped up in extensive re-wording or wholesale rejections – sometimes if you know the explanation, a quick solution is right under your nose.

5. Make it easy for the company to accept your change. Sending an email or letter that outlines all of your requested changes (e.g., “in Section 5, change 30 days to 60 days”), instead of a redlined contract, creates a lot of busy work for the company negotiator because each agreed-upon change has to be entered manually by the company negotiator into the draft agreement. In this situation, it is only human for an overworked
**What’s on my DESK**

David Kennedy's Desk

My desk has been a mess since February 1. That is the date that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published proposed updates to the administrative, costing, and audit circulars. Eight federal circulars applicable to higher education institutions, state, local and tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations were combined into a consolidated circular—i.e., “OMB Circular A-81.” The OMB proposed guidance, plus supplementary materials, totaled over 700 pages of voluminous federal text, requiring a page-by-page read, analysis, and comment. Thankfully, responding to the OMB proposed guidance was not a one-man job. COGR Board and Committee members, plus at-large volunteers from the higher education community, worked as a team to produce a 104-page “COGR Response” to OMB. Comments were due on June 2nd, and now the waiting game begins. Since it may take months for OMB to review the comment letters and reach out to our community, this should give me plenty of time to clear my desk.

David Kennedy is Director of Cost Policy for the Council on Government Relations (COGR)

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**6. Put explanatory comments directly into the draft agreement.** Just like you, a company negotiator will often need to get approvals on changes from multiple sources. Putting the background of why you need a particular change directly into the draft agreement next to highlighted change (i.e., using the “Comment” feature in Word) saves you time by allowing you to comment as you draft and eliminating the need for you to draft an explanatory cover email or letter. The company negotiator is also able to communicate the background to his or her stakeholders efficiently since the comments are incorporated directly into the draft agreement. Help the company negotiator by using a form that lets the people “behind the scenes” immediately understand and evaluate why the request was made without the need to refer to multiple documents or communications (Make sure to tell them in your cover email that the comments are in the agreement!).

**7. Enlist the help of your PI.** It is fairly unusual for contract negotiators to know each other before the negotiation. In contrast, there is a good chance that your PI already knows his technical contacts at the company from previous projects, conferences or even graduate school. And, the company's technical contacts were graduate students themselves and often understand the university's core academic needs, such as protecting the right to publish. If the company's technical contacts understand the negotiation challenges, they may be willing to work closely with the company negotiators to find work-arounds.

**8. Know the company’s history with your university.** Did they sponsor research before? If so, can you simply use the same terms as the last agreement? Nothing is simpler or more efficient if you can do that. If you have a solid agreement from a previous interaction, let the company negotiator know you are willing to bypass negotiations and work under the same terms as last time. There’s a good chance they will appreciate your efficiency.

**9. Consider master agreements, when appropriate.** If you work regularly with a particular company and have arrived at a set of terms that work well for both parties, consider putting a master agreement in place. Master agreements let you add new projects through a simple amendment or task order – once the scope of work and budget are agreed-upon, just add it to the master and get started on the research!

**10. Use your NCURA connections!** If you are experiencing negotiation challenges and know another university has worked with the same company, reach out to that other university. There’s a good chance they may have already faced the same challenges – and perhaps even solved them. After over a decade in this field, I can definitively report that legal constraints may have limited the amount of information that could be provided, but I have never had a plea for help go unanswered from an NCURA colleague. You have a great community – let them help you!

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SPONSORED RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION: A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

The world of sponsored research administration is filled with a plethora of complexities and nuance. Expanding government regulations demand you to stay informed. In order to provide effective support for the research enterprise and be responsible stewards of federal funds, administrators need to be knowledgeable about multiple areas of research management. NCURA provides the comprehensive reference guide that helps you.

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The guide is a valuable publication for a range of individuals, including sponsored programs directors, departmental/college administrators, and business officers at smaller institutions who manage sponsored research “on the side.” It is also an excellent training tool for newcomers to sponsored research.

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Since the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the federal government has increased its focus on many aspects of U.S. security. One area of particular interest is export controls related to university activities. Export control regulations are federal regulations that prohibit the unlicensed export of certain items, information, and software for reasons related to U.S. national security and foreign policy. The regulatory agencies include the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) (15 CFR §730); Department of State, Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC) (22 CFR §120); and Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) (31 CFR §500-598).

Recently many universities have been working on defining their export control compliance programs. As with most compliance programs, the nature of an export compliance program will depend upon the nature of the university, its goals, and resources. In this article, we will describe two very different types of universities and how one tool has enabled both universities to do more with less. The first university, University of California, Irvine (UCI), is a large, decentralized, multi-discipline, fundamental-research-only institution. UCI has a medical school and hospital, a business school, and an engineering school. Each has unique export control issues despite the fact that UCI only conducts open-access, fundamental research. The second university, Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), is a relatively small research university with a medical and health care facility. The research activity is focused on health care, with little work in fields that have export controlled technology or outputs.

Despite their differences, both universities need to provide a compliance program and document their place in fundamental research. One of the issues both schools have had to tackle is the diversity of export control issues regardless of the size of the operation. When thinking about export controls, university administrators often think of the contract and grant function. Responsible for negotiating terms and conditions that will govern the award, the contract and grant office is a primary gatekeeper for export control compliance. It is the first line of defense in flagging equipment that may be exported for the performance of a project, research that may include receipt of export-controlled technical data, and award terms that may make research results export restricted such as publication restrictions or foreign-national restrictions.

But there are many issues that arise outside of research and outside of sponsored research agreements. Export of items will not always be related to a sponsored research agreement. Activities involving sanctioned countries such as attending a conference in Cuba or importing a piece of artwork from Iran may be licensable under OFAC and may also occur outside of research or outside of a sponsored research agreement. Physical shipments originate in all areas of the campus. When a shipment is sent internationally, an export license determination should be conducted beforehand and must include restricted party screening (15 CFR §732). Just recently, UMass Lowell agreed to a $100,000 fine for shipping EAR99 items to an entity listed on the BIS Entity List (United States v. University of Massachusetts, 2013). The BIS Entity List is one of several lists maintained by government agencies of individuals and entities that are restricted or prohibited from participating in unlicensed U.S. export transactions. Keep in mind EAR99 is the lowest level of export control under the Export Administration Regulations. Something as simple as a pencil is considered EAR99 (15 CFR §734.3). (For more information on the Entity List see: http://www.bis.doc.gov/complianceenforcement/liststoscreen.htm)

With the wide variety of export control issues encountered by these two universities, both schools found they could do more with less by identifying gatekeepers within the university and building relationships. Gatekeepers include people in many different campus functions. Department managers are gatekeepers for purchases and ex-
ports. Department finance directors are excellent gatekeepers for travel reimbursement, which might include travel to sanctioned countries. Material managers are gatekeepers for decommissioned equipment that may be subsequently sold and exported. The purchasing officer is a gatekeeper for sales and services. This list goes on. As gatekeepers and advisors are identified, so are high-risk areas; and through these relationships the importance of export safeguards can be communicated.

At both schools, one way communication is kept open is through the campus Export Advisory Committee (EAC). The committee at each institution is made of key gatekeepers. The EAC meets several times a year to discuss the most recent issues. Often through discussion other key gatekeepers are identified as are ways to strengthen the program.

It is important to get the right people at the table when creating an EAC. UCI’s first EAC meeting was held five years ago during a lunch hour with lunch provided to the attendees. Over time the committee realized having a faculty member as part of the team would be valuable. Faculty are busy, and it takes a special faculty member to be interested in spending extra time advising on compliance issues. But through relationship building, showing respect for the faculty member’s time, and demonstrating the benefit of participation, the committee found a faculty member interested in participating. It made a world of difference in assessing information applicable to real-life to situations of which the committee previously was not aware of.

UCI’s EAC helped create the first institutional guidelines for export control compliance. The EAC has discussed questions such as, “What is the best way to reach faculty for training?” and, “If we do not accept foreign national restrictions related to research, do we accept such a restriction related to a sales and service agreement?”

The OHSU EAC plays a critical role in creating organizational “buy in” for improvement to the compliance program, communicating revisions to the compliance program, and educating the appropriate audiences on campus about how export compliance affects each group’s operations. In addition, having representation from senior management can give the EAC the institutional significance to demonstrate commitment to compliance for the organization.

Using or establishing an EAC on campus can add leadership weight to the compliance message delivered to a diverse campus audience. Asking research staff to complete a checklist or consult with us before travelling to China may carry more meaning when that requirement has been reviewed or approved by the Vice President for Research or a Provost. Having senior staff on the EAC hear the compliance message on a regular basis can help balance the principle of academic freedom with an understanding of the political and economic impacts of open sharing.

Advisory boards and committees can be a double-edged sword. They provide an opportunity to get valuable feedback and assist in getting the word out, but they also have the innate ability to create more work. However, we have found that these meetings provide valuable feedback that helps clarify the export compliance message. Export compliance officers are all aware that we are at risk of diving into our own group think just as the researchers can and end up in a foreign alphabet language of BIS, ITAR, OFAC, ECCN, etc. Having that outside voice asking for plain language can really help get the compliance message across to those who need it most.

Research administrators do not need to tackle these complex regulations alone. As export control compliance programs move forward and awareness increases, creating an EAC or participating on one is a way to work with colleagues on campus through our diverse environments to increase communication and compliance without a lot of additional cost.

References

Mark Peters joined Oregon Health & Science University in 2011 to create the institution’s export compliance program. Mark spent 15 years working on international trade issues at U.S. Department of Commerce. He can be reached at petemark@ohsu.edu

Marci Copeland is Export Control Administrator at the University of California, Irvine. Marci, in conjunction with the campus Export Advisory Committee, directs and advises the UCI campus community in regard to export control compliance. She can be reached at m.copeland@uci.edu
NCURA ELECTION RESULTS

MICHELLE VAZIN, Director, Office of Contracts and Grants, Vanderbilt University, has been elected Vice President/President-Elect of NCURA. Throughout her nearly 20 years of NCURA membership, Michelle has been incredibly active at both the regional and national levels. She has been a Co-Chair for the FRA XIII Conference and 51st Annual Meeting and a program committee member for numerous national conferences. Michelle was a member of the Board of Directors and a member of the LD1 Class of 2010. Within her service in Region III, she has served as the region’s Chair Elect/Chair, sat on the regional program committee, and chaired the Region III Nominating Committee. Michelle has also presented in many capacities, including NCURATV, conference workshops and concurrent sessions. Upon her election as NCURA Vice President/President-Elect, Michelle says, “Every opportunity I have pursued within NCURA over the years has taken me to a higher level professionally and personally. I truly have grown as a result of my involvement and I am excited and honored to now find myself in the capacity of serving as NCURA’s next VP/President Elect. I look forward to contributing to the efforts of the NCURA leadership team to ensure that NCURA continues to thrive and prosper as it grows stronger and more successful each year and I welcome the opportunity to meet and collaborate with even more NCURA members in the future.”

JOSIE JIMENEZ, Associate Director, Office of Grants and Contracts, New Mexico State University, has been elected Secretary of NCURA. Josie has been a member of NCURA since 1997 and continues to be a committed volunteer to the association. She has been a member of the Board of Directors, Professional Development Committee and Nominating & Leadership Development Committee. Josie has also served on the Annual Meeting and PRA Program Committees. At the regional level, Josie was the Chair of Region VII (2005-2006) and Secretary/Treasurer (2001-2002). She has also served on the Evaluation Committee and Program Committee for various joint Region VI/VII Spring Meetings. On being selected as NCURA’s next Secretary, Josie shares, “I was so excited to get the call letting me know I had won the election! I’m so grateful for this opportunity and being able to serve NCURA in this capacity. I will put forth my best efforts to serve the officers, Board and members of NCURA as their new Secretary.”

HEATHER OFFHAUS, Director, Grant Review & Analysis Office, University of Michigan Medical School, has been elected NCURA’s Treasurer-Elect. An NCURA member of 17 years, Heather has been an active volunteer in Region IV as a member of the Region’s Board, Region IV Chair, Spring Program Co-Chair and Membership Committee Chair. At the national level, Heather currently serves on NCURA’s Professional Development Committee, is a former member of the Board of Directors and has sat on program committees for the Annual Meeting and Pre-award Research Administration conference. Heather is a current Traveling Workshop Faculty member and has presented for concurrent sessions, discussion groups, spark session, webinars and NCURA YouTube Tuesday. Upon being elected Heather shared “NCURA is a vibrant organization and I am honored to be able to serve as the next Treasurer. I look forward to doing my part and working with current Treasurer Bob Andresen and members of the FMC over the next year to learn the ropes!”

CRAIG REYNOLDS, Associate Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, University of Michigan, has been elected At-Large Member of NCURA’s Board of Directors. After joining NCURA in 1997, Craig became involved in the organization as a presenter in multiple forums at the regional and national levels, a panelist on NCURATV and a member of the DRA Traveling Workshop Faculty. He has authored several NCURA Magazine articles and was a Contributing Editor from 2010 to 2012. He has been a member of regional and national Boards of Directors and is a member of the LD1 Class of 2007. On being elected to this position, Craig expresses, “What an honor! I could not be more pleased to be serving on the Board of Directors! NCURA has given so much to me personally and professionally throughout my career, and I can think of no better way to repay the debt, even if partially, than through service on the Board over the next two years. NCURA is recognized both nationally and internationally as an important and vital resource to the research administration community, and I am thrilled to be helping the organization maintain its place as the preeminent organization for research administration in the world.”

BETH SEATON, Director of Research Administration, McCormick School of Engineering, Northwestern University, has been elected to the position of At-Large Board Member. In her 24 years of membership, Beth has contributed greatly to NCURA. She is currently a member of the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee and presents at the national and regional levels. She served as a member of NCURA’s Traveling Workshop Faculty, Peer Reviewer and sat on NCURA Magazine’s editorial staff. In 2010, Beth traveled to Lisbon, Portugal as an NCURA/EARMA International Fellow. She also received the NCURA Distinguished Service Award in 2011. Upon being elected, Beth shares, “I am thrilled to be elected by my NCURA colleagues to the National Board for NCURA. I look forward to working with all of the other members of the Board as we strive to meet the professional development needs of the members and work on future NCURA initiatives to move this great organization forward.”

Both Reynolds and Seaton will begin serving January 1, 2014 for a two-year term. Vazin will take office January 1, 2014 for one year after which she will succeed to a one-year term as President of NCURA. Offhaus will become Treasurer-Elect on January 1, 2014 and will serve for one year after which she will succeed to a two-year term as Treasurer. Jimenez will take office on January 1, 2014 and will serve a two-year term.
For over forty years, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)—a federal grant-making agency—has directly supported the research and writing of college and university scholars. At present, NEH offers three programs for individual scholars: Fellowships, Awards for Faculty, and Summer Stipends. Annually, these grant competitions receive over 2,400 applications and make approximately 170 awards. While each program incorporates unique opportunities and requirements, they have much in common. With this article, I hope to offer a few insights into the application as well as the evaluation process.

Submitting an application to NEH through grants.gov is relatively easy; preparing an application is less so. Applications for Fellowships, Awards for Faculty, and Summer Stipends require a three-page narrative, a one-page bibliography, a two-page resume, and two letters of recommendation. As grant administrators well
know, the most important starting point for applicants is: read the program guidelines. While NEH programs share many features, each program has its own requirements and prohibitions, so applicants should read the guidelines carefully to ensure that their projects are appropriate and eligible for a particular competition.

When beginning to draft a proposal, applicants should:

1. Consult the NEH web site www.neh.gov for the most recent information and guidelines.
2. Look at the posted FAQs and sample successful applications.
3. Address the published evaluation criteria specific to each particular grant program, considering how the parts of the application can work together to cover all evaluation criteria and to create an overall argument for funding.
4. Discuss the proposal with recommenders and encourage them to address the evaluation criteria in their letters.
5. Construct a detailed work plan that accounts for the amount of time for which funding is being requested.
6. Write as clearly as possible, and use language that will appeal to well-educated but non-specialized readers. Little will doom an otherwise competitive application as quickly as an over-dependence on jargon or specialized language.

The importance of the evaluation criteria cannot be over emphasized. While all five of the evaluation criteria for these programs are important, the first, concerning intellectual significance, is the one on which evaluators are most likely to focus. So applicants should address, as fully and explicitly as possible, the significance of their projects. A common error is to discuss a perceived gap in scholarship as necessarily significant, but not all scholarly gaps are in need of filling. While this may serve as a useful place to begin an argument for intellectual significance, more should be said. In discussing NEH applications, panelists have often expressed useful ways of thinking about significance: “the application needs to answer the ‘so what’ question”; or, “I don’t see how this will change my thinking when the project is done”; or, “what will I know when this book is published that I don’t know now?”

Once an application has been crafted, ask colleagues to read and evaluate it. Feedback from scholars outside of one’s own field can be especially helpful, for these readers are often sensitive to jargon or other specialized language. Many colleges and universities have institutionalized this practice, making use of past award winners and past panelists, so take advantage of institutional resources, when available.

Applicants to individual programs must submit their proposals through grants.gov, the central federal government portal for all grant applications. For these particular programs, however, applicants must submit their proposals by means of an individual account at grants.gov (not their institution’s AOR or grants.gov account). While the process for individual registration typically takes only minutes to complete, NEH strongly recommends that applicants complete or verify their individual registration with grants.gov at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. Late applications—regardless of the good excuses that accompany them—are not accepted into the competition.

Once the deadline is past, NEH staff sorts all of the applications into “panels” of similar applications. For individual awards, applications are divided into panels based on discipline or clusters of related disciplines. This is harder than it might first appear. The process begins with the project field(s) indicated by applicants, but as applications are read and re-read by several staff members, the ultimate placement of applications may rely on other factors: an applicant’s bibliography and background; the anticipated audience for the proposed work; and the fields of the selected referees. With each competition, the distribution of applications changes, but our goal remains the same: to place applications where they’ll receive the most fair and sympathetic reading by panelists.

Once applications have been sorted into panels, NEH staff carefully recruits panelists to evaluate the applications. In addition to recruiting scholars whose areas of expertise match the set of applications to be considered, staff seeks to find for each panel as diverse a group as possible, in terms of institutional affiliation, stage of career, geographical region, gender, and experience with NEH, among other factors. The work of the panels is advisory, so panelists do not make funding recommendations but rather rate and comment upon each application in relation to the evaluation criteria listed in the program guidelines. For a full description of the Endowment’s peer review process, see: http://www.neh.gov/grants/application-process

The evaluation process takes time, so applicants should be prepared to wait up to seven months for their results. (Check the guidelines to see when announcements will be made.) Finally, regardless of the outcome, applicants should request their reviewers’ written evaluations at the end of the process. By doing so, applicants will be able to improve future applications and, frequently, improve their projects themselves.

For information about these or other NEH grants, visit http://www.neh.gov/grants If you have questions or would like to discuss information included in this article, please feel free to contact the author at jcox@neh.gov or 202-208-7099.

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References

Information about these programs and application guidelines for each can be found at:
NEH Fellowships: http://www.neh.gov/grants/research/fellowships
NEH Summer Stipends: http://www.neh.gov/grants/research/summer-stipends
NEH Awards for Faculty at Hispanic-Serving Institutions: http://www.neh.gov/grants/research/awards-faculty-hispanic-serving-institutions
NEH Awards for Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: http://www.neh.gov/grants/research/awards-faculty-historically-black-colleges-and-universities
NEH Awards for Faculty at Tribal Colleges and Universities: http://www.neh.gov/grants/research/awards-faculty-tribal-colleges-and-universities

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John D. Cox is a Senior Program Officer in the Division of Research Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. Prior to coming to NEH in 2009, he was an Associate Professor of English and Director of Graduate Studies at Georgia College & State University.
It began with one of those unfortunate conversations with my boss, the VP for Sponsored Projects and Compliance and Graduate Studies and Foundation Relations and the Undergraduate First Year Experience. As you might imagine, I had arranged the meeting to present my ironclad case for the need to hire more staff. We may be small, but with everyone scrambling these days for the holy grail of research money, things had become a bit overwhelming in the trenches.

I showed him my charts, carefully built over multiple weekends and two cases of chardonnay, which visually replicated our institutional increase in activity. With a laser pointer, I began with our internal competition and highlighted the ratio of increased administrative processing and oversight in direct correlation to the increased number of proposals for the meager dollars currently available. Then I moved to the fact that Social Studies was blithely using research surveys and Psychology was running potentially invasive experiments on undergraduates, and I had just lost my IRB co-coordinator. "Clearly, we are overloaded," I said in a carefully modulated tone, "and I'm afraid our service is slipping. We simply can't cover all of the bases."

I know this will not sound at all familiar to most of you, as I understand the uniqueness of Livlonenprosser.

"We can't afford to replace Ms. Harried," he said. He was tapping his pencil on his desk. He does this when he doesn't immediately have a suitable response and is feeling a bit cornered. Irritating. "And did I mention that Prof. Houdini is doing some research with a colleague overseas? Astrological Engineering, I think."

Hmmm. I did not know this. "Oh?"

"Yes, yes, very big stuff. They are working on some kind of a new guidance system for satellites that Prof. Houdini has been toying with for years."

"Uh-oh," I think.

"Really?" I say this as brightly as possible. "Where?"

"Oh, I don’t know. Iraq or Iran. Maybe Syria. I can’t remember." My eyes nearly bug out of my head. He takes it for indigestion and offers me a Tums.

"Export Controls!" I yell. He looks at me blankly.

"Yes, yes. Whatever." He looks out the window. The pencil is tapping faster.

I sputter, "We aren’t equipped to handle export controls!" My palms are sweaty.

I feel my heart racing as I say, "I need an expert! I need more help!"

"You will just have to do more with less. Everyone is in the same boat," he responds.

“Oh,” I think, “okay. When it’s said out loud and in that tone, it seems completely reasonable. Not!”

He continues, "I was chatting with my colleague, Mr. Bigwig, over at Southern Northeast the other day. They have expanded their offices into a new suite to keep up with the regulations, and their budget hasn’t increased. It was embarrassing not to be able to say the same. Go find out how they are doing it, and then do it here."

I rise and turn to leave, giving him my best Mr. Spock raised-eyebrow. He misses it completely. "Fine," I think. "I haven’t spoken with my bud, Cindy Louwho, in months. I’ll give her a call. It will be nice to catch up."

My hand is on the doorknob. As I pull the door open, he casually calls after me, "I meant to tell you the other day. The Biology Department has mice."

I pause. "We all have mice.”

He gives me a withering look. "White mice. The expensive kind. Something about genetics and making the fur turn green. You will need to set up one of those animal things."

I walk out the door and head directly to the closest watering hole. Fortunately, being a college campus, this is a short walk.

The next day, with my headache finally abated, I look up Cindy Louwho on Collaborate and give her a call. After the usual chitchat, I explain that my boss wants me to see how she handles this "do more with less" business. May I come visit her operation, I ask, and then take her to lunch?

There is dead silence on the phone for a full 5 seconds before she says, "Sare! I’d love to have you." Unhappily, Cindy uses that tone of voice that translates into "I would rather poke needles in my eye, but what can I do." "Hmmm," I think.

She continues, "But, honestly, lunch isn’t necessary at all. I don’t want to keep you. I know everyone is busy. Maybe a quick coffee?" Arrangements are made.
I arrive a few days later and when the elevator door opens, I see Cindy sitting at the receptionist’s desk. How nice, I think, she’s waiting for me. She has undoubtedly sent her receptionist on an errand. We do the quick hug, fake kissy thing, exclaiming over how good the other looks. But, in truth, she doesn’t look all that great.

“Hmm,” I think. The phone rings. She glances at it guiltily and mouths, “Answering machine” to me.

“Let’s move to my office,” she says, zipping around the corner. It is eerily quiet on this floor. She has a nice office, though. I’m impressed. The phone rings. She ignores it. I get down to business. I’ve been out on her website, I say, and I see that she oversees the offices for IRB, IACUC, COI and other compliance, and even export controls. Their research volume, I know, is similar to my own. How are they doing it?

I ask if I might speak with her people in each office. There, again, is the full 5 seconds of silence. “Hmm,” I think.

The phone rings. She ignores it. “Sure,” she says hesitantly. “Do you need to visit the ladies’ room?” What a weird question, I think. Maybe I look like bladder control is an issue at my age. She directs me down the hallway, and then says that the IRB office is down the other hallway, and to head there when I’m done.

Finished, I walk down the appointed hallway, and—again—the only sound is the constant ringing of the phone. I find an office with a large sign: “IRB.” I walk in, and there, behind the desk and an enormous pile of papers, is Cindy. My confusion is evident.

“We’re a little short-handed in some areas ourselves,” she begins. “We were getting ready to ramp up and moved the offices over here, but then the economy tanked. I’ve been promised a new IRB administrator as soon as things pick up.” “Been there,” I think.

Could I visit the IACUC office, I ask? “Of course. Would you like a cup of tea?”

“My boss,” I say, “heard from your boss that you had all of these new offices.”

“We do have new offices,” Cindy wailed. “We just don’t have anybody to do the work.”

“So, Ty,” She honks loudly into a tissue. “Things have become so bad that I can’t leave the office. The telephone rings all day long. Everyone complains of delays. I can’t provide the kind of service we used to provide with a real staff, but everyone expects things to happen at the same speed they always have; and they don’t understand that back then, I didn’t have FCOI or export controls or human subjects or any of these unfunded mandates that just keep getting added.” Swallowing a sob, she continues, “For the most part, I do pretty well. I work 18-hour days. But sometimes I think if I hear my boss say, ‘Do more with less’ one more time, I will hurl.”

I am incredulous.

“Do you want to see the view?” I say. “Isn’t the view lovely?” She points out the large window overlooking the lake with the wonderful old oaks everywhere.

Still, I understand Cindy’s situation completely. The consummate professional, Cindy is determined that all bases will be covered... one way or another. That’s what research administrators do.

NCURAbly Pedantic is written by long-standing NCURA members, all under pseudonym protection.
With competition for research dollars increasing and funding budgets being reduced, many research administrators are being asked to do more. For many, this request also involves completing the work with fewer staff or in fewer hours due to furloughs. The added stress benefits no one. In electronic research administration (eRA), we often hear: “Can’t we get some software to do this for us? It’d be quicker and easier.” Systems are only one way of achieving more work in less time. But systems won’t solve a bad process. They’ll shine a light on it. So two questions to ask ourselves are: “Is the process as efficient as it could be?” and “How can the process be improved to increase productivity?”

A software solution is only one of the many ways research administrators are managing today’s demands. Therefore, we asked the eRA Community members about the creative solutions they’ve put in place to help them cope rather than crumble under the weight of their daily work. Here are their tips.

**Stay Positive and Find a Balance**

Elaine North of Georgetown University says she’s “wearing more hats these days” due to sequestration. She has also noticed that faculty researchers are growing more and more discouraged about being funded. “You have to be a cheerleader,” she says, “and give them tools to be successful. Yes, funding rates are down, but awards ARE still being made. It is important to pay attention to reviewers’ comments and work with the Principal Investigator (PI) to improve the proposal because each attempt gets the PI closer to funding.” When one of her PIs gets funded, she takes pride in knowing she helped to achieve that. “It doesn’t matter if the award is for a thousand or a million dollars,” she says. “The fact is that they got funded, and it’s important for us to realize we played a part in that.”

Elaine builds rapport with her researchers and over time there is a true partnership. “If you don’t have rapport, it’s difficult. If you are open, available, and realize they also have personal lives to manage too, then you can understand more how to help them.” At the same time, she knows it’s important to balance our work with taking care of ourselves. This ranges from finding ways to alleviate the added stress to maintaining our knowledge of the industry. She’s concerned that tighter budgets can mean fewer opportunities for professional development such as NCURA meetings. Elaine does her best to keep up and feels she has an obligation to share what she knows. “Sometimes picking up the phone for a quick conversation is faster way to an answer than using email,” she says. “If I can help others, I will gladly do it. We can all help each other. And if I can make someone else’s day, I’m happy. At least I made a difference.”

**Get Moving**

Sherie Donahue of Loma Linda University has found that integrating exercise into her day helps her stay focused, reduce stress, and avoid that mid-afternoon slump. “I integrate exercise into my work environment in several ways. First, because I use a sit-and-stand workstation, I am more likely to walk over to speak to a co-worker rather than calling or sending an email. Second, I keep a dumbbell at my desk to do a few arm exercises while listening to a webinar or during a long phone call. And finally, my favorite is ‘walk and talk’ meetings. I take a 5-10 minute walk with one or two others to discuss a particular topic or issue. Not only do I get to spend a few minutes in the fresh air during daylight hours to reduce stress levels, but the conversations stay focused since the discussion ends when the walk does.”

**Subscribe to RSS Feeds**

“I subscribe to the RSS feeds for a group of news or funding opportunities. It saves me a lot of time,” says Pei Lin Shi of the University of Texas at Brownsville. “If you are charged with making monthly or weekly funding news reports, this will be of great help. You can glance through the list instead of detailed news, and then read them whenever you have more time. This saves a lot of your time.”

**Establish a Work-from-Home Day**

Cara Egan-Williams of the University of California at Santa Barbara writes: “One of the things my office has implemented is a work-from-home day for our Sponsored Projects Officers.”
While three... 

distinct volunteer pathways exist, a hybrid approach may also suit our membership. Looking back on my 19 years with NCURA, I recognize the hybrid path I pursued. Initially, I volunteered as E-News Editor via the Professional Development Committee. I learned a lot about the organization and our membership. As I became more confident in the profession and my expertise, I began presenting – leading discussion groups, co-presenting concurrent sessions and conducting workshops. I enjoyed meeting new people and relished observing their “ah ha” moments as they learned new concepts. Teaching Fundamentals has been the ultimate high as attendees absorb new concepts and attempt to assess how these new concepts might work at their home institutions. The piece de resistance – NCURA Leadership – identifies new/improved ways of serving our membership. Whichever route you choose, know that the volunteer opportunities are endless within NCURA and your efforts will be rewarded tenfold!

Jill Frazier Tincher is Director of Strategic Initiatives at the University of Miami’s Office of Research Administration. She can be reached at jtincher@med.miami.edu.

This way we can have one day a week, every other week, to focus on some of the more complicated contracts or tasks on our desks without the office distractions. This gives you a few extra minutes in the morning; you can log-in to your computer when you might typically be getting ready for work or facing your morning commute.”

Go Electronic

Towson University’s Amy Taylor adds this tip: “Last year we migrated our proposal tracking, document storage, and submission approval from a paper based process to an electronic one using MS Outlook, SharePoint, harmon.ie and MS Access. All the software was immediately available (harmon.ie is a free download). The technical skills needed to design the new process and implement the changes were available either with my existing staff, or we found training available via our campus Human Resources Office or Office of Technology Services departments.”

Amy reports the following benefits as a result of this transition:

✔ Eliminated duplication of process steps, paper, and storage needs
✔ Dramatically reduced the approval submission timeframe from several days to (in some cases) a matter of hours
✔ Increased the efficiency and data sharing between pre-award and post award teams
✔ Increased the timeframe between faculty notifying us of an impending submission and the actual deadline
✔ Eliminated the ‘Who’s got the file?’ game
✔ Decreased the time between notice-of-award to issue-of-a-budget-number from 45-60 days to about 10 business days
✔ Amy added, “There have been other benefits to units outside Office of Sponsored Programs and Research too, such as our development office.”

Use Signatures as Email Templates

“One of the time-savers I’ve found that has allowed me to do more in less time involves emails about system outages,” says Terri Hall, University of Notre Dame. “From time to time, and for a variety of reasons, systems go down and I must inform our users to exit the system while the issue is reviewed. Since the content of this email is pretty much the same each time... I’ve created an email signature with the entire message. Now, when a system outage occurs, all I need do is open a new email, add that signature, tweak a few words, and hit ‘send’. This is so much quicker and easier than typing out a whole new message as I used to do. ”

Overall, it comes down to trusting ourselves to get the essential things completed each day. Once we identify those, we needn’t worry about the non-essential things. Leave them for tomorrow, when it all starts again.

Our thanks to all who shared their tips, and we hope to see more shortcuts shared through NCURA’s Collaborate! 

Terri Hall has worked in research administration for 15 years, and is currently the Director of Electronic Research Administration (eRA) and Reporting at the University of Notre Dame. Terri can be reached at Theresa.Hall.74@ND.edu

Sherie Donahue has worked in research administration for 11 years and is currently the Electronic Research Specialist at Loma Linda University. She also chairs the NCURA eRA Community. Sherie can be reached at sdonahue@llu.edu
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You have just entered your new job as director of research administration. You feel fully prepared to lead the staff in really making a difference at your institution. All the tools seem to be in place. Policies and procedures are carefully laid out. Processes are trim and honed. The office’s mission statement and goals align perfectly with your concept of customer service. But something just isn’t right.

After a couple of weeks you notice that office morale is low. There seems to be tension in the air. At staff meetings, you just cannot get people to participate, and when someone does, it is to criticize or point fingers. It may be time to check if you have a bully in the workplace.

Bullies can be found in almost any type of organization, including higher education. A 2010 scientific survey conducted by Zogby International for the Workplace Bullying Institute found that 35% of American workers have been bullied on the job. An additional 15% have witnessed work bullies in action and suffer vicariously.

Bullies in the workplace make an office unresponsive, impersonal, and adversarial. They cause an increase in sick days and reduce employee retention. In fact, the bully can rob you of your best workers. That’s because bullies operate out of fear and insecurity, and your best employees are the ones who threaten them the most.

How do you spot a bully? First you need to know what a bully is. The Workplace Bullying Institute defines workplace bullying this way:

Workplace Bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators that takes one or more of the following forms:

- Verbal abuse
- Conduct which is threatening, humiliating or intimidating
- Work interference, sabotage, which prevents work from getting done
- Exploitation of a known psychological or physical vulnerability

It is not incivility, simple rudeness, or the routine exercise of acceptable managerial prerogative.

By Robert Killoren
Workplace bullying may not be easy to spot, however. Bullies are masterful manipulators and most frequently work in hidden and secretive ways. They often know the rules of the game very well. They can spout the latest jargon from management self-help books and can walk a tightrope between subtle bullying and out and out harassment. Bullies may even work their way into your trust. They sometimes are very effective in meeting deadlines and production schedules. They kiss up and kick down, flattering the boss while victimizing those under them.

So, how do you spot a bully? Here are some suggestions from experts in the field.

**Bully Profiles**

**THE CONSTANT CRITIC**

- Put-downs, insults, belittling comments, name-calling
- Constantly criticizes the targeted person’s competence
- Scowls at the targeted person or deliberately avoids eye contact when the targeted person speaks
- Negatively reacts to the targeted person’s contributions with sighs, frowns or the “just sucked a lemon look”
- James the targeted person for fabricated errors
- Makes unreasonable demands for work with impossible deadlines

**THE TWO-HEADED SNAKE**

- Pretends to be nice while sabotaging the targeted person – one minute vicious, the next minute supportive and encouraging
- Ensures that the targeted person doesn’t have the necessary resources to do the work
- Makes nasty, rude or hostile remarks to the targeted person privately; puts on friendly face in public
- Steals credit for work done by the targeted person
- Says one thing to the targeted person and something completely different behind the targeted person’s back
- Will “kiss up the ladder and attack those below”

**THE GATEKEEPER**

- Purposefully cuts the targeted person out of the communication loop
- Ignores the targeted individual or gives that person the “silent treatment”
- Models isolation or exclusion of the targeted person for others

**THE SCREAMING MIMI**

- Poisons the workplace with angry outbursts
- Intimidates through gestures
- Purposefully interrupts the targeted person during meetings and conversations
- Discounts/denies the targeted person’s thoughts or feelings

As the head of an office, you bear the responsibility of providing a safe and comfortable working environment for your staff. Here are some things you could do to protect your workplace from bullies:

1. Make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated. (Contact your HR Department for help.)
2. Offer training in the types and characteristics of workplace bullying.
3. Provide workers a contact person for questions, concerns, or allegations
4. Survey office climate
5. Have a procedure to investigate allegations and document findings.
6. Take remedial action. Meet with the alleged bully
7. Issue stern warning
8. Write up a remediation plan
9. Monitor remediation plan
10. Terminate bully if remediation is not effective

An “accidental bully,” one who is not aware of how his or her behavior is affecting others, will normally respond positively to a one-on-one conversation to address concerns and resolve the situation. Pursuing an “intentional bully” can be a difficult challenge but it is one a director needs to take on in order to provide a safe and productive office.

**References**

2. Harvey Hornstein; Brutal Bosses and Their Prey: How to Identify and Overcome Abuse in the Workplace, Riverhead Books, 1996 (As cited by and quoted from Richardson and McCord, see below.)
3. Gary and Ruth Namie; The Bully at Work: What You Can Do to Stop the Hurt and Reclaim Your Dignity on the Job (As cited by and quoted from Richardson and McCord, see below.)

Bob Killoren is Past President of NCURA and recipient of the NCURA Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award. Bob has been engaged in grants administration for over 40 years and is now writing and enjoying retirement. He can be reached at rkilloren@gmail.com
The United States continually strives to maintain its competitive edge against other thriving economies with respect to its investment in research & development (R&D). As such, there will always be an ongoing need for a funding source that can subsidize the novel ideas of the nation’s most elite scientists. However, due to the turbulent conditions of the United States’ economy over the last several years, “increased competition and diminished federal funding have made it tougher for scientists to rely on grants that once generously supported labs, research and training of future scientists” (Bora & Bowers, 2008). Therefore, by recognizing the impact that a decrease in federal funding could have on research institutions, an organization can potentially realign its institutional strategies and pursue alternative ways to solicit funding from non-federal sources.

In fiscal year (FY) 2009 the federal government appropriated $147 billion for R&D to “reinforce the President’s commitment to the American Competitiveness Initiative” which sought to double investments in support of “basic research in the physical sciences and engineering” (The White House, 2009). Interestingly, the government only appropriated $100 million more during fiscal years 2010-2012 than the previous year in R&D even though the Administration continued to recognize “science, technology, and innovation are critical tools for making progress towards the national goals of a prosperous economy, a clean energy future, a healthy American people, and a strong and secure America” (The White House, 2010). Although there have been miniscule increases in the budget for R&D over the last four years, the additional debt borne by the government further threatens a widespread reduction in federally subsidized R&D.

Overall, the financial impact can be quite extreme depending on the amount of sponsored research that is conducted at an institution. For example, in FY 2012 the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded over $3.7 billion in new awards, which included mechanisms such as construction and training grants, research and development contracts, and research grants [http://report.nih.gov/fundingfacts/index.cfm]. Therefore, it is evident that research institutions have been and continue to be significantly impacted by a reduction in federal funding.

The passage of Presidents Obama’s 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), coupled with the pre-existing America COMPETES Act passed in 2006, resulted in a “heightened interest in the role of scientific and engineering research in creating jobs, generating innovative technologies, spawning new industries, improving health, and producing other economic and societal benefits” (Olson and Merrill, 2011, p.1). However, given the aftermath of the recession that specifically plagued the global economy between 2008-2010, the United States realized the need to adopt austere measures in order to safeguard the American economy from financial collapse. Unfortunately, as the national deficit continues to increase, the threat of a reduction in federal funding to support scientific research is a ubiquitous fear that is particularly shared by scientific researchers within the healthcare community (Kaufman, 2012, para 1 & 3).

A reduction in federal funding would predominantly have a negative effect on stakeholders such as employees and patients of independent hospitals, and employees and students at research institutions. Although the passage of ARRA was not fully embraced by all politicians, its execution alleviated an economic collapse while simultaneously creating new jobs and saving existing ones (The Recovery Act, n.d.). As illustrated in Figure 1, ARRA federal research funding appropriated to the Department of Health & Human Services

Figure 1. Estimated Jobs by Quarter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1/11</td>
<td>60000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2/11</td>
<td>50000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3/11</td>
<td>40000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4/11</td>
<td>30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1/12</td>
<td>20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2/12</td>
<td>10000</td>
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By Timothy Schailey, Erin Bailey, and Angela Henke
Maggie Griscavage’s DESK

Actually, not much is on my desk these days!

I’m sharing the difficult task of “shutting down” after 12 years in this ‘seat.’ Right now, I am four and a half weeks from retirement and my email has a disclaimer that on June 29th, 2013 (Editor’s note: This was submitted to NCURA Magazine on May 30th, 2013) I shall be retired and so they should contact the main office email. I began this notice early because I needed to review what needed to be handed off and I knew it wasn’t going to be settled by my departure date.

With federal funding decreasing, research institutions are now looking at ways “to do more with less” and to identify specific methods that can be exercised in an effort to solicit funding from other non-federal sources to mitigate possible monetary loss. For example, Johns Hopkins Medicine (n.d.) publishes information on its website that identifies where to locate non-federal research support. Similarly, Foster, Kim, and Christiansen (2009) discuss ten different models that leaders of nonprofit institutions may seek to emulate when identifying ways to offset a possible decrease in federal funding. One model, termed the Beneficiary Builder, may be especially useful for hospitals because this type of model reimburses healthcare institutions “for services that they provide to specific individuals, but rely on people who have benefitted in the past from these services for additional donations” (para 20).

In spite of the fact that a reduction in federal funding could have deleterious effects on the long term success of our nation, increased collaborations between research institutions and industrial organizations could positively impact institutions from a purely economic perspective. For example, Crueber and Studt (2011) forecasted that “[t]otal performance of R&D industry will reach $311.1 billion in 2012.” Therefore, it would seem possible for a non-profit institution to potentially benefit from the 1.6% anticipated increase in industrial R&D funding which could essentially offset federal reductions (p.8).

As previously discussed and confirmed by Caligiuri (2012), “[a]utomatic budget cuts would be devastating to university research and could delay the most innovative work being done into new cures and treatments for cancer, heart disease, lung disease, Alzheimer’s, you name it” (as cited within Pyle, 2012, para 5). As a result, it is important to investigate the topic of how reduced federal funding for research institutions leads to budget cuts that impact the day-to-day operations of research institutions.

As the uncertainty of future funding is threatened, research institutions have been forced to forecast budget cuts. Although decreased funding places greater financial burdens on institution, forecasting provides an opportunity for stewards of research funding to look past their present financial difficulties and plan strategically for the future. In particular, organizations should focus on not just looking at future funding from federal and non-federal agencies, but empowering their most important asset, their employees. Research institutions can and should examine the employees’ research portfolios, study how budget cuts are affecting job performance, and determine what team building strategies can be put in place to maintain production without augmenting the financial burden. Developing a successful strategy involves team building from the top-down, and should analyze the problem(s) and what can be done to alleviate or minimize the potential workload issues (Figure 2, see next page).

Mark Twain once said, “Success is a journey, not a destination. It requires constant effort, vigilance and re-evaluation.” To be successful and “do more with less” it would be advantageous for research institutions to be proactive and establish techniques to...
manage changes in the research environment. Resource managers need to heed Mark Twain’s advice and continue to put forth effort and re-evaluate current business practices. Organizations should keep the employees engaged and productive. This will require time, effort, commitment, investment, motivation and effective leadership to ensure employees maintain a positive attitude towards the organization and the overall mission of the institution.

According to Kulakowski and Chronister (2006), “[r]eactions to institutional change processes are influenced by such factors as an organization’s culture, values, norms, traditions, formal and informal decision structures, leadership style, and previous history of change processes” (p. 87). Therefore, it is important for research institutions to establish a guiding set of principles, which will define specific institutional objectives during a time in which the total dollar value of federal awards will be decreased, and the day-to-day business practices will be altered. N

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>How much has employee workload increased? Are the workloads increased due to staff shortages or other reasons?</td>
<td>Management must evaluate employee workloads and categorize what needs immediate attention. What are the expectations of the employee? Management must be willing to re-evaluate workloads for employees and place realistic goals on completing tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Is there collaboration among team members to complete a project?</td>
<td>Have weekly meetings regarding team projects and progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Does management effectively communicate to employees? Is staff kept up-to-date on current budget situations and how those changes will affect the staff?</td>
<td>Management must be honest about how things are going. If things are going well, be sure employees are aware of the success. If things aren’t going well, talk about the problems early to avoid gossip later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Is staff performing effectively or are they doing just enough to get by?</td>
<td>Stop by and touch base with the employees. Ask them how they are doing and whether their performance matches their attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morale</td>
<td>What changes could be implemented that could help with employee morale?</td>
<td>Give compliments on good work. Management should make an effort to compliment everyone on their work in individual situations, particularly when they can point out specifics. When someone does well, point it out to the group. Highlight a variety of people and give them public recognition.</td>
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</tbody>
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### References


### Figure 2.
EFFECTLESS.

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Elaborate nanostructures blossom from a chemical reaction perfected at Harvard

“Spring is like a perhaps hand,” wrote the poet E. E. Cummings: “carefully / moving a perhaps / fraction of flower here placing / an inch of air there... / without breaking anything.”

With the hand of nature trained on a beaker of chemical fluid, the most delicate flower structures have been formed in a Harvard laboratory— and not at the scale of inches, but microns.

These minuscule sculptures, curved and delicate, don’t resemble the cubic or jagged forms normally associated with crystals, though that’s what they are. Rather, fields of carnations and marigolds seem to bloom from the surface of a submerged glass slide, assembling themselves a molecule at a time.

By simply manipulating chemical gradients in a beaker of fluid, Wim L. Noorduin, a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) and lead author of a paper that appeared on the cover of the May 17 issue of Science, has found that he can control the growth behavior of these crystals to create precisely tailored structures.

“For at least 200 years, people have been intrigued by how complex shapes could have evolved in nature. This work helps to demonstrate what’s possible just through environmental, chemical changes,” says Noorduin.

The precipitation of the crystals depends on a reaction of compounds that are diffusing through a liquid solution. The crystals grow toward or away from certain chemical gradients as the pH of the reaction shifts back and forth. The conditions of the reaction dictate whether the structure resembles broad, radiating leaves, a thin stem, or a rosette of petals.

It is not unusual for chemical gradients to influence growth in nature; for example, delicately curved marine shells form from calcium carbonate under water, and gradients of signaling molecules in a human embryo help set up the plan for the body. Similarly, Harvard biologist Howard Berg has shown that bacteria living in colonies can sense and react to plumes of chemicals from one another, which causes them to grow, as a colony, into intricate geometric patterns.

Replicating this type of effect in the laboratory was a matter of identifying a suitable chemical reaction and testing, again and again, how variables like the pH, temperature, and exposure to air might affect the nanoscale structures.
The project fits right in with the work of Joanna Aizenberg, an expert in biologically inspired materials science, biomineralization, and self-assembly, and principal investigator for this research. Aizenberg is the Amy Smith Berylson Professor of Materials Science at Harvard SEAS, Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology in the Harvard Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, and a Core Faculty Member of the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard.

Her recent work has included the invention of an extremely slippery material, inspired by the pitcher plant, and the discovery of how bacteria use their flagella to cling to the surfaces of medical implants.

“Our approach is to study biological systems, to think what they can do that we can’t, and then to use these approaches to optimize existing technologies or create new ones,” says Aizenberg. “Our vision really is to build as organisms do.”

To create the flower structures, Noorduin and his colleagues dissolve barium chloride (a salt) and sodium silicate (also known as waterglass) into a beaker of water. Carbon dioxide from air naturally dissolves in the water, setting off a reaction which precipitates barium carbonate crystals. As a byproduct, it also lowers the pH of the solution immediately surrounding the crystals, which then triggers a reaction with the dissolved waterglass. This second reaction adds a layer of silica to the growing structures, uses up the acid from the solution, and allows the formation of barium carbonate crystals to continue.

“You can really collaborate with the self-assembly process,” says Noorduin. “The precipitation happens spontaneously, but if you want to change something then you can just manipulate the conditions of the reaction and sculpt the forms while they’re growing.”

Increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide, for instance, helps to create ‘broad-leaved’ structures. Reversing the pH gradient at the right moment can create curved, ruffled structures. Noorduin and his colleagues have grown the crystals on glass slides and metal blades; they’ve even grown a field of flowers in front of President Lincoln’s seat on a one-cent coin.

“When you look through the electron microscope, it really feels a bit like you’re diving in the ocean, seeing huge fields of coral and sponges,” describes Noorduin. “Sometimes I forget to take images because it’s so nice to explore.”

In addition to her roles at Harvard SEAS, the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, and the Wyss Institute, Joanna Aizenberg is Director of the Kavli Institute for Bionano Science and Technology at Harvard and Director of the Science Program at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Coauthors included Alison Grinthal, a research scientist at Harvard SEAS, and L. Mahadevan, who is the Lola England de Valpine Professor of Applied Mathematics at SEAS, Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology and of Physics, and a Core Faculty Member at the Wyss Institute.

The project was supported by National Science Foundation grants to the Harvard Materials Research Science and Engineering Center (DMR-0820484) and the Harvard Center for Nanoscale Systems (ECS-0335765); and by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research.

Want to know more?
Read up on Dr. Noorduin’s research in the May '13 issue of Science Magazine! For other cool photographs of his microscopic masterpieces, try a “Noorduin” Google Images search.

If you want to share a “cool” project idea, please email Danielle Anthony at danthony@wsu.edu

References

Original article at: https://www.seas.harvard.edu/news/2013/05/beautiful-flowers-self-assemble-beaker

Dr. Wim L. Noorduin is a postdoctoral research fellow with Prof. Dr. Joanna Aizenberg in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Harvard University. Current research includes investigations on the biomimetic synthesis of complex nanoscale architectures. Dr. Noorduin can be reached at wnoord@seas.harvard.edu.

AUGUST 2013
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Contracts are a necessary step in research collaboration but are often viewed as a hurdle that delays research. In clinical research, institutions and investigators need new medicines for their patients, some of whom have no other treatment options and sponsors are eager to get their drugs to market as every day that delays the drug approval is costing the sponsor money. With both sides highly motivated, why are contract negotiations often so prolonged and what can contract negotiators do about it? Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation has been consistently recognized by sponsors as one of the most efficient sites for contract completion – in the top three in Canada. A contracts coordinator and 1.5 contract negotiators handled over 500 agreements with each initial review completed within 10 days of contract receipt. Here the Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) Team shares their top 10 tips on how to get agreements to signature more quickly:

1. **Try a template.** Template agreements are an excellent investment of time if the parties work together frequently. If one party cannot enter into a template then perhaps you can both agree to use the same contract language repeatedly, even if you cannot officially commit to it for all future agreements.

2. **Use a checklist.** A quick scan of the agreement, aided by a checklist of required clauses, will quickly highlight what’s missing so you can focus on those areas first. After proposing appropriate wording, review the remaining wording and align with your institution’s standards.

3. **Identify your timelines.** Educate the other party on your timelines and needs. How quickly do you typically complete the initial contract review and send back changes? What are your objectives and what do you need from the other party to achieve them? At HHS the contract timeline is carefully tracked; from the initial review through negotiations and even the circulation for sign-off. The Contracts Team owns the process and is accountable for the total number of days it takes to complete the process. Timeliness on the sponsor side significantly impact HHS’ ability to achieve their goals. When a contracts negotiator is absent she always provides the sponsor with the contact of her back-up whom she has briefed.

4. **Start the process promptly.** As soon as HHS receives a contract, the contracts coordinator enters it in the database and the clock starts ticking. This ensures all team members have it on their radar as it is captured in our weekly reports. The Contracts Team follows up with sponsors on all agreements at least every 2 weeks to make sure nothing slips through the cracks.

5. **Be clear about your expectations.** Stating non-negotiable items up front makes it easier for both parties to see common ground as well as promptly identify which issues need to be escalated for approval. Parties can increase transparency, and therefore negotiation speed, by including a link to their policies on their website. Overhead rates, preferred contract language and institutional signatories can all be identified here and accessed by sponsors as they prepare the draft agreement. HHS follows principles established by the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario, which is affirmed by a link on the HHS research webpage. While reviewing the agreement, always propose alternate language for consideration and provide your rationale for the request to educate the other party as to exactly what you need and why.

6. **Have a backup plan.** If an issue arises that you are having trouble resolving efficiently, have an alternate plan to implement promptly. Is there a colleague that could help you by providing a different perspective on troublesome wording? HHS contract reviewers established an e-group of peers nationally so they have over a hundred experts to consult in confidence at any time. Can you refer the matter to a more senior administrator for direction or a final decision?

7. **Explain the process.** When and if you have to escalate a decision, explain to the other party what the timeline for the decision is and which party will be making the final call. Follow up to make sure the decision is made in a timely manner and communicate back to the other party as soon as you know whether you can move forward or not.

8. **Pick up the telephone.** Unfortunately, the opportunity to meet is rare, so connect by telephone. Telephone conversations are the quickest way to negotiate and also help build rapport.

9. **Verify.** If you are not clear on an explanation, sense frustration in an email or are receiving information about a third party you doubt - verify it. Ask for more information, clarification or confirmation. When HHS contract reviewers are told other sites are accepting terms that it cannot, the contracts specialist calls the third party to confirm and learn how the third party resolved the issue.
**10. Invest in long-term solutions.** Continue the dialogue beyond the contract. Solicit feedback annually from your sponsors and researchers. How does your institution rank as an efficient research partner? What are their frustrations? What hurdles can you jump for them? This will give you a good sense of opportunities to address impediments to research.

Contribute to harmonization efforts. Find out which groups in your field and geographic area are working on standardizing contract negotiation language and get involved. Reducing contract negotiation times is better for everyone! Contract negotiators need not feel threatened by standard language, more efficient administration processes will help attract more research and expand, not eliminate your role. Think big picture and invest your strategic thinking in long-term solutions.

The Contracts Team at HHS is always focussed on the main objective - supporting research - which helps us rise above the routine busyness and demands of a typical day. Getting treatments to the bedside more quickly is a very powerful and tangible goal and one we always keep on our radar. By continuously improving our processes and setting ambitious targets we play our part in ensuring accurate contract negotiations.

On June 18th, the AAAS released the FY 2014 R&D Report, so between that date and our production deadline we have some interesting news and numbers (and both sides of the aisle weighing in). Looks like we have a long road ahead of us...

**6/18 R&D Report:** The President’s proposed federal R&D portfolio in FY 2014 is **$144.1 billion**, an increase of 1.1% over FY 2012 levels.

**6/18 R&D Report:** Total federal support of research (basic and applied) would increase **6.9%** to **$69.7 billion**.

**6/18 R&D Report:** Clean Energy is a clear R&D priority - President Obama wants **$379 million** for ARPA-E.

**6/19 ScienceInsider Story:** The House Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies...want **$50 million** for ARPA-E.

**6/25 ScienceInsider Story:** Senate Spending Panel Votes to Stop U.S. Contributions to ITER. This story says the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development of the Senate Committee on Appropriations generally embraced the administration’s research agenda, which emphasizes clean energy research and agreed to the **$379 million** for ARPA-E.

**6/18 R&D Report:** USDA’s R&D investment would rise by **8.2%** (AFRI would get a 45.1% increase).

**6/20 Business Insider:** In a Big Blow to Speaker of the House Boehner, House Defeats Farm Bill, 195-234.

Want to share numbers? Email Derek Brown at derekbrown@wsu.edu

Sources:  
Research administration is an increasingly complex business. Competitive academic environments require efficient and responsive experts who can function in a rapidly changing environment. New regulations, tight funding markets and increasingly greater responsibilities impact both central and departmental administrators. Investments in new technologies or new business systems may require reevaluation of existing staff levels, procedures, and training. Research administrators make personal investments through maintaining competencies and pursuing ongoing professional development. They are committed and focused specialists who play an integral role in advancing the university’s research mission. The rewards are found in engagement in the process of discovery and innovation and knowing that our efforts are essential to the success and vitality of the enterprise.

Research as an institutional investment: what are the benefits?

Although Kulakowski and Chronister (2006) would argue that a “research administrator typically has minimal interaction with an investment committee,” an institution’s quest to expand its infrastructure or perhaps acquire a piece of capital equipment could impact a research administrator’s day-to-day responsibilities (p. 118). For example, a 2008 evaluation conducted by The University of Georgia’s (UGA) Research Administration and Infrastructure AdHoc Committee found that infrastructure enhancements would require the organization to place a greater emphasis on items such as Roles & Responsibilities, Policies & Procedures, Systems & Technologies, and Training & Education. Undoubtedly, the greater vigilance on the aforementioned areas may have required a research administrator to absorb new responsibilities, or perhaps become acquainted with newly adopted policies and systems through mandatory education. However, UGA found that the AdHoc Committee’s recommendations would “help strengthen service levels, increase administrative efficiency, and mitigate research and fiscal compliance risk” (The University of Georgia, 2008).

It is advantageous for universities to make an investment in both central and departmental research administration given the impact highly-skilled and hard-working research administrators can have on the success of an institution’s research funding. At the 50th Anniversary NCURA Meeting in 2008, Dr. Steve Squyres, Professor of Astronomy at Cornell University, delivered a well-received keynote address about the Mars Rover Mission. In the concluding comments of his presentation, Dr. Squyres remarked how this mission would not have been possible without his team of research administrators who prepared the grant proposal that would ultimately fund the Mars Rover Mission. Trained, motivated research administrators adept at navigating through the logistics of the grant application process can free-up the faculty to focus on the science of their respective projects, which in turn increases their productivity and output.

How would research administrators define commitment?

While institutional investments in both infrastructure and staff could essentially enhance day-to-day operations, the success of an organization’s research enterprise relies heavily on the commitment of its grants administration staff. For instance, those individuals working in a central office are at times required to stay until the 11th hour to submit a grant application, whereas departmental administrators may be required to spend additional time working one-on-one with their faculty to develop budgets and assemble application packages in order to meet the central administration’s pre-submission deadline. Working together, central and departmental research administrators are vital to ensuring universities’ compliance with regulations and award terms. Stephen Golding, Executive Vice President at Cornell University, found that “strong research administration, and the resulting commitment to compliance, is essential to avoid jeopardizing the University’s research excellence” (Research Administration Forum, 2006). Departmental administrators in particular can provide a compliance safety net as they assist the central research administrators in managing the post-award financial
activities of sponsored projects to ensure expenditures abide by state, federal, and sponsor regulations. The steadfast commitment of research administrators not only contributes to the success of our institutions, but also underscores the importance of an organization’s mission on which it was founded.

**What non-monetary rewards can a research administrator recognize?**

In addition to the investments organizations make in their research enterprises and the commitment of their respective staff, a career in research administration provides its own rewards. For example, individuals working in the central research office are given an opportunity to manage the research portfolios of principal investigators from various disciplines. Furthermore, a position in a central office allows administrators to work in a challenging environment while constantly expanding the scope of one’s knowledge and imparting that information to other grants personnel throughout the organization.

On the department side, research administrators become intimately familiar with their faculty’s research areas and accomplishments. It is genuinely gratifying to experience the elation of a funded proposal alongside faculty members, especially knowing the team effort that was put into the project. In addition, overseeing the entire life cycle of a sponsored project, from the proposal stage through award closeout can be enormously satisfying. Finally, departmental administrators build a dialogue and relationship with funding agencies, particularly private and industry sponsors, which enhances collaborations and improves the university’s public relations.

There seems little doubt that the role of research administrators will continue to grow and evolve. The increasing breadth and complexity of the research enterprise requires both central and departmental research administrators to be flexible and proactive. Continued investment and commitment in research administration and the passionate professionals who are engaged in supporting it is essential to the success of a university’s pursuit of research excellence.

**References**


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**Amy Brusk** has been a Grant Specialist for the College of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University since 2007. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science (2004) and a Master of Agribusiness (2009), also from Kansas State University. She has been a Certified Research Administrator since 2010, and a member of NCURA for 6 years. Amy can be reached at abrusk@vet.k-state.edu

**Jennifer Lawrence** is the Manager of Business and Finance for the Department of Neuroscience at the University of Arizona, where she has been involved in grants and programs administration for more than 20 years. She currently serves on the NCURA Departmental Community and the Region VII Volunteer Committee. She holds a BA in History and is enrolled in the Eller College of Management Executive MBA program. Jennifer can be reached at jll@neurobio.arizona.edu

**Timothy Schailey, MS** is currently employed at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia as a Manager of Sponsored Programs. In his current position, Tim is primarily responsible for all pre-award functions of research administration. Tim has worked in researcher administration for approximately 7 years. His career has also afforded him an opportunity to acquire experience regarding post-award aspects of the profession as well. Tim has been a member of NCURA since 2006, and is involved with the Program Committee for Region II, the Professional Development Committee, and serves as Co-Chair of the Departmental Committee. Additionally, he is a recent graduate of Emmanuel College where he obtained his Master’s degree in Management with a specialization in Research Administration. Timothy can be reached at SchalleyT@email.chop.edu

**John Hanold** is Interim Director, Office of Sponsored Programs at Penn State University. He can be reached at jhh6@psu.edu

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Presenting can be nerve-wracking, especially when you find out that NCURA has teamed you up to co-present with some of the biggest names in research administration! But it is also exhilaratingly fun. You learn so much during your preparations, augmenting gaps in your knowledge, and conferring with your co-presenters. And the fear becomes much less of an issue when you realize that your colleagues at NCURA are never your enemy. As long as you show your audience respect (and have a little fun), they will work with you to make every presentation a success.

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One of my favorite moments... presenting came when I completely lost my place. I had no idea what to say or what I had been saying or where I was. I looked around the room and saw everyone looking at me. They all believed that I was about to say something really profound! As the seconds ticked by, they all kept leaning forward in their chairs, and it was all I could do not to laugh.

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**PATHWAYS**

**AUGUST  2013**

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As some of you may recall, the 2010 movie *Company Men* centered on a company in Boston, Massachusetts that is undergoing downsizing. Ben Affleck portrays a character that must redefine his life as a man, husband and father due to corporate downsizing. The theme has particular significance for many in the world of research administration as budgets keep dwindling and resources are being reduced. Many discussions have occurred where research administrators ask: “So how is one supposed to cope and do more with less?” Some would argue that you actually wind up doing less with less!

Amid competitive pressures and a challenging global economy, “doing more with less” often brings skeptical reactions from employees who already have added many duties to their current oversized workloads. Employees are often facing increased goals and expectations, while working longer hours. Managers want employees to accomplish more in the same amount of time, and most likely for the same compensation. Coping can be challenging for all.

Some employees will cope by hunkering down and soldiering on, despite feeling overworked and overburdened. However, even employees who are aligned with goals and objectives and are enthusiastic about making a difference, have reported feeling frustrated.

From a motivational perspective, one way that managers can help everyone cope is to match the emphasis of engaging employees with a similar commitment to enabling them. Some successful management tips to help cope with adjustments and to implement efficiencies include:

- **Focus on essential, value added tasks.**
  ✔ Provide regular, constructive feedback about employees’ work and their value.
  ✔ Clarify key priorities.

- **Provide employees with the tools and support they need to succeed.**
  ✔ Frequent training to develop employee skills and abilities.
  ✔ Evaluate work processes regularly to ensure they’re aligned with changing work demands.

- **Allow employees to make decisions and have ownership on their portfolios without fear of overstepping boundaries.**
  ✔ Assign roles with serious consideration to each employee’s strengths.
  ✔ Reward and reinforce teamwork and collaboration.

With this perspective aimed at enabling workers, “doing more with less” no longer has the traditional view where the employee needs to develop ever-higher levels of motivation in order to help the organization accomplish more with fewer resources. Instead, in this context, the focus is on how managers and leaders need to respond. Employees who want to give their best - but can’t because of organization barriers and constraints - are able to achieve their full potential.

David Ngo, MBA, Managing Officer the University of Wisconsin - Madison, is a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute and Executive Leadership Program. David’s responsibilities at UW-Madison include management of Pre-Award operations. He can be reached at dvngo@rsp.wisc.edu or follow him on twitter @DavidNgo26
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NCURA’s Volunteer Central

NCURA’S VOLUNTEER CENTRAL now makes getting involved with your professional association even easier! Find volunteer opportunities that match your interests, expertise and availability. Scroll through the list of opportunities or filter your selections to find out which positions or projects best suit you. Check out Volunteer Central for the latest ways to get involved and enhance your membership and career!

Additional personal benefits include:

- Career enhancement/advancement
- Professional contacts
- Personal growth/new knowledge
- Additional experience
- Sharing expertise
- Personal achievement
- Giving back to the organization
- Recognition
- Having fun!

If you have any questions or would like additional information about how to get involved with NCURA, please contact Alissa Brower, National Volunteer Coordinator, at brower@ncura.edu or 202-466-3894.

Visit: http://collaborate.ncura.edu/VolunteerOpportunities

Visit NCURA’s NEW Volunteer Central!
The HHS OIG has included audits of Direct Charging of General and Administrative expenses in their work plan since 2010 with the first audit report issued in 2012.

The audits continue into 2013. In additional to findings on G&A costs, findings in other areas were included in the audits.

Below is a summary of the most noteworthy findings on the audits issued to date.

**General and Administrative Findings**

1. Payment of an Individual Membership in a professional organization. The auditors noted that only costs for institutions membership are allowable.

2. Janitorial services including restroom clean up and trash pickup. Billed services were for overtime work performed on another project and did not meet the criteria for allocability as stated in 2 CFR part 220, Appendix A.

3. Several findings were on the purchase of general purpose lap tops, monthly telephone charges and general purpose supplies.

**Extra State Compensation** A foundation incurred a finding for a payment of extra state compensation to a faculty member for work that he had done in the same department. The Foundation’s argument was that the faculty member’s job title did not allow for any release time to conduct research and that his role on the project was in addition to and outside of his official job responsibilities. The auditors maintained that the expenditure was unallowable because the faculty member earned it working for the same department where he performed his regular duties.

**Hourly Employee Effort Reporting** The University required hourly employees not covered by the Effort System to attest to the wages on a sponsored project on a prescribed time sheet. The reports included the total hours worked but did not identify the projects or activities on which the employees worked. Because it did not provide the project or activity it did not provide adequate documentation to support the determination to distribute salaries and wages for the employee.

**Graduate Compensation** A graduate student, who was a former speech pathologist with over 12 years clinical experience, was hired on a project at much higher rate than other entry level post doctoral students and higher than the NSRA stipend level. The Universities position was that based on past professional experience he was hired in a different capacity than a graduate student so the University was not bound by the NIH graduate student compensation guidelines. The auditors noted that the graduate student’s area of study was Communication Disorders and there was no meaningful distinction between the work this individual performed on research grants as a graduate student and the work the individual was hired to perform in his capacity as a speech language pathologist. There was no support for hiring the individual as a graduate student on one research grant and in a professional capacity on another.

**Salary Costs and Effort** Auditors found transactions where the documentation did not corroborate with the amount of effort charged to the award. An award was charged 100% of the biweekly salary of a laboratory researcher but according to the principal investigator, 40% of the researcher’s effort was devoted to the award, and the remaining 60% involved managing a zebra fish facility and other non-research related duties. Auditors noted that although these non-award duties may have benefited Federal awards in general, they were administrative in nature and not assignable to a single award.

**Questioned Service Center Costs** Auditors found that rates charged by the animal facility and telecommunications centers were not designed to recover only the aggregate costs of the services.

For the animal care facility the University computed the rates by averaging the rates that other universities charged. The University stated that the facility was heavily subsidized so it knew the rates charged were below cost. The auditors maintained their finding.

Charlene Blevens is currently on long term loan to the Business School from her position as Assistant Vice President for Research Accounting. She has worked in the financial area in both the public and private sector in various capacities for more than 23 years with more than 11 years’ experience at state universities in Research. She has presented at the NCURA, FRA, SRA and NACCA conferences. In addition she is the author of the Summary of University Audits, Settlements and Investigations located on the NACCA Cost Accounting Website at [www.costaccounting.org](http://www.costaccounting.org). She can be reached at blevensc@fiu.edu
Sarah Lampson was appointed Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Research Administrators (CAURA) and assumed her new role on May 15. A frequent contributor to NCURA Magazine, Sarah has also co-authored two books on research administration.

Sheila T. Lischwe, Ph.D., changed institutions and is now the Director of Sponsored Programs at Clemson University. She was the Director of the Office of Research Development and Services at Saint Louis University.

Tim Mildren is now Director of Budget and Operations, Seattle University College of Nursing. Tim left his position as Finance Officer at Washington State University, College of Nursing, in February 2013.

Jennifer Rosa, CRA, was promoted in May 2013 from her position as Program Manager, Translational Research Program in Pediatric Orthopaedics, to a new position as Administrative Director for Research for the Center for Childhood Cancer Research at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

Garrett Sanders was promoted to Executive Vice President for the Research Foundation of the State University of New York. He previously held the position of Vice President, Sponsored Programs Administration at the Research Foundation of SUNY.

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Congratulations to our Spring Meeting Travel Award Winners
Thomas Dillon, Brown University
Susanne Marie Alexander, Tufts University
Jared Huckle, University of Connecticut
Alison Wellman Smith, Harvard Kennedy School of Government

And to our Award Winners...
Outstanding New Professional— Kristen Pennarun, Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Outstanding Volunteer— Fredric Majnoun, Boston University
Merit— Stacy Riseman, Boston University
Distinguished Service— Gary Smith, Massachusetts General Hospital

Extreme congratulations to our Program Committee (co-chaired by Jeff Seo and Stacy Riseman) and to everyone in Region 1 who contributed their time and talents to the spring meeting. The eight workshops held on Monday were very well attended, Jimmy Tingle (jimmytingle.com) was an excellent keynote speaker; the concurrent sessions and discussion groups were an unqualified success, the site (Wentworth by the Sea Marriott Hotel and Spa) was spectacular, and, last but not least, the Gatsby-themed party on Wednesday night was super fun! The photo booth was very popular, and the money we made from “arrests” and “bailouts” allowed us to send over $500 to the Boston One Fund for marathon victims and their families.

Region I has now convened two site committees: a Regional Meeting site committee charged with finding possible sites for either a spring or fall 2014 Region 1 Meeting, and the RADG and Workshop site committee is looking for a Boston-area venue to replace the Boston Commons Hotel and Conference Center, which will be closing in 2014.

The June 20th Research Administrators Discussion Group (RADG): “Implementing fCOI Regulations: Challenges and Lessons Learned” has over fifty reservations as I write this. Thank you very much to Alison Wellman Smith, our RADG coordinator and Curriculum Committee Co-Chair! If you have any suggestions for future RADGs, please let us know.

Have you noticed changes to our website ncuraregion1.org? The website committee is working diligently to update the information on the site and tweak the design to make it more user friendly. We are also considering changing to a new content management system. If you’re a techie and/or have suggestions for the site, please email webmaster@ncuraregion1.org. Many thanks to Pete Hague, David Waldron, and the whole website committee!

I’m personally looking forward to seeing many friends in DC in August. We’ll be updating the NCURA Region 1 Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/ncuraregion1 with messages and tidbits from the sessions, so be sure to “like” our page if you haven’t already.

Karen Woodward Massey serves as the Chair of Region I and is the Director of Education and Outreach in Research Administration Services at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Harvard University. She can be reached at chair@ncuraregion1.org or on Twitter @kwmassey.

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

The year is flying by and we have been very busy in Region II. From successfully delivering three workshops packed with teaching moments at Region II institutions to an amazing regional conference in Buffalo, NY, Region II has been humming. These successes are only possible because of the great volunteers in our region. The volunteerism in Region II is remarkable and is the core for our region’s accomplishments. Our volunteers are dedicated and passionate towards ensuring success for our region’s new initiatives. Volunteerism is a great way to network. If anyone is interested in volunteer opportunities in our region, please reach out to me directly or anyone on our steering committee http://ncuraregionii.org/committees/.

Region II Professional Development Committee Update
The Region II Professional Development Committee was invited to the University of Baltimore on September 20th to teach a “Building Blocks for Research Administration” workshop and we were also asked to come to Temple University in Philadelphia, Pa in October 2013 to deliver another workshop for the members of Region II in the Philly area. Details can be found on our website. Also be on the lookout for my emails announcing these education packed workshops.

Region II Distinguished Service Award
Congratulations to Martin Williams from William Paterson University who received the Region II Distinguished Service Award at our regional conference in Buffalo, NY. Martin was our chair in 2011 and has contributed significantly to our region’s success through his leadership and volunteerism.

Catherine Core Minority Travel Award Winner
Congratulations to Kelba Sosa from Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva in Bronx, NY, for receiving one of the Catherine Core Minority Travel Awards. This award is in support of her participation in NCURA’s 55th Annual Meeting.
Region II is seeking institutions to host workshops in 2013
Workshop topics now available include:

- Hot Topics in Research Compliance (Advanced)
- Building Blocks for Research Administration (Beginner)
- Intellectual Property Management (Intermediate)
- The Alphabet Soup of NIH Training and Career Development Awards (Beginner)
- Advanced Issues in A-21, A-110 and A-133 (Advanced)

Detailed descriptions of these workshops are available at [http://ncuraregionii.org/](http://ncuraregionii.org/)

Region II’s Professional Development Workshops are an outstanding new resource serving the specific needs of our research and sponsored programs professions.

Region II’s workshops:

- provide detailed information that participants will be able to use immediately
- focus on current, general and specific topics in research and sponsored projects administration
- are presented by recognized leaders in research and sponsored projects administration from Region II
- foster local networks of colleagues
- are cost-effective, one-day events offered in locales where participants will not require overnight travel

Hosting entails local scheduling and coordination, assistance with registration, pre-event photocopying, and parking arrangements. The workshop requires a conference room accommodating up to 75 participants at round tables, projector and Internet access, and ample space for the presenters to interact with the audience. Lunch is included, available either nearby or in the presentation room.

Host organizations receive two free registrations to the next Region II conference.

The Region II PDC provides the workshop and its presenters, manages registration and promotion, and works closely with the host institution.

Hope everyone is having a great summer!

Brian Squilla serves as the Chair of Region II and is the Chief of Staff, Office of the Dean of the Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University.
“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

– Anne Frank

Region IV members embody and embrace this spirit of volunteerism, generously donating their time and talents to help improve our community of research administration colleagues. From serving multi-year commitments on the board of directors to contributing a couple of hours of time at a regional or national meeting event, each act of engagement makes a tremendous difference.

New officers and board members who were announced at our spring business meeting in Milwaukee include the following: Sue Kelch (University of Michigan) is chair-elect, Diane Hillebrand (University of North Dakota) and John Philipps (University of Chicago) are members-at-large, and Kirsten Yehl (Northwestern University) is the other board member.

Individuals appointed as committee chairs for 2013-14 include the following:

- Awards Committee: Nancy Reidelberger (Washington University in St. Louis)
- Communications Committee: Amy Kitzman (Northwestern University)
- Membership Committee: Sue Grimes (Purdue University)
- Nominations Committee: Jeff Ritchie (Lewis University)
- Professional Development Committee: Jennifer Duncan (University of Missouri)
- Site Selection Committee: Patience Graybill Condellone (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville)

If you’d like to learn more about ways to maximize the benefits of your Region IV member, explore ideas for enhancing professional programming, or help out at regional and national activities, feel free to contact me or any of the individuals listed above.

An exciting event this summer will be the 55th Annual Meeting (August 4-7, 2013) in Washington, D.C. As in the past, a host of activities will be offered to encourage networking and socializing with regional colleagues, such as a newcomer’s reception, dessert mix-and-mingle, dinner groups, hospitality suite (#4101), and options for exploring the city. Watch for upcoming e-blasts with more details.

Also be sure to stop by the Region IV table at the “Get Involved Fair” on Tuesday morning, August 6, to meet in person and learn more about regional and national volunteer opportunities. Region IV has more than four decades of history supporting research together. You are invited to be a contributing member to this proud tradition and do your part to improve the world.

Jeremy Miner serves as the Chair of Region IV and is Director of Grants and Contracts at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Hello and welcome to all Annual Meeting attendees. I want to invite everyone from Region V to stop by our Hospitality Room - #5101 - each night after 9pm. This is a great chance to get together with old friends and to make new ones. Be sure to visit the Region V booth (prizes and goodies) at the Get Involved Fair during breakfast on Tuesday, August 6th from 7:30-8:15 am to find out how you can get involved with our organization. Follow us on twitter @ncura5 to receive updates on Region V activities during the Annual Meeting. Let’s make Region V the best that it can be!

I want to alert the Region V membership to a special professional development opportunity within the Region V area. NCURA will be offering the following classes at the Crowne Plaza Dallas, TX, September 9-11: Departmental Research Administration Workshop; Fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop; Financial Research Administration Workshop; and Sponsored Projects Administration Level II Workshop. This is an excellent opportunity for professional development right here in our own Region. For more information and to register for these workshops, please go to http://www.ncura.edu/content/educational_programs.

Please welcome our new Region V officers: Vice Chair / Chair-Elect Hollie Schreiber, Oklahoma State University (in office); Secretary Melody Bell, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (in office, appointed to fill in for Hollie); Regionally-elected Member on the National Board, Jeremy Forsberg, University of Texas – Arlington (effective 1/1/2014); Executive Committee Members Becky Castillo, University of Texas MD Anderson (effective 1/1/2014) and Joanne Palmer, Texas State University (effective 1/1/2014). A big thank you to the Nominating Committee: W. Scott Erwin (Chair) Texas State University; Twila Baker, Lamar University; Lisa Faulkner, Oklahoma State University and Colette Solpietro, Texas Tech University.
Recipients of the Joan Howeth National Travel Awards were Leslie Lopez, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center – El Paso and Ruth Lozano, Southern Methodist University.

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us for Region V’s 2014 Spring Meeting May 3-7, 2014 at the Westin Austin at The Domain.

Scott Davis serves as Chair of Region V and is Associate Director at University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Lastly, congratulations to our Annual Meeting Travel Award recipients – Ashley Alexander (Loyola Marymount), Alicia Asgari (UC Irvine), Claudia Baroni (Stanford), and Jason Miller (Cal State University Channel Islands). We look forward to seeing you at your first NCURA meeting! See you soon at the Annual Meeting!

Katherine Ho serves as Region VI Chair and is the Deputy to the AVP and Executive Director of the Office of Sponsored Research at Stanford University. She can be reached at Katherine.ho@standard.edu.

By-Law Revisions – Our appointed Ad-Hoc Committee has returned proposed recommendations for Region VII by-law revisions to the Executive Committee. It is anticipated that submission to the full regional membership for review and vote for acceptance will be forthcoming prior to the NCURA 55th Annual Meeting in August.

Nomination and Election Committee – Any Region VII member interested in serving on the Nomination and Election Committee should contact Tony Onofrietti, Chair, Region VII as soon as possible at tony.onofrietti@hsc.utah.edu. Three individuals will be appointed to identify candidates for Region VII officer positions (Chair-Elect / Secretary-Treasurer / Member-At-Large) for the upcoming year. These are wonderful opportunities to further collaborate and become involved in the NCURA Region VII.

Travel Awards - Applications for Region VII Travel Awards to the AM55 have now been submitted and are being reviewed. Region VII will be supporting up to two travel awards of $1,000.00 to offset the cost of attendance for individuals who have not previously attended an NCURA-sponsored meeting or conference. Awardees will be announced shortly.

NCURA 55th Annual Meeting (AM55) - Registration is now open for the upcoming AM55 “Investment – Commitment – Rewards” to be held August 4-7 at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. http://collaborate.ncura.edu/NCURA55thAnnualMeeting/Home/.

Tony Onofrietti, M.S., CRSS, serves as the Region VII Chair and is Director of Research Education in the Office of the Vice President for Research at The University of Utah.
New International Region Vice-Chair

The International Region is gearing up for AM55 and its first Regional Meeting in April 2014 and we take our motto GOING GLOBAL: Fostering Innovation and Strengthening Synergies literally. It is therefore with great pleasure we introduce our new Vice-Chair Patriq Fagerstedt from Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden to the NCURA community – a truly international researcher and research administrator, who strengthens the synergies between US and European researchers on a daily basis.

Patriq studied chemistry and molecular biology at Stockholm University before receiving a Ph.D. in Neuroscience at Karolinska Institutet in 2000. Patriq performed post-doctoral work in Belgium and Sweden before joining the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca PLC in 2004 in their efforts to develop new medications for pain relief. In 2007, he accepted a position as coordinator of US grants in the Grants Office of Karolinska Institute where he has been responsible for pre- and post-contract support. Patriq has participated in several courses, workshops and expert panels on international sub-contracting of Federal grants.

He is not unknown in the NCURA family as he is a member of the NCURA international sub-committee and served in the program committee of the FRA 2013. So you can be assured that the International Region’s vision of becoming a leading forum for discussion and exchange of information regarding international research funding and research politics in the US is consolidated. We are striving for continuously introducing high-level representatives from the international institutions, national and regional entities (ministries, research organizations and institutes as well as supporting structures) whom we will encourage to share their experience. Hence the Spring Meeting 2014 will serve as a platform for networking and exchange.

Agatha Keller serves as the Chair of the International Region and is the Co-Director EU GrantsAccess, at ETH Zurich|University of Zurich, and Annika Glauner serves as the Secretary of the International Region and is the Senior Programme and Research Manager at EU GrantsAccess, International Research Programmes, at ETH Zurich|University of Zurich.
NCURA’s Traveling Workshops head to Dallas
September 9-11, 2013

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

**Departmental Research Administration Workshop**
- Best practices for a department administrator’s day-to-day activities
- Discussion of OMB Circulars A-21, A-110, and A-133
- Tools for successful department administration
- Pre-Award administration
- Management of the award
- Compliance Challenges
- Close-out and audit

**Financial Research Administration Workshop**
- The inter-relationship between pre and post-award financial research administration
- Costing elements in OMB Circular A-21
- Cash management issues
- Issues relating to service centers
- Close-out requirements
- Audits

**Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop**
- For the newcomer (less than 2 years experience) or for the individual who has worked primarily in only one area of sponsored projects administration
- Provides participants with a broad overview of the various aspects involved in sponsored projects administration
- Compliance Issues
- Preparation and review of proposals
- Negotiation and acceptance of awards
- Financial and administrative management
- Close-out and audit

**Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop – Critical Issues in Research Administration**
- For more experienced research administrators
- Institutional compliance responsibilities
- Proposal creation, budgeting and award administration
- Contract and subaward review
- Export controls
- Post award financial administration

Registration and hotel information is available at www.ncura.edu
NATIONAL CONFERENCES
55TH ANNUAL MEETING
Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC .................................August 4-7, 2013

2014 FINANCIAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION (FRA) CONFERENCE
San Francisco, CA ..................................................................March 15-17, 2014

2014 PRE-AWARD RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION (PRA) CONFERENCE
San Francisco, CA ..................................................................March 18-20, 2014

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Dallas, TX..........................................................................September 9-11, 2013

FINANCIAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Dallas, TX..........................................................................September 9-11, 2013
Charleston, SC ...................................................................December 9-11, 2013

LEVEL I: FUNDAMENTALS OF SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Dallas, TX..........................................................................September 9-11, 2013
Charleston, SC ...................................................................December 9-11, 2013

LEVEL II: SPONSORED PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP – CRITICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION
Dallas, TX..........................................................................September 9-11, 2013
Charleston, SC ...................................................................December 9-11, 2013

ONLINE TUTORIALS
A Primer on Clinical Trials – 8 week program
A Primer on Federal Contracting – 8 week program
A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements – 8 week program
A Primer on Subawards – 8 week program

DEADLINES FOR OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2013
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .....................September 9, 2013
Submission of Articles to Co-editors..................................September 16, 2013
Submission of Advertisements ..........................................September 16, 2013

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www.ncura.edu/content/news/newsletter/author_instructions.php

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