Sticking Together

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
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On The Cover: *Sticking Together* is what we Research Administrators do, for each other, our faculty, and our purpose. We came up with this theme just after the government shutdown in the Fall of 2013. We knew that by the time this issue comes out we would likely be in the midst of a fight once again over budgets, sequestration, additional cuts...or not, etc. We figured that because we “Stuck Together” then, we can Stick Together in mid-January.

Since it’s the January/February (winter) issue we HAD to have cute Penguins on the cover! I read a fun article on the internet entitled, “The Emperor Penguin” by Carlson and Leibowitz and the authors discuss how these penguins are so well protected that if snow falls on their backs it doesn’t melt, just like us, they can’t fly. Laughing to myself, I don’t think the flying is that important, BUT being well protected, I like that. Plus they can swim 30mph and leap out of the water over seven feet. The last characteristic that jumped out at me was that they huddle to keep warm. These appear to be all research administration characteristics, we can leap over tall buildings (just under seven feet) and speed along in our work (not exceeding 30mph) and by huddling we are well protected. Finally, we stick together no matter what happens....to the federal government.

January 15th may have come and gone by the time this issue is in our fins, I mean hands. However, we are illustrating here that we need our “RED” and “BLUE” buddies, on the right panel, to get it together and come and huddle up on our side of the ice, so WE ALL can Stick Together.

You will see Vivian Holmes, NCURA President, providing her first article. Carol Blum, from COGR, always gets the new-year started right with her wit and outstanding content related to federal policies and rules. Robyn Remotigue and Laura Let-better share with us advice on thinking of networking as a non-strategic activity in *Sticking Together: Using Your Network during a Career Transition*. Make friends where you want to be — good insight. Look for articles from our members and research administrators/managers in Canada, Europe, and Japan courtesy of Martin Kirk, Olaf Svenningsen, and Keiko Okano. I am a huge IT fan, so be sure and check out the article by Thomas Spencer and Melody Bell sharing their insights into IT-support, local and central. I have been super thrilled with the *Audit Watch* by Charlene Blevens — wow she really helps us out by putting audit findings into real words. Terri Hall gives us excellent pointers on free IT Tools and throws in a story about seventeen cow. Cows and penguins — lovely!

I have introduced a new feature called “On the National Level.” Many of our NCURA members have significant impact on the ‘National Scene’ and I have asked several of them to briefly share their thoughts on national issues in research administration. Also check out Ann Granters’ column — and keep those questions coming, hilarious! May all our webbed feet stick close to the ice sheet as we huddle close together, even our red and blue friends. I really don’t want to tell you how Emperors eat, but I will anyway. From our story “The Emperor Penguin,” when Emperors want to eat they push one penguin into the water to see if it is eaten by a seal, if it is not they jump in to find food. My hope is that we won’t need to push anyone into the water....but...enjoy your reading!

Dan Nordquist, Senior Editor

Dan is currently the Assistant Vice President, Office of Research, and Director of Washington State University’s Office of Grant and Research Development. He oversees research development, proposal and award processing, research metrics, non-financial post-award, and is significantly involved in strategic initiatives at WSU. He has a passion for technology and its positive impact on research management. Dan has significant leadership experience internally and externally, and is a NCURA Past President. He can be reached at nordquist@wsu.edu
Message from Your President

By Vivian Holmes, NCURA President

Change...is good. Living in New England means living with perpetual change. We glide our toes back into snow boots (always too soon) and our seasons melt from one into another – baseball, football, basketball, hockey...and then back again. NCURA is similar; we’ve grown accustomed to our various annual gatherings and, personally and professionally, plan accordingly.

As NCURA members, 2014 marks the beginning of another very busy and exciting NCURA year including some first-time-ever’s, some very special events, and of course the long-awaited change to research administration in the form of OMB Circular A-81, otherwise referred to as the Omni-circular, the Uni-circular, or my favorite, “the Circular to end all Circulars.”

Just in case you haven’t been living on the edge with the Office of Management and Budget’s Proposed Guidance, it brings the most significant changes to research administration that any of us have seen by streamlining eight of the circulars that currently direct, and frequently mystify, us. OMB’s intent is that this Proposed Uniform Guidance “increase the efficiency and effectiveness of grant programs by eliminating unnecessary and duplicative requirements and strengthen the oversight of grant dollars by focusing on areas such as eligibility, monitoring of sub-recipients, adequate reporting, and other areas that are potential indices of waste, fraud or abuse.” The efforts of many NCURA members have been invested in developing the clarity we’ve desired. I write this from “the edge” as the final product has not yet been delivered. However NCURA has been at the ready with plans to address the imminent final document and historic occasion. After all these years, one comprehensive streamlined policy guide sounds like a great change to me.

In March, we’re headed to the west coast for Financial Research Administration Conference (FRA) and Pre-Award Research Administration Conference (PRA). San Francisco is an excellent location for these meetings and, as I understand, St. Patrick’s Day is celebrated all across the city. The FRA Conference theme is “The Practical and the Possible.” This excellent program, co-chaired by Dave Lynch and Lisa Mosely, responds to challenges of post-award across multiple levels and tracks. Directly following FRA will be the PRA Conference held during March 18-20. As Co-Chairs, Tricia Callahan and Mary Louise Healy have developed a fantastic program based on their theme, “New Connections, New Horizons & New Skills.”

International members representing NCURA’s Region VIII will be gathering for their first-ever regional meeting in Washington, DC! This meeting, entitled “GOING GLOBAL: Fostering Innovation and Strengthening Synergies,” will be held on April 9th with keynote speaker Dr. Graham Harrison of the Office of International and Integrative Activities at the National Science Foundation. The enthusiasm for this meeting is palpable with energy and ideas coming from all over the world.

Just as international research at our institutions has been growing rapidly, NCURA’s global presence and participation continues to develop. On April 10 – 13, 2014, the fifth biennial International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) Congress will be held in Washington, DC at the Washington Hilton. The theme of the Congress is “Enabling the Global Research Enterprise from Policy to Practice.” There will be three primary tracks: Policy, Practice, and Performance and participants will include senior university administrators and researchers, government policy-makers and senior managers from the national and international funding agencies. This conference is aimed at the senior members of the global research and innovation community. This is the first time that the Congress has been held in North America and is being hosted by NCURA, CAURA, and SRA. We are so fortunate and proud to have NCURA past-president Dave Richardson serving as INORMS co-chair.

And speaking of change.....2014 will be NCURA’s 56th Annual Meeting and now the second one of this new tradition to be held in August. As you recall, planning future November meeting dates in Washington, DC for thousands of attendees would no longer be financially viable as it was not possible to assume our institutions would be able to absorb the significant increase in costs. Through all practical analysis, it was a “no-brainer.” But, would it harm our tradition, our habit to juggle Halloween, vote by absentee ballot, gamble on early autumn being kind and pleasant weather? And those deadlines – we were somehow even busier each November and our budgets for travel were getting tighter. It all made sense but…. who knew it would go so well?! President-elect Michelle Vazin and her team are well on their way in planning AM56 and it already looks great! This change addressed our membership’s primary concern for sustaining the ability to attend the Annual Meeting as well as “send new folks” not to be hampered by prohibitive hotel costs.

The future is big and bright for NCURA and our agility and willingness to grow beyond our institutions, regions, and borders, defines us. The coming year brings opportunities for us to greet historic regulatory changes and experience new global collaborations – together.

Vivian Holmes is NCURA President and serves as the Director, Sponsored Research Operations at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. She can be reached at vh Holmes@broadinstitute.org
It’s that time of the year again when reflection and anticipation collide. It’s inevitable given that January is all about ruminations on the past — triumphs and missed opportunities — and aspirations for the future. Since the Romans named January after Janus, keeper of transitions and beginnings, we’ve grown accustomed to looking forward and back as a new year begins. As a cautionary note, Janus is the god depicted with two faces and contemporary usage of the phrase “two-faced” carries a decidedly different connotation. But contemplation of the thoroughly modern meaning of two-faced - deceit and hypocrisy — brings me to my current “Capitol view.” It won’t take long.

On October 29, 2013, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform approved the reintroduced and slightly modified version of the Grant Reform and New Transparency Act of 2013 (GRANT Act, H.R. 3316) but it has not yet been considered by the full House. The amendments sought by the higher education community, including the posting of only grant-abstracts, instead of full grant applications and other grant information and the modification of the bill’s requirements on the posting of information about peer reviewers, offered by Reps. Gerald Connolly (D-VA) and Mark Pocan (D-WI), respectively, were defeated along party lines. Days after the Committee approval of the GRANT Act, its author Rep. James Lankford (R-OK) said in a published interview with ScienceInsider’s Jeffrey Mervis that “the bill isn’t aimed at research agencies and “would not change” how those agencies do their jobs. [Lankford] also said he plans to fix several provisions that are causing the most heartburn among academics and their institutions.” The fixes discussed include the amendments proposed by Connolly and Pocan.

Looking forward? A modified version is likely to emerge from the House but may wait until the next session of the 113th Congress. Given that there is no similar bill pending in the Senate, it may well be some time before this particular effort at reform and transparency bears fruit.

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act, S. 994) re-emerged in the Senate and was approved on November 6, 2013 by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. It is related to but markedly different from the House version (HR 2061) passed by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in May 2013. The differences from the perspective of the research community are not substantive. It continues to place the burden of implementation on the Federal agencies by avoiding adding or changing, in the short term, the reporting requirements of the recipient communities. It retains consultation with stakeholders, explicitly naming higher education institutions, in the development of new common financial data standards and in the review of reporting requirements with the goals of commonality across agencies and reducing unnecessary duplication and burden. It retains a pilot program to test the common data elements and elimination of duplications and reduction of compliance costs for recipients. But the Senate version is much simpler than the House. Presented as amendments to the Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) in both versions, neither bill changes the current FFATA subawardee reporting requirements and both propose creating Federal-wide data standards to make the information available on USASpending.gov more useful. What’s different is the elimination, in the Senate version, of a role for the Recovery Accountability and Transparency (RAT) Board in the various tasks outlined in the Act, notably the conduct of the pilot program to explore new streamlined financial reporting for Federal award recipients. The pilot proposed by the Senate would fall to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and it is focused on an effort to find common elements, eliminate duplication, and reduce compliance costs; really geared to correcting recipient problems and issues. What’s really notable is what’s not in the Senate version that is a part of the House bill. In addition to the elimination of the RAT Board, there are no provisions for the use of the web-site by the Department of Treasury to investigate improper payments nor is the Comptroller directed to “rank” the agencies on the quality of their data.

All this means is that it will take some time — if both versions of legislation are passed by the respective chambers of Congress — to reconcile the differences. Again — a task likely to occur (if at all) in the next session of the 113th Congress.

The Federal agencies’ draft plans for Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research in response to the directive issued on February 22, 2013 by John Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), were due within six months to OSTP. Following review by OSTP and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), agencies will be developing final plans. For our purposes, we can assume that the agencies met that deadline and have received or are awaiting comments from OSTP and OMB and have begun or will begin completing their plans for increasing access to scientific publications and scientific data in digital formats.

In the new year, we should begin to see the final plans. Depending on the approach chosen by a particular agency, the stakeholder communities — in-
cluding research universities and institutions — will see those plans offered for comment or posted to the agency websites or a government website as final. What will be important is that everyone takes the time to review the agency plans and engage in discussions with the agencies to ensure that our investigators and institutions — as grantees — meet the obligations outlined in the plans. I suspect this will be a very iterative process. Most plans will likely rely on current processes and policies, e.g., the National Institutes of Health has a public access policy related to publications supported in part or in full by NIH. And NIH continues to refine its data sharing policies including the recently proposed draft genomic-data sharing policy. Other agencies have policies and procedures related to various aspects of the open access directive. The shape and scope of comprehensive plans will be interesting to review.

And as to the long awaited Reform of Federal Policies Relating to Grants and Cooperative Agreements; Cost Principles and Administrative Re-
quirements (Including Single Audit Act) or now also known as the Omn-
Cicular (even sounds ominous) — it will likely be the hottest topic of the whole year. It will be the most anxiety-producing, process-changing, free-
wheeling-excitement research administrators have seen in some time. To 
imisquote Bette Davis as Margo Channing in the 1950 classic film, All About Eve — Fasten your seatbelts. It’s going to be a bumpy ride.

References:
2 See discussion of the OSTP memorandum in the May/June 2013 issue of NCURA Magazine, Volume XIV, No. 3.
Sticking Together

Using Your Network During a Career Transition

By Robyn Remotigue and Laura Letbetter
As research administrators, we are responsible for helping our principal investigators and institutions adapt to an ever-changing landscape. We are expected to be solid, reliable, and even constant. So where do we turn for support when it is time for us to make changes in our careers? To each other, of course! A strong professional network is one of the best resources that you can develop and draw upon throughout your professional life. This year, as we reflect on our careers in research administration, we come to appreciate how professional relationships have played a critical role in our success. Creating a professional network within NCURA allows us to connect with others while providing a sense of security and trust that can be mutually beneficial.

Most people are familiar with the concept of networking. We exchange information and services, we cultivate relationships that we expect to be productive, and we seek connections in areas of geographic location or professional interest. We normally think of networking as a strategic activity. Make friends where you want to be. However, we must not overlook the importance of non-strategic networking, which we define as seeking connections with no particular end-game in mind. By being open to meeting folks or to learning something new, we can position ourselves to make new contacts and connections that might not otherwise occur to us. This is a bit like reaching points or looking smart. After all, reaching out also means reaching back. So when someone seeks you out because of a presentation you gave, a dialogue posted on a listserv, or an article you wrote for the magazine, it is worthwhile to both of you if you can make time to respond. It is professional courtesy to take time to respond because you never know when you might need to seek expertise on a matter. You also never know who else they will be able to help as a result of your having helped them. This is a profession where you can practically assume that what you offer others will be paid forward.

The contacts you develop both strategically and non-strategically become invaluable when you embark on a career change. Once you share with your network that you are contemplating or making a change, do not be surprised if others who are considering a transition reveal their plans to you. A career change can be a delicate subject. By revealing your plans, you send a message that you are a safe person to talk to, especially if it is someone with whom you work closely. You are safe to talk with because of your shared experience and also because you are about to be gone. This can be a bit unnerving, especially if you are experiencing an intense period of transition yourself. Someone who nonchalantly offers to help you clean out your office just might be ready to talk. Take time to be a good listener, even if you are feeling overwhelmed by your own transition. Down the road, that person who sought you out will likely make their move and become the next safe person to talk to. Soon enough, they will be called upon to do the listening by someone else who hasn’t had the courage to voice their plans yet. Thus, the circle of colleagues sticking together through transitions will expand.

In addition to sticking with your colleagues, you’ll need your family or others close to you to stick with you too. Consider how your transition will affect them - will changes in your availability, especially in those first few months, mean that their schedules or responsibilities at home need to be adjusted? Family members, spouse, partner, children, elders, or anyone who relies on you outside of work needs to be prepared for and informed about your process. This may be an opportunity to seek out colleagues at or near your new institution to provide advice that could benefit your family or close circle. People generally love to give advice to newcomers about the lay of the land. Topics such as schools, sports, entertainment, even local grocery stores are good conversation openers that help you make connections in your new environment. Be open to advice about seemingly small things that will save you time and make your transition smooth.

Now that you’ve prepared everyone around you to weather your transitional period, don’t forget to prepare yourself psychologically, especially if you are changing to a much different type of institution or role. Reaching out to your colleagues during this time is essential because they will be able to offer their support, tips, and guidance. People who have made transitions themselves might be able to suggest best practices based on their experiences. You are going to be the new kid for a while, and you need to get comfortable with that. Keep in mind that everything you do is going to take longer. Not only do you have to learn new policies and procedures, you also have to learn all the unwritten rules about how things are done in your new environment. More importantly you will also be adapting to a new culture. Be patient with yourself during this process; ask lots of questions and listen. Remember that developing new relationships will take time too.

Robyn Remotigue is Research Manager, Dean of the School of Public Health at University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. She has been in the field of research administration since 1994. She is a graduate of the 2012 NCURA Executive Leadership Program and 2010 NCURA Leadership Development Institute. She is actively involved with NCURA serving as Pre-Award Contributing Editor for the NCURA Magazine. In addition, she has volunteered in various capacities at the national and regional levels. She can be reached at Robyn.Remo@unthsc.edu

Laura Letchter is a contracting officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. She holds a Masters of Arts in English from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Her background includes teaching, editing, and program administration. She began her research administration career in 2004 at Kent State University and is a 2012 graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program. She served as secretary for Region III, 2012-2013. She can be reached at Laura.Letchter@osp.gatech.edu
Teaming—What Congress Can Learn From Us

By Amy M. Brusk, Maria B.J. Chun, Randi Wasik, and Linnea Minnema

Those in the research administration field are all too familiar with an environment of constant change. The recent U.S. government shutdown provided a unique challenge for the management of sponsored research. Fortunately, our skills of adaptation are well-honed and gave us yet another opportunity to flex our rather impressive muscles. Although institutions across the nation handled the situation in different ways, it seems we were successful in our strategies, as faculty and research administrators banded together, to continue moving steadily forward while the environment in Washington, D.C. remained stagnant. Here we offer a few perspectives from various universities located around the nation and how we victoriously conquered the beast of the unknown.

University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Randi Wasik

People picture the Pacific Northwest as this rainy place with creatures of the night roaming freely. My friends back east are amazed that I chose to go to this “rainy” place where people don’t talk directly with one another. I am happy to say both assumptions are clearly myths as demonstrated by the research community here at the University of Washington. However, those assumptions could be applied to those we have elected and sent to the other Washington.

Politics aside, what occurred on our campus demonstrated the power of open and transparent dialogues. Our central office sent out almost-daily updates to include links to federal sites, clearly outlining what was happening at the federal level. They offered suggestions and advice, demonstrating patience with what I can only imagine must have been a myriad of inquiries from those of us in the research community.

At the School of Medicine (SOM) level, administrators echoed the messages from the central offices as well as emphasized the support available at the SOM and the importance of the research mission. They offered to partner with us in any planning, forecasting, or modeling.

At my immediate level, I tapped into these resources, as well as my own experience and what I was reading on the various NCURA social media websites. My chair and I had regular communications with the faculty. I planned out support models and actions we could take to ensure the continuance of our research. Through this 360 degree part-
nership (central/local/departmental), coupled with stories from the “outside,” everyone faced this period of challenge calmly and as a united team.

One lesson learned was that we have much to be proud of in our professional organization and the amount of sharing and support of one another through NCURA. The biggest lesson learned for all was that we can pull together, have open and frank conversations, are agile, and, by using the power of a unified group, can accomplish what would have been thought to be unattainable. Communication is an incredibly powerful tool. Now if only those we placed in Washington can realize this and act accordingly, just imagine where we can go.

Through the concerted efforts of the departments, schools/colleges and central administration’s teaming and constant communication, we were successful and not “crippled” by this challenge—the sun did truly shine through during this recent challenge.

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii
Maria B.J. Chun

“Paradise” was not spared the impact of the federal shutdown. Pearl Harbor Shipyard workers and other federal government employees in Hawaii were directly affected. With regard to what was most memorable to me during that period of time was how faculty and research administration staff showed patience and understanding. Naturally, I can only speak to my personal experience in the Department of Surgery at the University of Hawaii’s medical school, but there was clearly a sense of “we’re in it together.”

What I most recall is the manner in which communication flowed readily. As soon as our university’s research office received word from the feds about the shutdown status, our medical school’s central administration was sent the news. They then notified department level staff of what was happening and how it would affect future and current proposals. We, in turn, notified our Principal Investigators (PIs). Faculty and staff could also visit the Office of Research Services’ website directly at http://www.ors.hawaii.edu

Fortunately for our department, our PIs had already received their funding so they could continue their work relatively unscathed. This experience made it evident that as long as communication is provided in a timely and effective manner, people are more accepting of “bad news.” For example, our Office of Research Services’ monthly newsletter1 is yet another way information is shared at our university. This is just one example of the many ways that our research administration keeps us in the loop—government shutdown or not.

The University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville, Tennessee
Linnea Minnema

The last few months have not been easy for either faculty or research administrators. If it isn’t the threat of a funding cut for a major source of revenue (the proposed defunding of Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality was a fairly recent scare for my nursing faculty), then it is trying to figure out how to keep business moving while Congress squabbles like a kindergarten class. The only way my faculty and I have found progress to be possible is through working as a team.

My office is a one-stop-shop in a small college (so small we have no departments), and I work with a faculty group that is relatively new to the research realm. There are some individuals who have experience with federal funding and are comfortable with the process, but for most this is a strange new world. We take the approach of learning as we go, walking together through the entire cycle of project conception, proposal submission, and (hopefully) award management. This year provided an extra splash of excitement to the last step of the learning process as the government was closed right when five of the college’s grantees, four of them brand new to federal funding, had to submit their very first annual progress report. No program officers were available to answer questions, and each

of the grantees had questions. Our central office provided as much information as they could when it became available, but policy statements and university contingency plans could only go so far to calm anxious grantees who wanted to make sure they were following the rules. Since the college is so small, I was available to sit with each of them to get their process started, answer questions in the interim, and converse with our central research office representative for final submission approvals. Once the government re-opened, we worked together again to ensure that any follow-up questions posed by the program officers were answered.

This level of exceptional customer service has gone a long way toward building my office's excellent reputation within the college. Whether they schedule a meeting with me, or just stop by my office with an immediate crisis, faculty members know that they will receive prompt responses, attention to detail, and genuine empathy. No problem is too small and no question is less important than any other. My researchers know we are a team. In return, I don't worry about being left out of the loop. The researchers want to include me in everything from programmatic conference calls to presentation of results. We celebrate the victories together and commiserate on the defeats. I just wish they could take me along to those conferences in Hawaii…

Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas

Amy M. Brusk

Located in the “Little Apple,” K-State resides in a much smaller city than our famous counterpart, though our research activity reflects a similar motto of “the [community] that never sleeps.” Despite the wrench the government threw into the operations of our well-oiled sponsored programs machine, we were able to continue our research momentum without too many hiccups.

Our Pre-award office stayed in constant communication with our research faculty and departmental administrators through e-mail updates of federal notices to keep everyone informed despite so many unknowns. Though grants.gov was technically up and running during the federal shutdown, Paul Lowe, our Assistant Vice President for Research, strategically decided not to submit proposals due to validation concerns. Instead, we were encouraged to continue the preparation of federal proposals in progress and have them ready and waiting for the re-opening of the government. This gave our faculty reassurance that we would continue to move forward with their proposals and be fully prepared. Paul’s plan worked well as evidenced by the number of proposals successfully submitted shortly after Washington gave the green light.

Current federal award funds were drawn down as long as it was an automatic transaction from online systems such as the Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Agriculture that didn’t require any manual interventions. Departmental administrators and faculty were still asked to watch cash flow closely as it wasn’t clear how long the shutdown would last. Fortunately, our Director of Sponsored Programs, Shannon Fisher, was confident that we had sufficient funds to float us financially at least through the end of the year.

K-State takes pride in its sense of family, a value which has shone brightly through this stressful time. Families support each other and band together to shoulder heavy burdens. Faculty leaned on their grant administrators, we leaned on our central sponsored programs offices, and they leaned back on us to relay information and trickle dedicated customer service down to the faculty. By working together as a united team, we not only survived the shutdown predicament, but also successfully kept it from being a hindrance to the progress of our research activity.

In Conclusion…

Clearly open and timely communication and teamwork was consistently highlighted throughout all of our individual experiences as a way to effectively overcome the negative side effects of the government shutdown. Both of these factors are ingredients for the excellent customer service that we as Departmental Research Administrators have found is the cornerstone in providing a positive experience for our faculty. Navigating through challenges such as this, our adaptation prowess can only grow stronger. In the end, it’s appropriate to reasonably conclude that there isn’t much that really surprises us anymore, not even the shutdown of the world’s most powerful government. ■

Randi Wasik, MBA is the Director of Administration and Finance at the University of Washington’s School of Medicine Department of Urology. In addition to her department role serving both the clinical and research operations, she is active on several committees in the School of Medicine—creating a shared service model for the School of Medicine, Audit Committee, and Finance Committee. At the University level she is part of a team teaching a post-award grants management class, a group creating a monitoring system for non-FEC cost share monitoring and reporting and on the HR/Payroll Committee charged with selecting and implementing the new payroll/HR system for the UW. Randi has worked in the central pre-award office at Harvard Medical School and the central post-award office at Boston University. She is very active in NCURA at both the regional and national level. Randi can be reached at randiw@uw.edu

Linnea Minnema is the Director of Research and Evaluation for the University of Tennessee’s College of Nursing, where she assists faculty with everything from searching for the right funding opportunity to closing out expired projects, and just about everything in between. Before stepping into this role in April 2012, she had worked as a contracts administrator for the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Tennessee since August 2008. She holds an MS in Management from Emmanuel College, with a specialization in Research Administration and is a member of the NCURA Departmental Community committee. Linnea can be reached at lminnema@utk.edu

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If you have been working in the same position or with the same employer longer than you anticipated, you might be thinking of a change. Overused skills, untapped creativity, and lack of meaningful challenges can leave research administrators at all career stages feeling bored, unfulfilled, and unhappy. Equally challenging are those nasty little voices that try to talk us out of change: “I don’t have time,” I’m too old,” or “I don’t know where to start.”

Indeed, for many of us change can be difficult and intimidating because we often lack two critical factors that propel us to act: (1) knowing what we want to achieve and (2) a map to get there. The first step in turning “wishful thinking” into reality is by setting new goals for your career. It’s not as hard as you think—it’s as simple as applying daily organizational skills that you already use. This article describes an interesting, yet simple process to help you map the next steps in your career or personal life, combining your career skills with your personal interests. The result: a new set of exciting goals and an action plan to accomplish them.
Analyze Your Current Situation

The first step toward changing your current situation is to analyze where you are now and where you want to be. There are two important mottos to keep in mind: the first one is “You can do what you do better by doing something else.” Have you wished that you could learn how to play that musical instrument that you never got around to doing when you were young? Perhaps you have inherited a piano and have the time for lessons—now you have the opportunity to pursue this dream and could find yourself in a situation where you enjoy playing so much that you attend talent shows to help demonstrate and improve your skills. Congratulations! You are not only doing something enjoyable, but you are also learning how to perform comfortably in front of an audience—which translates easily into presentation skills.

The second motto is “don’t do one single thing too long.” As a research administrator you may think that you get a pass on this, as our world is ever-evolving, but you should realize that staying in one place too long can make you stagnate and stymie your creativity. Branch out and pursue other goals—is there an opportunity out there that will help you learn new skills, but it’s a lateral move for you? Resist the temptation to immediately overlook this opportunity. Although it is not necessarily a move up the ladder, does this position offer new skills or opportunities that would eventually lead to a move up? If so, consider the potential impact of the position on your future—will it open doors that cannot be opened in your current situation? Remember the board game “Chutes and Ladders”? Sometimes that path upwards takes a zig-zag pattern to take you to your goal.

Plan Effectively

Each day we set goals, prioritize our tasks, and monitor our progress. Upon arriving at work, most likely the first thing you do is check your calendar and view your schedule; perhaps there are meetings, grant deadlines, site-visit preparation, and annual reviews. You rely on your calendar to help you plan your time in order to meet these goals and best manage deadlines. When you are at home, you plan your grocery list, manage bills, and budget for vacations and college. You manage your time by planning meals, daily chores, and free-time activities.

This same meticulous attention to detail that you give to daily planning at work and home can be applied to your professional career. Your career goals should have the same thought, care, and reflection that you use when prioritizing and setting goals. As you would look in a mirror, your career span should also be reflected upon, evaluated, assessed, and adjusted. Ask yourself: Am I where I want to be?

Write it Down

Begin writing two lists: (1) your responsibilities in your current position and (2) the specific tasks you perform to achieve the goals and objectives in your position; it might be helpful to refer to your current job description or recent annual performance. Your lists can be broad and generic; the goal is to get your ideas down on paper. (See Figure 1.)

Next, create a list of what you enjoy doing outside of your job, including hobbies and recreational activities such as genealogy, sports, quilting, or coaching Little League. Don’t limit your list to vocational skills—this is specifically for what you consider your heart’s desire. If you need additional inspiration to help determine your interests, there are many online personality-traits and self-interest tests that you can take. Try the process described in the Wiki article “Analyze Your Skills and Job Options” or take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Knowing whether you are right- or left-brained, a Type A or B personality, or an introvert or extrovert can help you identify new career directions and pinpoint the specific tasks you want to do.

FIGURE 1. Getting your ideas on paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are your current job duties?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-award management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical trials administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effort reporting management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electronic research admin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are your personal interests?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crunch numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are your short/long-term goals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion/pay increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become active in NCURA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue degree/certification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remain active after retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep productive as life changing</td>
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<tr>
<td>events occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you need to reach your goals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek a mentor and find out what they did to get there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define and pursue educational goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep expanding your network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for specific roles that provide opportunities for advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue awards that validate your experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create your brand – package appropriately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you create your list, don’t overlook what you may be afraid to try. As we learned as children, you may find that if you try it, you might like it and discover talents or skills that you didn’t know you possess. Silence those nasty little thoughts that might pop up; we are never too old to take on new challenges, and it’s never too late to try! Find creative ways to take your interests for a “test drive” volunteer to take on a new activity or take a course on a topic that has always interested you but you were ambivalent about trying. See what you can discover about yourself!

Set Your Goals

Lastly, write a list of your short- and long-term goals that you want to accomplish. Do you want to travel? Finish that degree, or earn a new one to advance in your position? Open a business when you retire? Teach? Don’t restrict your list to only what you can or want to achieve here and now—if achieving the goal will lead you toward greater personal and/or professional satisfaction, keep it on the list.

Now, take your list of current responsibilities and current interests and combine them to come up with the list of what you need to reach your goals. For example, if one of your career skills is managing people, and one of your personal interests is coaching Little League, you may be interested in some form of teaching, such adult education or motivational courses, or elementary school. In most cases, teaching will require additional education and training, so that becomes one of your primary goals – becoming qualified to teach by obtaining more education, seeking a mentor to help map your career path, or even taking an instructional role in your current position.

Put Your Interests and Goals to Work: Bring it All Together!

There are many ways to achieve the goals you have set, as well as to enhance and improve your skills. Perhaps you would like to pursue an advanced degree or receive certifications? you may find that your employer may reimburse some costs of coursework. You may feel that learning a language or improving your second-language skills would be advantageous. Another good way to make improvements is to join a group of like-minded individuals and find out about networking and mentoring opportunities available.

Never stop evaluating and re-evaluating your experiences. This is the key to not stagnate or stay in one place for too long. Are you able to develop skills in your current position? If not, should you ask to take on different responsibilities? Should you pursue another avenue of employment?

Should you volunteer for an organization that would increase your skills and exposure?

Lastly, remember to keep a healthy work-life balance. Developing your skills and self-interest isn’t about fitting a square peg in a round hole; individual circumstances can drive your timelines and goals. Take it one day at a time, but never lose sight of your goals. Whether you chip away at obtaining a certification or finish it on the fast track, have faith and confidence in yourself, and enjoy the journey toward achieving your goals.

Sue Kelch is a Senior Research Financial Specialist in the Department of Otolaryngology’s Kresge Hearing Research Institute at the University of Michigan. She provides financial oversight for the departmental research and Institute. She has been a member of NCURA since 2007 and is currently Chair-Elect for Region IV. She also served on various task forces and the Communications Committee. Sue can be reached at suekelch@umich.edu

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What I Found on Twitter

@RockTalking - Test Drive SciENcv by Sally Rockey, a new tool being developed that will allow researchers not only to easily compile biosketch information but also populate biosketches for grant applications. http://1.usa.gov/1bQdvZb

@PubMedCommons - PubMed Commons going public soon http://ow.ly/rstyT

@AAUniversities - Government budget cuts and the crisis in scientific research http://ow.ly/rstVJ

@AAASmember - Merriam-Webster’s Word of the Year Is ... Science http://ow.ly/rssFq

@OMGFacts - The Nobel prize was created because Alfred Nobel was ashamed he invented dynamite! http://ow.ly/rssSz

I just started following:

@OIGatHHS
@DoD_IG
@GlobalHigherEd

By Dan Nordquist: follow me
@DanNordquist and follow @NCURA
Instead of taking for granted that what takes place in our universities will automatically result in benefits to the public, increasingly, universities are called to account for their activities (Holbrook 2012). In principle, universities aim to achieve the public good. But what is the good? And who is the public?

Public universities, despite receiving less and less support (in the form of budget allocations) from ‘the public’ (in the form of the state), are nevertheless accountable to that public. Should such universities aim only at the good of this limited, local public? Or should ‘the public’ be thought of on a grander scale?

Put differently, what is the boundary of the local? Most universities, public or private, are situated in a place. When universities branch out, establishing campuses in other locales, each takes on its own local character. Auburn University at Montgomery is both part of and separate from Auburn University. Although its scope is greater, New York University’s establishment of the Global Network University faces the same global-local dynamic: each campus is unique, as well as part of the whole.

In order to address increasing competition for scarce funds, coupled with increasing accountability demands, universities are increasingly turning toward collaboration, whether across disciplines, across institutions, through public-private partnerships, or beyond state borders. This dynamic raises the issue of the sustainability of the university (Frodeman 2013). Ironically, thinking locally has prompted universities to act globally.

Of course, universities rarely act without thinking; global action is no exception. In order to address issues raised by the increasingly global character of research, the Global Research Funding Forum (GRFF): Maximizing Opportunities to Build a Global Research Portfolio was held on February 4-5, 2013 at the University of North Texas (UNT). The GRFF was organized by UNT’s Office of Research and Economic Development, Toulouse Graduate School, and UNT-International. It was designed as a “high dialogue” event, with presentations selected specifically to generate discussion rather than simply to disseminate information. The emphasis was also placed on global research, rather than on international education. Specific topics of the GRFF included:

1. Expanding mutually beneficial global research cooperation;
2. Addressing competitiveness surrounding global research funding and exchange opportunities; and
3. Understanding the challenges and opportunities facing US universities in supporting faculty and graduate students with global research ambitions.

A report on the GRFF, a list of speakers, presentation, and other materials are available at the GRFF website (see below):

In addition to an unprecedented opportunity for networking, the GRFF provided several recommendations, including:

1. Convening a second, focused meeting between Senior International Officers and Vice Presidents for Research to discuss the value of global collaboration, and
2. Conducting a survey of current practices of institutions engaged in supporting global research to identify the impacts their approach has had on improving overall research quality and graduate training output.

In response to these recommendations, the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), the University of South Florida (USF), and UNT, in cooperation with George Mason University, the American Council on Education (ACE) and Elsevier, are sponsoring a second meeting on “Developing Institutional Strategies for Growing Global Research.” This meeting will be hosted by the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida on April 6-8, 2014. Registration will open on January 6, 2014. Further information can be found at: http://global.usf.edu/globalforum/index.php

J. Britt Holbrook is a Visiting Assistant Professor with the School of Public Policy, Georgia Institute of Technology.

References


GRFF website: https://international.unt.edu/global-research-funding-forum
The Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA) at Yale University supports innovative, interdisciplinary research that combines behavioral, social and biomedical approaches, focused on the implementation of HIV prevention and treatment and the elimination of HIV disparities. CIRA is one of five NIMH-funded HIV/AIDS prevention research centers in the United States, and the only one in New England. During the latter part of 2011, as we prepared to compete for another five years of funding, we were mindful of the importance of strengthening ties with our collaborating partners in Connecticut. Our researchers told us again and again that they didn’t know what their colleagues were doing. “Changes in communications technology have reduced opportunities for random face-to-face conversations.” Despite the many innovative ideas we presented to share information about our investigators and their research (web bios, video bios, automated email alerts), it came down to the fact that our researchers wanted to talk to each other. We decided to try something different — a matchmaking event for researchers. Our goal was to bring together researchers, who are geographically dispersed across Connecticut, in order to encourage new research collaborations.

What is a Schmooze?

Speed dating, even for researchers, is not a new concept, and is becoming more popular — Tufts and University of Central Florida held researcher speed dating events in 2013. As we considered how to market our event, we weren’t confident that our audience would even open an invitation if the email had speed dating in the subject line.

We wanted to convey that this was definitely an event about research, that other than showing up, we wouldn’t ask investigators to prepare anything beforehand (we didn’t want to add to their already busy lives), and that it wouldn’t be a stuffy affair. Thus the “After 5 Research Schmooze” was born. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the word schmooze to mean “to converse informally… to chat in a friendly and persuasive manner especially so as to gain favor, business, or connections” (Merriam Webster, Incorporated, 2013). In addition to providing researchers with an opportunity to network informally, we offered an additional incentive for participating — we issued a Request for Applications (RFA) for a $50,000 joint pilot project (funded jointly by the two organizing institutions) that required a new collaboration between two Principal Investigators, one from each institution. (Note: I have seen other models that offered…)

—The biggest barrier to collaboration is that “people don’t know one another. So let’s introduce them.” (Linan, 2009)
travel awards or funding for student research assistants as incentives to boost attendance at similar events.)

This is how we did it …

We identified our targeted audience. We focused on researchers at our institutions whose primary research interest is HIV/AIDS prevention. Working from existing website biographies of those individuals, we created a document we called the “90-second bios.” We stripped away credentials, publications, grants, honors, and awards, and focused on research interests. We included hyperlinks to the individual’s original detailed biography and his/her email address. The intention was simply to provide a snapshot of each investigator.

We gauged the level of interest, timeframe, and location. We emailed our targeted audience, shared the “90-second bios” with them, and described the purpose of the event, i.e. to provide them with an opportunity to meet each other face-to-face to share research ideas with the additional incentive of developing ideas in order to respond to the RFA. We asked each person to indicate: (1) Interest in participating in such an event; (2) preference for a breakfast, lunch, or after-five timeframe; and (3) willingness to travel to a location midway between our institutions (for some people that might mean a 45-minute drive).

We got commitment. From an initial target audience of 60 individuals, 30 researchers indicated they would participate, that they preferred an early evening event, and that they would be willing to travel the distance. I suspect the travel distance involved probably influenced the preference for having an event in the evening. We reserved space at a restaurant that had a relaxed ambiance, an interesting menu of hors d’oeuvres, and an ability to set up that space with small table arrangements that would be conducive to quiet conversations.

We sent formal, personal invitations. A second email formally invited those who indicated they would participate, with the following directions:

1. Review the 90-second bios of participants (revised to include only the participants).
2. Having reviewed the bios, complete and return the *Research Schmooze Matchup Form.

*We asked each person to provide descriptions of projects or ideas they might like to discuss with other researchers at the event, and to choose up to four researchers with whom they would like to have one-on-one conversations at the event (with the caveat that we would do our best but could not guarantee we would be able to accommodate all match requests). The project descriptions/ideas were subsequently combined into one summary document and shared with each participant the day before the event.

We played matchmaker. Once all the sign-up sheets were returned, we created a matrix of matches that incorporated all the requests. Astonishingly, no-one was disappointed. In some cases, people had only made two choices or none at all (offering to meet with anyone who wanted to meet with them), whilst others submitted five requests. We settled on five rotations with 15 minutes for each time slot – ten minutes to schmooze and, at the sound of a whistle, five minutes to switch to the next partner.

We ensured commitment by being personal. Every communication we sent to participants was personal. Our goal was to have 100% participation, i.e. that every person who signed up would actually attend the event. In both the follow-up email to registered participants and the reminder we sent the day before the event, we included each person’s “dance card”, i.e. a list of those they would meet, the timer for each interaction, and the table number for that interaction. We wanted to be clear that others were counting on them being there. I think this may have been key in achieving 100% participation.

We made it easy and appealing. Two of our researchers indicated they would be out of the country during the event and yet wanted to participate, so we set up laptops at the restaurant (which had free WiFi) so they could “attend” via Skype. We arranged car pools to the location to make sure transportation was not an issue. We used tempting language to describe the menu: “An eclectic menu of modern Mexican dishes, including the Guacamole Table, Mini-Taco Table, Chicken Skewers, Beef Skewers, Empanadas, Quesadillas, Taquitos, and beverages including the house margaritas, bottled beers, wines, and sodas.” We investigated and shared parking choices – the city was offering an incentive for people to come downtown in the evenings by providing free parking vouchers. And, of course, every email included directions to the restaurant and a contact phone number in case anyone needed assistance. We left nothing to chance.

We evaluated. From the perspective of the organizers, the event was a success. Everyone who registered for the event attended. The room was buzzing with excited discussion. In the end, three new pairs of collaborators competed for the pilot grant, and one researcher got a job.
Public speaking has been challenging for me as long as I can remember, and might have been a lasting bar to my professional growth were it not for NCURA. I am grateful to NCURA for providing a pathway to practice speaking, mostly as moderator and panelist of concurrent sessions at regional and national meetings and as a fundamentals faculty member. I had generous supervisors and mentors who encouraged me to join NCURA thirty years ago. I faced the risks of speaking in public by comforting myself in the presence of supportive NCURA peers and colleagues, and took the challenge of learning topics well enough to be able to speak about them. The NCURA community sticks together as we share and learn in real time, as new challenges cross our desks. NCURA taught me to be patient problem solver, and to take pleasure in my colleagues and my own development and learning.

Garry Sanders
Executive Vice President, and
Chief Operating Officer,
The Research Foundation for SUNY
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- Environmental Protection
- Human and Animal Subjects
- Safety and Security
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Shared Service Center Implementations—an Inclusive Approach

By Megan Cluver and Nick Stevens

Shared service centers offer an opportunity to redefine how the common business functions and transactions that support a university’s mission are conducted. Decentralized support in areas such as human resources, accounting and budget, information technology, and research administration can be reorganized with a focus on providing an increased level of service by training staff to specialize in specific functions and providing them with systems and processes that are necessary to succeed. Successful implementations result in support functions that are efficient, timely, based on best-practice, and incorporate an accountability structure designed to create an environment of continuous process improvement.

To succeed in a university setting, shared service center implementations must take into account the unique environment of higher education, including elements such as shared governance and multiple funding streams. Implementation and planning should be approached as a collaborative process, integrating input from Principal Investigators (PIs), faculty, and staff to develop an approach to providing services that fit within the context of university culture.

The implementation is comprised of three key stages, as depicted in the model below. Each of these stages may take months to execute, depending on the scope of services offered and the magnitude of change required.

Central Mandate: The High-Level Plan

Stakeholder Input: The Detailed Roadmap

Ongoing Feedback Loops: Continuous Improvement

Central Mandate: The Framework

It is essential that leadership make the decision to redefine the service model on campus in the context of the unique culture of the institution. Conversations which decision-makers hold with campus leadership to understand stakeholder needs and concerns establish the foundation for the change management effort required to successfully move to a new model. These interactions provide leadership with awareness of both the benefits and the challenges created by this administrative shift. The impact of proposed changes must be considered when constructing the high-level framework.

At their core, shared service centers represent a redefined organizational model, coupled with the opportunity for process transformation and technology enhancement. There are a variety of different models that can be executed based on the needs of customers and the goals of the university. Leadership must consider the services that will be

Successful shared service centers are **customer focused**—it is only logical to integrate the customer into the implementation approach.
provided and determine which model best balances the goals of the implementation with the impact of changes on the stakeholders served.

Once the decision has been made to move to a new organizational model, leadership must define—and communicate—the framework for implementation. Stakeholders across campus should be provided with an outline of the high-level vision of what shared services means for their institution. Initial questions which should be addressed in the framework include:

- Will there be one center or many?
- How will service groups be defined (by geography? by affinity?)?
- How will the center(s)’ reporting relationships be aligned within the university?
- What services will be provided (at the functional level; e.g., post-award research administration)?
- What level of customization will exist to account for individual customer needs?
- Will unit participation in the model be mandatory or will it be opt-in?
- How will the center(s) be staffed and how will those decisions impact current staff?

The responses to these questions provide a framework for campus stakeholders to develop the detailed design. It is crucial that university leadership provides this high-level vision for the implementation and an unwavering commitment to move forward; without this, stakeholder involvement will not move past a debate of the merits of moving to this model.

**Stakeholder Input: The Detailed Roadmap**

The second step in the design phase is the most critical: within the context of the vision established by leadership, the university will need to define the desired attributes and activities. Successful shared service centers are customer focused—it is only logical to integrate the customer into the implementation approach. Engaging university stakeholders in a meaningful way throughout this stage is essential and will enable the university to create a model that will be successful in both achieving the goals of the implementation as well as meeting the needs of its customers.

This stage is focused on fully developing the model by defining: the specific activities to be provided, desk references and process maps for each of these activities, center reporting structure and staffing plan, role definitions and job descriptions, accountability mechanisms, baseline metrics and training plans. A variety of strategies should be used to engage stakeholders in the development of these components, providing opportunities to both gather input as well as to educate future customers and center staff on the benefits of the proposed model.

**Gaining Leadership Buy-In**

The support of influential leaders throughout the university can be cultivated through individual and group meetings to communicate the vision and mission of the model. These meetings should gather feedback and input into how the centers can best serve the customers and will also educate stakeholders about the model benefits. Broad buy-in, based on linking benefits to customer needs, is a must for success in the higher education arena.

**Customer and Employee Satisfaction Surveys**

Ongoing measurement of the impact of changes to the customer and employee experience enables the university to demonstrate the success of the new model and highlights needed corrections. Campus-wide surveys serve as a baseline for measuring satisfaction, provide insight into current pain points and identify potential service areas that offer quick wins. Surveys should ideally be conducted prior to the mandate to move to a new model to establish an unbiased baseline for measuring changes in satisfaction and demonstrating success.

**Process Improvement Committees and Focus Groups**

Process Improvement Committees are charged with developing standardized processes that account for the realities on the ground. These committees bring together key department staff members who currently perform the work with central staff to redesign processes. At the same time, they provide education and disseminate information about the role of the shared service center. Focus groups should also be used to engage faculty, staff, and PIs around a specific topic or issue. These groups provide insight into best practice processes that already exist on campus which can be readily standardized in the new model.

**Communication Ambassadors**

By establishing a broad, inclusive group of campus stakeholders who receive regular communications about implementation progress, the university can manage information sharing and address inevitable rumors as they arise. While this group is broad and open, members are charged with disseminating information to peers at staff meetings and forums. Brown bag forums are also an effective and informal way of discussing the model with faculty and staff.

**Implementation Web Site**

A centrally maintained website can provide regular updates and share accurate information about the implementation and model. This site can also be a venue for gathering feedback and answering questions via “suggestion box” emails and blogs.

**Ongoing Feedback Loops: Continuous Improvement**

The development of shared service centers is designed to be iterative, with processes being continually reexamined. Focused continuous engagement with customers provides necessary feedback, preventing the development of a gap between customer needs and the services provided.

A service level agreement or service partnership agreement establishes key performance metrics for which the center will be held accountable. To be effective, this document must be used as a guide for ongoing operations. Center staff and customers should be aware of the expectations detailed in the agreement. In addition, detailed
Process documentation and desk references provide center and departmental staff with a common understanding of the manner in which work is conducted. These materials, initially developed in the design phase, should be living documents with established mechanisms for updating them and plans to regularly communicate changes.

Regular customer engagement, by the center staff and managers, facilitates understanding of the customers’ changing needs. Staff meetings offer a key forum to share both customer needs and best practices. Meetings should be held across functional or service lines within individual centers, with customers, and with central staff. Outcomes of these discussions should be captured as process changes by center managers who have ownership of individual processes. To avoid “big bang” process changes that disrupt the flow of work from the departments, an approach of relentless incrementalism allows for continuous process improvement to meet customers’ changing expectations.

Establishing governance and oversight—generally through an Advisory Board comprised of customers and stakeholders—provides a formal feedback mechanism for addressing customer concerns and gaining insight into the departments’ needs. Membership should include a broad mix of thoughtful leaders, including PIs, faculty, and unit leaders who can help ensure that the center is meeting customer needs.

Shared service centers offer institutional benefits; however, this level of change is difficult to execute and requires thoughtful planning. Without stakeholder involvement throughout the development and implementation process, an institution runs the risk of failing to achieve the benefits of this organizational redesign. Implemented correctly, this model offers an opportunity for improved service, reduced overhead costs for the institution, stronger career paths for staff, and decreased compliance risk to the university. However, realizing these benefits requires customers and staff to come together and approach the implementation as a partnership, solving problems in the spirit of the vision for the unique university model. An inclusive implementation approach offers the benefits of a more sustainable end product that meets the institution’s needs, as well as an increased comfort level for the stakeholders involved.

Megan Cluver is a Manager with Huron Education. Megan led Huron’s partnership with the University of Kansas to design and implement regional shared service centers providing post-award research administration, financial, and human resources support for units across the University. The KU implementation is currently in its second year of a three year planned implementation. Megan can be reached at mcluver@huronconsultinggroup.com.

Nick Stevens is the Project Director for Shared Service Centers at the University of Kansas. Nick has spent his career in higher education, previously working in research administration and research information technology. He recently transitioned to the Shared Service Center project and is responsible for managing the implementation project for KU’s eight regional shared service centers. Nick can be reached at nickstevens@ku.edu

Denise Moody’s Desk

At the time of this writing, I’m breathing a sigh of relief that we submitted our Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC) Program Description with a few days to spare before the deadline and taking a breather before preparing for our site visit in the first quarter of 2014. On my desk at this moment, I have material to review before a manager’s workshop next week, draft the agenda for two upcoming committee meetings and a staff meeting, and perform background research for two possible policy changes. I’m balancing that with our new HR ePerformance goal-setting initiative and helping my staff members draft their (and my!) next year’s goals. Finally, I was just asked to prepare training material for our upcoming Responsible Conduct of Research conflict of interest session. This is why I love research administration – the days go by quickly and you never get bored!

Denise Moody
Director of Research Compliance
Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Officers and Board

Vice President/President-Elect & At-Large Members of the Board of Directors

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

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

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

For a detailed description of the current responsibilities and nomination materials for these positions, please visit Volunteer Central and view the Vice President/President-Elect opportunity or the At-Large Board Member opportunity.

Terms of these positions begin January 1, 2015

Please email nominations to: nominations@ncura.edu

All nominations and supporting materials (candidate’s statement of interest and current resume/vita of 1-3 pages, etc.) from the nominees must be received electronically on or before March 24, 2014.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

2014 NCURA Awards

The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee is pleased to announce the Call for Nominations for the 2014 NCURA Awards.

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

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

Deadline for nominations: March 24, 2014

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

Deadline for nominations: March 24, 2014

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

Deadline for nominations: March 24, 2014

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

Deadline for applications March 24, 2014

Please email award nominations and applications to: awards@ncura.edu
Collaborative research is a partnership between faculty researchers, academic institutions and external entities. Understanding the perspective of the faculty researcher in this partnership enhances our ability as research administrators to empower productive collaborations.

**Dr. Anne E. Giblin, Senior Scientist**  
Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL), Ecosystems Center  
Giblin received her B.S. in Biology in 1975 from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and her Ph.D. in Ecology in 1982 from the Boston University Marine Program. Following postdoctoral training at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution she moved to MBL in 1983 as an Assistant Scientist with Ecosystems Center where she was promoted to Associate Scientist in 1990 and to her current position of Senior Scientist in 2003. Giblin holds a graduate faculty appointment with the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island and also a joint appointment in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Brown University. Giblin is the lead PI of the National Science Foundation’s Arctic Long-Term Environmental Research (ARC-LTER) project which is a collaboration of seven institutions.

The MBL is a non-profit soft-money institution for research, education, and training in biology, biomedicine, and ecology.

**Dr. Robert Mayes, Research Professor**  
Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education (i²STEM)  
Georgia Southern University, College of Education  
Mayes received his B.S. (1979) and M.S. (1981) in Mathematics with a secondary education focus from Emporia State University and his Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from Kansas State University (1989). From 1993-2001 he assisted in developing and implementing an innovative Mathematics Education Ph.D. offered through the Mathematics Department at the University of Northern Colorado. In 2001 he returned to the WVU Mathematics Department to direct the Institute for Mathematics Learning (IML), whose mission is to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in lower level undergraduate courses. In the summer of 2006 he joined the University of Wyoming assuming the directorship of the Science and Mathematics Teaching Center (SMTC). The mission of the SMTC is to improve the learning and teaching of science and mathematics in Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region. August 2011 Mayes joined Georgia Southern University as a Professor of Education and Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education.

The mission of the STEM institute is to establish collaborative interdisciplinary programs committed to excellence in K-20 STEM teaching and learning. A key component of this is through unique partnerships across academia, business, education and research centers in the Coastal Plain.
1. How do you communicate with partners on a collaborative project? What methods of communication have you found to work well for you when multiple collaborators are involved? Do you meet in person or do you communicate electronically (Skype, email, phone)?

AEG: We always have face to face meetings at least once a year for the entire project if it is very large (like the ARC-LTER). For smaller collaborative projects where everyone is local we usually meet face to face 3-4 times a year. In between, we communicate extensively by e-mail for reports, etc. and also usually do 2-3 conference calls/video calls per year (Skype or Vidyo).

RM: I collaborate on multiple projects with partners at other institutions, so virtual communication is required. I feel it is important to establish a common recurring meeting time to ensure sustained engagement on project tasks. So we meet weekly online using a conferencing tool which allows for two way video, audio, and ability to share files on screen. We have used Blackboard Collaborate, Google Hangout, Go to Meeting, and even Skype for different projects at different times. These weekly meetings set a deadline for tasks in the project and keep the team active. We also incorporate a significant amount of asynchronous communication as well, including e-mail, Word markup to collaborate on revision of papers, and Dropbox to share files. We do meet in person at conferences or for yearly project meetings supported by grant funding. But face-to-face meetings on national collaborations are expensive and time consuming, so they are infrequent and focus on summarizing progress on project goals and set agendas for the next year.

2. What is your approach to working with multiple collaborating institutions?

AEG: See #3

RM: It is essential to sustain the effort through providing meeting agendas where different members of the team take the lead in the discussion. Every meeting ends with action items for the next meeting assigned to members of the team. It is important to share items far enough in advance of the meeting that the team has a chance to review the item before the meeting. This is challenging when meetings are held weekly. I want a discussion of the item, not a presentation of it by the lead person. Of course any collaboration has to provide incentives to keep partners engaged. In our collaborations the awards have been support for salary and travel of course, but just as important are collaborative publications, curriculum development, and opportunities for future grant support for research and outreach.

3. When building your team, what expectations do you set in advance? Do you discuss topics such as responsibilities of each party, authorship/publication, and intellectual contribution in advance?

AEG: When designing the project, each person has a defined role in the project, i.e. an aspect of the work they are responsible for, specific data they will collect, or a research area where they and their staff and/or students will be working. The assumption is that they would be authors of their work and that the grant would be credited. Then there are usually synthesis papers that the PIs are all authors on. In a few cases I have been involved in collaborative projects where the PIs wanted all PIs to be on all papers but this is less usual.

RM: Much of the collaboration I am involved with is driven by external funding, which requires defining the role of personnel funded by the grant in advance. This is a good thing. It establishes expectations for members of the team, which is tied to their area of expertise and research or other professional interest. I expect that all members of the team will be coauthors on papers and codevelopers of products. They are on the team because they bring an essential expertise to the goals of the project. Their intellectual contribution is driven by their expertise as a STEM content expert, STEM educator, or research specialist.

4. When collaborating with another institution how do you define your targeted deadlines?

AEG: The deadlines are based upon two things – the needs of the project, which often rely on weather and other coordination, and NSF deadlines for reports. These are discussed at the annual meeting.

RM: As I discussed previously, we set weekly targeted deadlines through action items. We also set targeted deadlines for primary project products, such as development of an assessment, curriculum tasks, or research publication. These targeted deadlines are set on a semester level, adhering to academic calendars which with faculty are familiar. Deadlines are flexible, with quality of outcome more important than deadline.

5. How do you handle a collaborating institution that doesn’t provide the documentation you need by the specified date?

AEG: If it is something that I need from a PI (report information, etc.) I just keep after them until I get it. If it is something from the institution, I let my institution deal with it (i.e. Center Administrator or Office of Sponsored Programs).

RM: This depends on the task. If they do not provide requested input on a paper or product then they are removed from the list of authors. If they are not providing expertise on a grant proposal they are removed from funded position, minimally to an advisory position on project. It is natural in collaborations for participation to ebb and flow, one reason it is so important to sustain communication and have both short and long term deadlines.

6. How do you coordinate the writing of the proposal text when multiple PIs are involved? Is there software or websites that you have found useful (or not useful) when trying to organize comments and changes to text?

AEG: One person has to be the primary and the rest send text to them. After that, it simply gets passed around and we use the Track Changes feature in Microsoft Word.

RM: I have used Google Docs with groups for joint editing, but I prefer simply using Word markup. Files are shared through Dropbox or Google Drive. One person is the chief worrier, taking the lead in integrating comments from others into the document. I either set sequential deadlines for the writers where one has a few days to make changes before the next jumps in, or we have the author tag their Word markup version with the date and their last name. This makes it easier to track the latest version of the paper.

7. How do you determine if your collaborators will be included as subcontractors within your proposal budget or if you will treat your proposal as a true collaboration with each institution submitting their own
8. When your collaborator is to be a subawardee to your prime award, how do you approach nailing down the scope of work for the subaward? Who writes the scope of work, and do you prefer to have a very detailed scope of work in place or a more topical summary? What do you see as the benefits of your preferred approach?

**AEG:** We write a more topical summary. I want the collaborator to do the best science possible, sometimes great approaches and ideas are not panning out and to answer the question you have to change what you are doing.

**RM:** The collaborators are recruited to the project with roles in mind, so from the beginning discussions there is a sense of what the roles will be. I provide a frame for the scope of work based on recruiting them to be on the project. I ask the collaborator to provide a more detailed scope of work which brings out their interest for and talent supporting the project. I believe that scope of work should be more topical than excessively detailed. The benefits of this approach are twofold. First, the majority of grant proposals are not funded, so do not overburden the potential collaborator with requests for excessive details. Second, projects always take on their own life if funded, that is, you need to be flexible in implementing the project to account for real-world implementation issues. This makes a detailed scope of work quickly obsolete.

9. Has there ever been a time when the collaborating institution you’re working with forms a third party collaboration with another institution? If so, how was it handled?

**AEG:** Not in my experience.

**RM:** I would have the collaborating institution include this a consulting line in their subcontract budget.

10. In your experience, what makes a successful collaborative team?

**AEG:** It is important to have a team where there are synergistic skills and ideas and complete buy in on the goals of the proposal. Too much overlap leads to competition while too little means everyone goes off on their own direction and are not worrying about the proposal goals.

**RM:** The collaborative needs to have a personal bond or connection, which is why it is important to have face-to-face meetings early in the project. These meetings should be at a neutral site if possible, and future meetings should rotate between all collaborators home sites so they are equally valued as partners. The roles of the collaborators should be clearly established from the beginning of the project. Finally sustained and frequent communication is essential for the collaborative.

11. What have been some of the challenges and or benefits with working with collaborating institutions?

**AEG:** The benefits are often great science, new ideas, and the ability to tackle a project you could never do alone. The challenges can be personality conflicts or strong differences of opinions that are not possible to resolve easily.

**RM:** One challenge of collaboration is maintaining active engagement of the partners. The collaboration may be viewed as a second priority, which one gets to after completing the priorities they are assigned by their institution. The best way to avoid this is for the collaborator to view the project task as supporting either an already assigned priority task or being a passion which the collaborator would pursue if given time and support (which the project provides). The benefits of collaboration are numerous, including peers which provide new insights into the work I do, bringing expertise to a project that I do not have and may not even exist at my institution, and moving projects from local to regional or national impact.

12. As a researcher, what are some tips that you think a research administrator would find helpful in navigating the proposal preparation responsibilities for a collaborative research proposal?

**AEG:** Except for the lead institution, the pieces of a collaborative that are required are pretty straightforward, so simply getting the PI to get them to you well ahead of time would be the main one.

**RM:** Helping the researcher to navigate the budget complications of subcontracts, consulting fees, and indirect rates on subcontracts is the first thing that comes to mind. They could also assist in identifying possible collaborators for the project, especially if it is new faculty member.

13. If you were advising a new or junior faculty member embarking on their first formal research collaboration what advice would you give that individual?

**AEG:** Make sure your role and responsibilities are clear ahead of time. Make sure you all agree on how authorship will be handled, especially for students. Keep communication open and let everyone know if anything needs to change.

**RM:** Much of the advice I would give is related to my previous responses to building successful collaborations. Search for collaborators with the appropriate expertise for the project within your own institution first. Be sure collaborators bring expertise that addresses key components of the project you are proposing, not who just bring a reputation. A request for proposals may require or strongly encourage expertise that does not exist in your current team, seek collaborators to meet these special needs. Bring collaborators on board as early in the proposal development process as possible and have them write portions of the grant related to their expertise, not just make comments on the proposal. Have frequent communication with the collaborators throughout the proposal writing process. Finally, don’t avoid budget discussions until the end, address budget early in the writing process.
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Cindy Hope  
Asst. Vice President for Research & Dir., Sponsored Programs, The University of Alabama

I’m seeing a growing, and unnecessary, friction resulting from calls for accountability and transparency paired with calls for efficiency and effectiveness. The accompanying increase in distrust and anxiety is probably most apparent when we look at audits. Accountability and good stewardship are crucial but there isn’t a strong correlation between those and audit activity. The decrease in productivity resulting from a long, detailed audit, however, is readily apparent. Auditors are expected to have findings, signifying the prevention waste, fraud and abuse, while we are expected by our administrations, boards, governments and sponsors to have clean audits. Meanwhile, our federal agency colleagues are experiencing the same tension. I think we will have to work closer with them to find better solutions to our common problems.

Michael Ludwig  
Director Of Sponsored Programs Services, Purdue University Main Campus

DOE National Energy Technology Laboratory recently started inserting foreign national participation approval requirements into their contracts, even fundamental research projects. This raises serious concerns, because it undermines the fundamental research exemption, subjecting the project to export control regulations (15 CFR 734.11 & 734.3(b)(3)). We have voiced these concerns, questioning this clause when the work is fundamental research. With the help of COGR and AAU we will continue to address this issue. It’s clear this change creates additional burden for the researcher. What’s unclear is who has created this administrative burden: DOE, DOC, or the Institution. In situations like this, it’s vital to explain the broader issue. For regulatory reform to succeed, researchers and administrators must share a common understanding regarding the source of the burden.

Patrick Schlesinger  
Asst. Vice Chancellor - Research Administration And Compliance, University of California-Berkeley

Why should universities care about curtailing abusive patent litigation? Because we want to protect our patents in the future. There are many stories about patent acquisition entities or “patent trolls.” These are companies that acquire patents simply to generate licensing fees rather than actually manufacturing items. But we also license our patents without manufacturing products. HR 3309, a measure to reduce abusive litigation, would make it harder for legitimate patent holders to enforce their rights. It includes fee-shifting terms that could require a university to foot the legal costs of an opponent in a good faith enforcement action and provisions that might require universities to join litigation that they did not initiate. Universities may be a lot of things but we are not trolls!

Editor’s note: Speaking of NCURA members on the national scene. Great job Sue Rivera! Suzanne M. Rivera, PhD, MSW, Associate Vice President for Research at Case Western Reserve University and NCURA Board member.

Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Human Research Protections (SACHRP)

SACHRP is governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act and provides expert advice and recommendations to the Secretary on issues and topics pertaining to the protection of human research subjects. The Committee was created by Secretary Thompson in 2001 after dissolution of the prior National Human Research Protections Advisory Committee (NHRPAC). To date SACHRP has focused its attention on areas such as research involving children, prisoners, and individuals with impaired decision-making capacity; informed consent and the use of biospecimens; harmonization of human subjects regulations and guidance; the reduction of regulatory burden; the HIPAA Privacy Rule; community-engaged research, and accreditation.

SACHRP Members July 10-11, 2013  From left to right front: Pilar Ossorio, Lainie Freedman Ross, Suzanne Rivera, Susan Krivacic, Jeffrey Botkin (Chair) and Jerry Menikoff (OHRP Director). From left to right back: Assistant Secretary for Health Howard Kob, Albert Allen, James Anderson, Stephen Rosenfeld, Thomas Eissenberg, Owen Garrick and Gary Chadwick.
The Federal Shutdown… Again? Getting Through the Uncertainty

Who remembers the federal government shutdown? Who wants to do that again? No one. Unfortunately, the federal government shutdown was only suspended until January 15, 2014 at which time we will face another federal government shutdown. The difference this time is that we went through it once, gained valuable experience, and have a much better idea of what to do and what not to do the next time.

Planning for the Shutdown

Approaches for planning will vary due to a wide number of factors such as the size of your institution, size of your research portfolio and what portion is federally-funded, amount of available bridge-funding, and whether your institution is public or private.

In addition, your approach may change depending on how long the shutdown lasts. For example, not much may change at your institution if the shutdown lasts one to two weeks. However, plans may change a lot if the shutdown continues for four to eight weeks. Be ready to adjust course and do it quickly depending on your institution’s situation.

Priorities and Considerations

Most notable for all universities and colleges were drawdowns against federal letters of credit to minimize disruption to existing projects and to minimize the “floating” of expenditures during the shutdown. Some institutions increased the frequency of drawdowns during the shutdown in case automated cash management systems stopped operating. As learned from the last shutdown, federal agencies made clear that there would be no staff support of any kind. So, any system problems would not be resolved during a shutdown.

In addition, continuity in proposal processing was a priority for institutions and PIs. Most institutions encouraged principal investigators to continue with proposal preparation and to submit proposals their central offices based on agency direction. Proposals were typically held in sponsored research offices until the shutdown concluded and until further proposal submission instructions were given. If faculty insisted on submitting proposals, then sponsored research offices would confirm this direction in writing and submit; but note that agencies required institutions to go back and re-submit proposals that were submitting during the shutdown.

Ensuring bridge funding was an important consideration to minimize disruptions for research projects. Discussions at the institutional level should occur early on to identify sources for bridge funding, and how to plan and assess need.

Communications

Consistent messaging is important. It is critical to minimize confusion, especially if your institution has a highly decentralized research administration environment, and to ensure that everyone is getting the same message in a timely manner. There were also agency-specific guidelines. These too must be communicated broadly.

Method of delivery for communications should be varied to make sure everyone who needs to know the information has it. Establishing an email listserv can be effective because you are able to reach a targeted audience. It is also efficient because email can be delivered quickly and is easily shared. Posting information on a website is an additional option. Examples of good websites that provide information sorted by agency as well as notices from the institution’s leadership include University of California, Berkeley1 and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill2.

Once the shutdown ends, frequent communication follow-up should be made about agency guidance for proposals and awards as well as communications to the research community regarding internal processes and deadlines to deal with the backlog of proposals.

Katherine Ho, Deputy to the AVP and Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Research, Stanford University. Plus special thanks to the following individuals for their contributions: Susanne Hildebrand-Zanki, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, University of California, San Francisco; Lisa Jordan, Assistant Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, Boise State University; Robert Lowman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Melissa Mullen, Sponsored Programs Manager, California Polytechnic State University; Ethlyn O’Garro, Director of Pre-Award Services, Office of Sponsored Programs, Harvard University; and Patrick Schlesinger, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration and Compliance, University of California, Berkeley.

1. http://spo.berkeley.edu/procedures/federalshutdown.html
Dear NCURA Members,

I hope to see you at the Financial Research Administration Conference, March 15-17, 2014 in San Francisco. In addition to over 150 offerings related to financial research administration, I am going to work with you, during the keynote address, to help you enhance your presence and influence in your leadership position. Over the last four years, I’ve been honored to work with research administrators and greatly value your important work.

In this interactive session, you will gain insights to motivate staff and collaborate across the university by:

- Communicating **authenticity** through active, purposeful listening
- Establishing your **unique** role and expertise within the university
- Forming personal advisory teams for **reality-based** feedback and continuous learning
- Gaining the **authority** and skills to communicate the hard decisions and lead a motivating vision.
- Evaluating your executive presence and communication style from current to desired reality.

In addition, all registered FRA conference participants will receive some pre-work should you choose to maximize the experience you will have at the keynote address.

Exceptional leaders are able to establish their own executive presence. We call this executive AURA – which involves communication that is authentic, unique, reality-based, and authoritative. Every leader can establish his or her own executive AURA through awareness, observation, and practice.

Register today for the FRA Conference to advance your knowledge, and your Executive AURA.

See you in San Francisco!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Pace

Professor, Vanderbilt’s Owen Graduate School of Management, CEO, Executive AURA
Spring is just around the corner and along with the fresh flowers and cherry blossoms comes the opportunity to participate in the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) biennial conference. INORMS 2014 starts with workshops on April 10\textsuperscript{th} and concludes early in the afternoon on April 13\textsuperscript{th}. This will be the 5\textsuperscript{th} meeting of the International Network of Research Management Societies and the first time it is being held in North America. The opportunity to host this biennial gathering of global research administrators was presented to us nearly four years ago and half a world away. While attending the 2010 INORMS conference in Cape Town, the three of us advocated for bringing the 2014 conference to North America. As the conference co-chairs, we have worked diligently to put together a truly global program that transcends languages, cultures, and politics.

With the conference being hosted in Washington D.C., the program naturally has a policy focus but also emphasizes the invaluable tools of metrics and the sharing of best practices. In staying true to the conference theme of “Enabling the Global Research Enterprise from Policy to Practice” we developed three session tracks of Policy, Performance, and Practice. The “Policy” track provides sessions on global, national, or institutional initiatives impacting the administration of research. The “Performance” track provides sessions on tracking, enabling, or measuring performance of impact utilizing tools or systems. While the “Practice” track permits the exchange of pre-award, post-award, or compliance best practices. We encourage you to visit the conference website at [www.inorms2014.org](http://www.inorms2014.org) to view the abstracts of the 10 pre-conference workshops and 70 concurrent sessions. We are confident that you will find multiple sessions of interest whether you are new to the global research administrative scene or an established administrator.

As a member of NCURA, SRA International, or the Canadian Association of University Research Administrators, you may be asking yourself - Why should I attend INORMS 2014? First, we have lined up a global A-list of talented presenters to share their insights into the world of research administration and more importantly discuss how they have managed to resolve problems that might be similar to your own institutional issues. Second, the conference will attract a global audience representing multiple countries as well as representatives from various types of research institutions. If your institution is just beginning to become engaged globally or is already actively involved in international collaboration, INORMS will provide you the opportunity to engage your global counterparts in-person and expand your network. Third, it is reassuring to hear that the research administrative challenges that we face here in North America are really no different than those faced by our colleagues around the world. While the governing policies and contract terms may be in a different language, the performance and practice of managing a sponsored portfolio are the same the world over. And if these three reasons are not enough of a justification, INORMS 2014 will sponsor poster sessions from both established and emerging research institutions on a multitude of topics spanning the entire sponsored project lifecycle. You will have an opportunity to engage the authors of the posters and learn directly from their shared experiences.

In addition to the great program content, the INORMS 2014 conference will provide ample opportunities for networking and exchanging of ideas. Our opening reception will welcome the world while our reception at the Air and Space Museum will both educate and entertain. The closing “Rock the Research” party will feature the global edition of *Soul Source* and the No Cost Extensions performing on their worldwide one-stop concert tour. So plan to join us this spring as the natural beauty of Washington D.C. overshadows the monuments-to-the-past and reminds us that we are indeed a global society connected through the administration of research.

Hotel rooms are limited, so be sure to reserve your room soon and also take advantage of the early bird conference registration. In closing, we are forever grateful to CAURA, NCURA and SRA International in supporting our co-chairing of INORMS 2014 and we look forward to hosting the world come April 10\textsuperscript{th}, 2014.
Not too long ago, I sat down with a few colleagues from NCURA and the inevitable discussion around government funding and shrinking budgets came up. Each of us brought a different perspective, and it really made me think about what it takes to continue building successful and productive research programs in today’s environment. At the department level, research administrators rely on leadership, management, and creative skills to build programs. Department administrators think like start-up companies remaining focused on growing the research enterprise. Central offices often have a greater focus on process improvement. While my colleagues and I brought varying perspectives to the discussion, there were a few themes that resonated throughout the conversation: the importance of hiring and retaining great people, making great investments, and collaborating with philanthropy officers.

**Hiring and retaining great people**

The cornerstones of a research administration team are the people who comprise the team. The team is the foundation on which the operations run; research administration is all people power. When great research administrators partner with faculty to build strong proposals, chances for funding are increased. With the current funding environment so tight on federal dollars, it takes well-established, high-functioning teams to succeed. The cost to replace staff is not only a monetary loss; it may cost the institution external funding.

Once a great team is established and committed the time and effort to training, an institution cannot afford to lose any member. It takes more than salary to retain a great staff. Career growth and environment are the two essential factors. Take the time to develop staff relations and mentoring programs, invest in training, listen and inspire.

**Make great investments**

In addition to great staff, there are many areas where an institution can invest to obtain a high return on investment. The return will spur growth and productivity. There were three highlights around our discussion on investments: pilot funding, technology, and marketing.

As we strive to develop new ideas and new science, many times our researchers need an investment in pilot funding to produce preliminary data that in turn makes them more competitive for independent funding. These pilot programs encourage creativity and innovation. Many times a small investment in pilot funds will produce large, federally-funded research programs.

Technology, the second investment, creates efficiencies across operations, and allows staff reallocation from basic administrative duties to higher-level tasks. Or, consider investing in collaboration software and video conference technology. The current research climate is moving more towards larger collaborative research projects, and we need to provide the infrastructure to support it. Collaboration software can make it easier for teams to work together across states, reduce unnecessary travel time, and provide a space for easy and consistent access to information.

The third great investment is spending a little time with your central marketing team; it can go a long way to increase the visibility of team. Your team needs to be known for others to want to work with you. Develop a brand for your team or institute and refine your messaging to convey a value proposition and messaging that emphasizes the key features of your program. Define the community you work with and connect with that community through newsletters and meetings.

**Collaborate with your philanthropy officers**

Do not forget to market to your corporate relations and gift officers. This group has a mission to target donors and industry for philanthropic gifts. In order for your central officers to advocate for your group, they need to know who you are, your mission and vision, and what makes your group attractive to a public audience. There are many private individuals and businesses ready to give, and in fact want to donate for the tax breaks, but these groups want to support worthy, meaningful causes. Make it easy – let people know who you are.

**Open and consistent communication**

Finally, all of us around the table agreed that none of this works without consistent and transparent communication. Most research administrators are excellent at operations and execution, while some need help with communication aspects of the profession. Communicate your mission and vision to a wider audience, and people will likely take interest and reach out to work with you. Use technology and pilot funding to make the communication easier. Keep your faculty and staff informed of your shared goals and train faculty and staff on message delivery to engage and inform a wider audience. The funding environment is tough, but we are prepared to tackle it, as a team, and continue the successful growth of our research programs.

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**Kirsten Yehl** is the Administrative Director for The Institute for Public Health and Medicine, Northwestern University. She has been an active member in the NCURA community since she started her research administration career at Northwestern University in 2002. Prior to Northwestern, Kirsten’s career focused on global technology at Arthur Andersen. Kirsten holds a bachelor of arts in communication studies and a master’s degree in library and information science. She lives in Chicago with her two sons and loves to sail and spend time with friends. She can be reached at k-yehl@northwestern.edu
Members’ benefits will increase this year as a new alliance begins between NCURA and the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA). Starting in 2014 NCURA members will be able to access certain sections of the ARMA web site with a reciprocal arrangement for ARMA’s members. Each organization will allow the other organization’s members access to grant information, compliance, and reference material that are normally restricted to members only. Thus, NCURA members will be able to obtain UK and European grant information through the ARMA website, and conversely, ARMA members will be able to obtain U.S. grant information through the NCURA website.

Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director and Andrew Chamberlain, ARMA’s Chief Executive met several times during 2013 and, in November, agreed on a number of areas where members of both organizations could gain through an alliance. Larmett stated, “NCURA’s Board of Directors approved a global strategic plan in 2013 which looks to increase our collaboration with other like associations around the world and this is an excellent beginning.” Chamberlain added, “Promoting international excellence in research, supporting opportunities for cross-border collaboration and realizing the continued professionalization of research management and administration are key strategic objectives for ARMA and we are very excited to be working with NCURA to deliver these goals. Our new partnership will offer new and innovative pathways for our members to proactively engage and will provide opportunities for colleagues to grow their networks, share ideas, exchange knowledge, promote best practice and develop new partnerships.”

In addition to separate information sections of our web sites, we are exploring options for providing members with discounts on various programs. In the late summer of 2014, ARMA will begin work on a study module for NCURA on UK funding practices with applicable rules and regulations, while at the same time NCURA will begin work on a U.S. module for ARMA’s forthcoming professional qualifications framework. Beginning in the fall of 2015, both NCURA and ARMA will coordinate study tours for U.S. and U.K. research administrators, with NCURA members visiting UK institutions, including funding agencies and research universities. NCURA will provide a similar service for ARMA members. Both programs will provide opportunities for additional professional development.

As the collaboration continues, the two organizations plan to co-author “A Guide to UK-US Research Collaboration.” Jesse Szeto, Sr. Manager, NCURA Global, will be heavily involved in this new collaboration and stated, “This alliance with ARMA will yield immediate benefits to the growing number of our members who currently work or will work with the UK and other European institutions while further strengthening NCURA’s global reach and offerings.”

Larmett concluded, “Increasing our non-U.S. collaborations by forming an alliance with ARMA was an easy and natural step to take. We are very excited to start what we see as a long-term relationship.”
Traditional Approach: Looking In

The traditional approach to stimulating faculty grant-seeking activity includes a combination of positive and negative reinforcements. Among the enticements held out are:

Financial Incentives: Offering a summer stipend to write a grant, subsidizing travel to a grant writing workshop or to visit a program officer, topping off a grant award, and distributing a percentage of indirect cost returns directly to initiating departments and investigators.

Time Incentives: Offering course reassignments, reducing committee workloads, and awarding sabbatical leave to create “protected time” for proposal development.

Human Resources: Offering staff support for identifying sponsors, analyzing sponsor guidelines, developing budgets, and reviewing drafts; student support for conducting literature reviews and collecting data; and consultant support for analyzing preliminary data and formulating evaluation plans.

Enforced Rewards: Offering public praise for grant-seeking efforts, having senior administrators write personal notes of recognition, hosting celebratory award banquets, and publicizing accomplishments through emails, newsletters, websites, and press releases.

On the other hand, pressure may be applied by elevating the expectations for grant-seeking activity associated with:

Promotion and Tenure: Proposal submissions and grant awards may carry measurable weight as indicators of scholarly productivity and career advancement.

Position Hires: Job descriptions might state the requirement that candidates develop nationally recognized and funded independent research programs.

College/Department Culture: A history of research, scholarship, and grantsmanship may encourage conformance to campus cultural norms.

Program Accreditation: Grant awards provide funding for research programs and modern instrumentation essential for maintaining standards of approval and external certification.

More broadly, with the traditional approach, a combination of enticements and pressures may be employed to motivate faculty into increasing applications and funding. The focus of this approach looks inward at the office goal and considers tactics for effective accomplishment. Engaging faculty is often viewed as a means to achieving the targeted ends.

Nontraditional Approach: Looking Out

A nontraditional approach turns this vantage point around by 180 degrees. The focus looks outward at the goal desired by faculty and considers grant-related tactics for effective accomplishment. Increasing applications and funding, then, becomes a means rather than an end in itself.

For example, from the perspective of research administrators, departments in the humanities and social sciences often represent an untapped or under-tapped area for grant-seeking activity. But when faculty in these areas are asked about...
their aspirational goals, rarely do they say “I want to write a grant”; rather, the most common response is “I want to write a book.” This is the clue for seeing with fresh eyes.

Instead of pushing grant and fellowship opportunities at humanities and social sciences faculty and hoping grant applications will materialize, consider asking them, “What do you want to write about? Tell me more about your book ideas.” Faculty frequently seize this teachable moment to share their thoughts. Their voices are often filled with passion and excitement as they recount their plans to prepare a scholarly manuscript, general interest non-fiction work, or student textbook.

At an opportune moment in the conversation, next ask the faculty, “Have you considered who would publish this book?” Some faculty will say “Yes,” but many of them will say “No,” adding, “I just know that I want to write this book.”

Regardless of the answer, take this occasion to point out that when it comes to writing, anticipating who might publish the book could influence the overall shape and direction of the manuscript. As book editors will attest, even university presses, under increasing pressure to remain profitable, are cautious about contracting for books on narrow topics for specialists. With hundreds of book publishing companies in existence, myriad choices exist for reaching broad and targeted audiences of readers.

The conversation with faculty can then move into considering what might go into preparing a book proposal. With a specific publisher in mind, just as support is provided to faculty in analyzing sponsor guidelines for grant proposals, assistance can be offered in interpreting publisher guidelines for book proposals - the skills are immediately transferrable.

Though the intellectual heart of book proposals is often slightly longer than grant proposals, 5-7 single spaced pages compared to 3-5 single spaced pages, their elements are remarkably similar, as indicated in Table 1.

Six elements are common to both types of proposals – descriptions of biographical information, audience, purpose, rationale, timeline for completion, and chapter outline – and six elements are unique to book proposals – descriptions of annotated table of contents, anticipated length, special production issues, competing titles, unique selling points, and author marketing efforts. The final six elements of the book proposal relate specifically to marketing and selling the product.

An outward focus on the goal of advancing scholarly writing productivity tends to be well-received. Humanities and social science faculty, in this example, gain a new understanding of the process for moving from book idea to book contract. At the same time, they recognize that research administrators have a genuine interest in, and commitment to, their success as researchers, educators, and scholars.

There’s also an added benefit of this nontraditional approach. When faculty write the book proposal first, they’ve already written the grant proposal. With almost no additional writing effort, faculty can submit grant and fellowship applications that request funding for items related to their book projects, such as paying summer salary, traveling to libraries and archives, purchasing research materials, and conducting laboratory and fieldwork. (For faculty who write the grant proposal first, they’ve written 60 percent of the book proposal; they would only need to include details relating to sales and marketing.)

Book proposals and grant proposals are both persuasive documents – one aims to convince a publisher to issue a book contract and the other aims to convince a sponsor to issue a grant award. By “looking out,” research administrators can show faculty how to leverage their own intellectual property. The tasks of writing book proposals and writing grant proposals are more intertwined than imagined.

### Table 1: Comparison of Book Proposal and Grant Proposal Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Proposal</th>
<th>Grant Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biographical information</td>
<td>Biographical information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline for completion</td>
<td>Timeline for completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter outline</td>
<td>Chapter outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated table of contents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated length</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special production issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competing titles</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique selling points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author marketing efforts</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Unparalleled financial times have afforded an extraordinary opportunity for research administrators to come together with faculty. When the traditional approach to stimulating faculty grant-seeking activity yields a diminishing response and faculty feelings of negativity and hopelessness abound – “There’s no grant money out there. Why bother?” – a nontraditional approach holds the promise of optimism.

The simple act of caring about faculty goals inspires confidence. It builds trust. It lays the foundation for a productive working relationship with mutually agreeable results. Equally significant, faculty who feel good about the grant-seeking process are more likely to continue writing proposals, regardless of the outcome of any particular submission.

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Jeremy T. Miner, M.A., is Director of Grants and Contracts at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire and Chair of Region IV. He is an active NCURA member at the national and regional levels, serving on committees, presenting workshops and concurrent sessions, and publishing journal articles. Jeremy is an NCURA-SARIMA International Fellow for 2014. He can be reached at minerjt@uwec.edu
If you haven’t seen it yet, check out the 8th PRA Preliminary Program. The 2014 program is filled with a multitude of diverse options that should appeal to a variety of palates. Below is a sampling of what’s in store for you during the Pre-Award Research Administration Conference in San Francisco, March 18-20.

**Hors d’oeuvres**

**Pre-Conference Workshops**
- Pre-award Basics
- Departmental Boot Camp
- Technology Transfer
- Succession Planning
- FAR & Federal Contracting
- Going Global
- Industry Agreements

and more (see preliminary program for a complete listing, we’ve crafted something for every taste).

**Early Bird Sessions**
- Shorter samplings for those who like to get a jump on their day!

**Breakfast Roundtables**
- Lively morning discussions served over continental breakfast.

**Entrees ~ A Sampling**

**Concurrent Sessions**
- NSF/NIH Update
- Compliance Basics
- Best Practices
- Interdisciplinary Proposals
- Agency Site Visits
- International Granting
- Clinical Practices
- Omni Circular
- Training
- Administrative Burdens

**Discussion Groups**
- Export Controls
- Building a Pre-award Office
- Data Management
- Understanding the Review Process
- 360 Service Approach

**Side Items & Desserts**

**Sparks Sessions**
- Short, calorie-packed sessions for administrators on the go

**Senior Forums**
- Created for administrators with a more experienced palate

**Networking/Refreshment Breaks & Dinner Groups**
- Because dining alone is no fun

**Keynote Speaker Robert Sapolsky**
- Certain to whet your appetite!

**Tuesday Evening Opening Reception**

**Optional Cheese Course**
- Extend your stay in San Francisco with a tour – choices are abundant and include:
  - Alcatraz
  - Fisherman’s Wharf
  - Coit Tower
  - Ghiradelli Square
  - Chinatown
  - Wine Country
  - Sausalito

**PRA Sampling Menu**

Select from our various menu themes: Compliance, Departmental, Federal, Funding Opportunities/Proposal Development, Human Capital, International, Medical, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions
GIVE TODAY!

NCURA received a generous gift from Jerry Fife, an NCURA past president from Vanderbilt University to provide financial assistance to support continuing educational and professional development needs for NCURA members. A taskforce is hard at work developing business and marketing plans for this new initiative. NCURA has been challenged to raise $50,000 in matching funds by 2021. Has NCURA made a difference in your professional life? Do you want others to have the opportunity to receive professional development? Can you help us meet our goal of $50K by 2021?

Please visit our booth at the PRA & FRA meetings in San Francisco to learn more and make your tax-deductible contribution. Donate online at http://www.ncura.edu/content/misc/edu_scholarshipFund.php or, mail your check made payable to NCURA Education Scholarship Fund; 1015 18th St. NW, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20036

We need your help. Even a little makes a difference.
This issue’s theme of “Sticking together” reminds me of the collaboration and compromise that is needed in research administration and system support. And that reminds me of this story: A wealthy man with seventeen cows died leaving a will that stipulated the cows are to be split among his sons in this manner: the eldest son was to receive one-half of the cows, the middle son was to receive one-third of the cows and the youngest son would get one-ninth of the cows. Although excited about their inheritance, the sons could not think of an easy way to split up the seventeen cows and felt their father had played a cruel trick on them. They began whining all over town. A woman who owned only one cow offered to help the sons by adding her cow to the mix. With the total number of cows now at eighteen, the eldest son received his half or nine cows. The middle son was given his six cows as one-third of the total, and the youngest received his one-ninth inheritance of two cows. There was also one cow remaining. The woman took back her original investment, told the sons to stop whining, and they all lived happily ever after.

How often in research administration do we rescue a frustrating situation by utilizing a bit of compromise and collaboration? We collaborate with people in our areas or on the same campus, and in different cities, states and countries. Proposals and awards can involve many documents and versions of those documents. Large proposals can involve a team of investigators and a team of administrators who must stay informed as they assist the researchers. Systems have quirks that can be resolved more easily by seeing the issue rather than reading a description. We use email to stay in touch, and when a file we need to share is too large for email, we turn to a system to share files. In addition, we share tasks and schedule meetings or events. We’ve grown comfortable jumping from system to system. And the reality is we are juggling several projects at a time.

When we need to find a specific piece of information, that we recall working with a couple of months ago, it can be a challenge to remember which program has it.

Below is a summary of a dozen free tools that may help you get things into one place. Some focus on project management, while others are geared more toward sharing ideas and a couple try to do it all. These tools work on both PC’s and Mac’s and most are also compatible with iPhones, Android, iPads and Windows 8 Tablets. Best of all they are free! And I don’t mean just a free trial. Some of them also offer extra features for a monthly fee but the basics are available at no cost. A few minutes of your time is needed to set things up, and you’re on your way. Most of these programs have a 1-2 minute demo or tour that quickly shows you the features to help you determine whether it fits your goal.

Please note that I did not use a standard list to compare these tools and so if a feature is mentioned in one listing but not in another does not mean the other does not also include the feature. It was merely a matter of the feature impressing me at the time of my review. I have no connection to any of them — so no conflict of interest here. These are just tools I’ve investigated and think they may be useful to you. Ready to get started? Here we go:

Project Management

SamePage http://samepage.io allows teams of unlimited users up to 10GB for project management and collaboration. Create your own dashboard for projects. Add a task list, a calendar, files and photos, a comment section, etc. Allow new members to review history and quickly get acclimated. All information is on one
page and you may create additional pages for more detail.

**Teambox** teambox.com assists in planning and coordinating tasks for up to five users. It has an Outlook email plugin. A calendar shows Gantt chart view for milestones and workloads. You can share documents. Integrates with Dropbox, Box, and Google Drive. Communicate with people in and outside your organization in real time. Configure your email address (or your support team’s email address) so it forwards email to Teambox and saves you the time of re-entering an issue or task into Teambox. It can export tasks to CSV or XLSX file as well.

**Trello** trello.com is another task or project management tool. If you are familiar with the Kanban method, this works well as an electronic version of that. Set up various columns representing the workflow stages (e.g., To Do, Doing, Done) and move cards (representing tasks) through a workflow. Assign the tasks and easily move them from one column to another. Everyone on the team sees at a glance who’s working on what and in what stage or status it is.

**Producteev** producteev.com helps with project or task coordination and meeting deadlines. Gives team visibility to everyone’s tasks and their status. Get all of your to-do’s out of your head with access anywhere, anytime. Share files. No limit on users.

**Wiggio** wiggio.com can send mass text messages and voicemails to teammates for big news or last minute changes. Shared calendar, file storage, conference calls and online meetings. Poll the group to confirm members’ availability for a meeting, vote on next actions, or decide on favorite locations to meet.

**Siasto** siasto.com for collaborations involving teams of up to three members for up to 10 projects and 1 GB of space. Connect with your team, know the status of different tasks and view what everybody else is doing. A shared calendar exports to Google Calendar. Share documents.

**Docs9** docs9.com shares any type of document (Word, Excel, pdf, PowerPoint, etc.). Invite others to view files and provide feedback. No configuration. If you want to share documents from another tool such as Visio or Microsoft Project, your collaborators need not have these systems to view it in Docs9.

**LiveMinutes** liveminutes.com has partnered with Evernote to offer videoconferencing and collaboration. Allows up to 5 workspaces. Use videoconferencing to share progress or troubleshoot obstacles. Everyone is notified when a workspace changes so you are not wasting time emailing everyone. Edit notes in real-time and save everything to Evernote for future reference.

**System Support**

**Freshdesk** freshdesk.com helps up to three support staff to provide helpdesk support for the systems you manage, and to track system bugs and questions. Can set up so that you can continue to use your regular support email address for users to send in issues or questions, and the system then forwards the message to another email that automatically enters the item into Freshdesk. You can also download the entries as a csv file if you wish to show the activity in a graph or analyze it in other ways.

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**OMB Sets 2017 as Deadline to Move to Dynamic Cybersecurity**

I asked our NCURA IT Experts if this impact administering sponsored projects? Ron Splittgerber from Colorado State University shared with me that this OMB directive extends FISMA compliance that has been in place since 2002, and moves the focus to Homeland Security. Previously NIST and GSA were largely responsible. The focus on what they term Information Security Continuous Monitoring (ISCM) – again isn’t new, only that the entire concept has been moved under DHS.

The outcome for Ron’s shop @ CSU has been in a number of opportunities to provide FISMA compliant services for research under USDA funding. Other than that, in Ron’s opinion it focuses more on procurement of IT goods & services, especially as those resources focus on the cloud. Ron see’s little impact on day-to-day operations with the research agencies beyond the efforts we’ve seen in securing Grants.gov, NIH Commons and Research.gov.

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**Brainstorming**

**groupZap** groupzap.com is an online whiteboard to brainstorm ideas or to work an idea during a conference call. There’s no registration. Enter your email to get a web link, then share it with your collaborators and everyone can work on the same screen. Share documents in real-time. Session is recorded which enables you to review how a particular idea came to be. The whiteboard stays active for 7 days so the group can add ideas after your call and you can create a PDF to send to the team as a record of the meeting for any follow-up action items.

**Scribbler** scribbler.com is another online whiteboard but with real-time audio capabilities and text chat as well. The free version has a limit of 5-pages for documents, and 3MB of space. Share screenshots and work through a system issue, or do some training. You are not limited to one screen, however, you can add various screens (pages) during a session. Take a snapshot of the screen to save it to review several variations on a theme.

I hope you test some of these tools and find one or two that will ease your daily burden. If you do, I’d love to hear about it. Let me know how you saved the day whether it was splitting up cows, budgets or solving a system issue. And here’s to living happily ever after (with no more whining).
The Evolution of Research Administration – facing the future… together

The 56th Annual Meeting (AM56) Program Committee would like to wish the NCURA community a Happy New Year. It is hard to believe that 2014 has arrived, but it is here and there are so many changes evolving for us in research administration. It was with this ever-changing landscape in mind that the AM56 Program Committee developed the theme for this year’s upcoming annual meeting. This year’s theme is “The Evolution of Research Administration – facing the future… together” The NCURA annual meeting provides the optimal opportunity for the research administration community to come together and share vital and pertinent information necessary to do our jobs. Over the course of the conference there are a multitude of sessions, workshops and discussions to get guidance and updates related to the rules and critical processes impacting the research administration environment. In addition, there are ample opportunities to meet up with colleagues and make new connections with research administrators from across the country and around the world. Somehow, being a part of the NCURA network makes facing the future within this evolving profession less daunting. Two heads are always better than one and the NCURA annual meeting delivers ten-fold on this front. This will be the meeting to attend if staying apprised of policy changes, getting updates on compliance issues and expanding your contacts within the research administration profession are on your To-do list for 2014.

The AM56 Program Committee has diligently reviewed your evaluations and proposals and we have been working on confirming sessions and recruiting excellent presenters. We will have a great selection of basic and introductory offerings for our attendees that are new to the profession as well as intermediate and advanced sessions for those in the business for a while. Also, in response to member feedback, we have added more Senior Forums and eRA topics this year. There will be something for everyone! We will be releasing the preliminary program early this spring for the August meeting. The committee is so excited with how things are shaping up and we are certain that this is going to be a wonderful program – from the wide variety of workshops slated for Sunday to a full gambit of concurrent sessions and discussion groups running Monday through Wednesday.

Be sure and mark your calendars for August 10-13, 2014 for NCURA’s 56th Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. It is never too early to make your plans for attending the meeting. With all the changes we are facing this year, from the new combined OMB circular to the DATA Act to the sub-accounting draw process implemented by HHS (the list goes on and on!), you will want to be at the Washington Hilton this August to commiserate, encourage and obtain guidance on how best to navigate all the recent changes at your own institution. It will be a win-win for all that attend. Come learn, share and get empowered so you can deftly manage the evolution of research administration as we all face the future together.
Cool Research 
Project Spotlight

Radiologists study structure of mysterious sea ‘monster’

By Elaine Schmidt

IMAGE COURTESY OF CAL STATE FULLERTON
“Wow, that’s one big fish!”

That was the reaction of everyone at UCLA’s Translational Research Imaging Center when a monster fish story became reality in the form of a rare 14-foot, 250-pound oarfish, whose snake-like carcass washed ashore in Ocean-side last month and ended up in nine pieces at the state-of-the-art imaging facility on campus.

On Nov. 21, scientists from UCLA and California State University, Fullerton teamed up to study the big oarfish, the second found DOA in Southern California waters last month after the first one surfaced off Catalina Island. A camera crew captured the process at UCLA for an upcoming segment on the Discovery Channel’s Daily Planet — the latest flurry of media interest since the giant specimen became hot news around the nation.

Misty Paig-Tran, 32, a CSUF ichthyologist (that’s a fish scholar to you and me), had approached Dr. Dieter Enzmann, UCLA chairman of radiology, with an irresistible offer. Would his department’s specialized center perform a computerized tomography (CT) scan on the oarfish? Enzmann enthusiastically agreed.

After all, the oarfish, a mysterious deep-sea species that most likely spawned the sea-serpent legend of yore, was first described in 1772. But it’s been poorly studied by researchers and rarely glimpsed by sea divers. Living as deep as 3,300 feet below the ocean’s surface, the monstrous fish can grow up to 30 feet long and weigh as much as 600 pounds.

This particular silvery, red-finned specimen offered an unexpected bonus to scientists. Its six-foot-long ovaries were overflowing with millions of eggs, which Paig-Tran’s team plans to count and analyze.

With expertise in biomechanics, Paig-Tran is teasing out how the shape of the oarfish affects its function. Her goal? To trace the evolution of the fish’s Jell-O-like skeleton and unravel how the elusive oarfish can swim upright, with its head afloat and its tail hanging vertically.

“The oarfish hangs motionless in the water for much of the day, except for its continuously beating dorsal fin, which is bidirectional,” explained Paig-Tran. In its CT scans, she is looking for clues “that explain why the fish moves its fin this way and how its soft skeleton contributes to its swimming performance.”

It’s not your typical task at the UCLA Translational Research Imaging Center, equipped with the most sophisticated imaging technologies available. Usually, UCLA scientists at the center are developing and testing new medical devices and drugs prior to their use in human clinical trials. The lab also trains clinicians in new FDA-approved therapies to benefit patients in the fields of cardiology, neurology, neurosurgery, radiology and urology.

In the case of the oarfish, the tricky part for radiologists came in prepping the fish and then transferring the data, a task that took more than 12 hours.

As a fishy odor perfumed the air, Michael McNitt-Gray, a professor of radiology at the
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, painstakingly positioned the fish on the center’s high-resolution CT scanner.

Even though it was chopped into nine pieces and frozen for transport, the oarfish was so long that McNitt-Gray could only scan three pieces at a time. The actual scan required only a few minutes.

“I was expecting something unusual, but nothing prepared me for the oarfish’s size and unique structure,” said McNitt-Gray, a medical physicist who advises numerous national and state task forces on clinical CT techniques.

“Dr. Paig-Tran described the fish’s anatomy as it materialized on the monitor before my eyes. That’s what I find so interesting about my work—experts are making discoveries as we scan.”

Paig-Tran will use the scans to create a three-dimensional model of the fish and then spend several months dissecting the fish to remove the bone for further study. The findings she gleaned from UCLA’s scans will be published in an upcoming paper, but until then, the oarfish’s secrets remain buried at sea.

Dr. Misty Paig-Tran is a marine biologist at California State University, Fullerton. She can be reached at epaig-tran@fullerton.edu.

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

References
Schmidt, Elaine (2013, Nov 26). Radiologists study structure of mysterious sea ‘monster’ retrieved December 9, 2013, with permission from University of California, Los Angeles and California State, Fullerton.

Research Administration in Canada:
CAURA, Over 40 and Still Growing

When a body (person or association) reaches the age of forty, it is a good time to take stock of where you are and where you are heading. The Canadian Association of University Research Administrators (CAURA) recently reached its 40 year mark and decided to ask its members some searching, introspective questions regarding how they felt about the association, their profession and how CAURA is doing in support of that profession. The answers are fascinating. Forty percent of the membership responded to the survey, suggesting this was a topic of great interest and importance. Although NCURA is a little older and more mature, we think the findings have relevance to our US and global colleagues including the Australians who did a similar study recently led by Simon Kerr at Melbourne.

So what did we learn?
The profession of Research Administration: Clearly research administration (RA) is a profession that is not well known or understood. A large proportion of CAURA members (62% of respondents) had little or no awareness of the profession before they joined and many “fell into it”. Only 9% had a definite career plan to become a research administrator.

Members come from a diverse range of backgrounds including research, finance, administration, legal, library, etc. This might explain why the RA profession is such a vibrant and expert group of people. 30% came from an administrative background, another 23% from a research or academic background, and the remainder from every conceivable corner of the educated workforce.

The good news is that respondents tell us unambiguously that it is a rewarding, challenging, satisfying and reasonably well paid profession (96% told us they found RA a somewhat to very rewarding career). Most respondents tell us they believe they have good advancement potential (32% told us they felt they had very good to good advancement potential and another 37% had somewhat good advancement potential). Our members see RA as a stable and worthwhile career with 90% planning to stay in the profession medium to long-term.

The benefits of being in the RA profession were numerous with the most quoted reasons being: diversity and challenges in the role; the opportunity to work with intelligent people; flexibility; and good working conditions.

When asked about their next career move, 18% told us they expected to be promoted, 43% said they would grow in their current role and a further 14% expected to move into a different role within RA.

When asked if their RA role was valued at their institution, 66% responded positively. The fact that one third felt their role was not valued raises some concern and this is in an area that we will be exploring further.

CAURA: Support for the Profession: CAURA is judged as doing a good job supporting the profession (69% of respondents indicated the association did a good to excellent job). Three main roles were identified: communication and networking (74% said CAURA did a good to excellent job enabling this); advocacy (68% identified CAURA as highly effective); and training /professional development (PD) (57% said CAURA does a good to excellent job of providing PD and training). There is clearly improvements to be made, particularly on the training/PD aspect. Many excellent suggestions were made in answering the question about how CAURA could better support the profession and these will be analyzed in terms of viability in the context of our recent strategic plan.

Demographics of the Membership: Our responding members cover a wide spectrum with respect to age (3% are 18-29, 26% are 30-39, 38% are 40-49, 27% are 50-59 and 6% are 60-69). Our members have strong levels of experience with 77% having at least 3 years of experience. Salaries are considered good with 50% of respondents earning more than $70,000/year.

Our members are extremely well educated with 98% having a post-secondary degree or diploma (22% with PhDs, 39% with Master’s degrees, 28% with Bachelor’s degrees and another 9% with college diplomas).

Conclusion: Research administration is a well-established and rewarding career in Canada. CAURA provides high quality support to its members and has a plan to improve the quality as we head into middle age as an association. We have a lot to learn from our global sister associations and their members. We plan to partner and communicate with them more in the future.

Martin Kirk - CAURA, President & Director, Office of Research Services, UBC
Sarah Lampson - CAURA, Executive Director
Debra Zornes - CAURA, SIG – Small Universities & Director, Research Services, Royal Roads University
Imagine you’re a new faculty member just starting up your own research lab at a prominent research institute. You’re ready to go, but the bench seats are cold and the shelves are unstocked. And although you may have garnered a start-up package, you have now realized you do not have all the funds necessary to get your research projects fully running.

To whom do you go for help?

At the University of Houston (UH), a well-trained Research Administrator (RA) is the answer. Here, we understand that a knowledgeable RA can open doors to faculty into the nuances of grant funding, agencies, and awards management.

A knowledgeable RA is no accident. It is a matter of hiring properly and training appropriately.

In 2011, UH reached out to NCURA to bring training to our campus aimed at enhancing the skills of both new and long-standing RAs.

What resulted was a series of four workshops held between October 2011 and June 2012 that covered topics such as awards management, the role and significance of RAs, compliance issues, proposal creation and submission, and the ‘cradle-to-grave’ award lifecycle approach.

Dr. Rathindra Bose leads the Division of Research as Vice Chancellor for Research and Technology Transfer for the UH System, and Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer for UH. UH is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university.

“We must have skilled research administrators who understand that we are a trustee of public funding,” Bose said. “We must be good stewards and uphold our responsibilities.”

Supporting faculty is central to the decisions made by the Division of Research, Bose said.

“The task involves ensuring that the information and guidance provided to them by our research administrators is up-to-date with any new regulations and is in line with best practices for the field,” he said. “Ongoing training for our staff is necessary to meet our faculty’s expectations.”

The workshops were not just aimed at being a refresher or a teaching tool for RAs. The goal was to make better RAs that can learn and adapt to the ever-changing nature of research and the awards that fund it.

Judy Morris is a research administrator with the UH Division of Research. She praised the sessions, which were presented in panel format.

“Bring NCURA Workshops to Your Campus

Looking for a cost-effective way to train a large number of campus personnel about effectively managing sponsored research? NCURA has four distinctive traveling workshops:

• Departmental Research Administration
• Financial Research Administration
• LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration
• LEVEL II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop: Critical Issues in Research Administration

A minimum of 60 participants must be committed in order to host a workshop at your campus. These can be attendees from your institution as well as neighboring institutions. You supply the on-campus workshop location, the meals and beverage breaks, and the AV equipment and NCURA will provide the rest - a team of presenters who are experts in the field, all workshop materials and a discounted registration fee.

Contact Stephanie McJury at mcjury@ncura.edu for more information and to schedule your workshop.
“NCURA presenters are some of the best presenters in the field that I have encountered,” she said. “They are dedicated, answering all questions from the audience and staying until the room is empty.”

In addition to learning about the business of research administration and the opportunity to get questions answered by experienced trainers, the NCURA workshops served as a great way to network and having them held on campus was convenient, said Debborah Dowell.

“The biggest advantage to having the event on campus is one of convenience,” said Dowell, who attended the sessions as a research office grants officer, but who has since been promoted to research administrator also with the Division of Research.

The NCURA workshops and the time she spent with RAs were crucial to her success at UH, Dowell said. “As a new research administrator, I would have come into my position clueless about what I was expected to do without the knowledge I gained from the NCURA workshops.”

Prior to attending the workshops at UH, Dowell had also attended other NCURA training events, where the exchange of experiences was of great value.

“One of the primary reasons for attending the national and regional workshops is that we are able to interact with research administrators from many other educational institutions, where we can hear about what is working or not working for the other institutions,” she said.

The quality of the materials provided as part of the UH workshops became a good resource for Dowell.

“They covered the highlights of what every RA should know in order to perform the job effectively,” she said. “But what I remember most about the NCURA workshops were not so much the workshops themselves but rather the speakers that conducted the workshops,” Dowell said.

The instructors, she said, were well able to connect to the audience.

“They made the experience one that was enjoyable to attend and put some humor into it.”

The workshops at UH augment the training RAs receive by attending other NCURA events across the country.

“Attending the workshops helped me understand the diverse array of agreements,” said Maira Gonzalez, research administrator for the UH Division of Research, who attended an NCURA training in Seattle in June 2013. “I more clearly understand that reading up on the agreements and looking at the terms and conditions can help me determine whether certain expenditures are allowable or unallowable.”

Gonzalez said she felt the workshops she attended were not only informative but also had a significant impact on her work.

“Getting a grasp on the administrative side of research administration was an important skill for me,” said Gonzalez, who began her professional career as an RA in early 2013 after first becoming exposed to the field as a student worker. “By seeing the problems that universities and colleges face when trying to receive grants, I am now able to help both the faculty member and UH in a more efficient way.”

**“Collaborate Conversations”**

We are back with some of our favorite recent Collaborate Community conversation topics! Make sure to login to Collaborate and see what else is being discussed! Popular recent topics include:

**International Community** – “Change in Federal PMS System and its Impact on International Award Recipients”, posted by Marjorie Forster, Assistant Vice President for Research and Global Health Initiatives at the University of Maryland Baltimore. Marjorie was asking the community about any difficulties they have encountered or other problems associated with federal payments system.

In the **Pre-Award Community**, Margaret McGladrey, MA, Assistant Dean for Research for The University of Kentucky posted a question about “Just-in-Time Information Verification.”

**Compliance Community** – “Potential Revenue as Cost Share”, posted by Tonya Pinkerton a Compliance Manager at Texas Tech University. Tonya was looking for guidance on using “potential revenue” as a source of third party cost share.

“Subaward to Australia University, paperwork questions” in the **International Community**, by Dawn Underwood, the Director, Office of Sponsored Programs for Indiana State University inquired about advice on how to issue payment to the company without withholding taxes.

Join the conversation at: [http://collaborate.ncura.edu/home](http://collaborate.ncura.edu/home)
The Catherine Core Minority Travel Award supports travel-related costs to the NCURA Annual Meeting for up to four minority applicants who, because of institutional financial constraints, could not otherwise attend the conference. The awardees receive up to $1,500 toward travel expenses associated with attending the Annual Meeting. This award, however, does not only assist in the financial aspects of attending the meeting, it also offers a wide variety of services and opportunities for the awardees to interact with colleagues from other educational institutions around the country, and now the world.

This year, NCURA received an impressive pool of applications for the Catherine Core Minority Travel Award. The 2013 award recipients are: Wanda Cardenas, University of Colorado – Denver; Julie Gallegos, The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center; Rosalinda Natividad, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center; and Kelba Sosa, Yeshiva University.

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

**Wanda Cardenas,**
*University of Colorado – Denver*

I started my memorable experience by working at the Region VII table, both days of registration, no better way to meet and greet people… This laid the groundwork for networking and remembering the warm welcoming faces of the membership. The Annual Meeting was well organized and relevant to university research. Overall the speakers were informative, prepared and understandable, if they didn’t have an answer they made arrangement to provide that answer at a later time.

**Julie Gallegos**
*The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center*

It was a pleasure meeting Ms. Catherine Core, what a delightful woman. Thanks to Ms. Catherine Core, the Travel Award Committee, NCURA and the travel award, this was all possible. I left the conference feeling inspired and motivated from all the information I absorbed and new relationships I built with fellow members.

**Rosalinda Natividad**
*Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center*

By far, this is the most organized conference I’ve attended, from timing of workshops and serving dinner, to the overwhelming number of ways a person can be involved. It seems that attendance of the networking session is what exhausted me, rather than the line-up of workshops, discussion and spark session. Meeting Catherine Core humbled me. I saw her as a treasure of NCURA; people were so gracious around her… More than ever, I am motivated to receive my CRA and CPRA in research administration and cross breed my work in development to build on the knowledge base of this impactful organization. See you at the next annual NCURA!

**Kelba Sosa**
*Yeshiva University*

My experience at my first annual NCURA meeting can be summed up into one word, FANTASTIC! I was amazed by the number of meeting goers who I collaborate with on a routine basis but I never had the opportunity to talk to or even meet in person. This meeting afforded me the opportunity to network with my peers from across the nation.

This award certainly allowed me to experience what I did and I look forward to collaborating with the recipient of this award moving forward. Thank you again to Catherine Core and NCURA for making this experience at the annual meeting a memorable one.

If you are interested in applying or nominating someone for the Catherine Core Minority Travel Award, please find more information on the NCURA website. The next application deadline will be March 24, 2014.
Anybody having a conversation with a research administrator in Europe these days should be prepared to hear the term “Horizon 2020,” and that it may be uttered with both apprehension and little bit of healthy suspicion. “Horizon 2020” is the name for the 8th Framework Program for research and innovation of the EU Commission, a program that will run from 2014 until 2020 and that will be the biggest research funding program in the world, totaling c. €70 billion.

Research at the European level has been organized in so called framework programs since 1984, and those “FP’s” have contributed to creating the European Research Area (ERA), a strategic priority for the EU, and deeply affected research administration in Europe. Each framework program has had its set of rules and regulations, and those have not always been simple and straightforward.

After having evaluated the previous FP’s, particularly FP7 (which never got a spiffy name like its successor), the EU Commission decided to make some important changes in Horizon 2020:

• In previous FP’s, each instrument or funding program could have—and did have—its own set of rules, and those set of rules sometimes varied in confounding ways. In Horizon 2020, there will be emphasis on simplification, and one single set of Rules for Participation that will apply to all funding instruments.

• Horizon 2020 will strengthen the connection between research and innovation in order to satisfy the political goals, and of course to shorten the time from idea to invention.

Compared to previous FP’s Horizon 2020 has a more coherent organization, and is divided into three pillars, each addressing a particular strategic goal:

• **Societal Challenges** deals with 7 specific, broad themes, addressing major concerns like climate change, the ageing population, renewable energy, safe and secure societies, and others.

• **Strengthening Industrial Leadership** invests in key technologies and includes both some almost science fiction-like big projects and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

• **Excellent Science**, finally, aims to provide a boost to top-level science in Europe, as well as supporting European research careers. This pillar includes the European Research Council (ERC), which is the part of Horizon 2020 that is most similar to a traditional research funding agency.

The EU has been teeming with activities preparing for the launch of Horizon 2020 at the beginning of 2014, and the first calls, that are published in so called “work programs,” will be released in December 2013. During October-November, the activities could best be described as frantic, and the amount of information, and the speed with which it changes have been dizzying. As I am writing this, near-final drafts of Rules for Participation, a Model Agreement, and most work programs have been made publicly available (see link), so we are finally getting there.

Horizon 2020 is thus very much in the minds of many, if not most European research administrators right now, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. For all the hype, it is sobering to consider that Horizon 2020 may be the biggest research program that the EU has ever launched, but it still only represents c. 5% of European research funding; the remaining 95% is spent on national research funding.

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Olaf Svenningsen - Head of Southern Denmark Research Support at The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) and the Region of Southern Denmark


Research administration knows no borders! The truth of that statement was never more evident than this past August when three NCURA members visited the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana to serve as presenters in their 3rd Annual Summer School. Organized by the KNUST Office of Grants and Research (OGR) and the Quality Assurance and Planning Unit, the theme for the school was “Repositioning KNUST as a Global Institution: Effective Research Management as a Tool.” The main objective was to help attendees understand the role of research management in the university’s research enterprise, and to help lay the groundwork for establishing OGR as the central office on campus for pre-award and post-award research administration services.

Speakers were from both Ghana and the United States. International speakers were W. Scott Erwin, Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at Texas State University, Heather Offhaus, Director of the Office of Grant Review & Analysis in the University of Michigan Medical School, and Craig Reynolds, Associate Director of the University of Michigan’s Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. Speaking on the topic of intellectual property in Ghana were Mr. Joseph Tamakloe, Chief State Attorney, Registrar General’s Department, and Mrs. Sarah Anku, Assistant State Attorney, Registrar General’s Department.

Participation and interest in the five-day workshop was impressive. Approximately 200 senior academic and non-academic staff members were in attendance for the program, representing all six colleges in the university as well as KNUST centers and institutes.

Topics covered in the summer school ran the spectrum of research administration, including the roles and responsibilities of an office like OGR, the basic principles of pre-award and post-award research administration, effective proposal writing techniques, the necessity of proposal routing and approval (once the perplexed Ghanians figured out that the American pronunciation of “routing” is “raithing” and not “rooting”), financial processes for grants at KNUST, and audits. Other topics included the patent system in Ghana, and intellectual property and national development.

Participants were clearly engaged, had many excellent questions and critiques, and offered no shortage of suggestions on how to improve research activity and infrastructure at KNUST. Said Craig Reynolds, “I was deeply impressed by everyone I met at the KNUST Summer School. I have no doubt this institution is poised to become one of the leading academic research institutions in West Africa and beyond. Their faculty are eager to expand research at KNUST, their administration is fully supportive of creating a culture of centralized research administration, and they have a great foundation to build upon in the staff of the KNUST Office of Grants and Research. That’s a winning combination for sure!”

The activities reported in this article were supported by the Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health under award R24TW008899. The content is solely the responsibility of the author and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.
On November 18 and 19, the joint symposium of the 3rd URA Symposium and the 5th RA Study Group Meeting took place at Kyoto University. It attracted the largest number of participants as a gathering of URAs in Japan. One of the main objectives of this symposium was to initiate discussions towards a national URA networking organization.

Who attended There were close to 500 registered participants. More than three quarter were URAs or other personnel supporting research and/or industry-university collaboration at universities or other research institutions. Others were government officials from The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), personnel from funding agencies, university directors and their equivalents, some people from industries, and small number of faculties and students. Considering that the original quota was supposed to be 300, we can see that the interest in URAs are higher than ever.

About URA Symposium URA Symposium is held by the universities selected for the national project which develops a system to promote and establish research administrators (URA) (Hereafter, the URA Project). MEXT started the project in FY 2011, and so far 16 universities (listed below) have been working on it.

In this symposium, the 16 universities presented a poster on their approaches and activities for the URA Project. Seven of them also had 25 minute sessions. In addition, three “education track” sessions were held for the entry-level URAs. Their topics were: 1) what research administrators are, 2) science and technology policy, and 3) general research ethics.

About RA Study Group Meeting The RA Study Group was formed by the interested individuals in Kanazawa University in 2010. Its members overlap those in the URA Project, and once the project started, the group has received some funding from the URA Project. Still, they remained as a bottom-up style association for URA networking, and organized their own yearly meetings.

In this symposium, the RA Study Group had 9 of 1.5 hour sessions and 59 poster presentations. On the second day, Thomson Reuters, Elsevier Japan, and Nature Publishing Group hosted luncheon seminars on research management tools.

Two of the sessions discussed the URA networking organization, and others discussed:

- International collaboration
- URAs at smaller universities
- Grant proposal management
- Support for humanities and social science departments
- Day-to-day issues URAs come across
- Conversation with FA
- Building professional skills on your own

The posters were roughly divided into four groups: 1) facilitating research strategy, 2) pre-award services, 3) special activities, and 4) others, including reinforcement and promotion of research universities. The topics frequently discussed were:

- Building and using database
- Preparing grant proposals
- Outreach
- Efforts for the Reinforcement and Promotion of Research Universities Project at each university

There were a few posters introducing research administration, development, and management overseas, specifically, Italy, Germany, and US.

About the official URA organization in Japan At the very end of the symposium, everyone gathered in the largest hall, and Prof. Koji Tanaka, the head of Kyoto University Research Administration Office, addressed the need and conception of an official national URA networking organization. He also explained the circumstance and the scheme for starting such organization, and asked the participants to register as its founding members.

According to the schedule, the founding group will call for its members until the end of February 2014. Then, in the spring of 2014, the founding members will launch the first organizational meeting. They are also calling for a university, which will be in charge until the meeting.

My thoughts First of all, I would like to congratulate the organizers of this symposium for successfully pulling it together. It certainly was a huge event. Witnessing that there are so many people working on the URA endeavor should have encouraged many of URAs and those thinking about introducing URA system into their institutions. In addition, the networking opportunity this symposium provided was quite valuable. Japanese URA system is at its infancy, and slowly but steadily, we are making progress. As we have accumulated some experiences, we have a little better idea on what we are, what we need, what we can learn from others, including our foreign counterparts, and where we are heading to.

Japanese URA organization is barely at its conception. It will take some time before it truly becomes a counterpart of NCURA and others in the world, but we have taken a step forward. Meanwhile, our communication with you is going to be based on individuals, group of individuals, and/or universities/research institutions.

Keiko Okano, Ph.D., University Research Administrator at Kyoto University in Kyoto, Japan.
Dear Dr. Killinmehere:

This question involves many fascinating components of research administration such as export control, infectious agents, foreign nationals, cost accounting standards, biosafety precautions, budget modifications, and expanded authority. Such topics can be discussed from a theoretical perspective, or with a where-the-rubber-meets-the-road sense of realism. The latter is apropos in this case so, since time is of the essence of time (you don't have much), I provide the realistic response:

On behalf of the CIA, FBI, NSA, TSA, Commerce Department, Treasury Department, and Customs and Border Protection — all of whom read your email before it arrived in my Inbox — we thank you for your inquiry. This is one of those times when seeking permission will be a whole lot better than asking forgiveness. For had you not inquired, you might have found yourself in the laboratory one day suddenly distracted by the sounds of screeching tires and a distorted voice over a bullhorn calling your name, informing you that you're surrounded, and demanding that you drop your beaker and come out the front door with your hands behind your head.

You were that close. Stop by your research admin office tout suite.

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Dear Ann—

My husband and I are in the same department. I have added his name to all my publications and now he won't add mine to bis. What can I do about this problem? I am very mad at him.

Feeling Used

Dear Used—

How to solve this dilemma, the court of the heart or of academic custom? If it's a simple matter of the heart, you can always deny him foot rubs, or in a pinch, divorce him. But academic custom is another matter. You can't so easily escape your CV.

Let's hope your matter can be resolved as easily as that of Robert E. Lucas who won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1995. Shortly after Stockholm called, he also received another call — this from his ex-wife reminding him that their divorce agreement stipulated she would receive half the prize.

Still don't want a divorce? Then check your prenuptial agreement.

Don't have one you say? Think again. Lots of newlyweds (and you sound like one) find the rotors of their helicopter parents have continued to spin long after they entered grad school. Stories of these parents negotiating the terms of their grad's first job have been superseded by rumors that some are meeting secretly with the future in-laws to negotiate prenuptials. See if one isn't stapled to your marriage certificate. They may have already covered terms of co-publication for you.

By the way, do you know what Lucas did to thank his wife for that reminder call? He gave her the whole prize. A million bucks plus. An economist.

Maybe now we know why our country's economy is in the shape it is.

* * *

Dear Ann: If the world is truly flat economically, how does this affect my space survey?

No Accounting

Dear No Account—

Disastrously. Your survey is done in square feet, but the reality it represents is in cubic feet. Now if the world is flat economically, and the world isn’t a sphere, that means that costs formerly recovered for cubic feet are now being conflated into a plane, which as you will recall from your Geometry class, has no real dimension. It’s so small, it simply doesn’t exist.

Thus all those square feet you’ve been so diligently counting don’t amount to a hill of beans. Thus, no reimbursement.

Thank goodness a flat economic world is only a postulate.

Got problems? Question authority! Ann’s got answers for you at nordquist@wsu.edu

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Robert A. Lucas, Ph.D., Director of the Institute for Scholarly Productivity, An Educational Consulting Corporation in San Luis Obispo, CA., is Emeritus Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies, Research, and Faculty Development, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Author of over 100 articles on the subject of research administration and grants development, he is widely known for his faculty workshops on scholarly and research proposal writing. He can be reached at boblucas@aol.com
NCURA is calling for our members support in maximizing the growth in online education and sharing of resources by creating more topical communities and increasing engagement in Collaborate.

Time to Build New Communities and Network! Be a Champion leader for a Community!

Do you have a suggested community that would benefit members and be engaging to open in Collaborate? NCURA would love to hear from you. If you would like to advocate a new community for Collaborate please fill out the Application and submit to the NCURA office at Collaborate@ncura.edu.

All applications will be reviewed by the Collaborate Community Chairs with support from the NCURA Community Curator before launching.

For more information please contract Stephanie Moore Community Curator at moore@ncura.edu
As research administration (RA) changes and grows in scope in the 21st century, the paper forms and simple spreadsheets of the past no longer meet our needs. We find ourselves turning to the Information Technology (IT) resources at our institutions in hopes they can provide systems to help manage our complex business processes and keep us in compliance with local and Federal regulations. Dr. Jane E. Fountain, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, saw this need for IT partnership with RA at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), “As agencies began to automate their grants processes, it became clear that hundreds of stove-piped, computerized grants systems would result” (Fountain 2007). The government turned to information technology experts to help bridge these gaps and create a partnership that can tie these silos together to form real and useful tools for research administrators, such as the case with Grants.gov (General Dynamics).

Although many RA offices have embedded in them a few staff to manage day-to-day computing needs, a centralized university IT department has the resources and expertise to help RA offices build efficiencies and support regulatory compliance in a meaningful way. When RA departments need complex data integration and prevention of data duplication, or need technical questions answered by the end of the day, having a centralized IT department that is a partner and that truly understands our business can be extremely helpful.

RA and IT have a special relationship at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Under the leadership of both the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Vice President for Research, a new department was formed in 2007. Instead of RA and IT struggling within different chains of command to understand each other, Academic Information Systems (AIS) was designed from the ground up to be a partner with RA and the researchers themselves. By integrating staff members from various backgrounds such as research labs, industry, RA content experts (NCURA members) and IT specialists, a new type of research-focused IT department was formed. A department that would help bridge gaps, fill in cracks in our processes, navigate research compliance requirements, and really understand our needs as research administrators. Now, almost six years into this experiment, AIS has become a partner with RA in times of change and growth.

The term research administration is often associated only with the Grants and Contracts office at institutions but, as NCURA members know, RA includes much more than proposals and agreements. We not only submit grants, but also review conflicts of interests, protect our human and animal subjects, and provide guidance to
researchers for their awarded funds while meeting an untold number of regulatory requirements. The web of departments responsible for these processes often become stove-piped silos. To address this problem at UT Southwestern, RA staff reached out to the IT department and invited them to learn our processes. When IT partners with RA, three distinct constituent groups benefit: the researchers themselves, the back-office staff and the executive management. By supporting everyone along the way, the entire process is streamlined, improved and brought together in meaningful ways that support our final goals of compliance.

One of the most frequent methods of RA teaming with IT is in form creation and processing. The act of taking manual forms and entering them into IT structures can facilitate a number of improvements. The most readily obvious is the prevention of avoidable errors. When forms live in a single location form versioning is managed; state, federal, and university requirements are easily tracked and implemented; and typos of standard information (such as the DUNS numbers required for submission) become a thing of the past. This automation can be done on a small or large scale depending on an institution’s capacity and resources. As functions such as electronic routing for approval and automated information population become integrated into our daily work, they reduce the need to check extraneous things over and over again and allow the back-office staff to review content with a focus on compliance issues.

The second level of integration is the support for the back-office staff. Hard working Research Administrators rely on accurate data to succeed in their jobs. It is estimated that the number of protocols submitted to IRBs increased more than 40% in the period of 1995 to 2001 and more than one third of these studies are new submissions each year (Burman 2003). This influx of work is matched across all aspects of research administration and drives home the need for accurate data and reports to meet the compliance requirements amidst an increasing volume of work. Reporting for the back-office staff and researchers allows these customers insight into our processes. No matter the system, these staff-focused reports allow tracking of workloads, help with meeting deadlines, and give faculty opportunities to answer questions saving valuable time. By building a web of knowledge through system integration and robust reporting RA can flourish.

Finally, the third group—and arguably the one that can benefit the most from RA and IT partnership—is the senior executive leadership. Similar to the office staff, our executives rely heavily on accurate data to help them plan and strategize the best ways to allocate resources at our institutions coupled with ensuring research programs meet all federal, state and university guidelines. Executive dashboards designed for department chairs, directors, deans and vice presidents are different than the standard reports in that they provide snapshot views of department-level performance. These dashboards are designed to provide metrics across multiple departments and help steer university processes. Providing dashboards and views into information lets our leaders go to bat for our needs and opens new avenues for future improvement.

There are still great opportunities for additional teamwork for Research Administrators. One thing is clear: change is constant. IT specialists teamed with research administrators can improve, effectiveness and efficiency and ensure compliance specifications are met and really understand the needs of NCURA members.

References:
A September 2013 audit report of a major research university conducted by HHS OIG at NSF's request was released by NSF. Expenditures selected for review for the Direct Cost Audit were those that the auditors consider to be generally at a high risk for error, including supplies, recharge center activities, general expenditures, foreign travel, clerical and administrative salaries, cost transfers and other salaries. The audit sampled 714 transactions which resulted in 86 questioned transactions. The University disputed 60 of the questioned transactions which were primarily associated with the allowability of office supplies and information technology expenses, the sufficiency of the documentation needed to substantiate a charge to a sponsored project and charging administrative and clerical salaries directly to NSF awards.

Computer & Computer Related Expenses

The majority of the questioned costs in the audit were related to computer or computer-related expenses. Questioned costs included laptops for a multi-summer teacher training program that were originally proposed to NSF, solely used by the teachers during the summer and taken back to their school during the subsequent year. Other questioned costs were for computer costs specifically identified and incorporated into the annual budgeting and award process and computer supplies used in a laboratory.

The University argued that F.6.b.(1) and (3) guidance provides that computer and computer related expenses are allowable direct charges so long as they can be identified “to a particular cost objective.” The reference to major project is limited to F.6.b (3) which is explicitly limited to salary charges. Therefore, when considering the allowability of non-salary administrative-type costs, the related project need not be a major project. In a footnote in the University response, they noted that the auditors disagreed with the institution’s characterization of major projects and that the University believes that the auditors have taken too narrow an interpretation of the standards of A-21.

Participant Support

Participant support was also questioned. The auditors' findings included a lack of signed attendance sheets, insufficient documentation to support the amount of a stipend paid to a high school teacher/team member, a stipend paid to one program attendee was greater than that paid to the other attendees, and subsistence allowances pursuant to a written agreement. Many of the questioned costs related to a residential summer program for teachers in which a stipend was paid to the participants on completion of the program.

In findings related to lack of documentation (signed attendance sheets) for participant support, the University asserted that another reasonable and adequate form of documentation would be an attestation from workshop staff in attendance, which was consistent with guidance in A-21 that either the employee or someone else with a suitable means of verification can document compensation costs.

Foreign Travel

Auditors' findings included costs that (1) exceeded the maximum allowable per diem rate; (2) were incurred outside the authorized travel dates; (3) were for unallowable expenses (e.g., alcohol and laundry); (4) were not reasonable; and (5) were not adequately documented. The University disagreed with findings related to a portion of a registration fee paid in Brazil which was greater than the US based rate, a hotel room in which the traveler stated the room was occupied by the PI and the hotel confirmed that the room was used and was registered in the name of the PI’s graduate student, a subsistence payment which was noted in one portion of the reimbursement documentation as an honorarium and software and hardware needed for a project which took place off campus where access to normal IT support was unavailable.

Other Questioned Costs

Other questioned costs included what the auditors considered a “conference meal” which did not have NSF approval. The meal was for a team of high school students in lieu of a budgeted participant stipend.

Also questioned were a magazine subscription that did not benefit the sponsored agreement, visa expenses incurred outside the period covered by the sponsored agreement, late fees associated with publishing a thesis and directly charged office supply costs.

Less than 1% of the estimated questioned costs related to clerical and administrative work. The costs questioned included salaries for employees that performed tasks such as coordinating meetings and events, maintaining travel forms, and acting as general liaison for students.

In other audit news, two audit reports issued in September on claimed allowable costs for individual NIH Awards contained no findings. The objective was to determine whether costs claimed were allowable under the terms of the grant and applicable Federal regulations. The reviews were performed because Audits of National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other HHS grantees have found internal control deficiencies, problems with financial stability, inadequate organizational structures, inadequate procurement and property management policies, and inadequate personnel policies and procedures.

Another audit was performed due to concerns about the cost of utilities and steam-heat under a utilities contract between NIH and the grantee. An initial finding relating to the depreciation charged to the contract was issued in the draft audit report. The finding related to the monthly depreciation charge that was never revised for changes to the asset base, despite several, additional equipment purchases during the contract period to maintain the facility's functionality and performance. The OIG recommended a refund of the full amount, $404K, charged in depreciation to the contract over the audited period due to lack of underlying support for the asset values. In written comments on
the draft report, the grantee objected stating that in 1994, the DHHS Division of Cost Allocation performed an audit on the costs charged to this contract and did not find an issue related to the depreciation schedule. Hence, the Government was aware of and approved the depreciation schedule previously. They maintained that to disallow the depreciation schedule now because of the lack of documentation of asset valuation about 20 years later would be unconscionable. They provided the auditors with bond information relating to the funding of the central utilities plant’s construction costs and refunded $66K in unallowable depreciation costs and unallowable indirect costs relating to the depreciation costs it had identified. Based on the information provided, the auditors modified the report and had no recommendation.

Meet the NCURA Magazine Editors

Dan Nordquist started in Research Administration in 1990, as a departmental administrator, in one of Washington State University’s non-academic research units, the Institute of Biological Chemistry. Dan made it to the central pre-award office, after a stop at a college level administrative job, where he became the Director, in 2000, of the Office of Grant and Research Development (OGRD). In addition to being the OGRD Director, Dan holds positions in the Office of Research as the Assistant Vice-President and was also the Administration of Professional and Scientific Personnel (APSP) Director where he oversees a post-graduate personnel program for the Idaho National Lab (greater than $15.8MM in contracts since 2001). Dan participates and has participated in many research compliance and other campus committees: IACUC, IRB, IBC, COI, Rad. Safety, Export Control, Intellectual Property, Research and Arts (faculty senate sub-committee), Office of Research Advisory Committee, Research Administrators Community, and various other committees and review panels.

Dan has been a very active member of NCURA. He became a member in 1996 and has served in a number of capacities and at various levels at both the regional and national level. Here are a few of the NCURA positions Dan has held during his NCURA membership: Regional Chair, NLDC member, PDC member/Vice-Chair, Vice-President, President, Immediate Past President, Senior Editor of NCURA Magazine.

Geeta Dutta is the Copy Editor of NCURA Magazine and a Research Development Manager in the office of Grants and Research Development at Washington State University (WSU). Geeta has 4 years of experience with proposal development and management of large-scale grant proposals. Before joining WSU, Geeta spent 12 years at CTB/McGraw-Hill in various positions including Science Writer, Senior Editor, and Publishing Director managing a large group of writers, editors, and print and on-line page-production personnel. She has also been an independent expert reviewer of Science assessments for National Geographic/ Hampton Brown.

She is a member of National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) and National Organization of Research Development Professionals (NORDP).

Kristine M. Kulage is Co-Editor of NCURA Magazine and Director of the Office of Scholarship & Research Development at Columbia University School of Nursing in New York City. Originally from St. Louis, MO, she received her BA and MA in English from Southeast Missouri State University where she taught college composition courses. She began her career in research administration in 1996 at Washington University School of Medicine, and in 2000 was employed at Columbia University Medical Center. Since 2003 she has been working for Columbia’s School of Nursing where she assists faculty members with grant and manuscript writing, research dissemination, and leads continuing education seminars. In the summer of 2013, she developed the School’s first Faculty Writing Workshop which is about to launch a fourth session. In December 2013, Kristine completed her coursework for an MPH in Health Policy and Management from Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health. Graduating in February 2014, her program focus has been on child and adolescent mental health policy, and she is a student member of the New York Academy of Medicine. Kristine is particularly interested in methods for...
growing a school or department’s scholarly and research enterprise as well as ways to reduce administrative barriers to interdisciplinary research. She serves as a peer reviewer for *Academic Medicine* and was recently elected to the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Research Administration*. She is serving her third year as Co-Editor of *NCURA Magazine*, and she previously served 2-year term as the Biomed Contributing Editor. An NCURA member since 2007, she frequently presents at regional and national NCURA Meetings. A former musical theatre critic for a non-profit magazine, Kristine is also an avid fan and supporter of Broadway Theatre.

**Kris A. Monahan** is Providence College’s Director of Sponsored Research & Programs. Prior to arriving at PC in 2011, she served as the director of pre-award services at the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College from 2007-11. She also served as assistant and interim director of the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects at Bridgewater State University from 2003-07. She received a Ph.D. from the joint University of Rhode Island/Rhode Island College doctoral program of education.

Monahan is actively involved in the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) having recently served a two-year term on the Board of Directors and on the NCURA Education Scholarship Committee. She has volunteered extensively for NCURA Region I having served on the Region I Advisory Board, Chair of the Volunteer and Membership Committee, Program Committee, Awards Committee. She is a co-track leader for the Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUI) tracks of the 2014 PRA Conference and 56th Annual Meeting.

**Toni Shaklee, Ph.D., CRA, CPRA**, is Assistant Vice President for Research at Oklahoma State University. She has worked in research administration for twenty years. She holds a B.A. in political science from Southwestern Oklahoma State University, an M.A. in political science with an emphasis in public administration from Oklahoma State University, and a Ph.D. in environmental policy and law also from Oklahoma State. Her dissertation focused on hazardous waste policy implementation at Department of Defense installations. Prior to moving into research administration, Toni worked as a publications editor for the Division of Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources at OSU and as director of information services and sports information at Phillips University. In addition to her duties in research administration at OSU, Toni served two terms on the Board of Directors for the Research Administrators Certification Council. Her NCURA activities include serving as a member of the traveling faculty, a member of the peer review team, and as co-chair of PRA VII. She also served on the PDC, been on the program committee for several annual meetings, and has presented at national and regional meetings. A former newspaper sports photographer, she has turned her attention to wine and is currently studying to become a certified sommelier and wine educator.
I’m going to go out on a limb here, but I think most people consciously live their lives trying to do the right thing, taking responsibility for their actions, living by whatever values and ethos they have known since birth (or a bit after). However, as of January 2010, the federal government has mandated institutions involved in federally-funded research to have programs in place to instruct students, post-docs, and research trainees in conducting their research responsibly and ethically. Are these people inherently less ethical or responsible than others? Again – out on that limb – I don’t think so.

We’re talking about grown-ups here, not 5-year-olds who steal from the cookie jar. The truth is, some researchers just do wrong things – stupid wrong things. When the U.S. Office of Research Integrity (ORI) conducted a survey on research misconduct, it found 201 instances of possible misconduct observed by 2,212 researchers (quoted in DuBois & Ducker, 2009).DuBois and Ducker extrapolate that to mean approximately 2,300 potential instances of research misconduct occur each year in DHHS-funded research. ORI, however, reports only about 24 instances of institutional investigations into research misconduct each year. What about the other 2,276?

If over 2,000 events of research misconduct are being observed but not reported, it could mean several things: 1) few people want to be whistleblowers; 2) apathy reigns; or 3) responsible conduct of research and research misconduct are not clearly defined and, therefore, difficult to identify. I’ll take Door Number 3.

ORI’s definition of research misconduct is fairly broad - research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Obviously, this doesn’t cover every instance of wrong-doing in research and does not describe responsible research. What about sabotaging a colleague’s research, as recently reported in the Federal Register, April 27, 2011, and investigated by ORI (Federal Register)? That certainly is wrong, and potentially criminal, but it doesn’t fit neatly into ORI’s three categories. If a researcher mistreats animals used in a study, how does that fit in?

To quote the National Institutes of Health (NIH) NOT-OD-10-019, “…responsible conduct of research is defined as the practice of scientific investigation with integrity. It involves the awareness and application of established professional norms and ethical principles in the performance of all activities related to scientific research.” As you can see, there’s room for interpretation here as well.

Most universities – I hope most – have as part of their missions to provide a foundation of ethics for each of their students, faculty, and staff. The goal of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training is not merely to stop individuals from committing research misconduct as defined by ORI. It’s the “responsible” part that research institutions must address and is, coincidentally, the most difficult. Helping our researchers to know what is ethical and responsible in their investigations at every stage of their careers is a big part of what research institutions are supposed to do, especially institutions of higher education. And ORI, NIH, and the National Science Foundation (NSF) particularly want to be sure we take that responsibility seriously if we’re going to accept federal funding. This emphasizes the need for developing programs that help to ensure that we are training our future scientists, doctors, and researchers in RCR.

One of the most important requirements to get your RCR program off the ground is to get buy-in and support from upper-level administration. Without their support, your program won’t get the attention it deserves and needs. Create a policy to comply with the RCR requirements, advertise it, and post it on your websites and in areas where research trainees will see it. The policy should include what the institution will offer, and what encompasses meeting the federal mandates.

A complicating issue is finding out exactly who needs to be trained in RCR to comply with the federal regulations. Because this training is mandatory for post-docs, trainees, and students supported by NIH and/or NSF grants, it’s important not to miss anyone who may be required to take part in the RCR program. Maybe the best way to catch all potential trainees who are mandated to complete RCR training is to simply require that everyone take the training. However, this adds cost, time, and effort for the trainers and trainees, and it would probably be impossible to mandate training for every person at your institution. Instead, reports on payroll records can be used to show anyone who is supported with salary from
an NIH or NSF grant. Human Resources departments can assist by providing reports that include classification of employees based on their jobs—e.g., research associate, post-doc, student worker, research assistant. One of the best ways to be sure of catching everyone—or at least to alert everyone that this training is MANDATORY, is to broadcast the requirements on your institutions internal communication system to all PIs, faculty, staff, and students. It is the institution’s responsibility to develop and provide the RCR instruction and track participation; it’s the individual trainee’s responsibility to attend and complete the program.

Hopefully PIs with NIH and NSF grants will know about these requirements when they apply for funding—but maybe not. It’s really important to read the requirements of each grant application because many of them will now include the RCR instruction component, and agencies and programs may vary in what they required. Some individual grants may allow for the trainee to develop a personalized program. When grants requiring RCR training are received, research administrators can alert PIs that it is their responsibility to inform their students, trainees, etc., that this is a federal requirement. PIs should make sure that all of their trainees, post-docs, students and others involved in the project take advantage of RCR training. That’s a good time to remind them of the program that you have developed.

Although the guidance from NIH and NSF is fairly general about how and when you must provide RCR instruction, trainees should have the entire program available to them before their training ends. That is, if a post-doc is on a two-year assignment, the RCR instruction should be accomplished prior to the end of that two-year term. The program should include these nine areas of RCR as per NIH NOT-OD-10-019 (2009):

- conflict of interest—personal, professional, and financial
- policies regarding human subjects, live vertebrate animal subjects in research, and safe laboratory practices
- mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships
- collaborative research including collaborations with industry
- peer review
- data acquisition and laboratory tools; management, sharing and ownership
- research misconduct and policies for handling misconduct
- responsible authorship and publication
- the scientist as a responsible member of society, contemporary ethical issues in biomedical research, and the environmental and societal impacts of scientific research

Attempting to address all of these areas can be daunting—especially for smaller institutions with seriously limited resources. Even large institutions may have difficulty finding experts, in all of these areas, who are willing to participate in a program of formal RCR training. But institutions that accept certain NIH and NSF awards must comply or forget about applying for research funding from these agencies. Without a good RCR training program for some grants, applications will be returned without review.

Before panic sets in, let me assure you that there is help available. Meeting the expectations of RCR instruction can be accomplished in several ways, and resources are abundant.

The ORI website http://ori.dhhs.gov has a section on resources that are very helpful and provide guidance on developing RCR programs.

Departments or schools can develop curricula that are required for all individuals involved in research.

Departments can develop targeted RCR training that is specific to their disciplines and in accordance with guidance from their professional associations.

In special instances, research trainees, students, and post-docs can direct their own RCR training. The funding agency should be consulted on what is acceptable.

PIs can apply for grants with a training component and perhaps get funding to develop or conduct the training.

Individuals can be encouraged to attend workshops and seminars offered by professional organizations that are focused on responsible conduct of research.

PIs can develop RCR training specific to the projects in which the trainees are involved.

On-line training, like the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) programs, can be a good base for institutional programs https://www.citiprogram.org

Institutions can develop their own umbrella on-line programs and make them available to all researchers.

While on-line training like the CITI programs may provide a good basis for RCR, NIH requires face-to-face instruction as well. Except in very unusual circumstances, NIH expects that there will be eight hours or more of interaction in which trainees can not only read information or listen to on-line lectures, but also have an opportunity to raise questions and participate in discussion. A combination of on-line instruction and a series of workshops in which specific areas of RCR are covered works well. The sessions could be spread out over a semester, an academic year, or all accomplished in one eight-hour block—whatever is most appropriate for your institution and your trainees. For these sessions, experienced faculty make great discussion leaders or panel members for guiding the instruction. Curricula developed that span a semester or academic year and touch

References


ORI. http://ori.dhhs.gov/education

Federal Register: April 27, 2011 (Volume 76, Number 81) [Notices] [Page 23599-23600]

From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access wais.access.gpo.gov [DOCID:fr27ap11-72]
on all of the nine areas will satisfy the face-to-face requirement and could also include an on-line component.

No matter what method you choose to meet the RCR instruction mandate, RCR training must be a continual part of a researcher’s career and should be repeated at least once every four years.

When the RCR instruction program is in place, institutions are required to monitor course attendance and provide a certificate of completion or documentation of participation as each individual completes the course. One person, or a small group of persons, at the institution should be responsible for developing the program (collaborating with others departments), scheduling the sessions, collecting information, and documenting and monitoring compliance. This can be tricky, especially if you have developed several different ways to meet the requirements (e.g., department curriculum, institutionally sponsored seminars, etc.). NIH expects institutions to maintain records sufficient to demonstrate that NIH-supported trainees, fellows, and scholars have received the required instruction. NSF expects institutions to be able to verify that those individuals (undergraduates, graduates, and postdoctoral researchers) who receive NSF funds (support from salary and/or stipends to conduct research on NSF grants) will obtain RCR training. Therefore, someone has to coordinate and assimilate all the information to document compliance, and prepare and distribute the certificates of completion.

It’s not certain if NIH, NSF, or ORI will audit institutions for these programs, but NSF has stated that institutions’ programs are subject to review on request. Each institution should conduct an evaluation of their programs, with feedback from participants, to ensure that the message is getting across.

What are the consequences of not providing RCR instructions to those who are covered by the federal regulations? There could be loss of funding, headlines in the newspapers, costly investigations into alleged misconduct at your institution, or investigations by ORI; but most importantly, it may mean sending out our research trainees into the world without the background that they need to conduct research responsibly. Starting researchers at the beginning of their careers with a good foundation of responsible conduct of research will reap benefits not only for the institutions that provide the instruction and those who are trained, but also for society when these researchers become the scientists and researchers of the future. We all want to produce the best, most ethical and responsible investigators. They probably won’t learn by osmosis – so we need to give them some help along the way – and we should, whether the government requires it or not. It’s the responsible thing to do.

Carole Knight, Ph.D., is Associate Vice President for Research at Saint Louis University, with main responsibilities for research compliance, particularly IRB, IACUC, Conflict of Interest, and Export Controls. She has been an NCURA member since 1997. Carole is a member of the NCURA Region IV communication committee and regularly contributes articles for the Region IV newsletter. Carole can be reached at knightcl@slu.edu

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Research Administration...By the NUMBERS

$24 billion
Estimated cost of the October 2013 government shutdown on the U.S. economy.

6.6 million
Combined total days Federal government employees were furloughed during the shutdown.

12
Number of new patients enrolled by the NIH Clinical Center during the first week of October 2013.

200
Approximate number of new patients enrolled per week by the NIH Clinical Center under normal circumstances.

11,000
NIH research grant application reviews halted during the government shutdown.

200+
Missed NIH October review meetings rescheduled to January 2014.

January 15, 2014
Date through which federal agencies are funded.

Editors Note as of 12/19/2013:
Thank goodness this looks to change

Sources:
http://www.standardandpoors.com/ratings/articles/en/us/?assetID=12453586424598ContactInfo
http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/11/07/impacts-and-costs-government-shutdown
http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2013/10/18/more-information-on-moving-forward-with-nih-applications-review-and-awards/

Want to share numbers? Email Heather Kubinec at heather.kubinec@research.uci.edu
Dear Region I friends,

This is my first Regional Corner article as the incoming Chair of Region I, and I want to start by personally thanking our outgoing 2013 officers, Karen Woodward Massey (Chair), Donna Smith (Treasurer) and Patrick Fitzgerald (Immediate Past Chair). Under their leadership and guidance Region I is stronger than ever, and we are forever grateful for their service and commitment. Karen’s shoes will be difficult to fill. The breadth of her imprint extends to the farthest corners of Region I’s operations. As Treasurer, Donna demonstrated a relentless and fearless determination to improve the fiscal outlook of the Region. And Pat Fitzgerald will remain on the Advisory Board as the unofficial “Godfather” of Region I, guiding and navigating Region I for the foreseeable future.

Going forward, this column will be utilized to make important announcements and to celebrate achievements of the Region. I also plan to use this space to make sarcastic remarks just to see if anyone is reading this.

I want to also warmly welcome some new members of the Region I Advisory Board. Shella Batelman and Kristin Pennarun will lead our Curriculum Committee. Denise Rouleau will lead the Volunteer Committee, and Stacy Riseman will head the Professional Development Committee. Additionally, we are excited to announce the selections of David Barnett of Tufts University and Elizabeth Haney of the Wyss Institute at Harvard as the very first participants in the new Region I Executive Shadow Program. The Executive Shadow Program was the vision of Franc Lemire as part of an effort to develop future leaders for the Region. Thanks to Michelle Auerbach’s Professional Development Committee, the Program is now a reality. As part of the Program, David and Elizabeth will be assigned mentors and invited to attend the Advisory Board meetings. They will also be hazed heavily. Just kidding!

Please extend hearty congratulations to Donna Smith and Denise Rouleau for being accepted into the 2014 NCURA Executive Leadership Program. We had a particularly strong pool of worthy applicants from Region I, so expectations of these two are quite high. No pressure, though.

Our Secretary and Secretary-Elect, Peter Hague and Alison Wellman-Smith, are working diligently to transition the Region I website to a new platform and webmaster. An announcement will be made to the Region I membership upon successful migration to the new site. They have promised that the new site will be more functional than Google. Not really, but it will be better.

Chair-elect, Michelle Auerbach, and her program committee are well into planning the 2014 Spring Meeting in Mystic, Connecticut. Rumor has it that this year’s theme will revolve around The Hunger Games trilogy. I’m making that up. Seriously though, if you have an idea for a session or are interested in volunteering at the Meeting, please submit the information on the Region I website: www.ncuraregion1.org. For now, please save the date April 27-30, 2014…this very instant. Do it…now.

On December 11th, Region I held its final Research Administrators Discussion Group (RADG) of the year followed by the Annual Holiday Party. The December RADG topic was “Institutional Review Committees: Human Subjects (IRB), Animal Subjects (IACUC), and Recombinant DNA and Biological Materials (IBGs).” At the Holiday Party, guests served as human subjects and questioned the biological properties of the eggnog served. Going forward, Region I is considering alternative locations for its RADGs and Workshops. In 2014, a number of these events will likely take place at Emmanuel College which is strategically located in the heart of the Longwood Medical Area in Boston.

Finally, if you are headed to PRA or FRA in San Francisco in March, please look for an announcement providing details of a Region I event likely on the night of March 17th at a time that attendees of either conference may be able to attend.

That’s it for now, Region I, and “may the odds be ever in your favor.” Happy new year, too!

Jeff Seo serves as the Chair of Region I and is the Director of Research Compliance at Harvard Medical School. Jeff can be reached at jeff_seo@hms.harvard.edu.

I cannot believe that my year as chair of this fantastic region has come to an end. It has truly been an honor and I will treasure the experience. We have accomplished a lot in the last year and it is attributed to having a magnificent steering committee and the volunteers that make our region so special.

Region II research administrators are some of the best in the business and it is their expertise and willingness to volunteer that contributes to our region’s success. I would like to thank all of the volunteers that shared their time, energy and creativity in 2013.

Some highlights of 2013 that illustrate the commitment of our current regional leadership and volunteers in taking our region to the next level are:
• A successful and amazing spring meeting in Buffalo, NY packed with educational opportunities and networking.
• A program committee that is actively working on a remarkable program for our joint meeting with Region III May 4-7, 2014 in St Pete Beach, Florida.
• A Region II Professional Development Committee that soared far above initial expectations offering more than 10 workshops this calendar year delivering phenomenal programming.
• A new “Mentor Me” program. There has been a lot of work in 2013 preparing for this launch in 2014. The “Mentor Me” Program will provide a one-on-one, targeted approach to learning about the field of research administration. The program pairs a mentee with a mentor who will assist them in identifying leadership and professional development goals and objectives. Look for an email on how to join this program in January 2014.

Also, please join me in congratulating and welcoming our new 2014 regional officers. They will continue our region’s great momentum and energy in providing professional and educational opportunities for our members.

Chairperson-Elect  Jill Frankenfield, University of Maryland, College Park

Secretary  Charles Bartunek, The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health

Treasurer-Elect  Tim Schailey, Christiana Healthcare

I am proud to work with some of the most talented and dedicated individuals that are members in our region. I’m honored to have served as your Chair and I’m thankful to every single one of you out there that had something to do with making 2013 so successful!

Brian Squilla is the Immediate Past Chair of Region II and is the Chief of Staff, Office of the Dean of the Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University.

AM55 was another successful gathering of research administrators. The sessions, networking, and entertainment were spectacular as always. If you missed this annual meeting, please make plans to attend in August 10th – 14th in Washington, DC. A special thanks to all the Region III volunteers who helped make the meeting a success.

This year’s annual spring meeting will be a joint meeting with our colleagues in Region II in St. Pete Beach, Florida at the TradeWinds Island Grand Resort May 4th – May 7th. If you have not already made your plans to attend please do. This is a great opportunity for professional development, to find out how other institutions are handling the issues that you are struggling with currently, and to relax a bit in a beautiful location. Check out the Region III website – www.ncuraregioniii.org – to get more information on the meeting location.

If you have never attended one of these meetings, please take a glance at the meeting archives on the website to see the valuable professional development and networking opportunities that are the standard for these conferences. If you are interested in helping, we will need room monitors, mentors, registration desk help and folks that are tech savvy to help with AV set-up. An email blast will be sent to the Region III members calling for volunteers. Consider making a contribution to your region by volunteering! If you have an interest in volunteering, please contact Hagan Walker haganw@clemson.edu

The NCURA Region III Nominating and Elections Committee is pleased to announce the elected officials for this year’s election. The officials for 2014 are:

Vice Chair/Chair-Elect:  Danielle McElwain, University of South Carolina

Treasurer-Elect:  Alex Atkinson, Tennessee State University

Secretary:  David Smelser, University of Tennessee at Knoxville

Please join us in congratulating Erica Gambrell on her appointment to the NCURA Financial Management Committee and Jeanne Viviani on her appointment to the NCURA Professional Development Committee.

Lastly some sad news, many Region III members knew long-term research administrator Faye Cook from St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, who passed away on December 2nd. Faye’s career in research administration at St. Jude spanned over 30 years (1974 to 2009) and she saw dramatic changes in the field of research administration.

Happy New Year to all and see you soon in St. Pete Beach!

Bill Lambert serves as Region III’s regional corner contributor. Bill is the Assistant Dean for Research Administration at Emory University’s Rollins School of Public Health.
“The more you learn what to do with yourself, and the more you do for others, the more you will learn to enjoy the abundant life.” — William J. H. Boetcker

“Who will you nominate?” The Awards Committee invites your participation in selecting and recognizing members and/or programs within Region IV deserving of special attention. Nominations – including self-nominations – are welcome for honors and awards for spring meeting travel, distinguished service, outstanding new professional, meritorious contribution, and special merit and distinction. Instructions are online www.ncuraregioniv.com/awardshonors.html and nominations are due by March 1, 2014.

“Join the Region IV Board.” Contribute your talents by serving on the Region IV Board. Choose from five volunteer positions: chair-elect, member at-large (2 positions), treasurer-elect, and secretary. Position descriptions, term lengths, application processes and deadlines are posted on the website www.ncuraregioniv.com Feel free to contact Jeff Ritchie ritchije@lewisu.edu with questions.

“Your Keys to Success.” The theme for the Region IV Spring Meeting on April 27-30, 2014 in Indianapolis is “Keys to Success.” There will be a full course of workshops, concurrent sessions, discussion groups and case studies. Special Agent Brian J. Haynes, Strategic Partnership Coordinator for the FBI-Indianapolis will deliver the keynote address on “Higher Education and National Security.” Contact program chair Sue Kelch suekelch@umich.edu to explore ways you can get involved in the meeting, whether serving as a session presenter, helping out at the registration desk, or leading a dinner group.

“Kudos!” Congratulations to Shannon Sutton, Western Illinois University, and Roger Wareham, University of Minnesota-Morris, for being selected to participate in the NCURA Executive Leadership Program. This six-month program will be conducted between January and June 2014, and will provide them with the tools to assume prominent roles in NCURA at regional and national levels.

In essence, these examples represent just a few of the myriad ways Region IV members do for themselves and do for others, which helps them find meaningful ways to connect with others, get energized, gain experience, have fun, and find fulfillment. You can too. Get involved today.

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

REGION IV
Mid-America
www.ncuraregioniv.com

REGION V
Southwestern
www.ncuraregionv.com

It is a new year and our region meeting is only five months away. It is never too early to start planning to attend. Our 2014 region meeting will take place May 3-7 in Austin, Texas. Holly Schreiber and her Meeting Committee are hard at work to bring only the best to Region V. Be looking for more information regarding this meeting in the coming months.

Our membership is what makes Region V so great. I would like to ask that you consider running for one of the vacant Region V positions this year. This year we need to fill the following four positions; Vice-Chair, Treasurer and 2 at-large members to the Region V Executive Board. Regional committees are also looking for new members, so be sure to volunteer. This is a great way to be more involved in Region V.

Congratulations to Matt Berry, University of Oklahoma, for being selected by NCURA’s National Executive Board to be Region V’s representative to the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (N&LDC). I am also happy to announce that Thomas Spencer, UT Southwestern, was accepted into NCURA’s 2014 Executive Leadership Program (ELP). At a more local level, the Publications and Communications Committee is happy to announce that new member, Richard “Rich” Williams from UT Dallas won the Region V Logo Contest and will be receiving a free registration to the 2014 region meeting. Please join me in congratulating Matt, Thomas and Rich.

Have you joined Region V’s Collaborate page at www.NCURA.edu? You will want to join today so you will not miss out on any Region V information. You can follow Region V on twitter @ncura5 and join our facebook page by searching for NCURA Region V.

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

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

2014 is upon us and plans are well underway for our region for the new year. We are beginning the program development with Region VII leadership for the Fall Regional Meeting in Reno,
including some new volunteer opportunities for the program and the meeting. The Membership and Volunteer Committee is working hard on creating a path for volunteers and expanding the many roles for volunteering and connecting within our Region. This expansion for volunteering will include more chances to work locally, hopefully connecting those who may be unable to travel to continue to network and grow professionally with NCURA.

The transition for our leadership with the New Year is designed to be seamless. We have been working closely together and have a strong Regional Advisory Committee. We are dedicated to continuing the support of our members and are hoping to grow through outreach to individuals and institutions that are not currently participating and connected with our Region. Ideas are always welcome; please feel free to reach out to the 2014 Chair, Sam Westcott.

Along the theme of transitions, we would like to welcome Guam to Region VI. Guam was previously part of the International Region. We are excited to have another island join our region!

Lastly, for those attending PRA or FRA in San Francisco in March, we will have receptions to welcome our new members so please spread the word to your colleagues who are not NCURA members. Hope to see many of you there!

Happy New Year!

Samantha Westcott serves as Region VI Chair and is the Manager, Sponsored Projects Team, The Saban Research Institute - Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles.

Katherine Ho serves as the Immediate Past Chair of Region VI and is the Deputy to the AVP and Executive Director of the Office of Sponsored Research at Stanford University.

Agatha Keller serves as the Immediate Past Chair of Region VIII and is the Co-Director EU GrantsAccess, at ETH Zurich|University of Zurich.

### 1st International Region Meeting

**Washington, April 9th 2014**

It is with great pleasure that we invite all NCURA members to join us for the first international regional spring meeting and the fifth biennial International Network of Research Management Societies. We hope that many of you will seize this opportunity and join us for discussing the latest development within international research administration.

The International Region is steadily growing and we encourage everyone to engage in the work of the International Region by serving as an officer or member of one of our committees. It is a great way of learning more about NCURA and extending the own global network within our profession. Contact our volunteer coordinator, Bryony Wakefield from Melbourne University by email bryonyjw@unimelb.edu.au. Bryony coordinates the selection of volunteers for the different positions of the International Region and can inform you about the open positions. And if you are not yet sure, why not volunteering during the Spring Meeting to find out. I look forward to seeing you all in Washington in April.

Patriq Fagerstedt serves as the Chair of Region VIII and is the US Grants Coordinator at the Karolinska Institutet.
**NCURA Milestones**

**James Casey** has been named the Pre-Award Team Manager in the Office of Sponsored Programs at Carnegie Mellon University, effective January 15, 2014.

**Charlie Giese** has a new position at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as Research Program Manager in the Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics. Prior to his move, Charlie was the Senior Grants and Contracts Specialist in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at UW-M.

**Rosemary Madnick**, formerly Assistant Vice President, Research Administration at Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute, became the new Executive Director of the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration at the University of Alaska – Fairbanks on December 23, 2013.

**Marjorie Piechowski**, Director of Research Support in the College of Engineering & Applied Science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, will retire on January 31, 2014. An active member of NCURA since 1983, she has presented and volunteered at the regional and national level.

**Allison Ramos** accepted the position of Clinical Trials Negotiator at the University of Southern California as of September 18, 2013. She had been employed by the University of California – Irvine as a Principal Contracts and Grants Officer.

**Timothy Schailey** became the Director of Sponsored Programs within the Christiana Care Health System on November 25, 2013. Timothy had been the Manager of Sponsored Projects at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

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Christa Johnson, Washington University in St. Louis
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Pamela Napier, Agnes Scott College
Georgette Sakamoto, University of Hawaii
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Gale Yamada, University of Hawaii at Manoa
Susan Zipkin, Consultant

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**NCURA Magazine**

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NCURA Peer Review Program

Realize Your Potential
Reveal Your Strengths

National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) developed these Standards to represent the institutional baselines that provide a supportive environment for the conduct of research and other sponsored activities as well as the broad operational and functional areas of sponsored programs management.

The National Standards are part of an overall assessment that contains three interrelated criteria: senior and experienced research administration reviewers, the National Standards, and an analytical approach that provides consistency in the evaluation process with an understanding of institutional culture. These key features result in an assessment of effectiveness of sponsored programs environments at the institutions undergoing peer review.

Unlike an audit, this peer review performs an assessment of institutional alignment, organizational structure, and institutional priorities. These Standards reflect how the institution integrates the research enterprise with its institutional goals and expectations and operationalizes effective sponsored programs administration. The Standards allow NCURA Reviewers to assess how closely that integration relates to institutional and stakeholder goals and expectations. The Standards contain a list of over 165 features that are utilized by the Reviewers during their assessment and are used as the basis for the written report.

I. Institutional Commitments

I.A. STANDARD for Institutional and Research Administration Planning.

The institutional priorities and strategic plans as relate to research are clearly articulated and tied to action plans and metrics, defined by research administration, that will support and advance the institutional priorities. The relationship of research strategic goals, successes, and infrastructure commitments in areas that support research (such as seed or bridge funding, shared cores, release time) is understood by the institutional leadership. An institutional commitment to research and sponsored projects is clearly evident at all levels of the organization as appropriate to the culture, mission, and strategic plans.

This Standard is accompanied by seven features used by the Peer Reviewers in their assessment.

Assess your sponsored programs operation and receive valuable feedback to strengthen service and minimize risk.

Request a copy of the National Standards for Effective Sponsored Program Operations, newly revised and released, fall 2012.

For questions or further information contact peerreview@ncura.edu or call: 503 | 364 | 1847

http://www.ncura.edu/content/peer_to_peer_review/
NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Orlando, FL ................................................................February 10-12, 2014
LEVEL I: FUNDAMENTALS OF SPONSORED PROJECT
ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Orlando, FL ................................................................February 10-12, 2014
LEVEL II: SPONSORED PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP –
CRITICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION
Orlando, FL ................................................................February 10-12, 2014
REGIONAL MEETINGS
REGION I: NEW ENGLAND .........................................................April 27-30, 2014
Mystic, CT
REGION II/III: MID-ATLANTIC/SOUTHEASTERN .....................May 4-7, 2014
St Pete Beach, FL
REGION IV: MID-AMERICA .........................................................April 27-30, 2014
Indianapolis, IN
REGION V: SOUTHWESTERN .....................................................May 4-7, 2014
Austin, TX
REGION VI/VII: WESTERN/ROCKY MOUNTAIN .......................October 5-8, 2014
Reno, NV
REGION VIII: INTERNATIONAL ..................................................April 9, 2014
Washington, DC
NATIONAL CONFERENCES
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
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF RESEARCH MANAGEMENT
SOCIETIES (INORMS) CONGRESS
Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC .........................April 10-13, 2014
56TH ANNUAL MEETING
Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC ........................August 10-13, 2014
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 MARCH/APRIL 2014
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .....................January 31, 2014
Submission of Articles to Co-editors .................................February 7, 2014
Submission of Advertisements ........................................February 7, 2014
Additional information for authors can be found at:
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