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IN THIS ISSUE
began her research administration journey to the US this month by attending both FRA and PRA in San Francisco. We’ll follow her travels as she heads to Maryland.

Don’t have time to read a full article? Take advantage of another of the evolutionary changes, both in the magazine and the way we get information, by taking a quick look at Kallie Firestone’s “What I found on Twitter.” There’s an interesting and eclectic list of tweets ranging from why beer marinade may be good for you to a quick look at Kallie Firestone’s “What I found on Twitter.” There’s an interesting and eclectic list of tweets ranging from why beer marinade may be good for you to quick tips for preparing winning R01 applications.

The booming evolutionary change on everyone’s mind right now is the new Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) unveiled by OMB in December. As part of NCURA Magazine’s year-long series taking a deep dive into the Uniform Guidance, this month we feature two articles. Dan Evon offers a closer look at the document’s cost principles and Michael Ludwig examines the administrative requirements. While we wait for agency implementation of the Uniform Guidance, it is important that as a research administration community we take the time to become familiar with the Guidance. Plans for implementing appropriate revisions to our internal systems will help us make the transition less stressful for administrators and researchers.

Our jobs often require us to just take care of the issue in front of us at the moment and we don’t always have the opportunity to reflect on how we got to where we are today. Elizabeth Haney’s article “The Evolution of Federal Funding for University Research: History and Current Trends” provides a historical perspective on federal funding that provides some surprises. The first federal funding for proposals which we sent to the funders (often by express delivery services)? For those of us who have been in research administration since the days of paper in/paper out (and there are still a sizeable number of us), it seems like the profession is moving at breakneck speed, and it is almost impossible to keep up. This issue of NCURA Magazine focuses on The Evolution of Research Administration and serves as a reminder that not only are we all in this together, but there is always assistance from other research administrators virtually at our fingertips.

One of the most exciting evolutions over the past several years is the growth of the international research administration community. NCURA has formed very strong relationships with organizations including CAURA, EARA, and INORMS and we are pleased to have regular columns highlighting topics of particular interest to the international community. This month Martin Kirk, CAURA president, discusses the topic of open access publishing.

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“Speak up!"  “Get involved!"  “Make it Happen!"

These are familiar phrases that motivate us to engage, participate, and volunteer. And while the results of the Regional Leadership Survey suggest that we don’t always respond to a generic call for volunteers, we are more than ready, willing, and able to join, contribute, and share our expertise when personally invited by a colleague. As NCURA President, I would like to strongly encourage those of you who have known the professional satisfaction of active participation in our organization to invite your institutional colleagues to join in.

In my role as NCURA President, I have been charged with the task of delegating responsibilities for major events such as the Annual Meeting, PRA, and FRA conferences and identifying leaders to promote the continued development of NCURA’s voice in the crucial research it is our mission to advance. Aware that this is asking a lot, but unwilling to concede the daunting nature of such responsibilities and leadership opportunities, I would like to share with you a simple concept that I have found to be extremely formative in my own professional development — and that is the opportunity to partner.

Over the past twenty years, I have had several opportunities to co-chair, partner, or be a member of an NCURA team or committee. Sharing hard work, great fun, and tremendous pride, has developed close colleagues and friendships I hope to maintain forever. NCURA is the perfect setting for project partnerships. The opportunities to plan or present, to develop programs or initiatives, and to recognize and reward, are greatly enhanced by multi-institutional, cross-regional teamwork. The rewards of working together in this environment include the satisfaction of accomplishment as well as an awareness and pride in being a part of the national and global network.

The calls are always a pleasure to make. Often I am introducing two members who may not have worked together or even know each other at all, inviting them to jointly share the assignment, the choices, the decisions, the conflicts, and the deadlines for the better part of a year. Together, they will share issues to balance, time zones to consider, workloads to manage, and family situations demanding their immediate attention. You and your co-chair are working closely building the best program ever and handling unforeseen circumstances along the way.

It seems to me that every NCURA member I meet can easily recall the first time they were called upon to contribute their time or talents. Most recall feeling flattered and nervous, particularly if the task required them to speak publicly. While so many agree that this feeling of being “recruited” ignited their volunteerism, I urge you to look to your left and right, to those members you have learned from or with, maybe taught, or met over breakfast. We have a vast number of volunteers but also an ever-growing demand for new ideas, facilitators, committee members, and officers. As members, we are frequently called upon to recommend, nominate, and reward our peers. These are the unique opportunities to share a project, show our talents, help someone find their way, and create a team.

Current NCURA members responded to a poll as to why they continue to volunteer. While all recognized their access to the most reliable current information in research administration and the prodigious benefit to their career, overwhelmingly the responses include the relationships they had developed with their colleagues, friends they would not have made otherwise. These bonds have surpassed our professional lives and in many cases, lifelong friendships have formed. It has not been unusual to hear the word “family.”

With this notion of family in mind, we would like to extend our network to include our past, retired, and emeritus members in acknowledgement of the invaluable contributions they have made in paving the way for us. “NCURA Alumni” is an initiative we will set in place in 2014 to accommodate the wonderful friendships of lifelong NCURA members to stay in touch and create opportunities for reuniting our colleagues. I sincerely welcome all of your ideas and insights as we move forward with this initiative.

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 vholmes@broadinstitute.org
Here’s an example of a piece of legislation with a noble goal and well-intended aspirations that, from a research administration perspective, goes really wrong. As we reported in the December 2013 issue of NCURA Magazine, Congress is faced with the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act. The America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act of 2007 or America COMPETES Act (PL 110-69) became law in August 2007 and was reauthorized in 2010 (PL 111-358). This omnibus “science” act covers a wide range of agencies — the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) — and a host of programmatic initiatives including basic science, STEM education, and, through the Department of Commerce, “fostering innovation and the commercialization of new technologies, products, processes, and services with the goal of promoting productivity and economic growth in the United States.”

This year, Congress — or specifically, Congressional Republicans — is considering the reauthorization of America COMPETES in a series of smaller, targeted bills. Two of these bills are the EINSTEIN (Enabling Innovation for Science, Technology and Energy in America) Act which includes the DOE Office of Science parts of COMPETES; and the FIRST (Frontier in Innovative Research, Science, and Technology) Act which includes reauthorization for NSF, NIST, OSTP, and a host of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education components of COMPETES.

The FIRST Act of 2014 (HR 4186) was introduced in the House on March 10, 2014 and sent to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the House Committee on Small Business. The Subcommittee on Research and Technology reviewed it, marked it up including amendments from the Subcommittee Democrats and sent it to the full Committee on Science on March 13. It awaits action by the full Committee, the House Committee on Small Business and then the House. Between March 13 and possible passage by the House and similar action in the Senate, including any necessary conferencing, the legislation is likely to be very different than its authors — Reps. Larry Bucshon (R-IN) and Lamar Smith (R-TX) — originally intended in the version introduced in March.

Unfortunately, the text of HR 4186 becomes part of the conversation and deliberations in Congress. What’s unsettling is the manner in which the introduction of the bill was used — in press releases — to scold the National Science Foundation for, in Rep. Smith’s words — “misuse[ing] taxpayer dollars and fund[ing] too many questionable research grants — money that could have gone to higher priorities.” Those nuisance grants include projects in the Directorates of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences and Geosciences which received authorizations below FY 2014 funding levels. To address this Congressional concern, the FIRST Act holds NSF “accountable” by requiring any NSF public announcements of an award to include a written justification that the grant is worthy of Federal funding and is in the national interest. Rep. Smith assures the community that this requirement “does not change NSF’s peer review process. [Rather] It expands accountability and transparency requirements so that only high quality research receives taxpayer funds.” The time that will be spent by NSF preparing the written justifications and providing access to them is time that could be spent on worthy pursuits including other grants management tasks.

NSF is not alone in having its integrity checked. This version of the FIRST Act requires, as a condition of receiving an NSF award, a signed statement from the principal investigator certifying that any public presentation of the findings from the funded research will contain no falsifications or fabrications and will be free of any plagiarism — the elements of research misconduct.

More unsettling than this separate certification by investigators are the provisions directing the NSF Inspector General to investigate “suspected violations of the certification” and report the investigation’s outcome to the NSF Director. To the Director falls the task of making a determination of whether or not the principal investigator “knowingly violated the certification.” If the Director determines there has been a knowing violation, the principal investigator will be banned from receiving NSF support for not less than 5 but not more than 10 years.

One could take on the absence of criteria or standards for the findings and the processes to be used in the investigation and determination. Of far greater concern is the manner in which these provisions eviscerate NSF’s long-standing research misconduct policy — a policy fully consistent with the December 2000 Federal Policy on Research Misconduct. It entirely eliminates a role for the home institution in the inquiry and investigation and adjudication — there appears to be no inquiry at all. It offers no description of how the rights and reputation of the respondent will be protected during the process. The legislation establishes an appeals process which, essentially, asks the Director to reconsider her decision based on information provided by the respondent in the appeals process. Yikes!

Along the way through this recent version of the FIRST Act, its authors tinker with various application and award processes. The investigator’s biographical sketch may include only 5 citations published in peer-reviewed publications. And NSF may only consider 5 citations in making its determinations. Procedures are to be established to ensure that an awarded grant “does not duplicate the scientific aims and scope of any grant awarded to the same investigator by another Federal agency” — sounds like current and pending support to me.

And as a final challenge to the support of scientists, the Congressional authors direct NSF to ensure that investigators who have received more than 5 years of NSF funding at any point of their careers — other than traineeship awards — are only awarded additional funds “if they will be contributing original, creative, and transformative research.” What this means defies reason. If the FIRST Act intends to provide support for basic research as “an investment in our Nation’s future security and economic prosperity” and demands that NSF play a “proactive role in sustaining the competitive advantage of the US through superior research capabilities,” it is critical that Congress avoid handicapping the Foundation by limiting its ability to bring the best and most innovative scientists to the task. Artificial limitations do not help achieve the goal.

The FIRST Act authorizes appropriations for the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) as well. Ironically, the authors worry that the increasing administrative burden and costs are eroding funds available for
research, citing agency-unique compliance and reporting requirements – similar to the “unique” research misconduct provisions included in the FIRST Act – as a principal cause. OSTP is directed to convene a working group to review Federal regulations and recommend changes to “harmo-
nize, streamline and eliminate duplicative regulations” and to “minimize
the burden while maintaining accountability.” Was it in the last issue of the
NCURA Magazine that we described the increasing burden of work-
groups, taskforces, and committees investigating administrative burdens?
And the working group is to report and make recommendations within
one year.

I don’t have a year. It is with some regret and an increasing measure of
glee that I write the last of my views of the Capitol. I’m retiring – maybe
retreating – from this part of my life and taking on different challenges. I
thought about addressing the theme, The Evolution of the Research Ad-
ministration – Facing the Future, because I thought I had something to
say on that topic and it would be somehow “fitting” to go out musing on
the future. Nah. Here’s what I know about workings on the Capitol. If you
think the members of Congress are crazy you need to remember they are
your neighbors. There not from my hometown – Washington DC – but from
Ohio, Florida, Texas, New York, etc. I don’t have a member representing
me in Congress so I’m not really responsible. If you want change, it starts
at home where as Thomas “Tip” O’Neill, Jr., the Democratic member
(1952-1987) and Speaker (1977-1987) of the House from Massachusetts,
famously observed, “all politics is local.” Your elected representatives do
(or should) care about what you think but they can only act if you tell them.
If you want them to understand how colleges and universities work, invite
them to your campus (always go through your Federal relations folks!).

As for the notorious Federal bureaucrats? Some of the nicest people I’ve
had the pleasure to work with. They really are trying to do the best with
what they’re given but occasionally some take themselves way too seriously.
I am, I admit, one of those administrators who will seek forgiveness rather
than permission. But it has been my experience that if you make a rea-
sonable effort to meet the requirements under any given policy or regula-
tion, you and the visiting regulator or inspector may disagree (and you may
still be cited for non-compliance) but most will acknowledge the effort,
and the outcome will be manageable in the long run.

It’s difficult to figure out how to end this. As a historian, I went to one of the most famous of farewells — George Washington’s Farewell Address to the People of the United States (1786) with its humble expression of not intending error in his administration but conced-
ing, given his “defects,” that he likely committed many errors and asking for the country’s indulgence and that “the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion.” Nah. Bugs Bunny seems more appropriate – “That’s All Folks!”

Carol Blum is Director of Research Compliance and Admin-
istration at the Council on Governmental Relations until July 31, 2014. On August 1, 2014, she will put her fulltime energies
into tutoring adults to read at the Washington Literacy Center,
defending women’s right to make informed reproductive health
decisions by ensuring access to clinics with the Washington Area
Clinic Defense Task Force, and drawing, painting and sculpting
naked folks at the Washington Studio School. Y’all take care.
Carol can be reached at cblum@cogr.edu

What I Found on Twitter

@propublica – Researchers say FDA loophole allowed high risk devices onto the
market without human trials: http://propub.ca/1iZAixL

@hhs_ori – HHS Press Release on the ORI/OHRP interactive training video,
"The Research Clinic": http://f.mp/QDFzJ1

@sciam – Beer Marinade Cuts Grilling Carcinogens!!: http://bit.ly/1gVPiJ3

@HarvardOSP – NIAID on Ten Steps to a Winning R01 Application:
http://www.niaid.nih.gov/researchfunding/grant/strategy/Pages/stepswin.aspx

@neatorama – Student Accepted at All 8 Ivy League Schools: bit.ly/1gn7U1p

@wired Meet the NASA engineer turned artist whose canvas is a 200-gallon fishtank:
http://wrd.cm/Pggcw0 pic.twitter.com/9YcPGWaNwp

@insidehighered – National Institutes of Health clarifies 'no pornography' section of
funding bill: www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/03/2

I started following: @science360, @spacedotcom
Summer is just around the corner and we are looking forward to seeing you August 10-13, 2014 in Washington, DC for NCURA’s 56th Annual Meeting! The meeting plans are coming together nicely and we are so excited about this year’s offering (and we think you will be too)!

As we looked at the trends in our profession, we thought about all the issues that have affected Research Administrators throughout the years. We noted that the number of things that have changed or are in the process of changing as it relates to our profession is quiet staggering. From the recent issuance of the Uniform Guidance to the upcoming full-blown implementation of sub-account processing for HHS draw functionality, those of us in research administration have witnessed so many changes in the last several years that it makes one’s head spin. We have seen ARRA come and go, the addition of FFATA reporting, COI rules strengthened, Responsible Conduct in Research (the list goes on and on)…all of which has increased the cost of compliance that institutions have had to absorb. In relation to all these regulatory changes, one thing that has never changed – is the value of your “professional family” provided through your NCURA membership. It is the extensive network of colleagues available to you every day that you can reach out to for guidance which makes being a member of NCURA priceless. This network is where our theme for AM 56 was born: “The Evolution of Research Administration – facing the future…together.” We hope that you will join us at AM 56 to meet with old friends and colleagues as well as collaborate with new ones.

Our track leaders have been hard at work creating a robust and meaningful program for you. You asked and we listened to your evaluations and we have added more senior sessions, including some senior level workshops on Sunday. We’ve expanded the size and number of Senior Forums available so that our “seasoned leaders” will be able to participate in meaningful interactions. We will hear from our popular federal agencies such as NSF and NIH and we have expanded our Federal track to include presentations from USDA, EPA, NEA/NEH and USAID. The affect of the new Uniform Guidance will also be covered as OMB will be there to answer your questions. Discussion groups will be offered to continue the dialog that may begin in concurrent sessions on hot topics as well as we will again have Spark sessions being offered for those quick sound bites on relevant topics.

As our NCURA membership expands internationally, our International track leaders are working to provide insight on doing business as global partners. With the launch of Horizon 2020 and BILAT USA 2.0, there will be many sessions presented to learn about the evolving international research environment that these funding opportunities offer and how to deal with international contractual issues. We encourage everyone to welcome our new International Region and be an active part of our growing global partnership.

NCURA has also launched a new application that will help you plan your meeting. Watch for updates on how to build your meeting plans on your personal computing device so that session times and meeting rooms are just a click away.

We are pleased to announce that we will be entertained on Sunday evening with an invigorating “fireside chat” between Paul Begala and Tucker Carlson after dinner. Their conversation won’t disappoint so plan on relaxing and laughing after dinner as we all enjoy their lively banter. For our Monday keynote, we have invited a fascinating and engaging speaker, Dr. Robert Sapolsky, to officially kick-off our meeting. Dr. Sapolsky is a world-renowned professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University and you will want to come to the ballroom on Monday morning to hear him speak. In addition to all the wonderful workshops and sessions and speakers we have lined up for our attendees, back by popular demand is Camp NCURA! So if you want to bring your family to enjoy some time in DC while you attend the conference, you can sign your children up for camp to keep them entertained during the day. Plans are also well on the way for a fun-filled Tuesday evening event to celebrate and reflect on what is shaping up to be a very busy summer of change for those of us in Research Administration. Watch for more news as we get closer to the meeting.

A great part of our lives is spent at our jobs. Remember to include AM 56 and your professional family in your summer plans this August. Join us as we contemplate, commiserate and collaborate how we will evolve into better Research Administrators as we face the future…together.
Huron partners with academic medical centers, hospitals, and clinical research organizations to improve regulatory compliance, increase efficiencies, and achieve financial and operational objectives. We have a balanced perspective and unparalleled experience with identifying issues and developing comprehensive solutions that incorporate people, process and technology. Our approach serves the best interests of the entire enterprise, freeing you to focus on your mission.

Learn more about Huron Education by visiting www.huronconsultinggroup.com/highereducation.
Master of All Trades and Jack of None: Research Administration in the Small-Shop OSP

By Katie Plum

This schedule may seem crazy and disjointed, but it reflects the reality of many research administrators in “small-shop” (i.e., 1-3 FTE) offices at predominantly undergraduate institutions (PUIs). Because of our schools’ Spartan administrative structures, we are often asked to be the “master of all trades” in our institutions rather than simply the “master of one.” Our roles may include everything from planning proposals, searching for funding, writing one or more components of a funding application, developing budgets and budget justifications, and submitting grant proposals to setting up accounts, monitoring effort reporting, conducting responsible-conduct-of-research training, and even checking on the rare export control issue. And, to be successful in obtaining and managing extramural funds, knowing just a little about everything simply does not work.

To keep pace with the evolution of research administration, including the growth in sponsors’ unfunded compliance mandates and institutional expectations for securing more external funding, we may find ourselves adding new tasks to already heavy workloads. We may have originally been hired to assist our institutions with obtaining grants from the U.S. Department of Education, but as new faculty are hired and their research interests hold promise with previously untapped agencies, our roles must evolve to address these changing needs. In the process of doing so, we will need to master other dimensions of pre- and post-award service as well as ethical compliance and intellectual property issues.
But, is it possible for one or two research administrators to handle this breadth and depth of information? Can we really master all aspects of the profession? While we may be able to come close in some areas, I would argue that no single individual or small office alone can reach that level of specialization. Instead, we must be strategic about using resources that support us in being masters of all trades with the understanding that we cannot handle everything on our own.

Expanding our internal and external networks is the key to success: we can face the future of research administration when we do it together. Effectively drawing on the collective wisdom of colleagues, peers, and counterparts allows us to overcome knowledge shortcomings. Three steps a small-shop OSP can take to ensure it will manage its responsibilities expertly are:

1. Become a savvy information consumer. With so many tasks to complete, time is not on your side when it comes to keeping up with the latest funding announcements and federal agency news. Identify those funding agencies with which you most often work, and make use of their quick information resources. For example, many PUIs look to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support their projects. Some useful information resources the ED offers include a funding forecast [http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html) with estimated application notice and submission dates and detailed program descriptions with archived calls for applications.

RSS/Twitter feeds and e-mail notifications are another useful resource. The Federal Register [http://www.federalregister.gov](http://www.federalregister.gov) allows you to subscribe to RSS feeds and/or e-mails from specific federal agencies or on specific topics (e.g. “Department of Education” or “Grant Programs”). By embedding the RSS feed in the menu of your Web browser, you can simply mouse over the announcements each day to learn about new funding opportunities and programs in a matter of minutes. Equally important, this method of receiving news and information limits the number of new e-mails filling your inbox.

One additional information resource you may want to consult is LibGuides [http://libguides.com](http://libguides.com) a Web platform used by academic, public, and other libraries. Many university libraries subscribe to this service and have publically available resource guides on everything from proposal development to research ethics. Although you will not be able to access another institution’s subscription to a proprietary information service, numerous links to open information resources are available in the LibGuides.

2. Know your institutional resources. Even in a PUI with only 30–40 grants to manage at any given time, the sheer volume of work on those projects may prevent the OSP from thoroughly addressing all programmatic and compliance requirements. Developing strong relationships with other offices on your campus with similar areas of expertise may help fill any gaps in OSP services.

One of the ways to do this is by a process I like to call “office stalking,” which is not as nefarious as it sounds. During those (very few!) slow times in my office—or during an all-too-frequently occurring work-through-lunch session—I spend time reading the Web pages of other offices on campus. I learn about their faculty and staff (even reading their CVs, where posted), the offices’ purposes and missions, and the scope of their responsibilities. Using this information I assess where assistance might be found, and I work on building relationships with the individuals in those areas. Campus offices that may be able to help the OSP with research administration activities include faculty development (developing proposals), environmental health and safety (monitoring biohazards), general counsel/legal (reviewing troublesome grant/contract clauses), purchasing (preventing unallowable costs), and international studies/affairs and human resources (examining export controls). One way to enlist these offices in assisting the OSP is to cover the cost of their travel to a conference, such as those hosted by NCURA, NORDP, PRIM&R and similar organizations, to support professional development in research administration. Don’t have the funds in your regular budget? Consider using your recovered facilities and administrative costs to support this activity. Still short on funds? Host your own in-house training and provide coffee and donuts.

3. Ask your NCURA colleagues for help. NCURA’s social networking site, Collaborate [http://collaborate.ncura.edu](http://collaborate.ncura.edu) has an active PUI Community with a Discussion Board, Resource Library, and roughly 400 members with varying levels of experience and expertise. The Community is in the process of updating its resource library, and combined with its extensive discussion archive (more than 720 postings as of the writing of this article), individuals at all institutions can benefit from the community’s combined expertise.

If you have not accessed the PUI Community page in Collaborate yet, I highly recommend you do so. Signing up is simple. With your NCURA identification number and password in hand (or click on the “Forgot password” and “Forgot ID” buttons under the Login menu to receive them), select “Communities” in the top menu, and then scroll down to the “Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs)” Community. Click on “Join” to add the community to your list. You can choose to receive e-mail updates in real time, once per day, or opt-out of receiving e-mails, and you may change these options at any time. Although participation in the discussions requires an extra step—logging into Collaborate—beyond that required by other listservs, members have an advantage in that discussions are limited to NCURA members (i.e., no concern about individuals outside of university research administration listening) and the discussions are archived and searchable.

Becoming the “master of all trades” is a tall order to fill for any research administrator. But particularly in a small-shop OSP, it is imperative that we make strategic use of our human and financial resources to maintain and grow healthy research administration systems. Working together, we can create the structures and processes that will satisfy the expectations of our faculty, institutions, and sponsors.

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Focus:
Administrative Requirements

By Michael R. Ludwig

“To deliver on the promise of a 21st Century government that is more efficient, effective and transparent, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is streamlining the Federal government’s guidance on Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal awards.”

This is the opening statement of the Uniform Guidance and summarizes nicely the challenge all of us involved in Federal grant administration (awarding agencies, recipients, and auditing organizations) have in front of us with the opportunity to implement the most comprehensive effort ever to improve processes to apply for, obtain, and manage Federal awards. I have had the opportunity to meet a few times with OMB staff and members of the COFAR Working Group, who are responsible for writing the Uniform Guidance throughout this process, and I am confident that the summary statement reflects the good intentions of these people to make things better. We owe them a big thank you for the monumental effort that went into developing the Uniform Guidance. We also owe it to the researchers we support to keep in mind these principles of efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency as we plan for and implement resulting changes within our institutions. I encourage you to involve faculty researchers as you consider change and look for opportunities to streamline processes and systems that support those researchers’ efforts. How we implement these changes at the operational level will have a major impact on the success of reaching the goals of efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency. The remainder of this article focuses on Subparts B, C, and D of the Uniform Guidance (excluding the Procurement and Subrecipient Monitoring sections of Subpart D as those will be covered in subsequent articles) and highlights sections of interest to consider in your implementation planning.

There are a number of sections in Subparts B, C, and D where the impact will be dependent upon the awarding agency implementation of the Guidance. A good example of that is Conflict of Interest (200.112). The Uniform Guidance only specifies that the awarding agencies must establish conflict of interest policies and that the recipients must disclose, in writing, potential conflicts of interest. The degree to which this is implemented consistently across awarding agencies and the manner in which it is implemented (think disclosures associated with each proposal versus awards only) will have a major impact on efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of this requirement.

Another area to keep a watchful eye on is the implementation plans for performance measurement (200.301). This section requires the use of OMB-approved standard forms of which we already have the SF 425 for financial reporting and the RPPR for progress reporting. The definition of Performance goal (200.76) provides additional clarity by identifying discretionary research awards as an example where submitting a technical report (i.e. the RPPR) is acceptable to meeting the requirement for performance measurement. However, section 200.301 continues with “the Federal awarding agency must require the recipient to relate financial data to performance accomplishments of the Federal award.” The “must” statements in this section could lead to different interpretations of whether the current standard reporting formats are sufficient. OMB clearly recognizes the importance of consistent implementation of these regulations across Federal agencies and takes responsibility for
reviewing the agency implementations to ensure effective and efficient implementation (see OMB responsibilities 200.107).

The importance of strong internal controls is referenced throughout the Uniform Guidance. If internal controls over Federal funds and the documentation that goes with those processes haven’t been reviewed or tested recently at your institution, consider having that completed before December. The Internal control section (200.303) provides three resource documents that may be helpful in evaluating internal controls. Be sure to also read Q III-4 in the Frequently Asked Questions released by COFAR on February 12, 2014, https://cfo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2-C.F.R.-200-FAQs-2-12-2014.pdf The FAQ clarifies the purpose of the referenced documents as resources for best practices only.

Program income (200.307) has a significant change in store if not addressed in future FAQ releases. The definition of Program income (200.80) includes “license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights”. This definition is consistent with the definition provided in A-110. However, A-110 included an exclusion that recipients were under no obligation to the Federal Government in regards to treating licensing/royalty revenue as program income unless the terms and conditions of the award stated otherwise. The Uniform Guidance has no such exclusion and therefore requires revenue generated from license fees and royalties during the period of performance of the award to be treated as program income. While the instances where this type of program income is generated will be few, we must prepare for the possibility. Coordination between post award units and technology transfer groups will be necessary to establish procedures to identify instances of applicability and to appropriately account for the income.

There are some clear positive outcomes for the recipient community from these Subparts:

Notices of funding opportunities (200.203) must be available for 60 days for most program announcements but no less than 30 days under a special determination by the awarding agency.

Cost sharing or matching (200.306) clarifies that voluntary committed cost sharing cannot be used as a factor in the merit review of applications unless specified in the notice of funding opportunity. This should prevent agencies from compelling institutions to include voluntary committed cost sharing in proposals. If cost sharing is to be considered in the merit review process, the funding announcement must clearly state the evaluation criteria that will be used. This section also clarifies that voluntary committed cost sharing that was not committed in the project budget does not need to be included in the organized research base for calculation of the F&A cost rate.

Revisions of budget and program plans (200.308) include a prior approval requirement for the “disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25% reduction in time devoted to the project, by the project director” This better reflects that project directors can be away from campus and remain engaged in the project at the proposed levels. Prior approval is only required in the event that disengagement from the project occurs during the absence.

Before I end, I want to encourage you to watch for an upcoming article in NCURA Magazine covering the changes to the equipment and procurement standards. I recommend reading those sections of the Uniform Guidance carefully. There are a number of changes that may require both process and system changes. If those changes do impact your organization, alert your property-accounting and purchasing staff quickly to assess the impact of the changes and prioritize IT resources if needed.

Stay informed of the COGR and FDP updates on the implementation of the Uniform Guidance and take advantage of the resources those organizations make available. There is a lot of work going on to assess and recommend best practice alternatives for universities and other research organizations. If we all do our part, we just might be able to stake a claim in the accomplishment of a 21st Century government that is more efficient, effective and transparent.

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References:
CFR 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=704835d27377ce5212a51c149de10cab&node=2:1.1.2.1.2.1&rgn=div5
Many hours of federal effort have resulted in new regulations, ostensibly designed to be more streamlined while maintaining excellent stewardship. This article will focus on the cost principles included in the new regulations. Let’s begin with what we should call this new… document? Circular? Code? OMB Circular A-21 was easy. CFR Part 220 wasn’t bad (basically A-21 in the Code of Federal Regulations). Both A-81 and the Super Circular had promise, but ultimately weren’t adopted. Instead, we got 2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200. Say that in front of a group of faculty three times fast! Another popular term being used to describe these new requirements is “Uniform Guidance,” because it serves as guidance to the federal agencies as they strive to release their implementing regulations by June 30, 2014. However, using the word “guidance” to describe administrative requirements runs the risk of diminishing their importance, both internally and externally. I grimace at the thought of using the word “guidance” to an auditor during a “discussion”, especially since we treated A-21 as the foundation of our policies. For the sake of simplicity and the purposes of this article, I’ll refer to them as the Uniform Administrative Requirements (UAR) and hope that someone comes up with a better name.

Where do you find costing principles in the UAR? They are in Subsection E, or the dot 400’s. The .400 series follows a format similar to that of A-21, including groups for:

- General Provisions (.400 - .401)
- Basic Considerations (.402 - .411)
- Direct and Indirect (.412 - .415)
- Special Considerations (.416 - .419)
- Selected Items of Costs (.420 - .475)

Because these new rules apply to other grantee types (State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments, non-profits), it is important to look for those provisions that apply to specific grantee types. For example, we should look for those referenced as IHE’s (Institutions of Higher Education).

Most of the costing sections of the UAR become effective for awards and amendments on or after December 26, 2014, although early adoptions of entity-wide system changes are possible.

Now that the basics are covered, let us look at what has changed in the 23 pages of Federal Register print. With help from the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR) Costing Committee, here are some of the interesting items that you might consider as you develop your implementation strategies:

.400 Policy – Still has language in part (d) that says we shouldn’t have to have significant changes to our internal accounting policies and practices; and language in part (f) regarding the dual role of students; and a new part (g) that prohibits profit;

.401 Application – Part (a) suggests the UAR should be used as a guide in pricing for fixed-price proposals, with part (3) excluding fixed amount awards from their application

.403 Allowability – this section does not appear to have changed, although the language in part (c) could be interpreted as more encompassing of all policies

.404 Reasonable – has a new part about geographic area in (b)

.405 Allocable costs – has a lot about donated services, and does continue the favorable language about equipment use when no longer needed by the project
.413 Direct costs — continues to include language regarding extraordinary utility consumption, and a new part (c) regarding the direct charging of administrative and clerical salaries in certain circumstances

.414 Indirect (F&A) Costs — this is likely to be the subject of a future article, but does include language in part (c) to suggest federal agencies should use our approved F&A rates; a new de minimis rate of 10% MTDC for subcontractors in part (f); and a possible one-time extension of rates in part (g)

.415 Required Certifications — has been significantly enhanced (and might reflect the actual mood of the audit community regarding administrative streamlining)

.418 Costs incurred by state and local governments — still allowable with a cost allocation plan

.419 Cost accounting standards — yes the DS-2 is still required, but there is now a 6 month window for requests for modification to be acted upon (or extended)

.430 Compensation — this section has been restructured and needs to be studied. This is where the effort reporting/payroll certification requirements exist and will be the topic of a future article.

.431 Fringe Benefits — like .430, this section requires a detailed review. However part (b)(3)(i) payments for unused leave at termination or retirement will cause some institutions to change their systems and/or procedures.

.432 Conferences — includes new language regarding dependent care

.433 Contingencies — includes new language regarding its allowability for certain construction projects

.436 Depreciation — has new language regarding depreciating and cost sharing that may have F&A implications

.440 Exchange rates — is new and contains a requirement for prior approval if it increases costs, even if it doesn’t increase the Federal share of costs

.442 Fund raising and investment management costs — now allows for some costs of physical custody and control of money

.453 Materials and supplies — now includes computing devices in prescribed circumstances

.456 Participant support costs — is new and is now excluded from MTDC

.461 Publication — includes new language recognizing the cost of publications at the end date

.463 Recruiting — now explicitly allows short term visa costs

.470 Taxes — now includes a part (c) to address Value Added Taxes

.474 Travel — includes new language at part (b)(1) …is necessary to the federal award. Hopefully “necessary” will be converted/interpreted to “benefits” in agency regulation

While not directly included in the cost principles, the UAR uses the term “internal control” 103 times. It also references an “internal control integrated framework” issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO) that needs to be monitored, or clarified by OMB FAQ or agency regulations.

Hopefully this article has piqued your interest in reviewing the UAR, comparing it to your current policies, and then planning communication and implementation strategies at your institution. While it is important to get in front of new regulations, much of the implementing details will be contingent on how each federal agency incorporates the UAR into their individual agency regulations. Over the next several months be watchful for opportunities to learn more about the UAR, including reading the full UAR; OMB FAQ’s; agency regulations; NCURA, COGR, and FDP resources; and other training opportunities.

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Building Empathy for the Federal Government, One IPA at a Time

By Jennifer Rodis

“The National Science Foundation is the best place to work in the Federal government.” More than one presenter said this during my orientation. The statement was inspiring and reaffirmed my decision to uproot myself and move across the country to serve on an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignment. The Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 authorized temporary assignment of employees between the Federal Government and State, local, and Indian tribal governments, institutions of higher education, and other eligible organizations. Assignments are made for purposes of mutual concern and such that they are mutually beneficial. The National Science Foundation (NSF) uses IPA assignments for a variety of positions, primarily for faculty members serving as program directors who oversee NSF’s research and educational programs. Not all IPA assignees function as program directors, however. Each year, a handful of them work in non-program capacities. From January 2012 to January 2014, I was one of the IPA assignees serving in a non-program position. I was a Policy Specialist in the NSF Policy Office, part of the Division of Institution and Award Support, which is located within the Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Management (BFA).

As stressful as it was to make such a big change, I felt it was important to challenge myself to obtain new knowledge and experiences. After all, my home institution, UW-Madison, had enabled me to take this opportunity, shifting my responsibilities to other staff members. I needed to make good on this assignment and learn as much as possible. I hoped that my IPA contributions would be substantive and that, when my assignment ended, both NSF and I would be better off. I also hoped that what I gained would ultimately benefit UW-Madison. During my assignment I was lucky to have supportive NSF colleagues who were with me every step of the way, and to have opportunities to be involved in several different projects.

One significant project I was involved in was implementation of recommendations made in the National Science Board report, National Science Foundation’s Merit Review Criteria: Review and Revisions. NSF established a working group (comprised of program directors, Policy Office staff, and other business opera-
Revisions to the PAPPG and other system improvements began with the working group. When making modifications to guidance and systems, we chose words carefully and benefited from the input of program directors—not just from their experience as former faculty members, but also from their day-to-day work with current faculty members. Their proximity to the proposal submission and review process was invaluable in updating guidance related to the process. Also, when the draft PAPPG was released for public comment, it was posted as a PDF document, introducing a level of transparency and allowing the community to see precisely what language changes were being proposed. The working group appreciated receiving input on the draft from numerous individuals and organizations, and their comments had a direct impact on the quality of the final document. In addition, the staff within the Division of Institution and Award Support and the Division of Information Systems were critical in making improvements to guidance and systems. Several iterations were necessary prior to NSF senior management signing off on the final modifications. The work was accomplished because of the close collaboration between NSF program and business operations staff, with the participation of the research community.

Another project I took part in was carrying out ARRA acceleration. In September 2011, OMB issued Memorandum M-11-34, which directed Federal agencies to take steps to complete Recovery Act projects by September 30, 2013. NSF created a core team (others from BFA and myself) and a larger advisory team (staff representatives from around NSF) that spent a tremendous amount of time working within the agency and with the research community. We prepared guidance for NSF program staff so that they would be ready to work with and respond to questions from external organizations. We also released instructions to the research community so that they would be informed on how to proceed. As implementation of the Memorandum progressed, we regularly updated guidance for internal and external audiences to ensure that they had access to the most current information. We also cooperated with other Federal agencies, communicating as needed regarding jointly funded projects and sharing information to ensure that strategies were consistent where possible. Although ARRA acceleration was not an ideal directive to implement, it gave me the opportunity to learn more about the leadership within BFA. They tend to be proactive and want to be at the forefront. Because NSF’s primary mission is to promote the progress of science, they seek to protect the community’s ability to perform scientific research as best as they can. NSF’s experience and expertise has enabled the agency to lead significant government-wide efforts.

NSF has provided leadership for a number of inter-agency initiatives, one of which was the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR). As part of my IPA experience, I participated on the Final Research Performance Progress Report Working Group (FRPPRWG). The group’s goal was to develop and propose revisions to the RPPR format so that it could be used for both interim and final reporting. (Although some agencies chose to use the original RPPR format for both interim and final reporting, the intent was to use it for interim reporting and to develop a final reporting format at a later date.) A dozen different agencies that support research and research-related activities responded to the call from NSF when the agency solicited representatives for the FRPPRWG. Several agencies had implemented the interim RPPR format and wanted to use lessons learned from that experience to improve the final reporting format. Being part of the working group’s discussions was educational. I observed that each agency brought its own set of concerns to the table. A considerable amount of back and forth was necessary to create approaches and language that worked for all agencies involved. Differing infrastructure, resources, or place within the larger organizational structure influenced how agencies participated in the discussions. From this firsthand experience, I came to understand how complicated government-wide implementation could be. Research administrators may dream about having only one Federal-wide system for proposal submission, reporting, and all other administrative tasks, but the current reality remains distant from the dream. What NSF can and has helped to do is bring agencies together where possible. For instance, while one system for progress reporting may not be possible, one reporting format is. NSF is assisting agencies in achieving common ground, because uniformity in requirements (any consistency at all) goes a long way toward reducing burden for institutions.

My experience at NSF helped grow my respect for the agency. As one of my NSF colleagues put it near the end of my assignment, “The IPA program is building empathy for the Federal government, one IPA at a time.” Being part of the Policy Office allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how NSF works—the mechanics of how things are accomplished, as well as the philosophy behind it. NSF strives to be a leader among agencies, and being there gave me an opportunity to see the consideration that NSF, in particular, gives to the research community’s perspective. Although disagreements did (and will continue to) occur between the agency and the research community, the ability to engage in such dialogue demonstrates a healthy partnership, where entities are honest with their opinions and positions. This is important, because we need to understand each other in order to support our mutual goals. NSF’s investments in science, engineering, and education to promote the progress of science are crucial to the strength of research and educational programs at universities. NSF makes a strong partner in the evolution of research administration, facing the future…together.

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How do administrators handle increase in research funding without increasing administrative staffing? This is a common question heard in today’s constricting financial climate. At the University of Michigan Medical School (UMMS), a group of administrators were challenged by senior management to design a process that would accommodate increased research activity without increasing the administrative burden for staff. This challenge was part of the Dean’s initiative to modernize multiple administrative tasks throughout the School. Figure 1 describes the various committees involved in the post-award modernization process. The authors were members of both the Post-Award Design Team and the Post-Award Implementation Team.

Before commencing on this journey, we knew that, in general, faculty were not satisfied with their current post-award support, that record retention was tremendously time-consuming, and that reconciliation and reporting information technology varied widely within the UMMS. These challenges led us down the path of using Lean techniques to streamline the post-award management process. Lean techniques were originally used for auto manufacturing but have been adapted to meet the needs of other arenas. Lean thinking aims to standardize processes, reduce waste, and fix the root cause of problems.

With the help of a Lean coach provided by UMMS, the Post-Award Design Team started to develop the optimal process to be used by departmental post-award coordinators, beginning from the time the award was received through the time that the final financial report is submitted. We created value stream maps, which are flowcharts that illustrate all steps, both value added and non-value added, of the current processes. Figure 2 illustrates the timeline of events, the Design Phase, and the Implementation Phase.

We realized that if we were going to truly modernize the post-award process for the entire UMMS, choosing a standard application to carry out the monthly reconciliation and reporting process was necessary. Most departments within the UMMS were using Excel-based home-grown shadow systems, while some were purchasing tools from outside vendors, and a small number of others were using financial management modules within the University-supported Oracle® PeopleSoft system software.

The Post-Award Design Team determined that using the University-supported platform was the best option. The added value of a standard process would allow for system-wide enhancements, faculty would receive reports in a uniform format and would have real-time access to their accounts, there would be increased transparency between research administrators monitoring multi-disciplinary projects, and it would potentially lead to job-sharing and more seamless moves between units.

Once we had selected the application, the team participated in a three-day Lean planning session where we constructed the optimal future state. Devoting three consecutive days to the mapping was more efficient than spreading the planning sessions over several weeks because it allowed the group to focus solely on the process and keep the discussions fresh in our minds. Rather than focusing on what was not currently possible, we mapped what our ideal scenario would be, with the notion that we would partner with the University’s main IT office, Information Technology Services (ITS) to make our dream environment a reality.

At the end of the three-day planning session, we presented our recommendation to the Research Subcommittee. Once we had their approval, they pursued executive sponsorship to make it a requirement within the UMMS by presenting to the Chief Departmental Administrators of all units within the UMMS and to the Chief Administrative Officer.

As part of the standardization, we agreed upon the following key concepts:
Considering the procurement of research supplies as an integral part of post-award management. Re-work was occurring due to the lack of oversight in how goods were procured. Units were decentralized in that a large number of individuals had authority to make purchases without prior approval. This led to charges being placed on the wrong projects that later required correction by the research administrator. A plan was devised to limit the number of individuals in each department who could procure goods and focus on training the purchasers to check budget lines, project end-dates, and balances before placing orders. The intent was to achieve first-time quality by preventing erroneous charges before they happened, thus reducing the need for corrections.

Utilizing exception-based reconciliation. The theory was to be able to quickly verify most items without investigation by the reconciler. We planned to achieve this by adding data elements into the reconciliation tool that would provide more useful information in a single location.

Moving towards an environment where paper documentation was no longer required. We were determined to build a process which eliminated or reduced paper. We proposed utilizing the University-maintained imaging software WebNow to image invoices. The Post-Award Implementation Team helped units streamline their record retention by defining for them what documentation was required to be kept at the unit level and what was available in a centralized database.

Major Hurdles
Our group struggled to clearly define focus and direction. Following Lean principles, the first step was to map out the current process, but that proved to be a difficult task due the complexities and the fact that processes varied widely amongst departments. There was not a single current state to start with, but rather a sundry of them!

Figure 2. UMMS Post-Award Lean Timeline
Eventually, the group was directed to use one department as a sample. As evidenced in Figure 2, the mapping process took fifteen months, and group members did not attend formal Lean training until eight months into the process. It would have been beneficial for the training to happen before the mapping began, and also to have several days fully dedicated to the mapping. Initially, the group was only meeting for two hours every other week which made it difficult to maintain continuity of discussions. As a result of the prolonged Planning Phase, the Implementation Phase was forced to adhere to an aggressive timeline.

Another dilemma facing the group was establishing the optimal method for training. In our process design, we attempted to be flexible so that all units could adapt the process to suit their needs. Many of them chose to adapt, which made holding training sessions directed to all departments impossible. The Post-Award Implementation Team arrived at the decision to act as mentors, where each team member was assigned the responsibility of training several departments across UMMS. Relying on such a small number of staff to mentor and train became burdensome, especially since several of the IT enhancements were not completed until two months before the Go-Live date.

As with any transformation, we experienced resistance. As a result, change management became an important part of the Implementation Phase. A Town Hall meeting was held where the leader of the Research Subcommittee and the Chief Administrative Officer of the UMMS spoke in support of our process, and where we had the opportunity to explain the rationale behind our decisions. We helped staff to embrace the new process by illustrating how it was designed from the bottom up by staff in roles similar to theirs. What we were asking staff to do was step far outside their comfort zone, asking them to let go of their shadow-systems, and embrace change. During the pilot, the Post-Award Implementation team members had transitioned away from their shadow-systems, which helped us to assure others that it was possible.

Major Wins
While success of the new process is still being measured, some major wins have already been achieved. The Implementation Team developed “best practices,” which were documented in the first-ever Medical School Post-Award Manual. This was extremely useful during the process roll-out and will be maintained to serve as a guide for the future. We also created a standing committee, the Post-Award Advisory Committee (PAAC), which offers a forum for post-award administrators to network and learn about process and policy changes.

Throughout this process, UMMS units have strengthened our ties with other Schools and Colleges on campus. The College of Engineering was also undergoing a similar revamping process and programmers had already started to tackle some of the items on our wish list. This cross-campus collaboration helped garner the resources we required for updates, and has helped create interest surrounding the process from other campus units.

Major Lessons
We learned several major lessons throughout this process:

1. Metrics are important. Having baseline measurements in place would have helped define the focus in the beginning, and would have allowed us to measure success after implementation.

2. Never lose sight of the Lean principles. It can be easy to veer off track once completely embedded in a project. It takes strong leadership to refocus the group and keep the intended goals in mind.

3. Buy-in is necessary, so it is imperative to have representatives from all areas take part in the process. Both the Design and Implementation teams found this helpful in making sure all bases were covered and that all regulatory requirements were thoroughly examined. In retrospect, better communication and dialogue with end-users during the Implementation Phase could have improved processes, as some of them felt that we had not taken their daily work into consideration during the planning.

4. We must communicate frequently to the administrative leaders and other stakeholders about the impending changes. This helps to lay the ground work for acceptance.

When the project started, our group did not realize how difficult the challenge of such sweeping change would be. Most of the group had never been through such a large-scale project before, which contributed to some of the aforementioned issues. In the end, the project was highly rewarding and left everyone with a strong sense of accomplishment. We hope that our account will give other academic entities some insight as they consider their own current post-award processes and where they might help to implement change, especially with the current funding climate.
On the surface, naming a file is a simple task that requires little thought or consideration. However, in the world of research administration, file names are typically taken more seriously, due to the specificity of information associated with proposals, grants, contracts, reports, and other documents. Every single grant and contract has its own set of unique identifiers, including classification numbers, sponsor names, as well as those responsible for the work that is performed, namely the principal investigators. In research administration environments, therefore, it is necessary to maintain accuracy in managing files across all platforms, whether these files are electronic or paper-based.

In the past, research administration files were typically generated using paper documents, whereby rooms of filing cabinets contained large numbers of manila and other file folders over a period of years. File names were important but were not closely monitored for uniformity, with some older files even written by hand. However, as technology has evolved and computer-based systems have emerged as the critical path for file storage, there is an ever-increasing need to achieve greater consistency in naming files so that as research organizations grow in size and scope, files can be accessed efficiently. This practice far outweighs the older paper-based practices that existed for many decades. However, regularity in naming files is perhaps the most critical aspect of this process so that all users are able to access files without difficulty.

Files associated with many federal proposal submissions require standard naming conventions that do not include specific identifiers such as special characters (e.g., National Institutes of Health). When special characters are used in file names, proposals may be rejected by an electronic system altogether and must be resubmitted sans special characters prior to the deadline. On the other hand, proposals submitted to the Department of Defense require specific file names such as “TechAbs” for the Technical Abstract and “SOW” for the Statement of Work (Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs). Therefore, naming conventions for federal and other types of grant submissions must be established in conjunction with the requirements set forth by the granting agency.

For some research administration teams, formal guidelines have been established to address naming conventions for proposal development which govern these practices, and are shared with the research community to reduce application submission risks. For example, Cynthia Lysen, Sponsored Research Training Manager at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, has created an in-house document entitled “SF424 Required File Naming Conventions” that provides recommendations for files required for NIH, NSF, and DOD applications. Furthermore, Lysen’s document provides a formal file name requirement for all SF424 applications, which includes the following:

- **PD/PI Hutchinson ID**
- **NIH Hutchinson ID**
- **Deadline Date**
- **Submission number to the Office of Sponsored Research**

This is only one example of specific naming conventions that are common in research administration environments that provide many benefits to applicants and other staff.

Underscores are permitted in lieu of spaces between words within file names at the University of South Florida. Other organizations provide oversight in different ways and make informal recommendations regarding naming conventions that enhance the quality of the research enterprise. With each example, research administrators apply their knowledge and expertise to pre-and post-award activities to ensure that naming conventions are appropriate, practical, and compliant.

Every institution has its own method or strategy of naming files, given factors such as the size of the research portfolio, the type of filing system in place, and the capturing of data that is most relevant to the organization. When random file names are chosen without any rhyme or reason, precious time that could have been spent on other tasks may be wasted searching for files. As a result, file naming has become increasingly important to research administrators to improve efficiency and consistency within these roles. Innovative approaches to file naming should also be explored as needs change and as the research environment continues to evolve.

Many administrators depend on a specific naming convention to promote consistency in naming in-house and external files and to establish an approach that supports their needs effectively. Whether a file is in paper format or in an electronic version, file names are important in providing value to a document and in establishing a set of unique identifiers to capture the most relevant information. Regardless of their format, research administration files provide a central location for storing documentation and recording information that is relevant to the team and that may be accessed by each member. Therefore, file naming is likely to follow a specific format or pattern, depending on institutional preferences. For example, a file might be named using the following format:

- **PI last name, sponsor, grant number, and type of file:**

  Jones_NIH_AG123456_RPPR.pdf

Different file naming systems have been established in order to maintain consistency in managing files. Some universities’ strategies are general and allow flexibility in naming files, while others are more meticulous and require specific naming conventions. The size and complexity of the research portfolio is likely to play an important role in determining the most practical naming convention that is best suited to the work environment. The research administration culture is perhaps one of the most influential factors in establishing file naming best practices. Furthermore, offices with a large number of files are likely to have a specific strategy in place that works well for them, particularly large research organizations with a significant funding portfolio across many research areas. Other offices, such as those with smaller funding thresholds, might adopt a different approach. Regardless of the scope and size of the funding portfolio, file naming offers a critical path to consistency and efficiency within research administration practice settings.
In-house filing systems should be aligned with current needs and objectives so that research administrators are able to access these files at their disposal. To achieve a collaborative work environment, naming conventions should be consistent for all files based on type, including proposals and awards. For example, Arizona State University recommends that proposal file folder names include a brief description of the project in as few words as possible, the sponsor name, and the principal investigator’s name. Project titles are abbreviated and include the name, and the principal investigator’s name. For electronic files, naming conventions may be associated with the project identifying number and the type of file (i.e. budget, biosketch, Notice of Grant Award). Some organizations use central accounting systems that support greater consistency in naming files that are used widely across different work groups. Grants and contracts personnel, in addition to post-award accounting staff, may require access to many of the same files in a shared system environment such as PeopleSoft; therefore, the files should be named in a manner that is applied universally across both teams. Research administration teams encompass a number of functionalities, and as a result, naming conventions must be consistent to benefit all members.

A general rule for naming conventions is - the simpler, the better. File names should not tell the entire story of a project; rather, only a few specific key words or phrases are required to distinguish it from all others. For example:

Rather than:  
Dell_NIH_SubawardDocs_Wisconsin_SubrecipientCommitment.pdf

Suggested:  
Dell_NIH_Wisc_SubrecipCommit.pdf.

Another example:
Johnson_AmericanHeartAssociation_ProposalCentral_Application_April_2014

Can be simplified as   
Johnson_AHA_App_041514.

This is perhaps the most feasible approach to consistency in order to accomplish effective naming conventions. When files are shared by groups of people through a shared drive or other similar mechanism, this level of consistency is critical because it enables the group to identify files quickly. Files that are publicly available should be named in accordance with the principles established by the research administration team. It was noted during the research phase in preparation of this article that research administration offices have their own specific identifiers in naming their files, but the concept is generally standardized. Each organization has its own set of reasons for naming files in a particular manner, but in general, the emphasis is on similar objectives and principles that involve key information components.

The transition into a 21st Century mindset has been an ongoing process for many research administrators. Institutions of all shapes and sizes are gradually making the move to electronic filing systems. This reduces waste, eliminates the need for paper files, improves efficiency in research administration practices, and saves trees. Therefore, organizations should consider specific file naming practices to ease the burden of transitioning files to an electronic format. These opportunities will support the development of a successful research enterprise that emphasizes leadership, efficient procedures, innovative practice methods, and the intelligent use of available resources.

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Our profession first began to emerge in the late 1930’s and early 1940’s. It was around this time that the film “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” by L. Frank Baum was released. The title of this article was derived from that film; we replaced lions, tigers, and bears with several terms that have generated attention and discussion in the global research community. The term disruptors refers to a novel innovation introduced into the market which disrupts or destabilizes existing practices, products or services (Bower & Christensen, 1995). An example in our profession, the practice of using postal services to submit paper proposals being predominately replaced by an electronic submission process. Black swans or a black swan event (Taleb, 2010) is a major unexpected event or discovery that refutes a widely accepted thought or fact, but in hindsight the event should not have been so unexpected. Examples would be the stock market crash, the attack on the World Trade Center, and the BP oil spill. Looking back, these events could have been foreseen. Wicked problems are extremely complex problems that are almost impossible to solve through the application of a single scholarly discipline and require large populations of people to change their perspective and actions towards the problem to solve it. Examples would be water conservation, forest conservation, and climate change. Like the main character in the film, Dorothy, researchers today find themselves encountering increasingly complex problems in a strange world that is more diverse and globally interconnected. This article highlights some of the major trends that have fueled the evolution of our profession. This evolution has required us to equip ourselves to manage whatever the research community confronts—be it disruptors, black swans, or wicked problems—and to support researchers using our brains, hearts, and courage.

During the 1930’s and 40’s, the first digital computer and the atomic bomb were created, television broadcasting expanded nationally, and medical breakthroughs were being used to stop the spread of diseases and infections. It was also during this time that Vannevar Bush wrote the report Science: The New Frontier, advocating for federal support to fund basic scientific research. As a result, the National Institutes of Health
(NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) were formed to provide funding for research at universities and centers. In turn, research universities experienced a rapid growth in funding and soon positions were created to alleviate administrative burden from the researchers and ensure compliance with federal, state and university regulations. In the 1950’s the first OMB Circular A-21 was released and the NCURA professional association was established. At that point research administration was well on its way to becoming a recognized profession.

Our role as facilitators of research is intricately linked to those organizations and researchers we support. We are inescapably challenged by the same forces of economic fluctuations and constraints, changes in the demographics and global research community, and the rapid emergence of innovations and new technologies. Since the 1940’s, the four major shifts that have significantly impacted the evolution of the research administration profession are:

1. The expansion of innovative technologies in producing, storing, retrieving, disseminating, tracking and automating documentation and processes

2. The rapid growth of team science collaborations and international research

3. The emphasis on the role of higher education from education and research, to an ever increasing role in economic development

4. The increasing regulatory environment that has burdened both researchers and their institutions when trying to maintain compliance in a world that demands transparency and accountability in regards to research activities

All four of these shifts are intertwined and have stimulated the evolution of research administration to new areas of specialty and levels of complexity.

1. The Expansion of Innovative and Information Technologies

Electronic research administration (ERA) has increased efficiency, timeliness, and provided greater accessibility to information for use by research administrators, researchers, and sponsors. Electronic systems help researchers and administrators monitor expenditures and sub-contracts, submit and track progress reports, register patents, and support compliance requirements such as conflict-of-interest disclosures, effort-reporting certification, and IRB protocols. In the past we spent time scanning the Federal Register for funding opportunities, making multiple copies of proposals to ship to funding agencies, and filing paper records of grants and contracts; all this has been transformed into a few simple keyboard clicks to search database systems or submit a proposal electronically. No more late night runs to the post office! Today, almost all research administration offices have IT specialists to develop and maintain these critical database systems.

The expansion of information technologies have also created special issues related to the need for greater data security, heightened concern for human research participant privacy, the requirement for the inclusion of data management plans within proposals, and the need for multiple database systems that can interface with other systems. Being able to collect, report, and analyze research data in general has also driven the idea of establishing metrics and dashboards to monitor performance and productivity. One example is STAR METRICS (Science and Technology for America’s Reinvestment: Measuring the Effect of Research on Innovation, Competitiveness and Science). This program was established in 2010 as a partnership between NIH, NSF and the Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP). The goal of this program is to gather data in an attempt to capture evidence as to the benefits of research on the general public health and prosperity. All these trends were the result of our ability to electronically create, analyze, archive and disseminate data. This ease of transferring research information nationally and internationally leads into the second important trend.

2. Rapid Growth of Team Science Collaborations and International Research

It takes multiple areas of scientific expertise to examine and tackle global issues such as those related to climate change or pandemic diseases. Wicked problems are far too complex to be solved through a single scientific discipline. In addition, the benefits and increased productivity of working in transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams are well-documented (Brown, Harris, & Russell, 2010; Wuchty, Jones, & Uzzi, 2007). Teaming researchers from multiple disciplines and institutions creates complex issues in negotiating contracts, authorship on publications, and allocation of researcher credit. In response, research administrators have created database systems allowing multiple researchers to share credit for a funded project within a single institution and developed agreements for sharing ownership of research data and intellectual property.

Global problems are being addressed by researchers requiring them to connect and move across international borders. International research collaboration provides unique training and education opportunities to U.S. organizations and allows researchers to address global challenges with a greater number of ideas, information, resources, and develops lasting relationships among scientists and organizations worldwide. Trends in international research collaboration are staggering; internationally shared scientific publications have increased between 7-11 percent since 2010 (NSB, 2014). This growth in international collaborations has created challenges and areas of expertise in research administration related to project management, export controls, international negotiations, ensuring international research integrity, and specialists in international research law to support the implementation of research that fully complies with local international laws. It is not uncommon to find several Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) with campuses located in other countries.

3. The Changing Role of Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs)

The traditional role of IHEs has expanded from “teaching, research, and service” to incorporate “economic development.” The passage of the Bayh-Dole Act in 1980 is credited for this expansion and opening the door to increased academia-industry partnerships and the increase in perceived or actual conflict of interest. IHEs now have the option to claim the title to inventions developed with federal funds and many have offices with human and financial resources dedicated to economic development. IHE’s patents in the U.S. have escalated from 3,300 in 2009 to 5,100 in 2012 (NSB, 2014). The arm of higher education is lengthening as it establishes foundations and corporations to facilitate technology transfer activities and collaborations with industry. Campuses are constructing buildings to house new and existing businesses that will cultivate innovation and contribute to the local economy. IHE’s economic role has led to the creation of entrepreneurial institutes, business accelerators, and business incubation programs. Business and entrepreneurial talent are
recruited to campuses to work with researchers and businesses to launch endeavors.

IHEs now have the expertise to generate business plans, assess technological commercialization potential, address intellectual property issues, attract investors, and secure gap funding. Indicators of successful economic impact can include number of startups, licenses issued, number of jobs created, number of inventions disclosed, number of patent applications filed, number of patents issued, licensing revenue, etc. The role of higher education is continuing to change as it endeavors to become an innovation ecosystem. Many argue that IHE’s role in economic development creates conflicts of interest and distracts researchers from teaching & conducting unbiased research. This has led to new regulations intended to increase accountability and transparency.

4. The Increasing Regulatory Environment

There are competing missions and relationships with the Federal government, higher education, and industry. The Federal government wants the research it funds to contribute to the public welfare and be free of bias to maintain the public’s trust. IHEs’ missions are primarily focused on teaching, research, and service. In contrast, industry’s mission is focused on generating revenue on commercial products. The complexity of relationships and conflicting missions has contributed to the increased regulatory environment. Today we have over one hundred regulations and requirements that affect how we facilitate sponsored research and programs. The most recent upcoming regulatory change is the “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards” with an effective date of the Uniform Guidance is Friday, December 26, 2014.

Because of the constant changing nature of the regulatory environment, research administrators must be proactive in determining the appropriate steps for effective change management. Developing clear communications plans to convey new information and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in decision making within their institutions is critical. Compliance to new regulatory requirements may require additional human resources, modifications to database system and procedures, and financial resources. Organizations often incur additional costs in order to be in full compliance that are not recovered; however, non-compliance often results in a higher cost to an institution. Over the years the profession has been segmented into areas of specialization due to the complexity of complying with all the legal and regulatory requirements and the complexity of the scientific research being managed. Research administrators find themselves as specialists in Technology Transfer, Conflict of Interest, Responsible Conduct of Research, Pre-Award, Post-Award, Export Control, IRB, IACUC, among others.

The Future of the Profession

Researchers are not generally trained in all of the aforementioned areas of research administration. We bring diverse areas of expertise that are required for different functions of the research enterprise. Although we have specialists in the field, it is valuable to have the knowledge base of a generalist in research administration. It is no surprise in the recent development of graduate level programs and graduate certificates in research administration as a natural progression of our profession and a reflection of the growth of complexity within the field (Smith & Torres, 2011). Graduate education delves deeper into examining all aspects of the profession and prepares research administrators as decision makers for the future by requiring a high level of critical and analytical thinking and in-depth knowledge of the core competencies that include research development, administration of awards, ethics and professionalism, intellectual property, electronic research administration, regulations and statutes, compliance, federal/sponsor appeal procedures, sponsor financial reporting, human resource management, and facility management.

Research administrators live in a rapidly changing society faced with stronger competition for shrinking research dollars, expectations of immediate economic benefits from research, an ease of dissemination of knowledge among researchers, and a demand for more accountability and transparency (Fenwick, 2012). Even when we know about the past and the present; the future holds unpredictable and complex events such as disruptors, black swans, and wicked problems. The evolution of research administration will continue and more than ever it will require the use of our brains for developing new ideas and using innovative technologies for problem solving and increased efficiency; our hearts for an unwavering dedication to our profession and pursuit of excellence in research; and our courage to take on new and more complex roles and responsibilities. Together we’re off to a bright future.

References


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An Aussie in the US…

By Julie Ward

I’ve always been intrigued by the United State research administration structure and wondered why and how things differ so much from Australian research administration. Lucky for me, I now have the opportunity to answer that question and many, many more…

After meeting Denise Clark (Associate Vice President for Research Administration, University of Maryland, College Park) at the 54th NCURA Annual Meeting in 2012 we were able to work together and arrange for her to present on various US research administration topics at the Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) annual conference in Adelaide, Australia in 2013. It was in Adelaide that Denise and I started discussing the possibility of a visiting research administrator placement at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP).

The basis of the placement is to figure out how we, as research administrators, can help break down some of the boundaries that exist in relation to international research collaborations. The placement also aligns with our institution’s global strategic plan as both the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and UMCP are members of Universitas 21 (U21). One of the outputs of the placement is facilitating the U21 Research Collaboration Group workshop that is being held at UMCP in early April.

After thousands of emails, meetings, proposals and finally the signed agreement (because we all know we can’t do anything unless the agreement is signed!) – I was ready to start my US research administration adventure.

After a long flight, the first stop was San Francisco for the Financial Research Administration (FRA) and Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA) Conferences. On the first day of FRA, I attended an all day workshop on the Fundamentals of Post Award Administration which provided the basics for me to learn about compliance, effort reporting, export controls and audits. One of the stand out concurrent sessions for me was on crowdfunding, it really made you think what the future could/will hold for research funding. Then before I knew it FRA was over and we had moved on to PRA. At PRA, I attended a lot of sessions on international grant and contract processes which reinforced that we are all facing the same issues and hopefully we will be able to address some of these issues by the end of my placement at UMCP.

I thoroughly enjoyed both meetings and believe they have provided a great foundation for me to start my US research administration journey. I would like to thank NCURA for supporting my attendance at both FRA and PRA…now all I need to do is get my head around a new set of acronyms!

Keep an eye out for the next “Aussie in the US” update…

Julie Ward is a Research Coordinator for the Division of Research at the University of New South Wales. She can be reached at julie.w@unsw.edu.au
FRA 2014 Wrap Up
WOW – What a Great FRA Conference!

FRA 2014 included a plethora of amazing workshops, a fabulous keynote by Kimberly Pace who challenged us to increase our AURA (Authenticity, Unique, Reality-based, Authority) in our day to day positions, outstanding sessions, record breaking attendance and all of this happened in the beautiful city of San Francisco. We were also able to raise over $1400.00 for the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund (another record breaker!).

Attendees had numerous educational opportunities ranging from basic to advanced, offered in a variety of formats, from a breakfast roundtable to an all day workshop. We learned about the new Uniform Guidance and how it could impact our institutions, how NSF is using data analytics to audit institutions, witnessed a live contract negotiation and best practices in finding, proposing and managing projects with international partners. This is just a brief highlight of the great sessions that were offered! It was a great mix of practical, day to day, “skill enhancing” topics with new, cutting edge, think outside the box sessions.

FRA 2014 also provided several opportunities to connect with friends and colleagues from far away, make new connections, and finally put a face with a colleague you’ve been collaborating with long distance. Your network can never be too big! If you’re like us, you came home with newfound knowledge, an expanded professional network and many items which require follow-up.

FRA 2014 wouldn’t have been possible without our outstanding Program Committee, the stellar presenters, facilitators and hosts who volunteered their time and talent to make this an FRA conference to remember! The NCURA staff are Super Heroes – always there to save the day, provide support, guidance, reassurance and answer our questions with a smile….no matter how many times we asked the same question! “Thank you” isn’t a sufficient tribute to the hundreds of people who made FRA 2014 as awesome as it was, but THANK YOU!

And, thank YOU for your participation and attendance – FRA 2014 wouldn’t have been as wildly successful without you. We hope each of you left with increased knowledge of something practical and lots of ideas for the possible. Share what you learned and make a difference – take the possible and make it practical.

FRA 2014 Co-Chairs,
Lisa Mosley
and Dave Lynch
L-R: Dave Lynch (Co-Chair), Northwestern University; Keynote Speaker Kimberly Pace; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director; Vivian Holmes, NCURA President; Lisa Mosley (Co-Chair), Arizona State University
The *NCURA Magazine* seeks applications for the volunteer position of Co-Editor. The position is a three year term, beginning January 1, 2015. The Co-Editors work with the Senior Editor, Contributing Editors, and NCURA staff in ensuring the timely release of six issues during the calendar year. Each Co-Editor works closely with 3-4 Contributing Editors. Applicants should be senior research administrators with strong writing and editing skills and strong connections within NCURA and associated professional associations (such as COGR, FDP, etc.). We expect to have a candidate selected by the end of the summer so that the new Co-Editor can work with the existing Co-Editors and Senior Editor, in ensuring an orderly transition.

Individuals interested in this position should email Senior Editor Dan Nordquist at nordquist@wsu.edu
What We Can Anticipate for 2014

By Charlene Blevens

Currently HHS OIG is wrapping up audit reports of general and administrative expenses for several institutions including ones in Florida, North Carolina, California and Kentucky and we hope to see those published soon. Additionally, a review of the OIG work plans for both NSF and HHS OIG and the OIG’s reports to Congress on top management challenges gives us some perspective on what we can anticipate for 2014.

In the fall 2013 semi-annual report to Congress, the NSF OIG reported on the 2013 top management challenges facing the Foundation. One of the challenges mentioned was establishing Accountability over large Cooperative Agreements. According to the OIG, over the last three years, audits of the proposed construction budgets for three non-competitive proposals valued at $1.1 billion found that they contained almost 28 percent in unallowable or unsupported costs. The auditors noted that NSF does not routinely obtain incurred cost submissions or audits of costs claimed to determine the allowability of costs claimed on federal awards. Contingency funds were another concern of the OIG. Their audits found that awardees did not separately track the expenditure of contingency funds in their accounting records resulting in unallowable costs that may go undetected because they are not visible to those responsible for oversight. Other serious challenges mentioned were Improving Grant Administration and Strengthening Contract Administration.

The NSF OIG Work Plan included two major themes for audits and reviews in FY 2014: 1) oversight of awardees’ management of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, and 2) financial and/or program accountability. The first theme includes audits of 22 ARRA-funded projects and institutions. The first three ARRA audits will focus on large facility construction projects, the R/V Sikuliaq, a research vessel (there will be two reports), and an audit of a revised proposal for the construction of the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope, which included $146 million of ARRA funds. The remaining projects will cover incurred cost, and/or accounting system audits of 19 institutions that received ARRA funds from NSF. These 19 audits will cover compliance with the Act, applicable Federal administrative and cost principles, and the terms and conditions of their NSF awards including assessing the adequacy of internal controls over NSF funds.

HHS OIG top 10 management challenges for 2013 included one challenge related to HHS Grant and Contracts. The OIG stated that a common problem uncovered by the reviews was that grantees lacked robust financial management systems. They found that some grantees could not account for specific grants on a grant-by-grant basis and therefore could not account for costs associated with specific grant awards. The OIG mentioned that when combined with frequent significant findings of unallowable expenses, these conditions suggested the need for more purposeful oversight and consistency in the oversight processes. The HHS OIG also noted that OMB was in the process of finalizing extensive revisions to the grants management circulars and associated cost principles for Federal grant awards, which would result in implementation challenges for the Department, including changes to HHS regulations and potential adjustments to some grant oversight practices.

Similar to NSF, the HHS OIG 2014 Work Plan for NIH includes a review of extramural construction grants and College and Universities’ compliance with the cost principles. The OIG plans to review facilities that received extramural construction grants to determine whether funds were spent in accordance with federal requirements, appropriate bidding procedures were followed, and expenditures were allowable with the Cost Principles. For the audits of compliance with the cost principles, the selection criteria will be based on the dollar value of the awards received, other HHS internal input.

Additionally, the HHS OIG 2014 Work Plan also includes a review of select agent requirements. They will coordinate efforts with CDC, the FBI, and the Department of Agriculture to investigate violations of Federal requirements for the registration, storage, and transfer of select agents and toxins. In 2006, HHS OIG performed a similar series of audits at 15 universities. Findings of those audits related to weaknesses in inventory and/or access records, records that did not always identify individuals who had entered select agent areas or the dates and times of access, weaknesses in access controls including procedures for issuing electronic access keys to select agent areas, and weaknesses in security plans and training issues.

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Unlike institutional animal care and use programs, for which accreditation was granted over 45 years ago ("About AAALAC History," 2014); accreditation of human research protection programs (HRPPs) began less than 15 years ago.

The Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc. (AAHRPP), the largest HRPP accrediting body, was founded in 2001. As of February 2014, 192 organizations were accredited, including 86 academic institutions, across the U.S. and internationally including Canada, China, India, and Taiwan ("AAHRPP Accredited Organizations," 2014).

Alion Science and Technology Corporation started HRPP accreditation services in 2013. Alion recently awarded its first accreditation to the University of Nebraska Medical Center (Alion Science and Technology, 2013).
Institutions interested in seeking accreditation for their HRPP now have two options - AAHRPP and Alion. Both have similar accreditation processes that involve self-assessment, application preparation, application review, and on-site evaluation.

AAHRPP and Alion both provide applicant institutions with evaluation instruments. To achieve accreditation, an institution must meet all the accreditation standards.

On-site evaluations include interviews with key stakeholders including senior leadership, IRB members and staff, investigators and research coordinators, as well as members and staff of Sponsored Research Administration and the Conflict of Interests Committee and other members of the HRPP.

Here are a few application preparation tips based on our AAHRPP accreditation experience:

**Tips for Preparing the Application**

Establish a deadline for submitting your application. Start early. The self-assessment process involves comparing your institution’s policies and procedures to the accreditation standards. This process is critical and will take longer than expected.

Gather a team of experts to conduct the self-assessment. Since both AAHRPP and Alion look beyond the IRB, be sure you have the appropriate experts on your team.

Use the resources provided by the accrediting body:
- Review their websites [http://www.aahrpp.org](http://www.aahrpp.org) and [http://www.alionhrpp.com](http://www.alionhrpp.com), both provide a wealth of information about the process.
- Review their evaluation instruments and tip sheets.
- Establish a dialogue with your assigned Accreditation Contact and ask questions. S/he may not be able to provide specific answers but will point you in the right direction.

Communicate:
- Keep key stakeholders informed about the self-assessment process. Send out short email blasts or develop a dedicated web page.
- Educate the research community about new and revised policies and procedures.
- Reach out to colleagues at accredited institutions. Ask how they met specific requirements and prepared for the on-site visit.

Once you submit your application, expect to receive feedback in four to six weeks. Re-assemble the team to address any comments and concerns, which may involve revising policies and procedures and/or providing additional documents. If unclear about the feedback, call your Accreditation Contact.

Next comes the On-Site Evaluation. This phase of the process involves the accreditation agency interviewing key HRPP stakeholders, reviewing HRPP documentation including IRB rosters, minutes, research protocols and related contracts, and possibly attending an IRB meeting. You will receive a detailed schedule in advance of the site visit.

**Tips for Preparing for the On-Site Evaluation**

Notify interviewees as soon as possible, giving them sufficient time to adjust their calendars.

Prepare interviewees as questions are not provided ahead of time. Questions are geared toward an institution’s application of its policies and procedures regarding the protection on human subjects rather than a recitation of the ethical principles and federal and state regulations.

- Create a guidance document that includes potential interview questions.
- Prepare individuals in the same group (e.g., IRB members, clinical research coordinators, etc.) together in an orientation-like setting.
- Perform a mock site visit where interviewees can practice prior to the actual site visit.

During the site visit, debrief the interviewees after their site visitor meeting to understand the focus of the interviews and what questions are being asked. This is helpful information for those yet to be interviewed as well as for anticipating areas of concern in the Site Visit Report.

After the site visit the institution will receive a Site Visit Report that includes observations and areas of concern. Respond to any misunderstanding of procedures and address each concern. Responses should be specific and measurable. The Site Visit Report, along with your response, will be reviewed to determine whether your institution’s HRPP receives accreditation.

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The New Wild West - Preparing Your International Grant Proposal

By Bob Lammey and John Bostwick
There are countless resources designed to help Principal Investigators (PIs) and others prepare sponsored research grant proposals, from OMB circulars, to college and university informational documents, to professional journals like this one. Even with these resources, however, developing a proposal budget can be a challenge for even the most experienced research administrators to ensure all grantor requirements are met.

Budget implications become even trickier when a proposal has an international component. It’s natural that every grant agreement requires the awardee to be compliant with the laws and regulations of the countries where field work will be conducted. However, financial obligations associated with operating abroad often go unmentioned in proposal-preparation resources. And these obligations can easily be overlooked until after a proposal is awarded and the project is underway. These oversights can lead to budget shortfalls and severe administrative headaches, not to mention potential financial exposures and reputational damage to the university.

The good news is that those charged with preparing proposals involving international activities can avoid these oversights if they know the right questions to ask. Below are examples of the most important questions related to planning research projects abroad, based on the most common issues experienced by the leading research universities today.

Admittedly, the details of the topics discussed here are complex. But you don’t need to be an expert in every area; you just need to know what to look for. There should be people at your institution, such as representatives from the general counsel’s office or the university controller’s office, who can assist you. Other offices that provide guidance related to international activities include the provost’s office, human resources, and risk management. Increasingly, universities also have designated international officers who can provide guidance, often in conjunction with a professional services firm.

**Are you accounting for all the costs associated with sending employees abroad?**

When sending an employee who is a U.S. citizen (often called an “expat”) or third country national abroad, it is not enough to simply include a U.S. salary, fringe benefit rate and travel and work-permit costs. Depending on the length of the assignment and other factors, local laws may require that your employee pay local taxes, and your institution fulfills employer obligations in the host country—such as withholding and remitting income and social taxes to local authorities—**even if your employee remains on a U.S. payroll.** If the employee owes income and social taxes in the host country, this could reduce his or her take-home pay. In order to eliminate this burden, employers typically need to consider tax equalization, which can be complex and costly. All told, sending an expat employee to work abroad can cost an employer 2-3 times the amount of that employee’s base U.S. salary.

**Are you accounting for all the costs associated with hiring local workers abroad?**

When budgeting for hiring a citizen of the host country, you may be tempted to base your calculations on the costs of hiring a local contractor, simply multiplying a base hourly pay rate by the number of anticipated hours to be worked. However, depending on the nature and length of the assignment and other factors, local employment law may dictate that you classify the worker as an employee rather than a contractor. **Simply calling a worker an independent contractor and asking them to sign an agreement attesting to that will not determine the proper classification.** Hiring
a local worker as an employee entails complying with local employer obligations, which typically include but are not limited to entering into locally compliant employment agreements, providing paid time off for local holidays and other benefits, and withholding and remitting income and social taxes to local authorities. Fulfilling these obligations also requires engaging a local payroll provider.

**Will your activities require you to legally register in the host country?**

If your project abroad will last longer than six months and/or require you to hire workers, enter into contracts, open a bank account, and/or utilize office space in the host country, you may be required to register as a local legal entity. Determining whether to register an entity, and if so, what type of legal entity to register, is an institutional decision to be made at the highest levels. PIs should consult their institution’s general counsel and/or other appropriate offices when researching this question. It may be that your institution has an existing legal entity in the host country and/or has some other arrangement that could offset the administrative and financial burdens associated with registering a legal entity abroad. Your institution will almost certainly want to consult a local attorney, or other expert, familiar with that country’s laws to assist you in making the most advantageous and compliant decision. Note that legal registration also gives rise to bookkeeping and ongoing filing requirements, and, depending on the country, may trigger local audit requirements.

**Will your activities require you to collaborate with a local Institution or engage local subcontractors?**

In order to reduce the administrative and financial burdens associated with the administrative support of the project abroad, your institution may consider subcontracting or collaborating with a host-country institution, such as a university or local NGO. **However, doing so does not necessarily absolve your university of potential registration requirements and employer obligations discussed above.**

During the proposal stage, you should also plan for the time, and potentially the costs, associated with properly vetting the local collaborators and/or subcontractors before entering into any agreements. Background checks on these host-country organizations should reasonably ensure that they are legally registered, financially solvent, have a sound local reputation, and are compatible with your institution’s mission and values. You may also need to ensure that any collaborator or subcontractor is in compliance with other local laws, such as but not limited to those related to employment and labor regulations and data protection. It is particularly important to verify in advance that any local subcontractor engaged has adequate internal finance and accounting controls in place to meet the terms of the award (such as procurement practices and disbursement of funds).

Due to language barriers, legal and cultural differences, and other factors, gathering information on collaborators and subcontractors abroad is almost always costlier and more time-consuming than performing similar due diligence on home-country organizations. You will also want to account for the costs of entering into locally compliant agreements with any collaborators or subcontractors. Agreements may be required under local law to be written in the language of the host country. And in order to protect your institution, all agreements should be reviewed by a host-country attorney prior to execution.

**Are you accounting for health and safety costs and additional insurance?**

Each activity abroad carries a unique set of health and safety considerations, including those related to natural disasters, communicable diseases, civil unrest and cultural attitudes towards women, to name a few. Not only do these considerations vary by country, they can vary considerably between different regions within the same country. Depending on project location and other factors, proposals may include costs for the following: security, or an on-site safety assessment of proposed facilities; safety and cultural training for
foreign workers coming into the country (such as U.S. employees); emergency-preparedness, shelter-in-place and evacuation plan development; and health, travel, evacuation and other insurance coverage (such as additional liability) that may be required or prudent under program circumstances.

In addition to these considerations, if the project will involve sending U.S. students to the host country to participate in or observe the project, your institution may need to comply with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. The Clery Act requires higher education institutions to gather and disclose certain crime-related statistics on or near their campuses, including those located outside the U.S.

Have you considered the effects of currency fluctuation?

Many PIs and administrators unfamiliar with managing projects abroad don’t account for possible currency fluctuations during the budgeting process. Exchange rates between home- and host-country currencies can vary significantly over the course of an award’s life, resulting in financial gains and losses. As a result, your budget should account for at least minimal annual losses due to currency fluctuation. In order to reduce the effects of currency fluctuations, you may want to plan to have just enough host-country currency in-country to cover planned expenses and any emergencies, and to frequently replenish your local account. In any case, you’ll want to budget for wire-transfer fees, local transfer charges or taxes, currency-conversion losses, and related administrative costs when planning for your project.

Will you need to pay for professional expertise?

Virtually all of the topics mentioned above—from determining whether your activities will require establishing a legal entity, to fulfilling host-country employer obligations, to entering into contracts abroad—will require obtaining advice from qualified experts familiar with host-country laws and regulations, such as a local attorney. When preparing your proposal, you should contact your institution’s office of general counsel, or equivalent, to determine if your institution has an existing relationship with professionals in the host country and, if not, your institution’s process for engaging such assistance abroad. You should also seek to obtain an estimate of these costs likely to be incurred as a result of your activities.

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John Bostwick is technical writer for the Higher Education and Non-Profits practice at High Street Partners. Prior to working at High Street, he held various positions within Harvard University’s central administration, most recently as a writer and developer of financial policy. John holds a BA from Stanford University and an MA from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. John can be reached at jbostwick@hsp.com

Lisa S. Lowy’s Desk

As I write this, a FAR Clause Database developed by Jackie LaVerghetta (fellow NCURA member) and myself is front and center. In our office the pre- and post-award functions are split, with the post-group containing our contract specialists (“Agreement Associates”). Yet any review of a federal contract RFP generally requires that the Pre Award administrator examines the FAR clauses in the model contract, identifying potential issues and advising the PI accordingly. This is not an easy task for a Pre Award administrator to do under a tight deadline and with limited contract experience. To address this need, Jackie and I have been assembling a database listing Partners Healthcare’s positions on standard FAR clauses for easy reference by the Pre Award staff. Additionally, we are developing a SOP to handle new and difficult terms. These new resources should make negotiations easier in the future and, for us, have the added benefit of bringing the two teams together.

Lisa S. Lowy
Sr. Grant and Contract Administrator, Pre Award Partners Healthcare – Research Management
Dear Ann,

If I’m reading Sara Bible’s article correctly (The Final Guidance Series, last issue of the NCURA magazine), and based on insistence from OMB/COFAR that the’s no such thing as a “super-circular” or “omnicircular” or circular of any kind for this new Uniform Guidance [it’s either the UG, (not pronounced “Ugh”), or 2 CFR 200], it sounds as though there may be more to do to update my institution’s policies than just to execute a global find and replace A-21 with A-81 after all.

Is this terrible news true?

Turned-around in a post-circular-world

Dear Turned-Around,

Every now and then I get a letter from someone who is really looking for an answer rather than just asking if I heard any good jokes lately. Assuming you’re knee deep in need and desperate for a straight answer, here—submitted by one of my esteemed consultants in twelve tweets and concatenated for your reading convenience—one is.

I hope my stringing them together doesn’t string you out.

Researchers and Research Administrators alike will indeed be living in a post-circular world after 12/26/14, although it will probably take at least a generation of new Research Administrators joining the profession before the term “Circular” loses prevalence in common parlance. Unlike A-21/A-110/A-133 (first issued as OMB Circulars, then later relocated to the CFR), the “Uniform Guidance” (UG) was never promulgated as a Circular.

Rather the UG was first published in the Federal Register, then directly codified soon thereafter at Title 2 C.F.R Part 200. It supersedes the following: (1) A–21, (2 CFR Part 220); (2) A–87, (2 CFR Part 225); (3) A–89; (4) A–102; (5) A–110 (codified at 2 CFR 215); (6) A–122, (2 CFR Part 230); (7) A–133; and (8) those sections of A–50 related to audits performed under Subpart F—Audit Requirements of 2 CFR 200. (That last sentence might be easier to understand if read with a Tobacco Auctioneer’s Trill.)

You are also correct that merely finding and replacing A-21 references won’t do the trick. Although rooting out all outdated circular citations will be part of the task, simply swapping “A-21” with “2 CFR 200 Subpart E” won’t be precise enough to encompass the changes found in the UG. For example, the Editor’s Note sidebar to Sara Bible’s article points up a few interesting cost principles that could impact your institution’s policies: §200.413(c) on Clerical & Admin as direct charges; §200.430 on IBS and effort reporting; §200.431 on Fringe Benefits accruals; and §200.453(c) on Computing Devices as direct costs.

Sara Bible’s recommended steps, including designating a point person and developing a policy and outreach team in an “all hands on deck” approach, really will work far better than going it alone. This task is too large for one or two people to think of everything, so if you are one of only one or two people at your institution, consider reaching out to collaborate with NCURA members at other institutions, large or small, to share resources and ideas.

Good advice, and by the way, don’t hope for a time extension to implement this one. They were all used up by the Affordable Health Care Act.

* * * *

Dear Turned-Around,

NCURA is certainly expanding globally. We have an International Region, International Meetings, and research administration articles from Japan, Europe and Canada in last month’s Magazine. What’s your take on working with research administrators around the globe?

Signed,

Looking for More Experience in Global Research Administration (or, as they say in the E.U., “Research Management”)

Dear Looking,

Times sure have changed, haven’t they? It was not that long ago that research administrators had more experience working around a globe rather than around the globe. Work today comes in not only from departments, compliance officers, sponsors, and bosses, but from all the four corners of the Earth.

I (not my real pronoun, which is that of a ghostwriter, which shall remain secret, both name and pronoun) find my horizons are constantly being expanded by collaborating with research administrators from other countries, all without the added stress and hassle of having to tear myself away from my desk and travel abroad. How lucky is that, you ask? The answer is simple: “It’s a total gyp.”

My high school Spanish teacher, Ms. Gompert, who thought so highly of me that she asked me to take her Spanish 101 course four times, would certainly choke on her chalk to learn that I am now negotiating contracts that are written in both English and German, or Thai, or Norwegian, and/or (I’m still puzzling over this one, but it might be) Klingon.

It’s redolent of something Molly Ivins once said of a former U.S. President, “I’m not bi-lingual, I’m bi-ignorant.” In my case, it’s poly-ignorant, or even worse, polyglottally-ignorant.
The good news is that there is never a shortage of opportunities to learn. Unfortunately, this also happens to be the bad news.

So, my dear Looking, what is there to say? Well, the world does keep getting wider, our workloads do keep increasing, and yet the time in which to do it all remains constant. Which brings us to what we might, with apologies to Robert Boyle, call Ann Granters’ Law of International Research Administration, to wit:

The amount of Pressure (P) exerted by a research administrator’s workload is directly proportional to the number of International Agreements (I) under her purview when time (t) and resources (r) are constant: or

\[ P \propto I \]

By the way, my high school Chemistry teacher, Mr. Ayotte who, like my dear Ms. Gompert, also thought so highly of me that he asked me to take his Chemistry 101 course 3.14159 times—often with sentimental tears wet upon his cheeks—would drop his stopcocks if he could hear me now. (Interestingly, he and Ms. Gompert spent many an hour together, sharing from a thermos.)

But, I digress. In practical terms, Ann Granters’ Law means that you have the following options: (a) hide under your desk whenever the next international agreement comes through your office door; (b) keep taking on more international agreements until the pressure builds to the point where your head explodes; (c) build a time machine; or (d) continue reaching out to your NCURA colleagues—both domestic and international—for best practices on dealing with this new and wonderful world of research administration or research management.

My advice? Network, network, network.

Just as Howard Beale in the movie, *Network*, advised, I want you to go to the window, stick your head outside, and scream at the top of your lungs, “I’m as confused as hell, and I’m gonna call an NCURA colleague right now and talk about it!!!”

That should do it.

Ann

Got problems? Question authority! Ann has answers for you at nordquist@wsu.edu
I recently co-presented a session at PRA titled “Linking with your Central Office” where we discussed the significant growth in departmental research administration and the benefits that these services provide to growing institutional research programs. As a result of the growth in these institutional research programs, teams have formed and leaders have emerged focusing on process improvement and better communication between central and departmental teams. Facing the tough funding future together, the need and ability for central and departmental teams to communicate, collaborate, and compromise will determine our success.

In every aspect of our profession, leadership and teamwork are essential for success. It takes a team of dedicated research administrators from several departments to build strong, successful proposals. The PI, Departmental Office, and the Office for Sponsored Research (OSR) work closely together to ensure the team is successful. The process map below (modeled by Northwestern University) shows how complicated the process can be and how teamwork is essential in order to move through the different stages of the process from initiation through submission. Every stage of the proposal process requires a leader. So, who are these leaders?

What is the motivation for YOU to be that leader? Leading is different from managing an office staff. Leading could be simply being the go-to person in your office for a specific process or the lead on implementation of a new project. As is seen from the diagram, teams of individuals are required throughout the research administration proposal process and most teams have a leader, whether it is stated or not. Leaders emerge based on their ability to work well within their teams. Could a team be made up of all leaders? The answer is a very simple “yes”.

I have worked with many influential leaders in my career. What skills have made them influential in leading and motivating their teams? In order to be an influential leader, several skills are mandatory when working in or on a team. These skills are:

**Communication** - Transparent and consistent communication is essential if the team is to work effectively. Effective communication skills do not come naturally to most people. Often times, it requires feedback from colleagues and consistent practice. People will likely be more willing to work with you if they are informed and on the same page. An important aspect of communication is the ability to listen. Active listening should always be a goal. Don’t forget that 60% of communication is non-verbal so take notice of eye and body language as well. My grandmother once told me that one of the greatest gifts you can give another is your undivided attention — not your advice. Adapting your communication style depending on the audience is also useful.

“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across, your ideas won’t get you anywhere.”

- Lee Iacocca
Initiative - Have you ever worked with a team where someone just would not pull their weight? Did this person lack the drive and determination to accomplish the task or was it fear of rejection that kept them from speaking up? Great leaders do not wait to be told what to do: they find what needs to be done and then they get it done whether alone, or by motivating others. Fear often keeps us from speaking up when we have a great idea. Fear can hold us back from personal creativity and innovation. Step out on a limb and see who follows, you might be surprised.

“Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit.”
- Conrad Hilton (Hilton Hotels)

Delegation - Effective delegation begins before you actually do any delegating at all; rather, it starts with building your team. Pick people who are creative and self-motivated enough to work without you constantly looking over their shoulder and giving instructions. A successful leader is in charge of the overall direction of the team, not of the details of how to get there. Delegation of responsibilities with a clear understanding of what is expected helps to build morale, confidence, and productivity among the team members. The old adage, “Feed a man a fish, feed him for the day, teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime,” applies here. Be sure to share the rewards and give credit and praise where due.

“Leadership is the ability to get men to do what they don’t want to do and like it.”
- Harry Truman

Motivation - According to a recent survey from CareerBuilder, published in the February 2013 Time Magazine, employees are motivated most by the quality of life in their job and if the work is rewarding. In order to help employee motivation, a leader must “inspire” the team. Make time for your team. Be focused and effective in your communications. Delegate and engage your team by allowing them to understand the logic of how decisions are made. The role of leadership is to add value to other people by influencing the behavior and attitudes of others.

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”
- John Quincy Adams

Are YOU a leader? If so, what motivates YOU to lead? Do you feel like you contribute to the research administration profession? Do you need to cultivate your leadership skills? I recently watched Daniel Ariely’s YouTube video titled “What Makes Us Feel Good About our Work” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aH2Plppjho I recommend you watch it when you have time. You will be challenged to inspire others and you might figure out what makes YOU feel good about your work. Really Powerful Stuff!

Erica Gambrell is the Coordinator of Research Services in The University of Alabama Office for Sponsored Programs where her responsibilities include development of networking and education programs for faculty as well as campus-wide Effort Reporting. She is a graduate of the 2013 NCURA Executive Leadership Program. She is actively involved with NCURA, currently serving on the NCURA Financial Management Committee and is a member of the Program Committee for the joint Region II / Region III Spring meeting. She previously served as Treasurer for Region III. Erica can be reached at egambrell@fa.ua.edu
The Rapid Evolution of My URA Work

By Keiko Okano

At EARMA 2013, I participated in a session on how to prepare an NIH proposal, which was taught by my fellow NCURA Magazine Global Editor, Olaf Svenningsen. At the time I did not know of any faculty in my department who has or was planning to apply to an NIH program. I just thought that, in the future, there might be someone who wants to apply for it, and it would be nice if I could help. Just maybe!

Well, who knew? While I was still at the conference, I received an email from the accounting office in my department. They asked me for assistance with processing some US funds, and these funds happened to be from NIH! To be more precise, it was a sub-award — actually, subawards, as I found out later that there were two concurrent ones. For this, I am so grateful to Olaf. His session wasn’t meant for the task I had, but without the information I obtained from him, I would not even know where to start.

Nevertheless, the accounting personnel and I struggled through preparing the required documents. It was like working on crossword puzzles with a lot of blanks, where reading the clues leaves you with more questions. There were so many terms I did not know — OMB Circular, A-133 Audit, purchase order, F&A, fringe benefit, accounts payable, to name but a few. I was not quite sure if our compliance policies were compatible with those in the US. On top of all those, we did not have an effort reporting system, and were not familiar with issuing invoices in English.

I don’t know how much of what was going on our side was within the expectation of the PI’s research administrators, but I felt badly for them. They had been very patient and provided answers to all of my questions. Still, it took us a long time to finally turn in acceptable documents. This task landed on me because of my English language skills, but apparently, that’s not enough. There was (and still is) a lot I had to learn.

That was when I started to consider attending the NCURA FRA Conference in San Francisco. At first I was just hoping to meet someone who had handled NIH subawards internationally (hopefully with Japan). I needed to hear a whole story, not fragmented bits of specific tasks, with background or significance I knew nothing about. Then I was thrilled to see the term “subaward monitoring” on the program, and my mind was already set.

After attending a discussion session, three sessions and a workshop on/related to subawards in FRA and PRA conferences, I now have a much better idea on what was going on during my past experiences. There were so many “I wish I knew then what I know now” moments, and it gave me some ideas on what I needed back then. Here, I would like to share them with you; your input would be highly appreciated.

1. Have a single point of contact on both parties. Ideally, that person on the Japanese side is an accounting personnel who is fluent in English and familiar with your system. If there is no one like that, a URA (usually, English is a requisite for his/her employment) would be the next best choice. I think I had most, if not all, of the emails to the accounting office and to the co-PI forwarded to me, but it is simpler if they come in the order they were received. Having to correspond with multiple persons on the PI’s side was a bit confusing, too.

2. Provide an overview at the beginning. Walking through the whole process step by step would help us be better prepared. Knowing who is involved in each step would be nice, too. This is especially important when the process involves both pre- and postaward tasks so that the point #1 above cannot be met. Moreover, if you could involve us from an earlier stage, e.g. proposal writing, it would make things easier later on.

3. Make sure that the questions asked are fully understood, then answered correctly. Denise J. Clark from University of Maryland, College Park mentioned this point during her session. Sometimes people check “Yes” hoping to hasten the process. Others may be too embarrassed to ask so many questions (not me!). Or they don’t understand what they don’t understand. This is not easy, but it should help avoid future surprises.

4. Got sample(s)? Knowing what exactly is expected is a great relief, and shortens the processing time. So far, all I have been doing is asking, so I should do my part too. I will learn more about NIH funding and prepare myself. As I have to invent this wheel for Kyoto University, I would like to share it with other Japanese universities, too. The systems are different from institution to institution, but hopefully it will help them and their counterparts in the United States. Here is one of my new (fiscal) year’s resolutions.

I thank NCURA and everyone at the conferences. I’m so glad I went!
CAURA recently hosted a broad (virtual) consultation on open-access in response to a call for input on the draft tri-agency (Canadian Federal Funders) policy on open access. CAURA members broadly support the concept of open access and all the benefits that it will bring to the research community and society. We believe that publically funded research results should be freely available with minimum delay and not locked away in high-priced subscription-based academic journals.

Many universities have already established public, open-access repositories to enable post-journal-publication open-access. This article discusses some of the opportunities, challenges and concerns expressed by members during the consultation.

**Freedom to publish in the highest impact/quality journals:** CAURA members recognize that researchers publish in journals that best reflect their particular field of research and this choice of journal is influenced by the need to maximize knowledge mobilization, and peer and societal impact. Researchers are encouraged to publish in the highest quality journals, regardless of open-access status.

Any obstacle to publishing in the highest-impact journals, e.g. prohibitive publication fees (directly or indirectly caused by a drive towards open access “gold” compliance) levied by the large publishers to replace subscriptions, would negatively impact the competitiveness of Canadian researchers especially when other jurisdictions are providing additional financial support specifically for publications.

**Maintaining Research Excellence:** Although we complain about the cost of subscribing to research journals, we understand that they have mostly had editorial boards that protect the integrity and quality of the highly ranked journals. We recognize that the mass emergence of open access journals without satisfactory editorial boards opens the door to publication of “junk” science.

**Survival of the small (niche) academic journal sector:** Concern was expressed about the survival of the small (niche) academic journal sector and that an open access requirement might make their survival even more tenuous.

We understand the value that academic journals bring to the table in providing peer review to ensure the best possible quality articles, and recognize the need for this level of diligence to protect the integrity of high level publications. However, if the small niche publishers cannot survive in this emerging (open access) business environment, researchers will lose vital knowledge mobilization channels.

**How far do we need to go:** Many journals are already compliant with the “green” open access standard. There is concern that requiring “gold” open-access may cause a further spread of the “pay to publish” business model. This trend would be extremely damaging not just for social sciences and humanities scholars, but also science and engineering scholars who have smaller average grants (compared to peers in other countries), especially when there are no (additional) sources of funding to support publication costs. While the Federal funding agency policy allows publication costs as eligible grant expenses, it does not mitigate this problem due to the small size of these grants.

In summary, the drive to open-access is very beneficial, but it is critical that the cost of compliance is not simply transferred from libraries that traditionally pay the journal subscription fees, to the often underfunded researcher. It is also critical that the new breed of open-access journals and repositories have the appropriate editorial processes in place to maintain the integrity and excellence of scholarship and protect society from “junk” science that is already so prevalent on the internet.

**Martin Kirk - CAURA President, Director, ORS, University of British Columbia**
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Federal Landscape

Federal regulations require all agencies to post their funding opportunities in Grants.gov and encourage adoption of Grants.gov for application submission where practical. Agency-specific systems such as FastLane or NSPIRES can provide quality results for the owning agency and may be user-friendly for regular users. However, developing and maintaining expertise across an increasing array of such systems, each with its own distinct credentials, approaches, and nuances, is unsustainable for organizations and research administrators with complex portfolios.

While the development of Grants.gov has not been without its problems, on the whole it is a significant and positive step consistent with the goals of President Obama’s 2011 Executive Order 13571 — Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service — and toward reducing administrative burden, which is the key principle underlying the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP).

FDP – A Forum for Discussion

The process of electronic submission through Grants.gov engenders new questions for research administrators. Some key questions were presented to a panel of experts representing various federal agencies at the January 2014 FDP meeting in Washington, DC. Among the topics discussed were outcome differences when using Adobe forms vs. system-to-system submission technologies; how agencies interact with Grants.gov; how Grants.gov submissions interact with existing agency systems; and the relationship between the content that is submitted and the product made available to agency reviewers.

Adobe Forms & System-to-System Submission Technologies

Proposals for some or all opportunities from most agencies can be submitted electronically through Grants.gov using their provided Adobe forms packages. Agency representatives construct proposal packages reflecting general agency requirements and the unique needs of particular opportunities by combining various OMB-approved forms. Each forms package includes a cover page from the SF424 family as well as other standard or agency-specific forms available in the Grants.gov electronic forms library. Many agencies have additional forms that must be retrieved from their websites, completed, and submitted as attachments to the Grants.gov package. Generally, though not always, attachments are required to be submitted as PDF documents.

Many institutions have implemented solutions allowing them to submit Grants.gov proposals using system-to-system (S2S) technology instead of electronic submission through Grants.gov.
Volunteer Pathways

NCURA has identified three distinct volunteer pathways for its members to get involved – presenter, leadership and volunteer at the regional and/or national level. “Pathways” is intended to inspire and inform members on how to engage NCURA as a volunteer in any or all of these opportunities. To get involved visit http://collaborate.ncura.edu/VolunteerOpportunities

Cathy Snyder’s Journey

As a member of NCURA since 1997, I have been fortunate to participate in many different capacities resulting in increased knowledge and friendships. I was totally overwhelmed at my first annual meeting due to the sheer size and expertise surrounding me. And to top it off, my future boss, Jerry Fife, was in the band, “Soul Source and the No Cost Extensions”, that played on Tuesday night. While they were awesome, I wasn’t quite sure what to think of this shirtless singer that wore a leather vest and tattoos! It was quite different from my very conservative world and all I could think was, “He’s going to be my boss?” But it wasn’t long before I realized what a great boss, mentor, and supporter he is (and his tattoos were fake!). He continuously encouraged me and provided me with opportunities within NCURA. As other relationships developed, my participation in NCURA grew. The benefits I receive from participating far outweigh the contributions. You can do it, too! Find a mentor! Get involved! Let’s support research…..together!

Cathy Snyder is Director of the Costing Activities at Vanderbilt University. She can be reached at cathy.snyder@vanderbilt.edu

Agency Retrieval of Submissions from Grants.gov

Agencies retrieve submissions from Grants.gov electronically. They can retrieve an XML data file and/or a set of PDF pages comprising all the forms in their opportunity package as well as any attachments that were included with each submission. From Grants.gov forward, there is essentially no difference between applications created and submitted using Adobe forms vs. those managed using S2S systems. Agency staff and reviewers generally are unable to distinguish how the application was submitted to Grants.gov, according to Ed Calimag (Grants.gov) and various agency representatives.

Where agencies have direct submission portals, such as FastLane or NSPIRES, once an application package is retrieved from Grants.gov, it is inserted into the agency system and becomes indistinguishable, to staff and reviewers, from applications submitted directly via the agency website, according to Erin Nielson (NSF) and Paul Brundage (NASA).

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) systematically retrieves the XML data file and electronically migrates form data directly into the NIH Commons and back-end databases. NIH builds its own PDF pages and automatically generates the grant image file that is available for review through the NIH Commons by investigators, administrators and ultimately, NIH staff and scientific reviewers. NSF has a similar process.

Most other agencies combine the PDF pages provided by Grants.gov with attachments to build a final proposal package that is used internally for review. Most agencies do not have systems in place that allow investigators or administrators to review the final product that will be provided to agency staff and peer reviewers.

Opportunity for Continued Improvement

For agencies where research is an important, but not primary, agency function, this is a problem without a ready solution. Agency representatives, such as Bronda Harrison of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), recognize the problem and understand the institutional prerogative to confirm that the review package accurately reflects their intended submission, however budgetary limitations preclude EPA and many other agencies from building systems to address that need.

Consolidation of services across agencies may be able to provide enhanced outcomes for these agencies and their applicants in the future. The USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) program is in the early stages of exploring a possible consolidation of services with NIH that would result in NIFA applications being processed and available to researchers and institutions through the Commons, according to Jason Hitchcock (NIFA).

Roger Wood is Senior Product Manager at InfoEd Global. He served in various roles in research administration at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia from 1988 – 2006 including Director of Research Services. Since 2006, he has been responsible for the development and direction of grants and contracts solutions for InfoEd Global, working closely with institutions in the US and around the world. He received a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from Illinois State University and a Master of Science in Marine Studies from the University of Delaware. He can be reached at rwood@infoedglobal.com
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Sitting in the hotel lounge, unwinding, we watch as people make their way up Mason Street. At the top of Mason Street is a breathtaking view of the bay, including San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Warf, Alcatraz, and the Golden Gate Bridge.

During our short time in the bay region, we hit a lot the highlights—taking a cable car ride to Pier 39 where we got to view a pod of walrus, cruise out to Alcatraz, and sink our teeth into some San Francisco sourdough bread. We strolled through the Haight-Ashbury district, center of the 1960’s hippie movement, ate Ghirardelli squares on Ghirardelli Square, shopped on Union Square, and meandered down crooked Lombard Street. We even ventured into the San Francisco botanical gardens and beyond into Muir National Monument, where we craned to view the tops of giant redwoods.

And that was just for starters….

The fun really began on day one of the 8th annual PRA conference where over 600 members and attendees gathered for three full days of learning opportunities in the form of workshops, concurrent sessions, discussion groups, roundtable events, and SPARK sessions. We had our largest attendance ever since our first gathering in Portland, OR, over 8 years ago.
PRA 2014 kicked things off with a day of workshops, including one full-day workshop and 12 half-day workshops. We were delighted to assist Jeff Ritchie, Lewis University, in presenting a free workshop offered by NCURA on Effective Presentations. If you’ve never presented at an NCURA conference and are afraid to do so, then this workshop is for you (and did we mention it was free?). It is designed to teach the presentation skills needed when addressing adult learners, demonstrating engaging and content-rich presentation techniques. Look for this workshop to be offered during the 2014 Annual Meeting, AM56.

For the next two days of concurrent sessions, the mood was set by a very entertaining, fascinating, funny, witty, insightful, and delightful keynote address given by Dr. Robert Sapolsky. His topic was one to which we could all relate: stress. As a faculty member and recipient of a number of grants, Dr. Sapolsky’s empathized with us and regaled us tales of Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers but humans do.

The days continued with ample training opportunities, as well as ample opportunities to network in the form of breakfast roundtables, refreshment breaks, and dinner groups. Just like our struggle in choosing between Ghirardelli and TCHO chocolates, we struggled to choose between the many sessions PRA had to offer. In the end, we decided on a sampling that included two Federal updates (thank you to our Federal friends

L-R: Vivian Holmes, NCURA President; Keynote Speaker Dr. Robert Sapolsky; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director; Tricia Callahan (Co-chair), Miami University; Mary Louise Healy (Co-chair), Johns Hopkins University
for being with us remotely from D.C.), a concurrent session on stimulating proposal development at the PUI, a SPARK session on the research administration M.A. programs and the process for obtaining a Research Administrators Certification, a discussion group on how to promote peer to peer learning and one on strategic planning, a compliance session on FCOI for the pre-award administrator, several visits to our sponsors and exhibitors in the exhibition hall, and more.

When the conference ended, we were tired (okay, we were exhausted), but it was a good tired. We were amazed and delighted by the number of people who came up to thank us for a job well done, but as we mentioned in our opening remarks, the strength of NCURA lays in its volunteers. We want to thank you again, all who presented and lead discussion groups and roundtables, along with those who volunteered for registration, the Collaborate booth, and technical support. We want to thank our wonderful, hard-working program committee members and we especially want to thank the amazing, hard-working, tireless, talented, and supportive staff of NCURA, with a special San Francisco shout out to Stephanie McJury, our PRA staff liaison. We also want to thank NCURA President, Vivian Holmes, for believing in us and supporting us. It was your collective efforts that made PRA 2014 a wild success.

And while we leave San Francisco a bit tired, we also leave with new connections (including several business cards and LinkedIn invites), new horizons, and new knowledge and skills gleaned from the information-filled days.

Thank you NCURA and goodbye San Francisco.

Sincerely, Tricia Callahan & Mary Louise Healy
PRA 2014 Co-chairs
Federal funding is essential to research at universities and leads to new solutions to important problems. For example, a federally funded study at the University of Nebraska allowed Prof. Stephen DiMagno to study the behavior of ions in solution. Although this topic seems very basic and far removed from medicine, this work was essential to improving PET scans that are used to detect cancer (1). Federally funded research can also address more trivial issues—the cloud computing industry that lets us enjoy games of Candy Crush on iPhones would not exist if it were not for federally funded research at the University of California Santa Barbara that laid the foundations for this technology (1). Federal funding also allows great thinkers to share their knowledge with the world. It will support Walter Isaacson, author of the best-selling biography *Steve Jobs*, when he gives a lecture this May at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts about historical figures who fused the sciences and the humanities in their careers (2). You could say that federal funding is the engine that drives the research enterprise at universities.

Scratch that. Maybe engines and driving are not the best metaphors just yet. After all, federal support for research was invented long before the automobile. It began early in our nation’s history, only 11 years after the signing of the Constitution. On July 16, 1798, the predecessor to the Public Health Service (PHS), the Marine Hospital Service, was established by President John Adams. Although the Marine Hospital Service initially focused on the relief of sick and disabled seamen, by the time the automobile was invented in 1886, there was a small intramural research program. So it is metaphorically correct to say that by then, federal funding was truly an engine driving research. It is also historically correct; in 1887, the government set up a one-room lab at the Marine Hospital on Staten Island, NY (3) where a single scientist who was only 27 years old studied the deadly microorganisms that caused yellow fever, cholera, and smallpox. That scientist, James Kinyoun, referred to his lab as the Laboratory of Hygiene. It was renamed the Hygenic Laboratory in 1891, when it was also relocated to Washington, DC, and today we know the organization, much changed of course, as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (3,4). The first formal extramural grants from the PHS did not come until 1918 when the Chamberlain-Kahn Act authorized grants to 25 institutions; this law set the precedent for the federal government to give grants to university scientists to fund their research (4). These first grants reflected the PHS’s priorities for research at the time—they were specifically for the study of venereal diseases. This fact is less surprising when we recall that the PHS started as an agency to provide medical care to retired sailors.
The engine of federal funding is what drives research at universities. Although federal funding for university research began with grants to 25 institutions in 1918, by 1967 the NSF alone funded almost a half a billion dollars in research. This change is like going from a horseless buggy to a mustang!

The Golden Age of Federal Funding:
Filling the Gas Tank and Revving the Engine

In 30 years, we went from a one horsepower engine (James Kinyoun’s lab) to 25 horsepower (those first grants). Just over 20 years later, in 1940, the engine driving the university research enterprise had even more horsepower. Those first few federal grants had grown into $350 million in federal funds for research at the top 100 universities in the U.S. (5). And this was just the beginning of a period of major growth. The U.S. developed a robust system of support for university research using public funds in the years following World War II. The PHS Act of 1944 established the legislative authority behind the NIH’s postwar research program (4), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) was established in 1950 by Public Law 507(6). Under the guidance of its first director, Alan Tower Waterman, NSF began awarding grants and fellowships in 1952 with a budget of $3.5 million (7). Its first major areas of research focus were astronomy—NSF financed the construction of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) in Green Bank, WV—and computer science, which was first funded by the NSF in 1955 (8). By 1967, NSF’s budget had grown to $480 million (7). This increase in support for the NSF of more than 100 fold in just 15 years showed that the government and the public agreed that scientific progress was essential, and that everyone had the need for speed. Indeed you could argue that the engine of federal funding was as popular as the engine in the 1967 Ford Mustang.
According to data compiled by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), federal funding for research as a percentage of the federal budget was at its peak in 1965. It began to decline in the 1970s, and by the late 1970s, federal funding for research as a percentage of the federal budget was mostly flat (9). This trend coincided with a rise in the percentage of the federal budget that was devoted to direct payments to citizens through programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. In terms of our driving metaphor, the trend since the 1970s is kind of like trading in that 1967 Ford Mustang for a Ford Taurus.

But we did not have to trade in our muscle car for a family wagon; we could have kept both. The direct payments to individuals in the federal budget were financed by increases in taxes on individuals beginning in the mid-1940s, so the families bought their own station wagons. And it’s not like we couldn’t afford the payments on the Mustang. Although federal funding for research has been flat since the 1970s, the U.S. economy has grown exponentially, according to data from the Government Printing Office. That economic growth has not translated into corresponding growth in the federal budget because tax rates on individuals are mostly flat and tax rates on corporations have greatly declined since the golden age of federal funding for research in the 1950s and 1960s. Basically, we decided that instead of paying for our Mustang, we would let businesses keep that money to buy their own vehicle—a Rolls Royce.

As we keep on rolling through current trends, we can still think about two
cars: a Ford for the non-defense related research and a Jeep for defense-related research. Both these cars have been cruising along at a constant level of federal funding for research since the heyday of the 1960s, but since 1982, the Jeep has been in front. Federal research funding on defense-related research has outstripped funding for non-defense related research when measured in constant dollars (9). But based on the most recent data from 2012, funding for non-defense related research is beginning to catch up. Indeed, the Ford is starting to tailgate the Jeep.

Although federal funding for research has been on cruise control, the private sector has been revving the engine on that Rolls Royce. In the mid-1980s, around the time when the Jeep passed the Ford, the percentage of research funded by the federal government began to be less than that funded by industry. By 2009, around two-thirds of research and development in scientific and technical fields was funded not by the government, but by businesses (9)—this Rolls Royce is driving way
Since 1982, funding for defense-related research has been greater than funding for non-defense related research. Note: Federal funding for research as a percentage of GDP has been flat since the 1970s; although this graph shows an upward trend, this is because the data are in total dollars and not percentages.

I really appreciate the cleverness of the analogy in this article between engines, driving, and cars and the evolution of federal funding for university research. Did you know that AAA—formerly known as the American Automobile Association—has actually been saving lives through grant funding? For the past 15 years, AAA Michigan has been donating funds for 'Jaws of Life' state-of-the-art hydraulic lifesaving equipment to needy communities in the state, having provided 55 grants totaling $835,000 to date. In March 2014, two new grants were awarded to Fire Departments along heavily traveled routes that serve Michigan's tourism industry that will allow them to buy their own 'Jaws.' Previously they would wait 40 minutes or longer after an accident occurred for it to be delivered from a neighboring jurisdiction. According to AAA, “the safety and security of our members and the traveling public are always first and foremost at AAA Michigan.” Personally, I have new respect for that little card I carry in my wallet.


– NCURA Magazine Co-Editor, Kristine Kulage, Columbia University School of Nursing
Despite the growth in industry-funded research, this source of funds as a contributor to university research has been more or less constant since the 1990s, and it is much lower than the amount of funding from the government (9). So, we may want to stop thinking of the Rolls Royce as being on the same highway; rather, it took an exit onto a private road.

Before we pull over this train of thought for a pit stop, it is important to remember why we are so interested in all this driving and who is behind the wheel. Publicly funded academic research has been shown to have a large positive contribution to the overall economic growth (10), whereas industry-funded research tends to benefit only the industry and its shareholders. Furthermore, the rate of return from public investment in academic research has been estimated at 28 percent (11). So unlike the engines in all these metaphorical vehicles we have been discussing, the engine of federal funding is no gas guzzler. Rather, by driving the research enterprise at universities, federal funding for research actually refills the nation’s gas tank, with economic benefits such as new knowledge and information; skilled, highly trained graduates; new instruments and methods; networks of experts; and new spin-off companies (12).

Industry funding for research has grown even as federal funding has remained flat. However, this industry-funded research is not being performed at universities.

Data and Figures from AAAS.
The Future of Federal Funding: What’s Around the Next Corner and Which Way Should We Turn

Before we take the exit and head off into the sunset, let’s back up for just a moment and retrace our route. Federal funding for research began as a horseless buggy in 1798, with the creation of the predecessor to the PHS. By 1887, it resembled a rudimentary automobile, with the establishment of a one room lab that later became the NIH. The engine of federal funding increased in horsepower over the next hundred years, beginning with grants to 25 institutions in 1918, and growing to $350 million in federal funds for research at the top 100 universities in the U.S. in 1940 and $5.6 billion in 1986. Federal funding for research as a percentage of the federal budget was at its peak in 1965, but by the late 1970s, it was mostly flat and the engine was set on cruise control. Since 1982, there has been more federal funding for defense-related research than for non-defense-related research, but both combined were less than the amount of industry funding for research. Although industry funds almost two thirds of research in the U.S., the percentage of industry funded research that is conducted by universities is small and is not growing. The engine of federal funding not only drives the research enterprise, it also does so with amazing fuel economy: a dollar spent on academic research has a 28 percent rate of return in the form of overall economic growth. This look into our rearview mirror can help inform which road to take as we continue on our drive. If I were on the pit crew, I might suggest we siphon some of the gas from the tank of that Rolls Royce and put it into the tank of the Jeep—or better yet the Ford—and see if that gives a turbo boost to the economy.

Elizabeth Haney was a recipient of federal research funding in the form of a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship in 2002. Today, as Senior Research Officer at the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University, she manages a portfolio of over $20M in federal research funds. Although she does not really like driving, she does like staying active in NCURA. This year she is AV coordinator for the Region I Spring meeting in Mystic, CT, and she was also selected for the Region I’s Executive Shadow Program. She can be reached at elizabeth.haney@wyss.harvard.edu

References
PULLMAN, Wash. – A middle-aged man is stricken by a heart attack and crumples to the floor. But when paramedics arrive, they skip the oxygen and instead administer a bit of toxic gas that puts the patient into a protective state of “hibernation.” Later, fully recovered in the hospital, the man’s heart shows little sign of damage.

Though futuristic, such treatment is nearly within reach thanks to chemical tools created by Ming Xian, an associate professor of chemistry at Washington State University.

Xian runs the world’s leading laboratory for development and production of bioactive hydrogen sulfide donors and sensors — a new class of chemical compounds aimed at some of medicine’s worst enemies: heart disease, traumatic shock and blood loss, complications of diabetes and possibly even Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease.

He has just been awarded $1.5 million from the National Institutes of Health to investigate hydrogen sulfide releasing agents for tissue damage that occurs during heart attacks and other conditions.

Controllable compound patented

Previous studies have shown that hydrogen sulfide (H2S) gas — once used as a deadly chemical agent in WWI — can reduce the body’s need for oxygen by temporarily slowing down metabolism. That could be a boon for medicine, especially for critical care workers treating trauma patients.

Unfortunately, H2S is not only toxic but is also extremely short-lived and difficult to study, blocking prior attempts to recruit it for health care.

In 2009, Xian began developing a controllable source of hydrogen sulfide gas for use in biomedical research. Today, his team has patented the first controllable hydrogen sulfide donors and one of the first sensors.

Xian’s donors and sensors are novel organic chemical compounds that allow H2S to be studied in living tissue with reliability and precision.

Donors are engineered to release H2S when they contact specific molecules in the body and may one day be used to deliver medical treatments. Sensors — fluorescent probes — glow when they discover H2S within cells and tissues, helping unlock the mysteries of the gas’s protective effects on the body.
70 percent less heart attack injury
For ages, hydrogen sulfide has had a bad rap, says Xian. Although sulfur is the third most abundant mineral in the body, important for protein and enzyme systems, its rotten egg smell has made it something of a joke. Most people know H2S as the warning odor in natural gas leaks.

But by 2008, researchers had clearly established that the body itself produces H2S and uses it as a signaling molecule to help regulate physiological processes in the brain, heart and other organs.

For example, hydrogen sulfide maintains heart health through a number of actions, including dilating vessels to help control blood pressure.

“During a heart attack, blood flow to cardiac tissue is blocked, resulting in a lack of oxygen,” says Xian. “In response, cell metabolism starts to slow down to protect the heart from injury.”

The worst damage occurs when blood pours back into the heart carrying normal levels of oxygen. The sudden influx triggers the release of oxidizing molecules that can destroy heart tissue.

Because H2S also acts as an antioxidant, Xian says that quickly treating a patient with hydrogen sulfide at this point could block oxidizing molecules and protect the heart from further harm.

“Experiments prove it works, but it hasn’t been used in humans,” he says.

In a 2010 TED talk, Mark Roth, a cell biologist at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, described how animals treated with H2S showed 70 percent less injury in heart attacks than animals receiving the usual human standard of care.

Injury, disease treatment possibilities
Hydrogen sulfide is also being eyed for use when the entire body is deprived of oxygen by blood loss or shock. Early treatment with H2S could allow tissues to survive on lower concentrations of oxygen, potentially buying a patient enough time to secure proper treatment.

Studies on Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease have found severely reduced levels of hydrogen sulfide in brain tissue where it should be abundant. This has led to speculation that supplemental H2S might also benefit these conditions.

“So, hydrogen sulfide could have lots of applications, from helping soldiers injured in battle, to treating heart attacks, to healing inflammatory conditions such as skin lesions in diabetics,” says Xian.

References

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

Professor Ming Xian received his B.S. in chemistry from Nankai University China. He then joined Professor Jin-Pei Cheng’s group at Nankai for his early graduate study. In 1999, he moved to the Wayne State University to continue his research under Professor Peng George Wang. After received his Ph.D. in organic chemistry in 2003, he did postdoctoral research with Professor Amos B. Smith, III as a DOD postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania. In August 2006, he joined the faculty at the Washington State University in the Department of Chemistry.

The core of Dr. Xian’s research interests comprises the desire to combine organic synthesis with bioorganic chemistry to examine, understand, and solve problems of biological and medicinal significance. We are interested in the areas of (1) synthetic methodology development; (2) natural product synthesis; (3) bioorthogonal reactions for protein identification; and (4) the development of bio-based new materials.

Dr. Ming Xian can be reached at WSU Department of Chemistry, mxian@wsu.edu 509-335-6073, http://xian.chem.wsu.edu
While many of you were facing “polar vortexes” and “Snowmageddon” in mid-February, Bob Andresen (University of Wisconsin-Madison), David Mayo (California Institute of Technology) and I were invited to offer the first “NCURA Global Financial Research Administration” workshop at Qatar University in Doha, Qatar. While Bob and David taught both the Global Fundamentals and the Global Sponsored Programs Administration Level II, this is the first time I was part of the team.

Just like last year, there were attendees from Qatar University, neighboring universities and the Qatar National Research Foundation. Two of the universities from “Education City” are the Qatar campuses of Texas A&M University and Carnegie Mellon. In fact, one of the attendees from Carnegie Mellon had recently travelled to Pittsburgh, PA to attend an on-campus offering of NCURA’s Departmental Research Administration workshop. She indicated that it was very interesting to compare and contrast the material offered.

For me, this was an experience I won’t soon forget. It was so exciting to be able to share experiences and knowledge. This workshop also reinforced for me that the desire to learn, share best practices and shared goals of assisting our faculty is global. We all face the same challenges, policies are always important, and it is always a joy to partner with my good friends Bob Andresen and David Mayo. But what really meant the most to me was a brief moment I spent with a student enrolled at Qatar University. This student came up to me during the session break on the last day. She approached me and introduced herself as a student. She then asked to shake my hand and said, “I want to thank you for what you’re doing here.” It was a real honor to shake her hand.

Patricia Hawk is the Immediate Past President of NCURA. Pat has previously served as a workshop faculty for NCURA’s Departmental Research Administration workshop, Financial Research Administration workshop and Fundamentals. Pat is the Director, Sponsored Programs at Oregon State University. She can be reached at Patricia.Hawk@oregonstate.edu

NCURA traveled to Qatar University in February to present the first Global FRA workshop. L to R: Dr. Moumen Hasnah, Director of Academic Research, Qatar University; Pat Hawk, Director of Sponsored Programs, Oregon State University; David Mayo, Director of Sponsored Research, California Institute of Technology; Robert Andresen, Director of Research Financial Services, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Creating a PI Portal:

PUTTING DATA INTO THE HANDS OF THE RESEARCHERS

By Marcia Smith and Jenna Lee

INTRODUCTION

As research funding becomes more competitive, pressure is increasing on Principal Investigators (PIs) and research administrators to closely manage their increasingly complex research portfolios. PIs are, in effect, running their own small businesses, managing financials, marketing, human resources, and safety and compliance requirements. They are assisted by skilled research administrators who are acting as their Chief Financial and Chief Operating Officers. To enable effective analysis and decision making, it is critical that data is available at a researcher’s fingertips. Historically, research administrators have had to continuously process and repackage data to respond to the specific needs of their PIs. This takes time, the data ages, the PI waits, and actions may be delayed.

Because of this challenge, many institutions are seeking increased accessibility and transparency in research administration data for their PIs all in one place – a PI Portal. The PI Portal is a tool that institutions envision will be a “one-stop shop” for PIs and their research administration data needs. This portal might display the current account balance for each of the PIs’ grants and contracts, while also providing a view into their current proposal pipelines. While various organizations define the contents of a portal differently, most of them generally desire the following types of information:

Financial data: Real-time available balances on research accounts and discretionary (or unrestricted) accounts that are under the PI’s control

Proposal data: How many proposals have they submitted and where are they in the review process (e.g., Submitted to Sponsor, Not Funded)

Compliance data: IRB/IACUC protocol status, conflict of interest review status, safety committee approvals, and tracking of compliance with various training requirements

Orientation information: Information and resources for setting up a lab, central administration contacts for submitting proposals and managing awards, search mechanisms for finding external funding, and other general information about research related policies and procedures at an institution

These decisions provide a solid foundation for the creation of an institution’s PI Portal. The key tasks and decisions are described in detail below.

To achieve these goals at UCLA, central research administrators and research IT resources collaborated with research faculty to develop a PI Portal designed by PIs for PIs. Based on UCLA’s experience, there were five key tasks/decision points in the process of implementing a PI Portal:
In many institutions, research administration tools have been developed to meet the specific needs of research administrators (both central and local). These systems often include detailed financial codes, cryptic terminology, and functionality that is focused on administrator needs and tasks. More rarely, tools are designed to reflect the distinct perspective of individual PIs whose needs and perspectives may differ substantially from those of research administrators. Rather than seeing a 10-digit expenditure code that is helpful to the administrator, the PI may want a simple roll-up category – such as “supplies.” If researchers express that they do not have ready access to the specific information they need in a format that is useful to them, a PI Portal that is designed to researcher specifications may be a solution.

In undertaking the development of a PI Portal, as with any campus-wide initiative, it is important to involve the key constituents in defining the scope of the project and planning next steps. In the creation of a PI Portal, your key stakeholders are the PIs themselves. Sparking their interest and garnering their buy-in and support early on in the project will be essential to the success of your initiative.

Investigator input is critical in defining PI Portal needs at your institution. Understanding what is important to the investigators and what currently may be lacking from an information perspective will be the foundation for defining your initial requirements. Involving researchers that represent various constituencies (clinical and basic research, for example) at your institution will help ensure your portal is addressing multiple needs.

Forming a diverse Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) is an important first step in answering the question: What is the problem the PI Portal is meant to solve? This group should be comprised of researchers from across your campus who represent the variety of research interests and expertise inherent at your institution.

Giving a room full of faculty carte blanche to discuss their needs around research administration data may seem overwhelming; however, this conversation is likely to be the easiest and most energizing to have – you are asking them to dream about the ideal data delivery system. Some key questions to discuss include: What do they not have right now that would be useful in helping them manage their research portfolios? What are their key pain points? What kinds of administrative questions do they ask regularly? What types of data are difficult to obtain? What kinds of analyses do they wish they could do? Be prepared with a few ideas of your own if the group stalls – with a little prompting, the flood gates will open.

Once you have the ideas and requirements, it is important that this same group help you prioritize. They are likely to dream big – it is now your responsibility to help them identify the greatest needs. This step is key in bringing focus to your project plan, managing expectations, and allowing you to move forward in a meaningful way.

Ask questions like: If we could only meet one of these needs in the next several months, which would be the most important? What will alleviate the greatest frustrations? What is the one thing on this list that you cannot live without?

At this point you will have received two very important pieces of data from your faculty: 1) What information is missing? and 2) Of the pieces that are missing, what are the most important issues to tackle first? Once you have the answers to these two questions, you are armed with the beginnings of a plan to address their needs.

**Task 2: Design the PI Portal**

Next you need to create a team for designing your portal. A successful portal should consist of functional subject matter experts who are able to identify data sources and definitions and to suggest meaningful data display as well as technical experts who know how to access the data, build the infrastructure, and create the user interface. In short, there should be individuals who understand the business of research administration and those that understand the technology behind the research administration systems.

While a PI Portal initiative may be led by one of any of a number of campus groups, working with central research administration may facilitate access to the systems-of-record that house the data to be delivered to PIs. The functional team members may be individuals within your central pre- and post-award offices who have a detailed understanding of how research administration data is entered into various systems as well as how data is to be interpreted by the end user. Functional team members may also be in the department and close to the PIs, with an understanding of the day-to-day report requests from investigators. Other possible members could be individuals who participated in working groups that helped implement various research administration systems. The responsibilities of your functional team will include:

- Further defining and refining requirements for the portal
- Drafting mock-ups for how the portal should look and feel to the end user
Identifying business process gaps that may need to be addressed prior to pulling in certain key data fields

The technical team members should be individuals who have a detailed understanding of the system architecture within your research administration organization and knowledge of related campus systems. These may be members of your research IT office (if you are fortunate enough to have one) or your campus IT office. It is important that these individuals also have an understanding of the research systems strategy from a global perspective to ensure the efforts of your PI Portal working group are in line with your research enterprise system strategy. For example, UCLA’s research administration system strategy is to draw data from the various transactional systems into a central data warehouse. The warehouse data is then displayed to meet the specific needs of various campus constituencies, including primarily pre-award users, fund manager users, and senior management users. The PI Portal initiative then resulted in a new view of data designed for PIs by PIs. The responsibilities of your technical team will include:

- Identifying technological approaches to how the requirements can be met
- Identifying technical gaps that may need to be addressed in order to obtain and display the required data
- Developing approaches to system security needs

**Task 3: Determine the Delivery Mechanism for the PI Portal**

Once priorities are set and a mechanism for PI involvement and feedback is created, a critical step is gaining a complete understanding of where your data lives, what is currently available through your existing transactional systems (e.g., pre- and post-award systems, protocol management systems), and how to retrieve it. In addition, determinations of data delivery requirements (e.g. real-time data required? Remote accessibility desired?) will influence your approach to system development. There are two primary options for how you may want to build the PI Portal:

**Home Grown Option:** Some institutions have chosen to create their own portal solution with a unique look and feel. For institutions that have dedicated research administration IT personnel, this is a good option. Having a dedicated research IT group will ensure you have proper support for a home grown tool over the long term. Advantages of this approach include:

- **Complete Customization:** You have complete control over the look and feel of your tool. UCLA is an example of an institution that customized its PI Portal. UCLA has had great success, releasing several iterations over the last three years and being nimble and flexible enough to answer PI requests for slight tweaks, new functionality or additional data.

- **Makes Allowances for your Differences:** Hand in hand with the customization advantage, home grown systems also can account for your institution’s particular systems and data nuances. If there are allowances that need to be made because of the complexity of

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**NCURA Education Scholarship Fund**

At the recent FRA and PRA conferences members opened their hearts and wallets to give back. We thank the following members for their personal donations to the Fund:

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MAY/JUNE 2014
your source systems or because data in your transactional systems are entered a certain way, these are likely more easily made with a homegrown system.

**Out of the Box Option:** For those institutions that may not have a dedicated research administration IT group or already have a system that includes a portal option, it may be easier and faster to go with an out-of-the-box solution. Advantages of this approach include:

**Quicker Turnaround:** Because it is a ready-made solution, going with a vendor can be much easier and faster to implement. Your working group is likely making some key decisions about data, but does not have to actually lay out how the portal will look and feel.

**Automatic Integration:** If you choose a portal in a system you already own, it’s easier and quicker to ensure the information is integrated with your current systems.

**Task 4:**
**Build the PI Portal and Release Iterations**

In order to build excitement around the PI Portal and continue to gain momentum over time, institutions should consider a staggered implementation. After the FAC members have identified their top priorities, it is advantageous to deliver on one or more of them as soon as possible! It may be more beneficial to your goals to be nimble than to be perfect. Providing even partial functionality that is useful will help PIs see solutions are possible, maintain high interest, ensure the delivered components actually meet the PIs’ needs, enable adjustments, stimulate new ideas, and generate buzz.

The first release of the portal should not be the last. PI needs may be modified over time, and their priorities may shift. Releasing incremental iterations of the portal over time keeps the project current and active. If you envision the PI Portal incorporating several components, release them one at a time. That way, you build excitement around the tool as well as demonstrate early wins that will keep your working group and FAC engaged. UCLA released “My Funds” for its PIs first — allowing PIs easy access to their sponsored accounts and this was soon followed by “My Personnel” and “My Proposals” — each new release was an opportunity to re-engage the campus and spur excitement around the tool.

**Task 5:**
**Assess Performance**

As various iterations are released, it is important to understand the effect the portal is having. Is it being utilized as you thought it would? Are there unintended consequences? Useful ways to measure the impact of your tool are usage statistics and PI feedback. Maintain a regular meeting schedule with your FAC to demonstrate new functionality and gather feedback. Provide an email feedback link on the portal landing page, and assign a resource to ensure...
timely, helpful, friendly, and reliable responses. Put up a booth at the campus technology fair. Continue to engage your users on the impact of the tool. Is it meeting their needs? If not, what should be tweaked? You will likely see usage continue to fluctuate over time.

Another strategy for gauging how your portal is being viewed campus-wide is to solicit feedback from your top users. Are PIs from certain departments more active in the system than others? Seek out invitations to faculty meetings. Run and analyze hit-rate reports to identify super users. Meet with the top 10 consistent users of the portal and solicit direct feedback about what is working for them — why do they like it, and what other uses have they found for the tool? This can be powerful for two reasons: 1) it provides you direct feedback to share your tool and promote it to others — quotes from faculty are powerful endorsements; and 2) it may inform areas you can modify or improve to get others to use the tool. This information should feed directly into future iterations of the portal.

Over time it may be possible to measure other effects of the PI Portal: Has the frequency of late cost-transfers declined as PIs viewed and discussed their fund data with their administrators more frequently? Are cost over-runs and/or refunds to sponsors decreasing as PIs are able to plan their spending more effectively? Are reminders about expiring protocol approvals, PI deliverables due, and lapses in required training helpful in maintaining compliance? A successful PI Portal implementation could have broad impacts across the institution.

**Conclusion**

PI Portals can be integral in providing real-time research administration data to investigators. Empowering faculty to be proactive, allowing them to make informed financial decisions, and promoting timely dialogue between faculty and research administrators are just some of the advantages of implementing this type of solution at your institution. The key to success is involving PIs, prioritizing their needs, and assessing progress along the way.

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**Marcia Smith,** Associate Vice Chancellor, Office of Research Administration, UCLA, has over 20 years of experience in research administration. In her current role at UCLA, she has oversight of pre- and post-award operations, as well as animal and human subject compliance. She is also directing UCLA’s Research Administration Process Improvement and Deployment (RAPID) project, leading campus-wide initiatives focused on increasing the effectiveness of research administration operations through changes in organizational structure, business process improvement, technology development and deployment, personnel development, and monitoring of comprehensive performance metrics. She has presented at numerous national conferences (including NCURA and SRA), and her team was awarded the SRA 2012 award for best technology innovation for their work on UCLA’s PI Portal.

**Jenna Lee,** Director, Huron Consulting Group has worked in research administration for over 7 years, primarily in the area of research administration transformation. She has experience in both pre- and post-award administration and regularly advises clients on improving research operations, with particular focus on how to implement successful transformation projects. Jenna has extensive experience guiding clients through significant change management obstacles. She has presented at national conferences on various research administration topics including Implementing a PI Portal, Research Administration Transformation and Using Business Intelligence to Drive Organizational Change.

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**Research Administration...By the NUMBERS**

The Evolution of Research Administration – Facing the Future...Together

7.5%: asset growth from 2012 to 2013 of 83 large foundations surveyed recently by the Chronicle of Philanthropy. Assets of foundations covered by the Chronicle survey grew to the highest levels since the Great Recession. This signals a possibility of an increase in 2014 overall funding.

**January 17:** Date that President Obama signed the 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

- **$29.93 billion:** NIH FY 2014 budget. A **$1 billion** increase over FY 2013.
- **$7.17 billion:** NSF FY 2014 budget, a **4.2%** increase over FY 2013.
- **$5.07 billion:** DOE FY 2014 budget, a **9.7%** increase over FY 2013.
- **$17.6 billion:** NASA FY 2014 budget, a **$700 million** increase over FY 2013.

Sources:

- [http://philanthropy.com/article/Foundation-Assets-Reach/145533](http://philanthropy.com/article/Foundation-Assets-Reach/145533)
- [http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2014/02/14/fiscal-policies-and-more-for-2014/](http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2014/02/14/fiscal-policies-and-more-for-2014/)

Want to share numbers? Email Heather Kubinec at heather.kubinec@research.uci.edu

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**MAY/JUNE 2014**

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The 2014 International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) world congress was held in Washington D.C. on April 10-13 and was a great success! The conference was truly a global experience, attracting approximately 450 research administrators originating from nearly 40 countries. We are grateful to our co-hosts, the Canadian Association of University Research Administrators and the Society of Research Administrators International, for making this conference a memorable and lasting experience. When we selected the conference date nearly three years ago, we accepted the improbable aligning of the dates to coincide with the 2014 National Cherry Blossom Festival, knowing that the weather the last few years has not cooperated with the timing of the festival. However, the risk paid off, and INORMS 2014 was rewarded with the beautiful sight of the cherry blossoms at their peak combined with absolutely perfect weather. From our opening outdoor reception to our excursion to the Smithsonian Air and Space museum, Washington D.C. shared its spring beauty and reinforced its selection as the first North American city to host this global event.

Since we were in competition with perfect weather conditions and the beauty of the cherry blossoms, we were fortunate to have excellent presenters and pertinent session topics as an incentive for our participants to remain indoors. The conference began with well over two hundred participants engaged in workshop topics ranging from bibliometric tools to policy development to detecting fraud. The concurrent sessions offered multiple tracks on policy, performance, and practice and frequently elicited the response from the participants that it was very hard to choose from such an overwhelming offering of relevant topics. The conference was further blessed with excellent keynote speakers who informed the delegates of global funding trends, challenged us to...
create easier ways to administer projects that extend beyond our geopolitical borders, and left us pondering over future global challenges and opportunities we will face as we manage our institutions so as to remain competitive within the global research marketplace.

The INORMS movement began with the simple vision of bringing together the various global research management societies to give their members the opportunity to make global connections and to share global best practices in the field of research administration. INORMS 2014 certainly lived up to the original vision and reminded all of the participants that the problems and challenges we face each and every day in supporting our institutional research portfolios are the same the world over.
NCURA members have significant impact on the ‘National Scene’—their thoughts on national issues in research administration.

Inaugural Region VIII International Meeting Recap

NCURA hosted its first ever Region VIII International Meeting in Washington, DC on April 9th, themed “Going Global: Fostering Innovation and Strengthening Synergies.” It was a great day of sessions and collaboration. We asked Program Committee Chair Agatha Keller and Committee Member Annika Glauner, both from the University of Zurich in Switzerland, to provide a few words about the experience. We hope you enjoy the comments and photos from this historic first Region VIII International Meeting.

Agatha Keller, Program Committee Chair: “I was very pleased to see how the discussions in the different sessions went, and I had the feeling that attendees appreciated the format of this 1st International Region Meeting. They got a lot of information and had the possibility to actively participate and discuss and very importantly network with speakers and attendees. And the Reception at the Swiss Embassy was a very nice way to start the discussions and get ready for going global.”

Annika Glauner, Program Committee Member: “What an intense day. What a thought provoking experience the outstanding speakers provided us with and what an incredible audience, who kept asking questions right to the very end. What impressed me was the clear mission the participants and members of the International Region defined throughout the day: One of the key factors for the International Region’s gatherings is to cut red tape and accelerate the funding process. We as members of this Region have a responsibility to act creatively and not react passively in order to achieve this goal. Regions 1 through 7 watch out! I am already looking forward to the next one.”

Twila Reighley  
Asst. Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs Administration, Michigan State University

NSF-OIG selected MSU as one of several institutions to participate in a data analytics audit. Auditors use software and other tools to identify areas of risk/significance in large data sets. MSU provided (as directed) three years of all transaction data for all directly-funded NSF projects. MSU is in the first review phase with auditors testing 300 transactions mostly focusing on travel and equipment. The second phase will focus on cost transfers, salaries, and participants support costs. Early reports of similar reviews indicate that when using this method, NSF-OIG does identify anomalies for further study. As you might expect, even with a more automated approach, the audit does require considerable resources, which are in addition to the resources we commit to the A-133 Single Audit.

Jerry Fife  
Vice Chancellor for Administration, Vanderbilt University

Over the past 10 years the compound annual growth rate for sponsored expenditures at Vanderbilt has grown by 6% while expenditures in support of the Office of Contract and Grant Accounting have risen by 4%. Add to this the burden of increased federal regulations over the same time period, and it is easy to conclude that maintaining compliance is an ever challenging task. Our federal counterparts are experiencing the same challenge. As leaders in research administration, it is up to us to meet this challenge and look for ways to remain compliant with fewer resources. A few possibilities such as restructuring or combining offices and continued process improvement are some ways we can and must use to continue to meet these challenges.

Bruce Morgan  
Asst. Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, University of California - Irvine

Concerns are growing regarding the increasing administrative burdens faced by our researchers. The U.S. research enterprise is not well-served by regulations and requirements that divert the efforts of talented researchers toward administrative tasks. This diversion slows the progress and productivity of U.S. research, as the FDP faculty burden surveys of 2007 and 2012 confirmed. Recently, the National Science Board completed its own examination of researcher administrative burdens. The report will be issued in early May and will contain several recommendations for reducing administrative burdens in the areas of proposals, progress reporting, human subject research, effort reporting and more. After the report is issued, please look for a future NCURA Magazine in which I’ll summarize and discuss the report’s findings and recommendations, in addition to comments associated with the Uniform Guidance.
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Vice President for Research at Portland State University

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rSmart empowers colleges and universities to step away from proprietary, legacy enterprise resource planning (ERP) software and embrace Kuali community-driven, open source technologies. Reduce costs, improve efficiencies, and lower risk with rSmart.
NCURA and the UK-based Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) announced a strategic alliance in January 2014 in order to provide additional resources and global value-added to our respective members’ increasing portfolios of cross-border research collaborations. One of the outcomes of this alliance is a jointly sponsored workshop which will be held during ARMA’s 2014 Conference in Blackpool, United Kingdom, from June 9-11, 2014. ARMA currently has a Leadership Programme for high-level university research policy executives, and as UK universities deepen collaborative ties with U.S. universities, there is a high level of interest and need for UK research managers to become more familiar with the U.S. research funding environment and the complexities of collaborating with U.S. universities. As a result, Vivian Holmes and Patricia Hawk, President and Immediate Past President, respectively, of NCURA, will cover the following topics in a 3-hour session on Tuesday, June 10:

1. Routes to Collaboration: Understanding the U.S. Funding Environment
2. U.S. Research Priorities and Policies
3. Challenges of Integrating U.S./UK Collaboration into Institution-wide Policies
4. Policy-focused Case Studies on U.S./UK research collaboration

In addition, an increasing number of UK universities are interested in applying for U.S. federal funds either as the prime recipient or as a sub-recipient. As a result, NCURA has arranged for representatives from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) to present during a 1-day workshop on June 9 to operational-level UK research administrators who already have or are very interested in managing a U.S.-funded grant or sub-grant. Federal representatives will include the following:

Jean Feldman, Head of the Policy Office, NSF
Marcia Hahn, Director of the Division of Grants Policy, NIH

They will present their respective agencies’ opportunities for research collaboration between U.S. and UK researchers as well as the federal perspective on managing cross-border research projects. Vivian Holmes and Pat Hawk will provide institutional case studies from the perspectives of two U.S. institutions, and Stephen Conway, Chair of ARMA’s Training and Development Committee and the Associate Director of Research Services at Oxford University, will provide a case study from the UK perspective. The focus of the workshop will be to provide practical approaches to project management for UK institutions involved in U.S.-funded projects.

It is with much excitement that NCURA continues to implement additional joint and mutually beneficial activities with ARMA over the course of the next few years. We expect that these joint sessions will be just the start of a strong partnership that will empower members of both organizations to more fully engage with global research collaborations and to keep them manageable and in compliance. We look forward to doing this while along the way also making friends “Across the Pond”.

ARMA Annual Conference website: https://www.arma.ac.uk/events/annual-conference/arma-2014
Kathi Delehoy, Senior Vice President for Research Administration at Colorado State University, retires as of June 1, 2014. Kathi is an alum of Colorado State University’s College of Liberal Arts and has 40 years of service to the University. Kathi’s professional career in research administration at CSU spans 30 years, including positions in Sponsored Programs before advancing to the Vice President’s office. As an NCURA member, Kathi served as the Chair of Region VII and on the National Board, in addition to a number of other volunteer activities. She most recently served on the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee.

Jennifer Duncan joined the University of Houston on February 1, 2014 as Assistant Vice President for Research Administration. Jennifer will develop, implement, and manage electronic research administration systems, oversee fiscal compliance, and be responsible for training efforts associated with system implementation to help the Division of Research achieve its goal of developing a world-class, state-of-the-art infrastructure for research administration.

After a national search, David Ngo has been named as Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Mr. Ngo has been with the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Office of Research & Sponsored Programs since February 2004, and most recently held the title of Managing Officer. He holds Bachelor of Science degrees in Economics and Industrial Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Master’s of Business Administration from Cardinal Stritch University. Mr. Ngo graduated from NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute in 2009 and from NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program in 2013.

Jennifer Shambrook, Ph.D., has been named the new Director of Research Programs and Services at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida. UCF is the second largest university in the United States with a primary research focus of economic development, engineering and partnerships. Jennifer is a past chair of Region III, a member of the PDC, and served as editor of RMR since 2011. She also is a long time member of the Soul Source and No Cost Extensions band, which performed their 4th Farewell Tour at INORMS 2014!

Regina White, Associate Vice President for Research at Brown University, is retiring May 16 after more than 10 years at Brown and 33 years in research administration. Regina began her career at a small research institution outside Boston, gaining more experience at Harvard, the University of Vermont, and the NIH. Regina served as NCURA President in 2001, and also as Secretary and member of the Professional Development Committee and various program committees for national and Region I meetings. Her highlight was serving on the faculty of Fundamentals of Sponsored Programs Administration. She also served on COGR’s Research Compliance Administration committee.

Carol Zuiches will retire from the U. of Chicago where she has served as Associate Vice President for Research Administration and Director of University Research Administration since 2008. Previous positions include Assistant Vice Provost and Executive Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Washington and Director of the Office of Grant and Research Development at Washington State University. Her first research administration position was at SUNY – Binghamton. Prior to that, she worked as a research assistant at three other institutions. She has been a member of NCURA since 1985, and has served on numerous NCURA committees including as Chair of Region VI and on NCURA’s Board of Directors. Carol has presented numerous workshops and concurrent sessions at regional and national meetings. She will move to Portland, Oregon following retirement. She thanks the NCURA staff and membership and attributes the training she received through NCURA programs and the professional network that she established both in NCURA and beyond for her career in research administration.

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:

Compliance Community – “Subwardee’s Patent application disclosure” posted by Collette Ryder, Director, Sponsored Research, New York Genome Center. Collette asked a question about subrecipient’s responsibility to report problems to the government.

“IRB Question” in the Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions by Ken Bielen, Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs, Indiana Wesleyan University. Ken asked advice on institution’s IRB policy allowing department/division chairs/coordinators (or their designees) to exempt research proposals from further review.

Research Development-Education Community – “Encouraging interdisciplinary research on your campus” posted by Erica Gambrell, Coordinator of Research Services at The University of Alabama. Erica asked members to share how they encourage collaboration and development of research partnerships across disciplines.

In the Pre-Award Community, Hillery Oberle, Pre-Award Administrator for University of Northern Iowa. Hillery posted a question asking members about non-employee eligibility to serve as PI.

Join the conversation at: http://collaborate.ncura.edu/home
Dear Region I friends,

So… while I was enjoying the Justin Timberlake concert at the TD Garden in late February, I had a vision. No, I was not on any narcotics if you were wondering. But, as I watched JT performing on a floating stage, engaging a sold out audience with his silky voice and smooth moves while playing the piano and guitar…all at the same time (no, not really), I asked myself: why can’t we, Region I, be like JT? As we provide our members with forums to exchange ideas and best practices, as well as opportunities for growth and development, why can’t we do so in a captivating, novel, exciting and entertaining way? Well gosh darn it, we’re going to try to be like JT, I say. You just wait!

On March 12th, Region I held its first RADG of the year at Emmanuel College. Over 130 attendees dressed in their “Suit & Tie” came to all say “Bye, Bye, Bye” to all of the OMB Circulars. Panelists from Harvard University, Attain LLC and Huron Consulting Group discussed the implications of the new Uniform Guidance, aka the SuperCircular, aka the OmniCircular, aka A-81, aka the thick document that screams “It’s Gonna Be Me!” Thank you, no please, thank you.

Special thanks to Region I Advisory Board Members, Kristin Pennarun and Alison Wellman-Smith as well as all of the Region I Volunteers for coordinating the RADG. The change in venue for the RADGs to Emmanuel College appears to have been a smashing success. Please go to the Region I website for details about the next RADG scheduled for June 11th. JT will be opening the event with his hit “Cry Me a River.” Well, that’s not true, but please come anyway!

At the end of April, Region I held its Annual Meeting at the Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa. Registrants enjoyed over sixty quality workshops and sessions and discussion groups, won prizes at the scavenger hunt, “[Took] Back the Night” on the dance floor with the local band Sugar, enjoyed some of the best pizza in the world, all while making new friends and connections. Chair-elect Michelle Auerbach and her Program Committee deserve a hearty congratulations on their wonderful achievement. To all of the Region I Volunteers and Speakers, thank you for all your efforts. It truly was a magnificent success, and I hope each of you take pride in the knowledge that together, you made it all happen. Now, if you have not done so already, please delete all photos of the scavenger hunt immediately. I’m serious. Not really.

If you had fun at the Spring Meeting in Mystic, then you will definitely want to come to next year’s meeting in Portland, Maine! That’s right, Region I has just booked the Westin Portland Harborview Hotel to host the Region I Annual Meeting in May of 2015. Wait, you want more? Okay, then. In 2016… Region I will have its Annual Meeting in Cape Cod, Massachusetts! You heard me! Incredibly, we have already started to plan our Annual Meetings for the next TWO years! Yeah, baby. Take that, Region II! Our fantastic Site Selection Committee members, Stacy Riseman, Kris Monahan and Donna Smith deserve our gratitude for all the miles traveled and for their wonderful eye. Thank you.

That’s it for now, Region I, and remember, “What Goes Around, Comes Around,” and hindsight is always “20/20.” Come on, admit it. You’re smiling. Now, someone get me a “Mirror.”

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

Happy (almost) Summer, Region II colleagues! Many of you, I hope, will be reading this after a long but fulfilling week in St. Pete Beach, FL, at our joint Region II/Region III Spring Meeting. It is always so rewarding to see so many of you engaged in learning new things, catching up with colleagues, and making new connections. And please take what you learned back to your institutions and share with those who were unable to attend. I want to take this opportunity to again thank our wonderful Program Committee and particularly the Chairs, Erin Bailey, University at Buffalo and Laurianne Torres, Duke University Medical Center, and Co-Chairs, Anne Albinak, Johns Hopkins University and Kay Gilstrap, Georgia State University, for doing such a great job! I move that we always go to the beach for our meeting…any seconds?

I’d also like to take a moment to congratulate all of our award winners from the Regional Meeting. Firstly, I want to congratulate our Distinguished Service Award winners: Jared Littman, St. John’s University, and Anne Albinak, JHU. The Distinguished Service Award is an annual award to recognize members of Region II who have made sustained and significant contributions to the Region. I’ve known both Jared and Anne for several years and their commitment to and support of Region II is outstanding. Secondly, I’d also like to congratulate our travel award winners: Hilah Zia, Smithsonian Institute and Sherry Skidmore, West Virginia University. The travel awards pay a small stipend and make it possible for a Region II administrator to travel to the Regional Meeting. I know that Hilah and Sherry return to their institutions with new toolkits and new resources.

The Spring Meeting also kicked off our newest endeavor, which is near and dear to my heart: the Cheryl-Lee Howard Mentor Me Program. The
‘Mentor Me’ program provides educational and professional development opportunities through one-on-one mentoring. I would like to congratulate the five mentees selected for the class of 2014: Anika Bissahoyo, PhD, Bowie State University; Christine Cowan, Christiana Care Healthcare; Jennifer Harmon, PhD, Nazareth College; Maisha Nelson, Icahn SOM at Mount Sinai; and Kierra Suggs, Johns Hopkins University, SOM. We wish them success in their projects over the coming months! If you would like to learn more about the Mentor Me program, or how to apply for next year’s class, please visit our webpage at: http://ncuraregionii.org/mentor-me

So what exciting developments/opportunities do we have in store for you in the next few months? One item of note is that regional officer elections will now be moved up to June-July, due to the change in the National Annual Meeting dates. Although regional officers don’t start their terms until January of each year, there are workshops and other opportunities that occur simultaneously with National that are important for the newly-elected officers to attend.

Therefore, starting this year, we will be holding the elections earlier in order to identify those officers in time. Look for an election survey to hit your inbox in late June/early July!

Also, be on the lookout for more traveling workshops coming your way! Our Professional Development Committee has been hard at work signing up new hosts for our existing workshops; and also designing new offerings based on your requests and new developments in our field (“Uniform Guidance” anyone?). If you don’t see a workshop in your area, we can always come to you! Did you know that host organizations receive two free registrations to the next Region II conference? For more information on our workshops and becoming a host institution, visit our website: http://ncuraregionii.org/pdc

I hope everyone had a wonderful Spring! Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii and Twitter: @NCURAREGIONII

Leerin Shields serves as the Chair of Region II and is the Manager, Contracts and Grants, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

REGION III
Southeast
www.ncuraregioniii.com
https://www.facebook.com/groups/192985687430137

SPRING MEETING 2014
This year we held a joint Spring Meeting with Region II in St. Pete Beach, Florida. It was an opportunity for all of us to enjoy some warmer weather and sunshine after a long gloomy winter while increasing our knowledge and getting an opportunity to network with our colleagues. As you read this, we hope that you are looking back on the great time you had learning and networking, or regretting not attending. No worries, there is always next year! The success of our meeting is the result of hard work from a large number of individuals who volunteer their time and talents. Thank you to all the presenters, discussion facilitators, and generous volunteers for making this meeting a success.

This year’s program included a great number of sessions and was the result of a tremendous effort by the joint program committee led by:

Region II Program Committee Chair: Erin Bailey, University of Buffalo
Region III Program Committee Chair: Laurianne Torres, Duke University
Region II Program Committee Co-Chair: Anne Albinak, Johns Hopkins University
Region III Program Committee Co-Chair: Kay Gilstrap, Georgia State University

We look forward to seeing everyone in Washington for the National Conference in August.

Bill Lambert serves as Region III’s newsletter contributor and is Assistant Dean for Research Administration at Emory University’s Rollins School of Public Health.

REGION IV
Mid-America
www.ncuraregioniv.com
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ncura-Region-IV/134867746805561

As I am writing this, the calendar says it is spring. The sun is shining and all of the animals in my backyard are busy preparing for the ritual of life as it descends upon us. However, the temperatures are still in the teens and there is still snow covering most of our half acre. It seems I’m getting mixed signals here!

But even if the weather isn’t cooperating, it is clear that Region IV members are forging ahead with their many accomplishments and successes. Here are some examples of Region IV’s involvement with NCURA: Region IV members serve on the NCURA National Board, are Contributing Editors of the NCURA Magazine and serve on the Research Management Review Journal Editorial Board while numerous Region IV members are authors in each of those publications. Many of our members have been recognized as leaders within NCURA and at their own institutions. They
serve as international fellows and step up to the plate to run in the annual Region IV elections to volunteer on the Region IV Board. In addition, members have volunteered for our inaugural “Mentoring Our Own” program, designed to help those new to the region and research administration navigate through the maze of opportunities and succeed. And of course I couldn’t begin to count all of those who enthusiastically agreed to pitch in at Region IV’s Indianapolis Spring Meeting.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank committee chairs who served a prominent role last year in moving our region forward:

- **Awards Committee** – Nancy Reidelberger, Washington University
- **Communications Committee** – Amy Kitzman, Northwestern University
- **Membership Committee** – Sue Grimes, Purdue University
- **Nominations Committee** – Jeffrey Ritchie, Lewis University
- **Professional Development Committee** – Jennifer Duncan, University of Missouri
- **Site Selection Committee** – Patience Graybill, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

And finally, let me also say congratulations to the latest Region IV CRA graduates:

- **Ponda Barnes**, Loyola University Chicago
- **Maureen Bonnefin**, Washington State University
- **Rocio Bueno**, University of Illinois at Chicago
- **Dania Diaz**, Michigan State University
- **Jill Ferguson**, University of Missouri
- **Tammy Good**, Indiana University
- **Natalie Goodwin-Frank**, Washington University
- **Zhong Jiang**, The Ohio State University
- **Anne Klarich**, Indiana University
- **Bonnie Kwit**, Oakland University
- **Teresa Miller**, Indiana University
- **James Olson**, Wartburg College
- **Sikirat Tijani**, Society of Thoracic Surgeons
- **Terry White**, Indiana University

Region IV members are serious about their commitment in advancing the field of research administration and use every opportunity available to them through NCURA. Region IV, you are busy! I am so proud of the enthusiasm and spirit you exhibit. This benefits the region and validates everyone as professionals and research administrators. If you are interested in getting involved with Region IV you can see there is no shortage of opportunities.

As I wrap this up, it shouldn’t go without mention that Region IV members also know how to have fun. Many of our mascot cows were photographed around the globe, from the Midwest to the African continent, and members voted on their favorite. I found this particular cow waiting for spring …

As Chair of Region IV, I will look for ways and opportunities to continue the growth of our region and tap into what I know is our most valuable resource – our members.

*Sue Kelch serves as the Chair of Region IV and is Research Finance Manager in the Department of Otolaryngology, University of Michigan.*

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**REGION V Southwestern**

www.ncuraregionv.com

Wow, was that Regional Meeting weird or what? By now you’ve unpacked your bags and are settling in on being back to work. A big thank you to Hollie Schreiber and her Program Committee for all of their hard work planning our Austin meeting. It is time to start planning to attend NCURA’s 56th Annual Meeting in Washington DC this August 10-13.

This year three Quinten S. Mathews Travel Awards in the amount of $1000 were given to Melissa Mikesell from Oklahoma State University, Adriane Moline from UTMB Galveston and Mari Martinez, from UTHSC San Antonio. Congratulations to Region V’s newest Certified Research Administrators; Maria Pesantez, Baylor College of Medicine; Mayra Hough, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; Vanessa Lopez, University of Texas At Austin; Mohini Patel, University of Texas At Austin; Stacy Williams, University of Texas At San Antonio.

This is my last Regional Corner Article as Region V Chair. At the end of the Austin meeting I will have turned the reins of Region V over to Hollie Schreiber, Oklahoma State University. I know that Hollie will do a great job as Chair in the coming year. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve Region V membership. “Leadership is being the first egg in the omelet.” -Jarod Kintz.

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 infor-
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

What an exciting spring. NCURA FRA and PRA meetings in our Region in San Francisco created a terrific opportunity for new connections and networking. Welcome to our new members!

It is with a heavy heart that we share the passing of a long-standing Region VI member and excellent research administrator. Laura Kubec, Director of Sponsored Research Services for the Keck Graduate Institute passed on October 25, 2013 after a long and courageous fight against cancer. In her role as director of sponsored research services, she was responsible for identifying funding opportunities, preparing grant proposals, working with post-award sponsored research staff to facilitate smooth transitions from pre-award to post-award, among numerous other duties — all of which she performed with humor, grace and almost super-human efficiency, according to KGI President Sheldon Schuster and others who worked with her.

“There is no doubt that she played an integral part in helping to grow and enhance KGI’s research activities, drawing on her long experience in sponsored research in the corporate and university worlds, and her unique expertise in both pre-award and post-award grants administration,” President Schuster said. “Laura was also a constant source of encouragement and calm in a world of deadlines. She was a friend upon whom we all depended, and her dedication and hard work inspired us as well.” Laura exemplified the profession of Research Administration and will be missed in Region VI and throughout the NCURA community.

Program development continues for Reno in October 2014. The theme, “Take a Chance” is taking shape and we’re creating events for every night that will be fun and social for more networking and friendship making opportunities. The Volunteer Opportunities are abundant. Please check the Region VI website for announcements and calls for volunteers.

Elections will be coming soon. Please consider serving your region in an elected position or nominating someone who would be an excellent leader for Region VI.

Region VI has service awards for worthwhile nominees. Please consider a nomination to a worthy candidate for any of our Award Programs. The descriptions are available on our website http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura/awardapp.aspx

Thank you.

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

It’s Monday morning and a reminder pops up…time to start writing the NCURA Regional Corner article, and now it’s Thursday afternoon and I’m still mulling over which topics to cover, which to leave out, it all seems so important. I feel like I’m becoming one of those PI’s that procrastinates on their grant proposal submission. Yikes! That’s not a good feeling, and so I’ll start by giving hearty CONGRATULATIONS to Lisa Mosley on serving as the co-chair for the FRA/PRA conference. In my opinion it was a rousing success with a record attendance overall and from our region. It was really wonderful to see so many familiar faces networking and making new acquaintances. I would also like to thank all of you that served as presenters for workshops and sessions. Your willingness to volunteer your time and expertise is critical and we all benefit from the variety of ideas and perspectives shared during these types of venues.

While many of the regions are in the throes of finalizing their regional meetings, I wanted to let you know that Sam Westcott, Chair from Region VI and I have been busy putting the plans in motion for our combined meeting which will be held October 6th – 8th in Reno, NV. We have been working with the Program Committee members to bring you a strong and educational program. At this point our “dance card” is about half filled and we still have room for more of your ideas for workshop and session topics. The University of Nevada, Reno has been very helpful in offering to assist in finding a fun and interesting keynote speaker and the Event Planning Committee has some really terrific ideas for our western themed meeting (like bowling, movie night and a driving range [yes for golf, not your car!]). If anyone from our region would like to serve on this committee, it would be most appreciated.
A bit of other news to pass along with this article – our region has some retirements from longstanding NCURA folks, specifically Neta Fernandez and Kathi Delehoy, and I know that I’m really going to miss seeing them both at our regional and annual meetings. Kathi will be stepping down as our region’s representative on the N&LDC and Winnie Ennenga has graciously agreed to serve out the rest of her term.

I feel like I’m missing something important here…oh yes, the upcoming Uniform Guidance implementation. As a blast from the past, NCURA TV will be available on May 14th with a panel of experts to help all of us figure out the best roadmap to ensure a successful implementation on our campuses. I’ve decided this feels a bit like running a marathon, complete with hatching the idea (OK the feds did this for us), doing the research to find the best workout plan and breaking it into bite sized pieces that we can handle. Then you launch with the group and stick together through the ups and downs. You just have to keep reminding yourself…you can do it and you have lots of others that are running down the road with you!

Did you have a chance to read the March 24th NCURA e-Xtra? Proof that happy people are more productive and now I can justify that box of chocolates in my desk drawer.

Leslie Schmidt, serves as the Region VII Chair and is Assistant Vice President for Research at The Montana State University.

REGION VIII
International

http://www.ncuraintlregion.org

The 1st International Region Meeting was a success!

Arriving with the cherry blossoms to Washington the International Region held its first spring meeting ever on April 9th. The attendance of International members together with visitors from other NCURA regions and invited speakers came close to 80 participants, making this meeting a great success. I would like to thank the Program Committee, comprising Agatha Keller, Annika Glauner and Bryony Wakefield, for getting a very interesting program with great speakers together and to congratulate them on a perfectly organized meeting.

The meeting kicked off with a great welcome reception hosted by the Embassy of Switzerland. We are very grateful for this generous support in honor of our inaugural meeting. The program included a Keynote address by Graham Harrison, Section Head of the Office of International and Integrative Activities of the NSF, on the topic of strategic shifts needed to maintain successful research projects in a changing and complex global environment. There was a panel session on the organization of research management across the globe as well as concurrent session on global science, the EU Horizon2020 program and compliance, organized in three tracks. I wished we had had more time so that I could have listened to all those great presentations. We are already looking forward to the 2nd meeting planned to be held in conjunction with the Region IV meeting in Chicago 2015.

We have prepared a first draft of bylaws and administrative procedures to be adopted by our membership. They will, among other things, regulate the election and responsibilities of regional officers. Look out for more information via email where you also will be able to give feedback on the draft. We aim to have these processes in place for the election of the 2015 officers in the second half of this year.

If you want to support the international region, there are open positions for volunteers. Contact our volunteer coordinator, Bryony Wakefield bryonyjw@unimelb.edu.au and inform yourself about the open positions. I hope many of you members can make it to the NCURA Annual meeting in August. It will be a good opportunity to meet and develop the International Region further.

Patriq Fagerstedt, Chair
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