Cultivating Community

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WRITTEN BY: Jane Youngers, Assistant Vice President for Research Administration, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and Pamela Webb, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, University of Minnesota

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IN THIS ISSUE

Message from Your President
By Michelle Vazin .......................................................... 3

Internal Controls: COSO, the Uniform Guidance, and More!
By Mary Lee Brown .......................................................... 4

Cultivating a Community from an FRA Perspective
By Tara Seaton and Sarah Kern ............................................ 6

Cultivating a Community of Scholar-Practitioners: The Emerging Role of MA Programs in Research Administration
By Mary Louise Healy and Christine Katsapis .......................... 10

Cultivating a Student Research Community at a PUI
By Emily Devereux and Rebekah Craig .................................. 14

eRA: Cultivating Community or Creating Confusion and Chaos?
By Colleen M. Loew .......................................................... 18

Expanding Opportunities Enabled by STEM Education
By Kelvin K. Droegemeier .................................................. 20

The Revised Cuba Asset Control Regulations
By Jessica Buchanan and Elizabeth Peloso ............................. 24

Research Administration in Europe: Common Goals Beyond Geographic Boundaries
By Eva Björndal and Laura Plant Fuentes ............................... 27

Transatlantic Research Cooperation
By Elli Tzatzanis-Stepanovic .............................................. 30

Research Administration in Japan: A Day in the Life of a Japanese University Research Administrator
By Tadashi Sugihara .......................................................... 34

It Takes a Village
By Linnea Minnema ......................................................... 38

Building 3D Communities from the Departmental Perspective
By Kristin Pennaran .......................................................... 40

Investigator Financial Conflicts of Interest: What Every Good Research Administrator Should Know
By Amy Spicer ................................................................. 44

Creating a Culture of Grant-Seeking
By Kathy Thatcher, Vivian Smyrl, Jason Leubner ...................... 46

Audit Watch
By Charlene Blevens ......................................................... 48

Change the Conversation by Building Community
By Sarah Browngoetz and Ryan Moritz .................................. 51

Cool Research Project Spotlight ........................................... 54

Research Administration by the Numbers ................................ 37

On the National Level ......................................................... 56

What I Found on Twitter ....................................................... 56

Regional Corner ................................................................. 58

Milestones ........................................................................ 64

Annual Meeting Update ..................................................... 65

Calendar of Events ........................................................... Back Cover

Education Scholarship Fund .............................................. 12

2015 Board and Standing Committees .................................. 13

Traveling Workshops Head to Portland ................................. 17

NCURA Pathways .............................................................. 28

Using Pinterest at Miami of Ohio ............................................ 32

Research Administration by the Numbers ............................. 37

NCURA Magazine e-Xtra Headline Highlights ...................... 49

Call for Travelling Faculty .................................................. 50

Select Committee on Peer Programs ..................................... 53

WorkSmart .................................................................... 55

On the National Level ......................................................... 56
ON THE COVER: When our Co-Editor team discussed the theme of this issue, we immediately all connected to the topic. Why? Because we had already built a community. NCURA is GREAT at helping support communities, as we have seen in… actually well before the creation of, NCURA Collaborate. We also build many communities inside and outside of the office. We defined these as a feeling of fellowship with others that result from sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals, and then we decided to ask the following questions. How can we cultivate or grow our community as research administrators? There may be ways to grow our community with other schools, grow a community of scholars, or develop a small community of research administration in a school’s department, right? How can we develop better programs, better communications, improved ways of working, or regular interactions that promote community? And voila our theme was born.

Before I get too far into describing our wonderful “Cultivating Community” based articles, just a reminder that we are FULL SPEED AHEAD INTO the Uniform Guidance, although likely no reminders are needed. I am very excited about the “Internal Controls: COSO, the Uniform Guidance, and More!” piece by Mary Lee Brown, the Associate Vice President for Audit, Compliance and Privacy (OACP) at the University of Pennsylvania and PENN Medicine (Health System), where she has worked for 18 years. All I have been hearing about is COSO, Coso, Coso in all its variations, so Mary Lee is helping the Community understand COSO, thank heavens!

Now let’s cultivate community! We are doing this with an FRA Perspective, Student Research at a PUI, eRA information, a 3D Departmental Perspective, and so much more happily brought to you by Tara Seaton, Sarah Kern, Emily Devereux, Rebekah Craig, Colleen M. Loew, Kristin Pennarun, and a host of other tremendous authors. You will hear about members, infrastructure, and networks as well as “Respect the person, respect the product” – great topics connecting us to the real world of cultivating community. Thank you to all of our authors!

Don’t forget to check out all the global writings from Europe and Japan. Plus Jessica Buchanan and Elizabeth Peloso, from Penn, giving us the latest on the revised Cuba Asset Control regulations. Also check out our cool infographic sharing data on NIH RO1 outcomes, very cool, the great Research Admin Meme, and Heather Johnson tells us how she is using Pinterest at Miami of Ohio. We added a small sidebar called “NCURA Magazine e-Xtra Headline Highlights” where Lourana Swayne, from Washington State University, is tying some of our recent e-Xtra headlines to our Magazine theme. Please enjoy this issue!

Dan Nordquist, Senior Editor

Dan Nordquist is currently the Assistant Vice President, Office of Research, and Director of Washington State University’s Office of Grant and Research Development. He oversees research development, proposal and award processing, research metrics, non-financial post-award, and is significantly involved in strategic initiatives at WSU. He has a passion for technology and its positive impact on research management. Dan has significant leadership experience internally and externally, and is an NCURA Past President. He can be reached at nordquist@wsu.edu
The theme of this issue of the NCURA magazine is “Cultivating Community.” How apt this is for us in research administration. Our fundamental core and purpose relies on the effectiveness and stability of the various “communities” with which we regularly interact and in which regularly we participate. Each of us has various overlapping communities at our own institutions. We have the research funding communities that we work within every day. The research community at large has become stronger over the years due, impart, to the development of the multitude of layers of collaborations that occur across the various communities. The sense of “community” abounds within all aspects of research administration.

NCURA is the epitome of a wonderful community to be a part of within the research administration world. The sense of coming home when you attend a NCURA conference or meeting is pronounced. Everyone is in step – we all have the same concerns, burning issues, regulation woes, etc. As a result of all these shared interests and goals, we become stronger as a community as we work through the relevant concerns and hot topics together. The old saying “two heads are better than one” is proven true time and time again within our NCURA community.

The NCURA Board’s first meeting in 2015 was in early February. The Board spent an entire day on strategic thinking and planning. There was much conversation around what the envisioned future of NCURA looks like – where should we be in 3, 5, 10 years? What are the “stretch” goals we should be aspiring to which will ensure that NCURA and its community stays on the cutting-edge of research administration? Exercises such as these keep the Board focused and on track to effectively lead the NCURA organization into the next successful stage of its growth.

In fact, recently NCURA was selected to be included as one of 14 case studies highlighted in the publication called *Transformational Governance: How Boards Achieve Extraordinary Change*. NCURA was chosen because it was seen as an association with a highly-functioning Board of Directors. This is a huge honor for NCURA, its Board and staff. I am very excited at what the future holds for NCURA and its members, and I feel extremely honored to be a part of this current dialogue in 2015. Every member benefits from NCURA’s continued success. This is definitely one of the communities research administrators should make a point to cultivate. The rewards reaped are priceless.

With spring right around the corner, the regional meetings will begin to take place soon. They are all shaping up nicely and will provide another great venue for NCURA members to build and enhance some strong community ties. I, or one of the national officers of NCURA, will be attending each of the regional meetings. We are all looking forward to these meetings and the opportunity they will give us to closely interact with the regional leaders and members.

Finally, don’t forget to mark your calendars for the annual meeting in August. It is never too early to start making plans. Stay tuned over the next several months as more information is forthcoming on all the wonderful events and sessions that are being planned for our members and attendees. It is going to be another stellar August meeting. So, lock in August 2-5, 2015, on your schedule, and plan on coming to Washington, DC, to spend time with your colleagues and be educated, updated and empowered on all things research administration.

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With the research administration community, the concept of internal controls has garnered increased attention recently, especially with the release of the Uniform Guidance (UG)\(^1\), and in particular, section §200.303 Internal Controls found in SubPart D-Post Federal Award Requirements, Standards for Financial and Program Management. So, what are internal controls, and why are they so important? Let’s start with a definition. COSO\(^2\) and the UG use the same definition for internal controls. In §200.61 Internal Controls, the UG defines internal controls as a process implemented by a non-Federal entity [e.g., institution of higher education], designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives in the following categories:

1. Effectiveness and efficiency of operations;
2. Reliability of reporting for internal and external use; and
3. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

In accordance with the UG §200.303, non-Federal entities must maintain effective internal control over the federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the entity is managing the federal award in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award. Internal controls should be in compliance with the Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government (the “Green Book” issued by the Comptroller General of the United States or the Internal Control Integrated Framework issued by COSO). In addition, non-Federal entities must:

- comply with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal awards;
- evaluate and monitor compliance;
- take prompt action when non-compliance is identified;
- take reasonable measures to safeguard personally identifiable information and other information designated as sensitive.

These requirements are not new. Per the preamble to the UG, the UG moves guidance that was previously only discussed in audit requirements into the administrative requirements to encourage non-Federal entities to better structure their internal controls earlier in the process\(^3\).

Why are they important?

Good controls encourage efficiency; compliance with laws, regulations and University policies; and seek to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse. Good controls are always documented and often communicated via policy and procedure manuals or guidelines, educational sessions and training programs, websites, regular publications such as newsletters, etc. All employees of a University have some role in internal controls. That role depends on an individual’s job responsibilities or association with the University. At the most senior executive levels, the role may involve setting the tone for expected behavior by all staff i.e., through publication and dissemination of a Code of Conduct/Ethics. At the staff supervisory level, the role may involve reviewing transactions for reasonableness and allowability prior to approval, reconciling accounts to ensure amounts are accurate and proper, or identifying instances where follow-up may be necessary. At the management level, the role may involve establishing control policies, conducting periodic assessments to confirm systems of control are designed properly and functioning as intended, or ensuring that adequate resources are available to carry out objectives. Whether your role is establishing and maintaining the controls or executing the processes and procedures in compliance with the policies, good internal controls signal an institution’s ability to effectively manage operations in furtherance of its mission, provide reliable financial information and ensure employee compliance with laws and regulations. I recommend that institutions establish a formal policy on internal control that articulates the institution’s commitment to sound business practices and describes the responsibilities of those whose roles are referenced above.
Additional concepts related to internal control include:

- Management, not the internal or external auditors, must establish and maintain the institution’s controls. Auditors can assess the adequacy and effectiveness of controls and provide advice or recommendations to strengthen controls.
- Controls apply to manual as well as electronic systems. Consider, for example, controls which govern the rules for granting access to electronic systems and controls that direct how frequently those access privileges are reviewed and confirmed as appropriate for the individual’s job duties and responsibilities.
- No system of control can be considered completely effective, nor can internal control ensure the success of an entity. Internal control cannot transform an inherently poor manager into a good one.
- The cost vs expected benefit of implementing any control should be taken into consideration when designing controls.
- Regardless of the commitment to effective internal controls, every institution will experience a breakdown in controls at some time and on some scale. Good internal controls help ensure an entity can avoid damage to its reputation and other consequences.

The COSO Integrated Framework and the Components of Internal Control

The Core Concepts of the Framework state that the objectives of internal control are to promote effective and efficient operations, produce timely and accurate reporting, and help ensure compliance with laws and regulations. There are five Components of Control: a strong control environment (tone at the top), an assessment of risks to achieving your objectives, controls activities (what most people perceive as internal controls – approval signatures, reconciliations, supervisor review, etc.), a steady flow of information and communication, and monitoring of the system of internal control. These Components of Control must be present and operating together for a system of internal control to be effective.

In regard to managing risks associated with the conduct and administration of research at an institution of higher education, let’s view the research portfolio through the components of internal control.

Control Environment – Does the board of regents/trustees understand the institution’s research portfolio and associated risks, and are they informed of how the institution is managing the numerous, and often complex, reporting and compliance obligations?

Risk Assessment – Have the institution and key stakeholders evaluated operations, reporting and compliance objectives and gathered sufficient information in order to understand how research risk could impact such objectives?

Control Activities – Has the institution developed control activities, including general control activities, over research administration and the technology used to support those operations, which enable the institution to manage the research risk within a level of tolerance acceptable to the institution? Have the control activities been documented and disseminated through formalized policies and procedures?

Information and Communication – Has the institution identified information requirements to properly manage internal control over the research risks? Has the institution defined the internal and external communication channels and protocols that support the functioning of internal control? How will the institution respond to, manage, and communicate about a research risk event?

Monitoring Activities – How will the institution select, develop, and perform evaluations to ascertain the design and operating effectiveness of internal controls that address research risk? When deficiencies are identified; how are these communicated and prioritized for corrective action? What is the institution doing to monitor their research risk profile?

Summary

Management is responsible, in both the central and decentralized operating units, for establishing, maintaining and promoting sound business practices and effective internal controls. Systems of internal control will vary from activity to activity depending upon the operating environment, including the size of the entity, its diversity of operations and the degree of centralization of financial and administrative management.

While there may be practical limitations to the implementation of some internal controls, each business function throughout the institution must establish and maintain a system of controls which meets the minimum requirements as established by the institution’s Internal Control policy. A properly functioning system of controls improves the efficiency and effectiveness of operations, contributes to safeguarding assets and identifies and discourages irregularities, such as questionable or illegal payments and practices, conflict of interest activities and other diversions of assets.

References

1 See 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

2 COSO stands for Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission. It is an independent private-sector initiative formed in 1985 that provides thought leadership through the development of frameworks and guidance on enterprise risk management, internal control and fraud deterrence. In May 2013, it revised and reissued “Internal Control – Integrated Framework” originally published in 1992 as a guide to establishing internal control systems. See: http://www.coso.org/aboutus.htm


Mary Lee Brown is the Associate Vice President for Audit, Compliance and Privacy (OACP) at the University of Pennsylvania and PENN Medicine (Health System), where she has worked for 18 years. Prior to working at Penn, she spent 18 years at the Johns Hopkins University in several leadership roles, including administrative computing, internal audit and controller functions. She currently serves as chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee for the Association of College and University Auditors (ACUA) and as liaison to the Council on Governmental Relations as a member of the Costing Policies Committee. She can be reached at marylb@upenn.edu
Cultivating a Community from an FRA Perspective

By Tara Seaton & Sarah Kern

When examining the community you live in, what advantages or disadvantages do you see? Your community may have an A+ school system, but may lack businesses, so members must commute to neighboring communities for work. Now, complete that same review with your work community. If you work in an FRA community, you may find that your community has an excellent financial system, but lacks professional growth opportunities, so members tend to leave for other communities. Determining what will satisfy the current members or attract new members is the challenge. Before sharing a few best practices for cultivating a community, it is important to understand the components of a community.

The first component is the Members. Members are the heart and soul of the community; without them, a community does not exist. They possess the skills and expertise which contribute to the success and value of the community. Members who are leaders have the important responsibility of establishing the vision and goals for the community. They are the guiding lights who put community before self.

Infrastructure, the second component, represents the “capital” that a community holds and to which members have direct access. In an FRA community, this could include office space, computers, desks, an IT department, member expertise, processes, etc.

The third component, Resources, embodies the pieces the community needs access to but does not control. In an FRA community, these are those items like the financial system, data warehouse, Accounts Payable, Purchasing, etc.

Lastly, Networks represents the pathways within the community or between the community and the resources. These range from informal networks (“I know Beth in Financial Services— I’ll call her up and get her opinion.”) to formal ones (“Our RA team has a monthly standing meeting with the Sponsored Accounting Office.”).
The Path of Cultivation

Cultivation begins with identifying the vision upon which the community was established. The vision determines the mission for the community. With support from the members, community leaders are usually the ones tasked with creating the vision. A worthy vision for an FRA community is that of providing the “best-in-class financial research administration.” To make the vision a reality, the leaders and members need to work together to identify goals and implement plans. Cultivating the community makes this possible.

There are many tools/methods that can be used to cultivate a community; they must be carefully picked based on the vision and members. We will provide several tools/methods that have worked within our FRA community.

Setting Goals

A couple of years ago, our FRA community’s ever-growing workload forced a number of closeouts to the bottom of the priority list, creating a huge backlog. As a community, it was decided that actions needed to be taken to get rid of the backlog. However, creating the strategy to implement this goal was difficult because we did not know where to start. Through the efforts of a few volunteer members, it was decided to follow the 4DX method documented in the book *The 4 Disciplines of Execution* (McChesney, Covey, Huling, 2012). The team established a Wildly Important Goal (WIG) lead and lag measures to track progress. They also scheduled weekly WIG Sessions with the members to account for the prior week’s commitments and make commitments to move the WIG forward.

The results of the 4DX method were amazing! This WIG united the members and was successfully accomplished. The community celebrated this win with a Rocky-themed party for knocking out closeouts. The community was also recognized by the highest level of leadership. The biggest win of all, though, was the newly established habit of closing out awards in a timely fashion.

Fostering Identity

A shared identity comes with symbols that label, express, and further that same identity. Within the FRA community, it is important to develop some symbols to share this identity. We’ve found success through the following:

- Birthdays are recognized by team members and the supervisor.
- The Director hosts a quarterly networking event that brings together both central and department research administration communities.
- Quarterly lunch parties are scheduled to gather the central administration community to play games and enjoy one another’s company.
- Our community has established slogans such as “Get the Stupid Out” or “We are Relentless in our Pursuit of Excellence” to support our efforts in streamlining our business processes.
Encouraging Autonomy

People are creative. It is extremely important to allow members to experience autonomy in their work; members who have autonomy will feel free to come up with creative and unique solutions to problems that better serve and strengthen the community. Our community facilitates this by giving its members the freedom to:

- Establish and change their workload management plan.
- Attend or create meetings, without supervisor permission.
- Set up periodic times where they work at their customer’s location.
- Direct access to all levels of leadership within the community so there is no need to go through a “chain of command.”

Stimulating Growth

When bringing in new members to your FRA community, it is important they have the expertise, skills, and, most importantly, the attitude to support the community’s vision. Potential members to an FRA community will most likely submit applications which highlight their financial work experience. While technical aptitude is desired, it’s equally important to ensure they have the right attitude.

When searching for new members, our community uses a 4-phase interview process. The first phase consists of reviewing applications to determine which applicants have the level of the technical skills and experience we need. Successful applicants are then invited to participate in a written interview, which is the second phase. The written interview consist of 4-5 behavioral questions which test the communication skills of the applicant. Successful applicants from the second phase move on to the third phase, the in-person interview. During the in-person interview, 5-7 behavioral questions are asked to determine how well the applicant fits with the values of our community. The successful candidates from the previous phase are then scheduled to meet with the community leader. The leader uses this meeting to learn about the inspirations and expectations of each applicant. The leader then meets with the interview panel to share her recommendations. This process helps our community determine the ability of potential members to adapt to change and work extensively in a team environment.

Once a new member is on board, the community needs to have a way to help that member quickly adapt to the roles and responsibilities within the community, as well as to continually encourage personal growth. In our FRA community, we have a robust 9-week training program for each new member that prepares them, not only technically, but also culturally, to be a successful contributor to the community.

Our office also encourages professional development plans which help members to secure funding to support their individual growth in the field. This has proven to be very successful as many of our members have represented our community at conferences and have moved on to more prestigious positions within the community.

Engaging Communication

Communication is the lifeblood of a community, and any successful cultivation or change requires lots of it. The method we find most useful is a bi-weekly newsletter which notifies the community of recent changes that have occurred, where they can find more information about the changes, and when they are in effect. Another method is the leader-hosted, bi-annual All-Hands Meetings with the entire community to share information and obtain feedback on what can be improved within the community.

Managing Change

Change, while rarely easy, is necessary to support the growth of a community. An effective change management process provides structure for implementing a change and empowers the members to take the lead in stewarding the change through the process. An effective method we have used is the establishment of Process Teams. Each Process Team consist of volunteer members from our FRA community who are responsible for owning certain post award functions. Ownership consists of maintaining current process documentation, facilitating process improvement and training new team members on their processes.

Just the Beginning

Perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of cultivating community, especially in the FRA world, is discovering how your own perspective of what constitutes a community changes. We challenge you to pursue this worthwhile endeavor and expand who you see as part of your community. In the beginning, it might be just your department. As you and your community matures, we hope you begin expanding into new territory, be it another department, another institution, even one of your sponsors. What better place to learn and practice these skills than to begin leveraging your membership in a community you are already part of, such as NCURA? You never know where this road will take you.

References


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CULTIVATING A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONERS:

The Emerging Role of MA Programs in Research Administration

By Mary Louise Healy and Christine C.A. Katsapis
The phrase “community of scholars” is defined in WordNet Dictionary as “the body of individuals holding the advanced academic degree” (Princeton University, 2010). Over the past 8 years there has been an increase in the number of research administrators who are choosing to complete a master’s degree in research administration, as well as an overall increase in individuals newly choosing research administration as their profession. They are graduating from programs designed to train current and future research administrators who will not only have the content expertise to flourish in the profession, but who will also have the skills necessary for engaging in high-level scholarship. They will be the founding members of a new community of scholars in research administration. More than that, they will form a community of scholar-practitioners, advancing the field through research and practice.

Bouck (2011) describes scholar-practitioners as individuals who bring together knowledge and strategies gained through the academic experience with the knowledge and experience that is “inherent to membership in their craft” (p. 203). Scholar-practitioners develop knowledge and conduct professional activities based on learning that takes place through active exchange with their colleagues in the profession — within their community of practice (McClintock, 2004). What is research administration other than a community of practitioners? With the advent of the master’s degree in research administration, this community will evolve into a community of scholar-practitioners. For example, Ms. April Heyward, is the definition of a scholar-practitioner. She is a graduate of the University of Central Florida’s Masters of Science in Research Administration, and in the October/November 2014 issue of NCURA Magazine, she wrote an article titled “Designing and Implementing Service-Delivery Models in Research Administration.” At that time she was the Grants Administrator at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) in the Bureau of Disease Control/Division of STD-HIV. Her article takes information both from her work setting (practitioner) and from the literature (scholar).

The four master’s programs preparing the scholar-practitioners are located at University of Central Florida (UCF), Johns Hopkins University, Rush University, and Emmanuel College. There is curricular similarity among these programs. They cover an introduction to the field of research administration and also have courses that cover the regulatory environment, pre-award, post-award, evaluation, compliance, and the human resources aspects of the field. However, our focus is on the scholarship curricula that is either embedded or separate coursework in these programs. The students are also taking research methods courses, both qualitative and quantitative. They are doing major papers, capstone projects, research papers, theses, extensive group work, and co-authoring. Both in their degree programs, and beyond, they are gaining experience through their day to day work and through applying their problem-solving abilities to real issues that arise, not only for themselves, but for many in the profession.

These programs are delivered on-line, which is consistent with the way research administrators do business (federal grants management systems, institutional systems, and email and web based communication) and engage in the inquiry that delves into our field. The two authors of this article, for example, did not ever meet in person, but rather relied on telephone calls and email for the exchange of information and ideas. The initial call for this article and initial communications among interested parties went out on NCURA’s on-line community tool, Collaborate.

Community is among the core values of the scholar-practitioner says Schultz (2010). What does community mean in the context a research administration professional who is advancing his or her field through research and continuous inquiry? Beck (1999), an education and human development scholar, discusses the many different metaphors of community. These metaphors can be psychological, behavioral, structural, political, and ethical. Psychologically, communities are associated with relationships that are long-term and depend on the uniqueness, or individualism, of the members and on the members’ participation in the larger group. Behaviorally, “action inevitably involves conversation” (Beck, 1999, p. 25). In a community, members talk to — and ultimately rely on — each other. Structurally, community is open and inclusive. Politically, individuals in a community are working towards the establishment of new political relationships with other members. Ethically, community brings together individuals with shared values and commitments.

Sound familiar? Research administration is a community, as is NCURA. We, as current members and practitioners, need to nurture that. We anticipate that there will be an increase in the scholarship of individuals who have gone through the master’s degree programs. Although the programs prepare many research administrators new to the field, they also enroll current practitioners. The induction and future success of all graduates, whether new to the field or already working in it, lies squarely on the shoulders of those of us already doing the job. Community is inclusive. Additionally, our encouragement is essential for novice research administrators to understand that we support their efforts to seek higher-level education in the profession. We can encourage them to not only to continue with their research and contributions to the field, but also to become ever more involved in NCURA activities. In carrying out its mission of serving its members and advancing the field through "education and professional development programs, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and by fostering a professional, collegial, and respected community," and adhering to its principles, NCURA is building community, and building a community of scholar-practitioners.

NCURA principles should shape the scholarly community of practitioners as we build it. By both sharing our knowledge with and learning from these graduates, we will be adhering to NCURA’s principles, to support: “our research faculty, our institutions, our sponsors, the local community impacted by research, our campus communities’ climate, and to resolving potential conflicts of interest.”

MARCH/APRIL 2015
So taking this group of emerging scholars who have been groomed to communicate the way we do into consideration, what is the role of more experienced research administrators in relationship to the research and investigative study that will be produced by these graduates in the coming years? We recommend that we take the first NCURA Core Purpose, “sharing of knowledge and experience,” for our direction. This is clearly meant to describe NCURA’s mechanisms for sharing both on-line with Collaborate Communities and in traditional publications like NCURA Magazine and Research Management Review and the micrographs created to give us ready reference. Senior research administrators, however, can also interpret this to mean a calling to share our own knowledge and experience with our newer members. And scholarship isn’t solely about research and publication; it also includes dissemination of ideas through presentations to colleagues at regional and national meetings. Scholarship and practice are deeply intertwined.

We can make it our responsibility to reach out and respond positively to these students and respond positively to these students and mentor these graduates and also encourage our newest-to-the-profession (dare we say, younger?) peers to apply for these programs. We can get to know the directors of these programs and their faculty so that when we are conducting a study of our own, we can seek out collaborators from among their recent graduates. We can contribute to the development of a growing community of scholar-practitioners.

References


NCURA Principles

http://www.ncura.edu/AboutUs.aspx#sthash.doHRwhMv.dpuf

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Education Scholarship Fund

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A sk a member what NCURA means to them and you will often hear extended family, long-time friends, and mentors – a community that cares about the future of our profession. A culture of support for our fellow members helps build community and a feeling of inclusion. NCURA’s Education Scholarship Fund is a facet of the NCURA membership’s commitment to promote the development of the research administration profession and its members with scholarships going to support those who seek graduate education in research administration.

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Many primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs) are struggling to expand and institutionalize undergraduate research while lacking the resources necessary to staff a dedicated student research office. In response to student desire for broader representation in the university research enterprise, Arkansas State University (A-State) is piloting a new model to actively engage students in expanding and institutionalizing undergraduate research in a resource-limited environment.

The Student Voice
“Your opinion matters”

During the summer of 2014, a common theme emerged as students from PUIs across Arkansas met during a state-wide symposium for a federally-funded research consortium. Students voiced a strong desire for more influence and leadership in research on their campuses, but did not have a pathway to engage in the process. Their desire for empowerment with regard to university programs and administration connects well with academic literature on “student voice.”

A 2012 report by Toshalis and Nakkula describes the spectrum of student voice activities – from merely articulating their perspective, to participating in meetings, to becoming co-leaders who are integrally involved in decision making, guiding group processes and conducting activities. They cite a considerable body of research that points to sustainable gains in student participation, improved competencies in skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, and a strengthened sense of organizational commitment when students are engaged as co-leaders. However, Dana Mitra, a leader in research on student voice, reports that the majority of student government organizations focus their energies primarily on social activities and are rarely engaged in formal problem solving that relates to broader academic issues or institutional culture.

While most of these studies focused on primary and secondary school reform, A-State research administrators believe that the same sustained, positive outcomes may result as students are engaged in co-leadership at the higher education level. At the 2014 PUI consortium meeting, research administrators listened to students’ expressed desires for more meaningful involvement in the university research enterprise and felt compelled to provide such a pathway of engagement. In collaboration with the A-State Research and Technology Transfer office, students, both undergraduate and graduate, have been instrumental in envisioning and piloting the A-State Student Research Council (A-State SRC), a student-led, registered campus organization. Over sixty students have participated this year in the launch of the Council, with outstanding participation from students across all academic disciplines.
The Student Vision
“You define the dream”

While developing the model and functions of the A-State SRC, students identified key functions to be fulfilled by the Council. They will co-lead:

- University research symposium and related events.
- Professional development initiatives.
- Faculty/student mentoring workshops.
- A peer-reviewed student research publication.
- Activities to broaden participation in research within the university and at regional primary and secondary schools.
- Evaluation and assessment of A-State SRC program and initiatives.
- Design of dynamic communication models and data tracking systems to engage current students and maintain communication after graduation.

Council members formed a governance structure with undergraduate and graduate co-chairs and sub-committees for professional development, special events, communications, and fundraising. The Council is formally advised by the university’s research administration office, and the staff is working closely with SRC members to develop, strengthen, expand and institutionalize student research on campus.

The Student Impact
“You make a difference”

A matter of primary importance to the SRC members was reform of the university’s annual symposium of student research and scholarship, Create@STATE, now in its fifth year. A sub-committee was initiated to immediately address their concerns. This committee had tremendous impact upon not only the event planning itself, but also on the faculty’s perception of the event. SRC members articulated their own vision of the event and how it could be more impactful for their research and scholarly endeavors.

The students provided an existing faculty advisory committee with suggestions such as juried selections of abstracts, reorganization of presentation categories and modification of the award structure to increase the quality and intellectual rigor of the event and provide more equality across academic disciplines. An additional committee was formed, made up of both students and faculty, to work together in defining judging rubrics and providing a juried selection of abstract submissions. Surprisingly, as student engagement increased, a noticeable boost in faculty enthusiasm and participation in the event was observed.

Follow the A-State Student Research Council:
Twitter: @A-StateResearch
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http://www.astate.edu/a/orti/research-development/student-opportunities

Beyond co-leadership of the Create@STATE event, the SRC executive committee meets regularly with research administration staff, keeping abreast of upcoming funding opportunities and professional development events and contributing the student perspective on the university research environment. As their engagement with research administration has gained precedence, space in the A-State Research and Technology Transfer office suite has been set aside for student integration and working space.

The Student Assessment
“Your voice is powerful”

Students in the A-State’s Master of Public Administration (MPA) program are providing an ongoing assessment and evaluation for the SRC initiative. The program has incorporated the evaluation process into two graduate analysis course sections, providing invaluable “real-world” research training in the classroom, and helping to establish the idea that “research is teaching” in university culture. Students will design the evaluation activities, obtain Institutional Review Board approval, collect baseline data during the initial year and assess student and faculty perceptions of the university research culture. Over time, the students will evaluate changes in both quantity and quality of undergraduate research and identify any association with the SRC presence and activities.

Throughout the program assessment and evaluation, mechanisms will be developed and implemented to collect feedback from both students and faculty on their satisfaction with the functions and program activities of the Council for program effectiveness and strategic planning. Data will be collected on the number of students, demographics, level of participation within the Council, participation in research opportunities, and outcomes of their research activity such as presentations, publications, conference attendance and awards. As students graduate, data will be collected to track educational and career accomplishments.

One practical expected outcome from the evaluation is opportunities for students in the MPA program to publish findings in academic journals and present outcomes at national conferences. An expected outcome of the evaluation is to provide evidence for the creation of student research councils as a model for broadening participation in and institutionalizing undergraduate student research in resource-limited environments.

The Student Innovation
“You are Unique”

While a few leading research institutions in the U.S. do have student research councils, there are two significant differences with the A-State SRC model. In the spectrum of student voice from expressing perspectives to co-leading, other formalized research councils that we have identified seem to engage students either at the level of expression or in the middle level of participation. In many instances, administratively staffed offices of undergraduate research invite student perspective and participation in activities of the administrative office. For many PUIs however, there are no existing budgetary resources to staff such an office, particularly for less research intensive institutions in the process of seeking to grow their research capacity.

The A-State SRC is a student-led model developed with little or no administrative resources. Using the enthusiasm and dynamism of students engaging other students, we hope to see growth in student participation in research. We also believe the model is promising in terms of sustainability because it is driven not from existing budgetary resources, but by the creativity and
energy of the student community. This model has the potential to be easily replicated at other PUIs and may provide an opportunity to develop regional and national networks of student-led research councils. As the A-State SRC grows and matures, we hope to show evidence of this practical model as a high-impact, cost-effective practice for sustainable growth of undergraduate student research at a PUIs.

Voices of Our Students

Founding members of the A-State SRC have the following to say about the impact of the Council just a few months into the launch of this initiative:

I envision SRC as an excellent conduit to reach students and let them know that they can do research; it’s not some far-off, unattainable pipe-dream.” –undergraduate student, Jacob Steele

My time with the Council has shown me that a group of motivated individuals can bring about change. By encouraging research in the University, we can continue to grow SRC until it is a major institution on campus and a driving force behind the research of A-State.” –undergraduate student, Christopher Elms

The SRC has allowed me to meet other undergraduate researchers from different fields. It will one day be an effective tool students can use to acquire internships and serve as a student voice to the faculty.” –undergraduate student, Aaron Tollett

SRC has given me real perspective to countless opportunities of involvement in research on campus and insight on how important research is at A-State. I’m not only considering a future career in medical practice, but also leaning towards medical research where I can be part of the improvement and discoveries that first empower the field. I hope this Council highlights that the research side of every subject is a vital role in any organization as a whole.” –undergraduate student, Morgan Tripod

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The 21st century workplace is increasingly supported by advanced technological tools that require a high degree of patience and acceptance within an organization. Although Electronic Research Administration (eRA) presents a way to improve communication and efficiency in our work, it may not achieve these ends without sacrifice, frustration, and misunderstandings. Technology should not be viewed as a method of problem-solving; it may simply create new problems in the workplace that are difficult to overcome. The goal of this article is to expose some of the myths of technology in the workplace — how people view the latest app or system as a cure-all, rather than as a potential headache, for employees who want or need to improve their performance. A new system will not fix a bad business process. An app that is confusing to learn will frustrate the user and take valuable time away from more productive work.

**Technology Tightrope Requires Balancing Act**

In spite of its benefits, technology may temporarily complicate matters within an organization as employees must continue to manage tasks relative to their roles and responsibilities. In research administration for example, they must be able to read and respond to emails, review and submit proposals, discuss agendas via video and teleconferencing, and communicate on the go. It requires a unique balancing act to ensure that all responsibilities are met without delays that could impact others. Research administrators must be able to use the new technology quickly and correctly in order for it to have a positive and lasting impact on the organization as a whole. Managers are expected to address these needs and to be effective in communicating their vision to units on a continuous basis.

**Employee Expectation of Enhanced Productivity Not Always Met**

Technology is designed to humanize an organization to some degree, but this requires employees to buy into the process and to be cognizant of how their roles change under this premise (Burg). For example, systems need to be maintained with users added or removed and passwords frequently updated to address security concerns. Employees may be given
new duties or responsibilities when new systems are implemented. In addition to institutional systems, sponsors often change their systems’ functionality or create new systems that must be managed to keep the day-to-day work going. Someone must stay aware and manage these changes.

Technology Often Adds Burden

Technology can fill a significant void in the workplace or may be brought in to solve a longstanding problem. Generally it is meant to ease a situation. However, it can also add a slew of issues to burden an office if not managed correctly. Deciding which system to select is just one in a multi-step journey to success. There are many more details to address.

Staffing a system implementation is one challenge. You might depend on an IT department and expect IT staff to understand your new technology. However, those staff members may not be available to assist your office or department during implementation or when there is an error that must be corrected on a proposal deadline day.

Current processes are another detail to consider. New systems are not meant to serve as band-aids to ailing processes. Leaders must have a clear understanding of the desired process and determine whether the system functionality matches that process. It is unusual to find a system that perfectly matches your ideal process. When there are gaps, it is helpful to identify how they will be managed once the system is in place.

Another thing leaders need to consider is the effect on the staff expected to use the new tools. Training or slight adjustments to a current process are often needed. Research administrators may face confusion, clutter, clumsiness, and other difficulties when working with an unfamiliar technology. Hopefully, this is only a short-term issue to manage.

More of Us Working from Home

One advantage that technology has brought is the ability to work from home. With so much of our work going electronic, we can work from anywhere if we have a computer and access to the internet. The implementation of strategies such as virtual teams requires a level of balance and an understanding of how these tools operate in order to accomplish the expected outcomes. More research administrators are working from home, and this requires their full commitment and dedication to fulfill their duties effectively at all times. In this context, employees must actively communicate and use technology to their advantage in order to accomplish their duties without delays.

Research administrators must be able to perform their roles at the expected level regardless of environment and maintain communication with their colleagues, faculty, and other constituents. This means that if your “customers” are used to you responding to email within five minutes, the fact that you are at home and may be putting in a load of laundry or getting your child an after-school snack must not distract you from maintaining that level of service. It can be done and often leads to a happier employee. However, managers must clearly express their expectations of employees, and employees must also express their own preferences regarding how they can be most productive in a virtual work environment (Nisen).

Support and camaraderie among employees is also important to satisfying organizational expectations. To ensure success in this type of arrangement, managers must develop a climate of trust among their teams, and employees must operate under a model of trust, cooperation, and productivity (van de Bunt-Kolkhuis).

“Electronic Leash” Adds Stress

Employees are required to support technology-based tools and initiatives in the workplace, but some may be more comfortable or skilled than others. Mobile communications has opened the door to a phenomenon known as the “electronic leash.” This is a disadvantage that can require employees to be on call at all times of the day or night to answer emails and troubleshoot complications (Hamlett). An expectation of availability on nights and weekends in order to satisfy the needs of research faculty and department personnel continues to evolve and requires employees to consider that their roles may change at the same pace as technological innovation. The perceived requirement to be available 24/7 contributes to stress and makes it difficult for employees to draw a balance between their work and personal lives (Hamlett). Leaders need to communicate that 24/7 is not required and set expectations with faculty members and other constituents that this is the case.

Communication and Cross-Training Key to Coordinating Efforts

Technology is changing the landscape of research administration. Organizations must be able to address the challenges of embracing technology and supporting the day’s activities. The coordination of efforts and cross-training between management and employees may provide numerous benefits and facilitate the use of technology to improve productivity. The ideal will cultivate community rather than chaos.

Today, technology provides unlimited connectivity to the workplace, whether in the office, at home, or on the go. This is both a blessing and a curse as it represents many challenges for leaders and employees as they integrate technology effectively into the workplace. We must carefully balance technology and humanity as a means of improving faculty services, communicating among the various constituents, and supporting each other for long-term success and achievement.

References


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MARCH/APRIL 2015 19
The Value of STEM Education and Training

Did you know that, in 2010, two-thirds of employees in the U.S. having a bachelor’s degree or higher in a science and engineering (S&E) discipline did not work in a science and engineering occupation? Was 2010 an outlier? Is this statistic a result of the lingering effects of the Great Recession? Actually, no. As it turns out, the observation that individuals with an S&E degree are frequently highly successful in both S&E and non-S&E jobs alike has been a consistent feature of the U.S. scientific workforce for decades. Education and training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—or STEM as it’s ubiquitously known—serve as a “knowledge and skills key” that unlocks numerous paths into well-paying, relatively stable careers across a wide array of disciplines, thereby making STEM education critical for both individuals and the nation in ways far more broad than one might imagine.
What this observation highlights for me is that the traditional notion of a linear “pipeline” from formal primary, secondary, and (perhaps) post-secondary education, into a career, and then finally, retirement, has not been valid for quite some time yet still is viewed, by a great many people, as the operative paradigm. As more and more jobs across our entire economy require higher levels of STEM capabilities, acquiring and honing these skills over an entire career will be increasingly requisite for full participation in a knowledge- and technology-intensive economy. Indeed, one of the most important attributes of a STEM education is the flexibility it affords for one to “reinvent” themselves, perhaps many times over the course of a career, and thus be prepared for success in jobs that require skills and utilize technologies that do not today even exist.

To illustrate this point, in 2010, the statistical arm of the National Science Foundation classified about 5.4 million jobs as S&E. In stark contrast, over 16 million college-educated workers reported that they required at least a bachelor’s level of expertise in S&E for their jobs. (See Figure 1.)

In the years following World War II, the U.S. workforce has evolved from the “small body of men and women who…are skilled in the techniques of scientific research” to workers at all degree levels in numerous occupations using STEM capabilities to facilitate innovation. (Figure 2.) Today’s workforce includes everyone from traditional scientists and engineers working in academic, government, or industry laboratories performing basic and applied research, to middle school biology teachers, to skilled tradesmen and technicians who use specialized knowledge and training to operate increasingly sophisticated diagnostic tools. These workers have distinct career interests and aspirations, require specific educational and training opportunities throughout their careers, and thus benefit from tailored policies aimed at supporting them.

Challenges & Opportunities

Meeting the specific needs of all of these various STEM employers and thus workers represents a central challenge for government, education, and industry leaders. Rising to this challenge is fundamental to our continued national prosperity. Underscoring the difficulty of this task are tightening Federal and state budgets, continuing disparities in educational achievement and workforce participation for some groups, the lingering effects of the “Great Recession,” and changing demographics for our labor force. In addition, foreign competitors, led by China, are emulating our model of national investment in R&D and higher education and continue to perpetuate and even enhance the already diminished lead held by the U.S. in science and technology.

What can we do? First and foremost, ensuring access to and interest in high quality education and training experiences for all students, at all levels, and of incumbent workers at all career stages is absolutely essential. The long-term strength of our workforce requires that the opportunities enabled by STEM learning and STEM jobs be available to all Americans. Our ability to respond to national needs and remain globally competitive will require the capabilities and ingenuity of individuals of diverse racial, gender, and ethnic backgrounds.

Yet individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and minorities traditionally underrepresented in STEM are particularly hard hit by two significant obstacles: achievement gaps and access to STEM training. Data show that achievement gaps for both these groups begin as early as Pre-K and continue through primary and high school. (See Figure 3.) Without an adequate
foundation in science and mathematics, opportunities in STEM training become much harder to attain.

Today, 51 percent of all school children attending public schools in this country qualify for federally sponsored free and reduced-price lunches because of their low-income status. And within a few more decades, current minority populations are projected to constitute the majority of the U.S. population. Given the paucity of minorities within and entering some STEM disciplines today, and in light of challenges attracting and retaining foreign-born STEM experts, how will the U.S. possibly remain competitive without a capable STEM workforce?

While the achievement and access gaps faced by these groups are sobering, finding ways to engage them in STEM education presents tremendous opportunities for both individuals and our society at large. As a recent National Science Foundation report put it, broadening participation in science and engineering will allow us to tap into this reservoir of human capital, adding diversity to the research questions we ask, the projects we propose, and the ways in which we approach societal challenges.

Where do we go from here and what is the role for Research Administrators?

President Obama’s recent community college proposal is one example that has tremendous implications for both the achievement gap and access obstacles noted above. But community colleges and Minority Serving institutions may not possess the same administrative support structures for research as do public research universities. This is particularly evident when it comes to managing STEM-related compliance issues, which not only are complex and vary across agencies, but also require increasingly large amounts of time to meet. Yet, these challenges afford an opportunity to explore new and creative ways for all partners in higher education to work together toward the shared goal of student success as well as economic prosperity and national security, for which STEM is an essential element.

We also need to think about the best ways to address the dearth of longitudinal data for measuring the career paths of individuals who receive their STEM training from Federal research grants. These data would give policy-makers, universities, and industry valuable information with which to plan. But what entities should take the responsibility for collecting these data, and how should that be balanced with keeping the administrative burdens that attend collecting such information as low as possible?

Access to high-quality data, and associated thoughtful critical analyses of it, are essential first steps for decision-makers in business, government, and education wishing to tackle the challenges and opportunities in the STEM education and workforce arenas. Providing comprehensive, high-quality, accessible data is a role that the National Science Board (NSB) continues to pursue. Indeed, monitoring educational attainment, career choices, and labor market indicators for the heterogeneous group of workers who comprise the STEM workforce is one of the key responsibilities of the NSB. This has become an increasingly complex task but also one that is increasingly important.

In order to make these data more accessible and comprehensible, the NSB recently released a revamped “STEM Education Resource.” This interactive online tool includes data and findings on educational and workforce questions most relevant to policymakers, educators, and students themselves. The resource is part of a suite of NSB science and engineering resources that also include the Science & Engineering Indicators report, Digest, state data tool and applications for tablets and iPad. All these resources are meant to help decision-makers of all kinds obtain comprehensive data about our nation’s science and engineering enterprise.

At press time, the NSB was finalizing a policy report that focuses on the U.S. STEM workforce. It is our hope that report will reframe policy discussions about creating and strengthening a STEM-capable U.S. workforce to focus on the most promising areas in which to apply our collective resources and chart exciting new paths forward for our nation and its people.

References


Kelvin Droegemeier is Vice President for Research and Regents’ Professor of Meteorology at the University of Oklahoma. He also serves as the Vice Chairman of the National Science Board (NSB) and chairs its Science and Engineering Indicators committee. NSB is the governing Board of the National Science Foundation and an independent advisor to the Congress and the President. Droegemeier can be reached at kkd@ou.edu
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On December 17, 2014, President Obama announced plans to revise the U.S. policy towards Cuba, including re-establishing diplomatic relations, easing travel and financial remittance restrictions, and facilitating authorized financial transactions between the United States and Cuba. On January 16, 2015, the Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Asset Controls (OFAC), released revisions to the Cuba Asset Control Regulations (CACR) 31 C.F.R. § 515 to implement the announced policy changes. Of primary interest to the research administration community is the expansion of existing General License Authorizations for travel to Cuba. Easing of restrictions on financial transactions will further reduce the administrative burden associated with Cuban travel (both travel from the U.S. to Cuba and from Cuba to the U.S.) in support of university education and research activities.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the changes in the General License Authorizations for Cuba-related educational and professional research activities.

The General License Authorizations additionally remove the per diem spending limit for U.S. persons travelling to Cuba and permit those returning to the U.S. to bring back up to $400 of goods of Cuban origin, including up to $100 in Cuban cigars and alcohol.
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<tr>
<th>Previous §515.565(a)</th>
<th>What’s Changed: New §515.565(a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Participation in a structured educational program in Cuba as part of a course</td>
<td>(1) Participation in a structured educational program in Cuba as part of a course offered</td>
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<tr>
<td>offered for credit by the sponsoring U.S. academic institution. Individuals must</td>
<td>for credit at the sponsoring U.S. graduate or undergraduate degree-granting institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>carry a letter on official letterhead, signed by a designated representative of the</td>
<td>(2) Noncommercial academic research in Cuba specifically related to Cuba and for the purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>sponsoring U.S. academic institution.</td>
<td>of obtaining a graduate degree. Individuals must carry a letter on official letterhead, signed</td>
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<td>(2) Noncommercial academic research in Cuba specifically related to Cuba and for</td>
<td>by a designated representative of the sponsoring U.S. academic institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>the purpose of obtaining a graduate degree. Individuals must carry a letter on</td>
<td>(3) Participation in a formal course of study at a Cuban academic institution, provided the</td>
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<tr>
<td>official letterhead, signed by a designated representative of the sponsoring U.S.</td>
<td>formal course of study in Cuba will be accepted for credit toward the student’s graduate or</td>
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<tr>
<td>academic institution.</td>
<td>undergraduate degree.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Participation in a formal course of study at a Cuban academic institution,</td>
<td>(4) Teaching at a Cuban academic institution related to an academic program at the Cuban</td>
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<tr>
<td>provided the formal course of study in Cuba will be accepted for credit toward the</td>
<td>institution, provided that the individual is regularly employed by a U.S. or other non-Cuban</td>
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<tr>
<td>student’s graduate or undergraduate degree. Individuals must carry a letter on</td>
<td>academic institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>official letterhead, signed by a designated representative of the sponsoring U.S.</td>
<td>(5) Sponsorship, including the payment of a stipend or salary, of a Cuban scholar to teach or</td>
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<tr>
<td>academic institution.</td>
<td>engage in other scholarly activity at the sponsoring U.S. academic institution; may be remitted</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Teaching at a Cuban academic institution by an individual regularly employed in</td>
<td>to Cuba or carried on the person of the Cuban scholar returning to Cuba.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a teaching capacity at the sponsoring academic institution, provided that teaching</td>
<td>(6) Educational exchanges sponsored by Cuban or U.S. secondary schools involving secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>activities are related to an academic program at the Cuban institution and that the</td>
<td>school students’ participation in a formal course of study or in a structured educational</td>
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<tr>
<td>duration of the teaching will be no shorter than 10 weeks. Individuals must carry a</td>
<td>program offered by a secondary school or other academic institution and led by a teacher or</td>
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<tr>
<td>letter on official letterhead, signed by a designated representative of the</td>
<td>other secondary school official, includes participation by a reasonable number of adult</td>
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<td>sponsoring U.S. academic institution.</td>
<td>chaperones to accompany the secondary school student to Cuba.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Sponsorship, including the payment of a stipend or salary, of a Cuban scholar</td>
<td>(7) Sponsorship or co-sponsorship of noncommercial academic seminars, conferences, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>to teach or engage in other scholarly activity at the sponsoring U.S. academic</td>
<td>workshops related to Cuba or global issues involving Cuba and attendance at such events by</td>
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<td>institution; may be remitted to Cuba or carried on the person of the Cuban scholar</td>
<td>faculty, staff, and students of a participating U.S. institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>returning to Cuba</td>
<td>(8) The organization of, and preparation for, activities described in paragraphs (a)(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6) The organization of, and preparation for, activities described in paragraphs</td>
<td>through (a)(7) of this section by members of the faculty and staff of the sponsoring U.S.</td>
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<td>(a)(1) through (a)(5) of this section by members of the faculty and staff of the</td>
<td>academic institution.</td>
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<td>sponsoring U.S. academic institution.</td>
<td>(9) Facilitation by an organization that is a person subject to U.S. jurisdiction, or a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuals must carry a letter on official letterhead, signed by a designated</td>
<td>member of the staff of such an organization, of licensed educational activities in Cuba on</td>
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<td>representative of the sponsoring U.S. academic institution.</td>
<td>behalf of U.S. academic institutions or secondary schools, provided that: (i) The organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) The organization of, and preparation for, activities described in paragraphs</td>
<td>is directly affiliated with one or more U.S. academic institutions or secondary schools; (ii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)(1) through (a)(7) of this section by members of the faculty and staff of the</td>
<td>The organization facilitates educational activities that meet the requirements of one or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>sponsoring U.S. academic institution.</td>
<td>of the general licenses set forth in §§515.565(a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3), and (a)(6); and (iii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) The organization of, and preparation for, activities described in paragraphs</td>
<td>The educational activities the organization facilitates in Cuba must, by prior agreement, be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)(1) through (a)(7) of this section by members of the faculty and staff of the</td>
<td>accepted for credit by the affiliated U.S. academic institution or approved by the affiliated</td>
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<tr>
<td>sponsoring U.S. academic institution.</td>
<td>secondary school.</td>
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The new regulations authorize [in Note 1 to §515.565(a)] U.S. academic institutions or secondary schools engaging in activities authorized pursuant to this section to open and maintain accounts at Cuban financial institutions for the purpose of accessing funds in Cuba for transactions authorized pursuant to this section. Recordkeeping requirements have not changed, as detailed in Note to § 515.565(a) and (b): Each person relying on the general authorizations in these paragraphs, including entities sponsoring travel pursuant to the authorization in §515.565(b), must retain specific records related to the authorized travel transactions. See §§501.601 and 501.602 of this chapter for applicable recordkeeping and reporting requirements.
The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security, has amended the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) 15 C.F.R. § 746.2, also effective January 16, 2015, to support the changes to the CACR. These changes include a new license exception: Support of the Cuban People (SCP). SCP is of particular interest to the research community as it may be used for export or re-export of items donated for scientific, archeological, cultural, ecological, educational, historic preservation, or sporting activities. SCP may also be used for the temporary export of items for use in professional research, provided that the items are returned to the United States within 2 years of the date of export, and that the items are not listed on the United States Munition List or controlled under the Export Administration Regulations for reasons other than anti-terrorism. This change will allow U.S. researchers to travel to Cuba with University-owned computers with general purpose software without first obtaining a license from the Department of Commerce, though care should be exercised in ensuring that all software on such computers is eligible for the license exception.

The new regulations authorize [in Note 1 to §515.565(a)] U.S. academic institutions or secondary schools engaging in activities authorized pursuant to this section to open and maintain accounts at Cuban financial institutions for the purpose of accessing funds in Cuba for transactions authorized pursuant to this section. Recordkeeping requirements have not changed, as detailed in Note to § 515.564(a) and (b): Each person relying on the general authorizations in this paragraph must retain specific records related to the authorized travel transactions. See §§501.601 and 501.602 of this chapter for applicable recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

Elizabeth D. Peloso, M.S.E., M.B.A., is the Associate Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Research Services at the University of Pennsylvania. Her office is responsible for pre- and post-award administration of federal and non-profit sponsored research activities and associated agreements, as well as management of Penn’s export compliance program. Elizabeth has been an active member of NCURA at the national level, participating as a panelist for NCURA TV, the NCURA webinar series, and as a presenter at national meetings. She recently served on the Program Committee for FRA. Elizabeth can be reached at epeloso@upenn.edu

Jessica B. Buchanan, Ph.D., is the Associate Director of Export Compliance at The University of Pennsylvania and has overall responsibility for Penn’s export compliance program. She has recently moved into research administration. Jessica can be reached at jessib@upenn.edu
A research administrator working with US funding but located outside the US can easily feel isolated and disconnected, particularly since international research support offices often contain only 1-2 people who work with US funding. The NCURA community is an invaluable tool to help an international research administrator connect with colleagues and maintain a dynamic participation in the US funding sphere. Growth in international NCURA participation and the formation of the International Region of NCURA reflects recognition of the many benefits of this community to international research administrators.

International members of NCURA are located all over the globe and in many different time zones, but we are far from isolated. Being an NCURA member and participant allows us to be part of this important community which drives us to be better research administrators. NCURA gives a sense of belonging and support, and working within a community which shares a common goal with common values permits increased learning and understanding for all involved.

Although several tools, such as the Collaborate platform and the LinkedIn group, enable us to facilitate information sharing and idea exchange, it is the people that make the NCURA community special. The greatest value in being an NCURA member is the connections that are made via this exceptional community of research administrators and the capacity to know who to ask regarding issues that would otherwise have you pulling your hair out. It is amazing how we share the same kind of challenges from Tokyo to Stockholm to Washington DC…
A productive community involves commitment, common basic understanding and a sense of belonging. However, a community must grow and adapt to the changing environment. While NCURA benefits our work within the US funding sphere, the international community has much to offer our US counterparts. Writing NIH grants as a foreign applicant requires us to address certain issues which are not required by US applicants. One of the most important is the addition of a foreign justification in NIH grant applications, which can be overlooked by US prime institutes who have not previously submitted applications with non-US partners.

Within the NCURA community, the international members can also be a source of information regarding funding from our own geographical funding spheres. The opening of the European Union Horizon 2020 program to US participants has had a huge impact on the global research community, and to non-European research administrators this means a new set of guidelines and regulatory issues which need to be addressed. Not only do we need to be experts in our own spheres, but we need to broaden our capacities and expertise to cover worldwide funding. This is not possible working alone, and despite the distance, the international community (and our expertise) is also only an email or phone call away.

So although it takes us a bit longer to get to NCURA meetings and conferences, and the accents may be a little different than ours, attending the NCURA events feels like coming home - home to a place where we are free to ask, free to give and free to receive a lot of new information that we do not have access to without involvement in this community. At the meetings there is room for both professional and personal development, and they are such re-energizing events that we are starting to crave our NCURA-meeting fix!

Community involvement is give and take. After joining the NCURA community and attending the NCURA conferences we receive numerous emails, phone calls, LinkedIn messages and questions on Collaborate. We receive both information and personal connections from the NCURA community, giving us the capacity to better support our researchers, protect the integrity of our institutes and promote our goal of performing world-class research.

Patricia Krells's Journey
Finding NCURA and attending my first meeting (a national one) was a defining moment in my career as a research administrator – ALL these people knew what I did AND did the same things. I realized that I wasn’t alone, and that Research Administration was a profession and not just a job. Wanting to get more involved and meet more people, I started on my “Volunteer” path, by working at registration desks. That networking led to my first request to present, which was exciting and terrifying – I loved it! I went on to present often, serve on program committees for both regional and national meetings, served as Chair of my region, was elected to the Board as a regional rep, and most recently was appointed to the NLDC as an at-large member. Volunteering at NCURA has brought so much to my life, both professionally and personally.

Vicki Krell is the Assistant Director of Research Advancement in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University. She can be reached at vicki.krell@asu.edu

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 NCURA 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

Laura Plant Fuentes
is a Grants Specialist at the Karolinska Institutet’s Grants Office. Laura’s responsibilities include supporting applications to US and international funding agencies and non-financial compliance. She has a scientific background with a speciality in infectious diseases. Laura can be reached at Laura.Plant@ki.se

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Vicki Krell is the Assistant Director of Research Advancement in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University. She can be reached at vicki.krell@asu.edu

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✓ OMB Circular A-110 Mini Guide
✓ OMB Circular A-133 Mini Guide

http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore.aspx
Research collaborations have many things in common with personal relationships—there is give and take, ups and downs, and, for the relationship to work, there must be respect and trust.

I could see this principle clearly at the EU-U.S. Innovation Conference, which was held in Brussels from January 14-15, 2015. This conference was organized by FFG (Austrian Research Agency) as a part of the BILAT USA 2.0 project (NCURA is also a partner). One of the aims of this project is to foster cooperation between the U.S. and Europe in setting innovation policies that benefit researchers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The theme of the conference was “How to integrate the innovation dimension in the EU-U.S. Science and Technology Agreement (STA).” The U.S. and the EU have had an STA in force since 1998, however, the agreement did not directly address how innovation policies can be integrated into the relationship. As a result, six panels, roundtables including 30 experts from the U.S. and Europe, and 120-plus participants attempted to enhance the partnership by focusing on policies that would foster innovation in both the U.S. and the EU. They did this by sharing best practices in academic partnerships and academic-industry partnerships.
LEFT: Opening by Jennifer Haskell, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Cooperation at the U.S. Department of State

ABOVE: Experts from left to right: Sinan Tumer (SAP Labs), James J. Casey (President-elect, State Bar of Wisconsin NRDL), Joann Halpern (German Centre of Research and Innovation), Camille Sailer (European American Chamber of Commerce EACCNJ), Robert Harrison (24 IP Law Group)

LEFT: Opening by Robert Burmanjer (Head of Unit: North America, Latin America and Caribbean, DG Research and Innovation, EC) BELOW: Experts from left to right: Jennifer Haskell, Robert Burmanjer, James J. Casey, Joann Halpern, Camille Sailer, Robert Harrison

ABOVE: Question by Cole Donovan, coordinator of the U.S. science and technology relationships with the European Union, Western and Southern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the ASEAN Secretariat.
The comparison to a personal relationship is clear; even between two people, there needs to be an agreement, either in written or oral form, and the rules need to be clear. In the best case, there is mutual learning from both parties.

Despite the different approaches to policy making on both sides of the Atlantic, U.S. and European experts and policymakers agreed on the following:

- Constant transatlantic policy dialogue is needed, coupled with science diplomacy.
- The few joint funding schemes that exist should be expanded.
- Open access to research results would set a standard for research access on a global basis.
- Research infrastructures should be shared and jointly used.
- Intellectual property issues should be discussed and agreed upon at an early stage in research collaboration.
- Faculty and other researchers in both Europe and the U.S. should receive entrepreneurial training.

Both sides also learned from each other:

- European innovators can learn to be better risk-takers from their U.S. counterparts, i.e., it is possible to manage risks as opposed to avoiding them altogether.
- U.S. innovators would stand to benefit from a greater willingness to collaborate with their European counterparts, since neither side has a monopoly on innovation.

For a more detailed analysis of the conference, as well as the presentations and speaker information, see: [http://www.euusscienceandtechnology.eu/content/very-well-received-eu-us-innovation-conference-on-14-15-january-2015-brussels-belgium](http://www.euusscienceandtechnology.eu/content/very-well-received-eu-us-innovation-conference-on-14-15-january-2015-brussels-belgium)

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**Using Pinterest at Miami of Ohio**

*By Heather Johnston*

The visual bookmarking web service Pinterest is best known as a limitless source of inspiration for foodies, crafters, and fashionistas. But there’s no reason research administrators can’t also take advantage of this easy-to-browse tool.

At Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, we’re using Pinterest to create visually pleasing, easily accessible – and shareable – resource guides. Among our boards are “NIH Resources,” “Proposal Writing Resources,” and “Faculty Research Funding.” Pinned to these boards are links to various media, including podcasts, videos, and webpages.

Images are key on Pinterest, but not every useful website has a pinnable image. One of the simplest work-arounds is a browser plug-in (we use Pin My Screen for Chrome) that captures a screen shot of the webpage and uses that image for the pin.

On the other side of the equation, illustrating your own online content with relevant, interesting images increases its chances of being shared on Pinterest. Just keep in mind that images should be 600-800 pixels wide and no more than 5000 pixels high.

*Heather Johnston is an Associate Director & Information Coordinator in the Office for the Advancement of Research & Scholarship (OARS) at Miami University in Ohio. She can be reached at johnsthb@MiamiOH.edu*
Looking to enhance your knowledge but don’t have a travel budget? These online courses are introductions to key areas of research administration. They are intended for those newer to the field or who have had very limited exposure. Students select an eight week enrollment period that works best and they have 24/7 access throughout that period to complete the course. Each course includes interactive learning exercises, lesson quizzes, a final exam and certificate of completion.

Primer on Clinical Trials
The course will focus on key administrative, financial, and regulatory issues that arise in planning, funding, conducting, and closing-out clinical trials.

Primer on Federal Contracting
Since Federal contracts are very different from federal grants, we have developed a thorough overview of this complex process.

Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements
This online introductory course is designed for university personnel working in contracts and grants, sponsored research and technology transfer offices. Its goal is to provide a basic background in issues of intellectual property management and practice in analyzing and drafting research and licensing agreements.

Primer on Subawards
This online tutorial is focused on subcontracting programmatic effort under federal grants and other financial assistance awards. “Subcontracting” and “third party agreements” cover a wide variety of activities. The course has been divided into a series of lessons that deal with aspects of the subaward crucial to the Research Administrator.

Enrollment Periods
When registering you will need to select one of following 8 week enrollment periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2015</td>
<td>June 1, 2015</td>
<td>March 30, 2015</td>
</tr>
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<td>July 6, 2015</td>
<td>August 31, 2015</td>
<td>June 29, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 14, 2015</td>
<td>November 9, 2015</td>
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<td>November 30, 2015</td>
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<td>December 28, 2015</td>
<td>October 26, 2015</td>
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<td>December 7, 2015</td>
<td>February 1, 2016</td>
<td>November 30, 2015</td>
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A Day in the Life of a Japanese University Research Administrator (URA): A Kyoto URA Explores Wild Animals in the Kalinzu Forest in Uganda, with Researchers

By Tadashi Sugihara

The Kyoto University Research Administration Office (KURA) is a unique URA office as the office designs, plans and manages “SPIRITS,” an internal research fund of the university, independently from other administrative offices. In December 2014, I attended a symposium at Makerere University, Uganda, organized by the Kyoto professor who is the SPIRITS project leader and who assigned me to be the project coordinator. The following description of my trip to Uganda gives a glimpse of the variety of tasks performed by the KURA staff.

Chasing “them” in the forest—why did a URA go to Africa?

Following an experienced Ugandan guide, I walked along the rough unpaved paths in the Kalinzu Forest of Uganda, trying not to be a burden on the rest of my party as my eyes scanned the green wall of vegetation in front of me. I could only guess where the echoing calls
of the monkeys and chimpanzees originated. Listening to the leaves, I could hardly tell whether the rustling was caused by the wind or by the movements of “them.”

Before I go any further, I should explain why I ventured into this country.

On the 9th of August, 2014, I received an email from Professor Takeshi Furuichi of the Kyoto University Primate Research Institute, KUPRI (http://www.pri.kyoto-u.ac.jp/), in the city of Inuyama, Aichi, Japan. The professor was replying to my inquiry related to the progress of his research project funded by SPIRITS. Kyoto University has a long history of conducting field studies in Southeast Asia and in Africa, and the KUPRI has been one of the most active research institutes in the study of wild primates worldwide.

Making a trip to Uganda with Professor Furuichi to support his SPIRITS project is part of my responsibility as a program coordinator of this project. However, something else was drawing me to venture to Africa. In May 2013, I was asked to help write a proposal for the “Program for Leading Graduate Schools” supported by JSPS. One of the researchers at KUPRI who was in charge of writing the proposal, Professor Tetsuro Matsuzawa, had conducted pioneering research on the emergence of intelligence in chimpanzees in a project known as the “AI Project” (http://langint.pri.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ai/index.html). In August 2013, we received the notification that our proposal had passed the first round of review. I visited Professor Matsuzawa at the KUPRI, where we worked closely to prepare the presentation for the second round. Fortunately, our proposal titled “Primatology and Wildlife Science” was accepted (http://www.wildlife-science.org/index-en.html). As Professor Matsuzawa was listed as one of participants in the symposium at Makerere University, my trip to Uganda was two-fold in purpose.

Primatology by Africans, for Africans, in Africa

The day I flew out to the JSPS symposium, I was also running a workshop titled “Responsible Conduct of Research,” facilitated by Tony Onofrietti, from the University of Utah, USA. I had met him at the annual NCURA 2014 meeting and had invited him to Kyoto University for this workshop. After the three-hour morning workshop and after finishing several tasks, I left my office and headed for Kansai International Airport (KIX).

Traveling through Hamad International Airport in Qatar, I finally arrived at Entebbe International Airport, Uganda, 21 hours after I had left KIX. Joining a group of symposium attendees at the hotel, we briefly discussed the schedule for the next day with Professor Furuichi, the chair of the symposium.

The following morning, prior to the symposium, an important meeting organized by Professor Furuichi was held. At this meeting, representatives from various African research institutes discussed how they planned to continue and strengthen the collaboration among Africans and researchers from Kyoto University. Professor Furuichi suggested the development of an African Primatological Consortium through which research collaboration and communication could be facilitated in a bottom-up fashion.
meaning that researchers would voluntarily form casual connections. The phrase provided by Professor Matsuzawa, the current President of the International Primatological Society, spoke to the hearts of all the attendees:

“Primatology by Africans, for Africans, in Africa!”

For the next two days, 11 open lectures and 19 activity reports were given. More than 40 scientists participated each day, and each presentation was followed by enthusiastic discussions and questions. The importance of this JSPS symposium was also recognized by the presence of Mr. Jyunzo Fujita, Japanese Ambassador to Uganda, who gave official remarks and extended congratulations on the success of this symposium.

A thunder of applause closed the symposium with participants agreeing that Makerere University would become the host institution for the symposium and that next year’s meeting would become the first “African Primatological Consortium” symposium. I left Makerere University thinking about how to obtain another small fund for the symposium next year, because the support of the JSPS to Professor Furuichi and his collaborators expires at the end of this fiscal year (March 2015).

Leave your office and see what’s happening
During this trip to Uganda, many opportunities arose that reminded me of the reason why Kyoto University decided to implement the URA system. “Cultivating an environment where researchers can devote themselves to their research,” is the key reason for our existence. How can we accomplish this important mission?

The KURA office has been playing the role of a central office for research administration at Kyoto University (Sugihara et al., 2014). KURA and the Research Promotion Division of the Research and International Affairs Department worked together to introduce the departmental URA offices with the goal of strengthening the relationship between URAs and researchers. While the KURA office is expected to be the center of the Kyoto University URAs as a whole, the staff

WORKSHOP: Responsible Conduct of Research

From the 15th to 17th of December 2014, a workshop entitled “Responsible Conduct of Research” was held in Kyoto. Tadashi Sugihara and Asa Nakano of the Kyoto University Research Administration Office (KURA) organized this workshop that addressed two topics: “Case Studies in Research Misconduct” and “Collaborative Research and the Roles of the Scientist in Society.”

We invited Tony Onofrietti, Director, Research Education at the University of Utah to facilitate this workshop. Although we primarily designed this workshop for URAs, we also tried to attract researchers so that URAs could learn the differences in how researchers and URAs think about identical issues. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) has been working to establish guidelines for prevention of misconduct during research, therefore, this workshop covered a hot topic. Each day, about 20 participants gathered, forming several groups. Feedback and comments from the participants were very positive, and we plan to extend this workshop further, aiming at the essential training program for URAs and researchers.
at KURA must “walk” by the side of the associated researchers. Understanding what kind of support the researchers need by learning their research perspectives is essential. From this viewpoint, seeing researchers working on-site during this trip was very beneficial. I could also understand how enthusiastic our researchers are as they work in the forest; they paid me little attention once they became intrigued by the wildlife!

After the JSPS symposium at Makerere University, I visited the basecamp for research in the Kalinzu Forest. There I met several young graduate students. One of them, Natsumi Aruga, is a graduate student in the Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Sciences, Kyoto University. I learned that the graduate students worked in Africa collecting data for many months; one student said that she was planning to come back to Japan only once a year. Despite the fact that the environment is obviously very different from Kyoto, their faces were full of happiness and all of them were very energetic. Since the future of our university is in their hands, it is clear that our support has to reach not only full-time researchers, but also graduate students. Finding a way to fund research is considered a task for full-time researchers, however, many other methods can be used to intensify the competence of the researchers who represent Kyoto University. We at the KURA office should not be considered merely “money men.”

References

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The world we research administrators inhabit is a shifty place, full of strange creatures and dark corners (Uniform Guidance, anyone?). The mountain of information that we are expected to be experts on is enough to make even the bravest, boldest among us shudder with fear. To paraphrase one of my favorite quotes from the Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, what can research administrators do against such reckless hate? Okay, hate is a strong word, and we aren’t Théoden watching an army of Orcs attack our stronghold, but there are days when it feels almost that overwhelming! It is in these moments that we need to look for our friends for help. Building a diverse network of relationships across your campus can provide the burst of light you need on a really dark day.

In this season of significant change in our profession, it is very easy to become overwhelmed by the amount of information that daily arrives in our email, via social media, and through multiple other sources. Trying to take on the challenges alone is daunting. However, discerning the requirements of a new grant award isn’t quite as intimidating when you have someone working alongside you, and discovering a mistake you made months ago isn’t quite as bad when you have a support system on the other end of the phone that can walk you through the process of correcting it. One of the most significant, informal, ongoing ways I have found to develop myself as a professional is to be bold enough to ask questions of anyone and everyone. More often than I would like to admit, I assumed that I understood all the facets of a situation and that I was the expert who was going to guide my group through the issue we faced. Then, sitting in a meeting, I realize, yet again, that I am not the only one who has knowledge to pass along. Not only that, but on many occasions I have been WRONG about how I was interpreting something and contributed significantly to the mess that needed cleaning up. I am confident in assuming that I am not alone in feeling this way. In these moments, we all need to choose to learn from our misunderstandings and mistakes, not run from them and try to place blame on somebody else. For instance, I recently made a rather “declarative” statement to one of my faculty members related to a new agency guidance that had come out for a proposal she was working on. It was phrased in a “you must do it this way” kind of email, but with nice words (of course). However, not 2 hours after I sent the original email, I was told by a more well-informed colleague that the guidance had recently been revised by the agency, and what I thought was the most current requirement, was already old news. In that moment, I could have either chosen to be thankful for my “village” helping me keep faculty up-to-date on changes or disgruntled that my faculty member had seen me drop the ball. Thank goodness I was having a moment of graciousness and was able to own this mistake and learn from it. Constantly being reminded that pride goes before a fall is humbling, but I will remember more clearly what I learn through mistake than through just reading about it.
Building bridges to other research administration professionals on campus is important, but equally significant are the connections research administrators make with faculty. Many times at NCURA meetings or training sessions, the chief complaint we voice or hear is that faculty just refuse to heed the instructions of the research administration professionals. There are always reasons given, but the issues often seem to boil down to problems with communication. One way to move beyond this impasse is to work toward building personal connections with those “difficult” researchers. Pretend with me, for example, that you have a faculty member who likes to do everything either at the last minute or dumps large portions of the work on someone else (you, perhaps). This individual has many things on his plate and is used to “delegating” the work. The problem comes when he takes too long to delegate the task, and it becomes a crisis. Once the crisis has passed and everything is normal again, take some time to work on your relationship with this faculty member. Make it a priority to be present with this person, and work on establishing a personal connection. I often get my best information by just stopping to chat in the door of a faculty member’s office when I know they have a research proposal brewing or when it is close to the time their report is due. Usually this gives the impression that I am here to support their work, and reminds the faculty member that they don’t have to face the beast alone. I am here and can help! This strategy also has the added advantage of working on my timeline, rather than when my faculty member is feeling crunched. Staff-level research administrators are quite often wary of bridging the “faculty gap” due to unseen and unwritten differences between the two groups. Moving beyond the distinctions by making personal connections helps to dissolve the imagined borders and makes working together much more comfortable.

Finally, a third important bridge for a research administrator to build is with the administration that makes the directional decisions that impact the daily life of the institution. Decisions made on the level of high administration can often feel disjointed to the individuals who deal with the impact of the decisions. An example that comes to mind relates to the E-Verify program, its corresponding clause FAR 52.222-54, and the policies put in place at some locations. When this program began a few years ago, some institutions made the decision not to do a blanket verification of all employees due to the possibility of “false positives” and the headaches that could cause. This related, in practice, to a significant time crunch when a federal contract arrived which required any employees paid on the contract to be E-Verified within a certain amount of time. Unintended headaches often happen while we are trying to prevent other problems, and not everything can be anticipated. While you can’t always stop a decision that has a negative impact on workflow in advance, by working to build bridges with your administration, you have an avenue to bring up questions that will positively impact you and your co-workers. Request to represent your central office, department, college, or center on institutional committees. Be bold when attending meetings or training sessions, and introduce yourself (even multiple times) to the decision makers on your campus. If you are an eager employee who can motivate your co-workers and achieve tangible results that are visible to the administration, don’t be afraid to highlight these skills and accomplishments, when appropriate, during a meeting. Do what you can to get noticed for your positive contributions, and then build a foundational relationship from there. Take steps to “build your podium” and when you need to have your voice heard, it will be ready and waiting for you.

When you are developing your professional “village,” it is important to build your bridges far and wide. If I really stop to think about it, I don’t want anyone to depend solely on me and my abilities to provide them with all their information. There is too much risk when you stand alone in these uncertain times. Everyone needs to have a network of friends, colleagues, mentors, and (often) counsellors to ensure you are providing the best service possible. Don’t ever be afraid to look silly by asking questions, attempting to connect with someone, or speaking up when you have something to say. Be bold and your courage shall be rewarded!

**Linnea Minnema, MSM, CRA, is the Director of Research and Evaluation for The University of Tennessee, Knoxville College of Nursing. Linnea’s responsibilities include providing proposal development support to faculty, interfacing with central administration, non-financial post award management, and program evaluation. She can be reached at lminnema@utk.edu**
Building 3D Communities from the Departmental Perspective

By Kristin Pennarun

Research administrators based in academic departments and centers are in a unique and powerful position to support Principal Investigators (PIs) and ensure institutional research compliance. Working in departments provides direct access to faculty, helping us to learn about the needs of individual research groups and tailor our level of responsiveness to the personalities and situations at hand. Unlike central offices, which are often highly specialized and policy-driven, departments tend to be generalist and product-driven when it comes to research administration. Our work is unpredictable, our priorities must be adjusted constantly, and we invariably end up developing flexible approaches to achieve our goals. At the same time, we are tasked with being subject-matter experts in a diverse range of areas, including sponsor guidelines, financial systems, and institutional policies.
The diversity of core activities comprising departmental research administration results in a three-dimensional community which encompasses peers, central research administration offices, and the PIs we support. From this perspective, active efforts to build community will focus on all three of these dimensions. Why does it matter that we direct our limited time and energy towards building community? Simply put, strong community relationships can help us achieve greater satisfaction in our jobs through interactions with PIs and an affinity with our institutional mission; increase efficiency in our work processes through cross-talk with peer departments; and achieve compliance in our sponsored research roles through partnerships with central offices.

**Relationships with PIs**

*“Respect the person, respect the product”*

Building community with PIs is about discovering new ways to find common ground and demonstrating an understanding of their needs and priorities. Whether our individual backgrounds have drawn us to work in proximity to a particular academic discipline, or we have ended up there by chance, over time many of us develop an affinity for the scholarly work that takes place in our departments. We understand its importance and can see how it fits into the “big picture,” i.e., the institution’s mission.

A key aspect of working with PIs is understanding just how busy they are, since they are under a very different set of pressures than are administrators. In a 2013 Harvard satisfaction survey, ladder faculty self-reported work weeks averaging upwards of 60 hours. Many faculty both teach and conduct research full-time; they actively mentor and supervise students and postdocs, serve on committees, evaluate grant proposals, and review journal articles. There are additional pressures, with the Federal Demonstration Partnership’s 2012 Faculty Workload Survey showing that faculty spend 42% of research time on administrative tasks.

PIs highly prize proactive behavior on the part of their administrators, not to the point of being pushy or nagging but to keep track of deadlines, sponsor requirements, and spending. Our specialized roles exist for a reason. It is humbling to realize that a financial system which may be second-nature to an administrator who uses it every day may seem daunting to a busy PhD-holding academic who uses it rarely! Thankfully, understanding the PI perspective depends little on our ability to comprehend their science. The key is our commitment to their success and ability to support their endeavors through our own complementary expertise. We can build trust by providing timely, reliable information that will lighten PI administrative burden.

Departmental research administrators can have a meaningful impact when they engage with PIs as trusted advisors. If we can make their busy professional lives more efficient, less confusing, and less stressful, there is a high level of intrinsic reward. Beyond that, opportunities to see great scholarship make its way into the public consciousness are extremely gratifying.

**Relationships with Peer Departments**

*“Respect our similarities … and our differences!”*

One of the best ways to experience being in community is to interact with peers from departments with a similar academic mission. Working in a department can sometimes feel isolating. We can combat this isolation by actively participating in meetings and training opportunities hosted by our central offices. These events are important for top-down information transfer and also for sharing information laterally by providing comments and listening to discussions.

Regular interactions with peer departments can help us measure our effectiveness in a real-world context and find inspiration for local improvements. What has worked well for us at Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences is a monthly networking lunch with research administration managers from eight science departments. Our units vary in administrative structure, number of faculty members, and types of research funding sources. However, we all access the same service centers, use the same
financial and grant management systems, work with the same central offices on pre- and post-award sponsored activities, and follow similar operational work processes.

Policies developed by central offices can be powerful in their simplicity and broad scope. However, such policies need to be implemented locally; this implies creation of department-specific work processes. Whether documented or simply understood, these processes should be sufficiently robust to stand up to scrutiny by our peers. Critical discussion of local best practices can be a great motivator for constructive change within our home departments. Examples of process documents that our peer group has discussed since we began meeting include onboarding materials, approvals for financial transactions, and the creation of monthly financial “snapshot” reports for PIs.

By building our community of peer departments and taking advantage of regularly scheduled and focused interactions, departments can more efficiently develop and optimize work processes. Being able to share insights in this way can save a great deal of time, providing perspective and a means to be more operationally effective.

Relationships with Central Offices
“Respect the process, respect the organization”

Successful collaboration between departments and central offices is an emergent product of our complementary roles. While department administrators have real-time access to information on specific awards and PI portfolios, we do not have the resources to coordinate large-scale training initiatives, develop or implement systems, or stay up-to-date and gain in-depth knowledge on federal regulations. We do play a facilitating role in submitting proposals and accepting awards, but are not the
institutional authority. On the other hand, central office staff may not have the bandwidth to interact with PIs directly and may not be well-positioned to fulfill support functions such as portfolio-level financial management or administration of non-sponsored research activities.

Departmental research administrators bridge the gap between PIs and central administration and even have the opportunity to facilitate cross-talk between different branches of central administration. There is tremendous added value when department administrators, well-versed in the use of sponsored systems and policies, can translate sponsored terminology into language that PIs will understand. We can support central offices by delivering these messages to busy PIs. Department administrators are also better positioned than PIs to understand why our central administrations’ processes exist and why specific deadlines and compliance functions matter to our institutions. By being responsive to the needs of our central offices, we can be critical allies in managing risk.

Administrators at both levels are often highly dependent on email to track and document tasks. However, email is sometimes inadequate, and we have found that our partnership can be strengthened through monthly face-to-face working meetings. These meetings are an optimal way to set shared priorities and tackle complex issues efficiently. Where different role groups are involved, working meetings provide a forum for all stakeholders to engage during a focused time block (e.g., cross-talk between central pre- and post-award administration). Being in community together in this way builds trust, increases understanding, and ensures that matters can be resolved appropriately according to the respective needs of the faculty and the institution as a whole.

When we truly work in community, academic departments and central offices are able to collaborate effectively, with mutual respect and the understanding that our units exist to support complementary aims. These relationships function best when we make time to work together as a larger team, resulting in a partnership with tremendous purpose and even greater potential.

References

Kristin Pennarun, Manager of Research Administration Services at the Department Organismic and Evolutionary Biology within Harvard University’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences, provides PIs with lifecycle administrative support and supervises a team of grant managers. Kristin holds advanced degrees in biology and has been an author on 10+ peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles. She is the 2013 NCURA Region I award recipient for Outstanding New Professional and can be reached at kpennarun@oeb.harvard.edu

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**Investigator Financial Conflicts of Interest:**

*What Every Good Research Administrator Should Know*

By Amy L. Spicer

Picture this: A major NIH grant deadline is approaching and everything seems to be going smoothly, perhaps a bit too smoothly. Until... *Screeching Halt!* The sponsored projects office discovers that a key investigator has not disclosed his outside interests since 2011.

Or, picture this: a new industry-sponsored clinical trial is ready to open with patients waiting to enroll, but... *Screeching Halt!* The PI has a financial conflict of interest (FCOI), and the IRB cannot review the human subjects research application until the COI Committee approves a conflict management plan at their next meeting... in a month! The perplexed research administrators are left wondering what to do.

Although these two scenarios might seem extreme, they are, unfortunately, not uncommon in the world of biomedical research. But do not fear, there are some things that intrepid research administrators can do to help avoid these kinds of delays. Here are some tips from the trenches:

1. **Disclose, disclose, disclose!** Do you have any procrastinators in your group? Reminding investigators to maintain updated disclosures of outside activities in your institution’s disclosure system, will help to avoid a last-minute nightmare of a grant deadline crisis. If you know the potential financial conflicts of interest (FCOI) of your “frequent flyers,” you can remind them to disclose interests related to their research in the grant application and the IRB application. This will help to ensure a speedy grant submission and release of awards. We cannot say this enough, “Disclose, baby, disclose!”

2. **Respond early and often.** Occasionally, the grants office or COI office may request more information or clarification from an investigator. If they do not receive a timely response, they may ask you for help. Getting an answer from the investigator quickly...
will help them finish their review so that they do not hold up the research.

**Study coordinators – your first line of defense.** Since study coordinators are often the closest to the clinical investigators and research subjects, they should be informed of any investigator FCOI on studies for which they are responsible. They should also be informed of any elements of a conflict management plan that will affect the investigator’s duties on the study.

For example, one of the most important elements of a conflict management plan prohibits the investigator from participation in the informed consent process for human subjects. On large clinical trials, more than one investigator may have a FCOI management plan, and therefore may not be allowed to consent subjects. Ensuring that your study coordinators are aware of these restrictions will help avoid possible non-compliance with a conflict management plan, forcing a situation in which subjects may need to be re-consented.

Another very important tenet of a conflict management plan is disclosure of the FCOI to human subjects in the informed consent document (ICD). Study coordinators can help ensure that the disclosure language is inserted in the ICD and that it remains there through all of the various revisions of the ICD over the course of the study. If a study coordinator inadvertently drops the disclosure language while revising the ICD, or does not understand why the disclosure language is required and thus purposely deletes it from the ICD, this could also force subjects to be re-consented. Ahh… the power of a study coordinator.

**Know the PHS Rule.** What is it? “Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which Public Health Service Funding is Sought,” 42 CFR Part 50, Subpart F, aka “the PHS Rule.” In simple terms (non-Federal-ese), this rule outlines the disclosure, training, and oversight requirements related to investigators who have an FCOI, for institutions accepting Public Health Service (PHS) funding for research. The most recent version of the rule went into effect on August 24, 2012. According to the rule, some key responsibilities for institutions are: to ensure that all investigators are trained regarding the rule; to require up-to-date outside interest disclosures for all investigators at the time of grant submission; to review all outside interest disclosures for all key investigators at the time of award; and to develop and implement a management plan for each FCOI prior to the expenditure of funds. (For more information on COI management, see Nadia Wong’s article, “Conflict of Interest: The Balance between Protecting and Encouraging Research” in the August 2014 issue of NCURA Magazine, page 64.)

Why is it important? Of course, the most important reasons for the rule are to reduce bias (or the perception of bias) in research, and to help protect the human subjects involved in the research. Other reasons to pay attention to the rule: the potential to miss a grant deadline because investigators have not made their required outside interest disclosures; the potential delay in grant funding or the start of research due to FCOI reviews or missing disclosures; and the possibility of suspension or termination of grant funding for non-compliance.

**Know your institutional policies.** Most institutions have policies related to FCOIs available on their website or from their office of research or grants office. For example, the University of Michigan Office of Research web page has a very comprehensive list of state and federal requirements, along with University policies. It is a good idea for research administrators to be familiar with these policies and know where to get information should investigators ask. Be aware that some institutions have FCOI policies that are more restrictive than the PHS rule.

**Ask questions!** There are many resources available for investigators or research administrators at their own institutions and beyond. If you think something does not look right, or you do not understand an FCOI issue, reach out to your grants office or COI office for help. We love spreading the word!

There are also resources available from the government, and from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). Some good websites to check out are:

- NIH Financial Conflicts of Interest and the associated Frequently Asked Questions page.
- AAMC Forum on Conflict of Interest in Academe.

Now picture this: A major NIH grant deadline is approaching. Because of your knowledge and expertise in the FCOI arena, you’ve done your homework and your PI and all key investigators have disclosed their outside interests promptly. The COI review has been completed. Your proposal flies through the approval process and the research begins on time. Life is good…until the next deadline.

**References**


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Creating a Culture of Grant Seeking

By Kathy Thatcher, Vivian Smyrl, and Jason Leubner

Background
Liberal Arts Grants Services, located in the College of Liberal Arts at The University of Texas at Austin, provides grants-related services to faculty, researchers, staff, and graduate students. Several years ago we were challenged to create a culture of grant-seeking in the College. While some College units boast a strong tradition and volume of grant activity, our office serves units where grant seeking is not part of the culture. We wanted to encourage more faculty and graduate students to apply for grants; increase the number of grant submissions from all departments; and develop services and procedures that would improve the overall quality of the grant proposals.

Assessment
As an initial step, our office assessed the grant-seeking activities already taking place in the College. We reviewed established programs and procedures to determine what was effective, what needed revision, and what we could add to the office portfolio to improve grant-seeking in the College. During the course of our work with faculty and graduate students who were preparing applications, we noted several recurring issues that we sought to address through improved training and communication.

Challenges
First, we found that many faculty members and graduate students were submitting grant proposals at the last minute, often missing the deadlines for internal review as requested and recommended by Liberal Arts Grants Services and our Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP). As a result, the quality of grant proposals suffered, and the rush to review and approve proposals with looming deadlines placed undue stress on the staff of all offices involved in proposal review and research compliance. We determined that the problem of last-minute submissions was exacerbated by a general lack of understanding of both the amount of time it takes to complete and submit a well-prepared, well-written proposal, and the internal processes and procedures that ensure compliance with UT and sponsor regulations.

Our review also highlighted an uneven distribution in terms of participation. The same principal investigators, predominantly in the social sciences, were submitting a majority of the proposals. If we were to create a culture of grant-seeking throughout the College, we needed to increase the number of departments, faculty members, and graduate students participating in the grant-submission process. How could we get new principal investigators to submit applications, especially in the humanities? How could we identify new funding opportunities for them?

Solutions
In addressing these issues, we had to keep in mind the capacity of our office. We improved efficiency by providing online resources to address the most frequently asked questions and concerns. We began offering workshops on the application process and UT policies and procedures as well as streamlined our grant-seeking process in order to reach the maximum number of potential applicants. We cleared all new policies and procedures with our Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies before implementing changes or publishing documents for distribution, assuring our plans were in line with the goals of the College’s upper administration.1

Proposal Submission Process and Timeline. To address the issue of late submissions and the lack of understanding of the grant submission process, we created a flow chart, Submitting Grants in the College of Liberal Arts, outlining the process for finding a funding opportunity and submitting a grant at UT. We also established a Grant Submission Timeline for submitting application documents to Liberal Arts Grants Services for processing. The timeline provides guidance for applicants about when documents are due to our office so that their proposal receives a full review. The timeline also helps ensure that we submit proposals to OSP within its requested review time. Finally, we created a version of the OSP Proposal Review Form for Liberal Arts. Our form gathers important
information about the proposal, which we then enter into the OSP Research Management System. This ensures that OSP gets a complete set of information for each application we send to them.

**Improving the Quality of Proposals – Print Documents and Workshops.** In order to improve the quality of proposals, we developed a set of guidance documents and approaches aimed at reaching a majority of Liberal Art’s faculty and graduate students. Because so many of our social sciences faculty and graduate students submit applications to the National Science Foundation (NSF), we prepared the NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant Tool Kit and the NSF Faculty Submission Tool Kit. These tool kits condense NSF’s instructions for proposal preparation and include templates from FastLane for individual sections of the proposal. The tool kits allow faculty and graduate students to find information and instructions for proposal preparation in one place and serve as a reference for answers to frequently asked questions. As a result, we receive fewer questions about the basics of preparing an NSF proposal and have more time to answer questions requiring interpretation. We also created a Budget Preparation Reference Guide to address federal, University, and College-specific budget questions. Finally, we created the Grants for Grad Students booklet, which provides general grant-seeking information to graduate students.

Our workshop series for faculty, graduate students, and research staff provides information and instruction on searching for funding opportunities, grant writing, and budget preparation. Some of our workshops relate to more specific applications, e.g., NSF proposals, grant preparation and formatting, navigating FastLane, and how the University processes proposals. We offer our workshop series once or twice each academic year. In 2013-14, more than 300 people attended workshops presented by our office. Upon request, we also conduct workshops for individual departments to fit their specific needs. We keep abreast of the changing needs of our College, by adding new workshops; this year we will offer new workshops on preparing proposals for the National Endowment for the Humanities and on stewardship.

**Finding Funding Opportunities.** Liberal Arts faculty members and graduate students often request assistance in finding the funding opportunities most appropriate for them. Initially, we began by meeting with individuals. Although this approach was popular, it was also time-consuming, and we noticed that we were providing the same opportunities to multiple researchers. We found that we could save time and effort by creating a database of funding opportunity announcements. By combing through list of opportunities published by Grants.Gov, the Foundation Center, and other sources, we identified the opportunities most appropriate to social sciences and humanities researchers. To get the word out, we began distributing a weekly College of Liberal Arts Grants Digest containing timely announcements of opportunities to Chairs and Center Directors, Senior Staff, and an opt-in listserv of approximately 400 people. The digest is also posted and archived on our website.

**Communication Strategies**

Communication is an essential part of our plan to create a culture of grant-seeking in the College and advertise our services. We make every attempt to be consistent, accurate, and as concise as possible when communicating with our constituents through various media: verbal, Web, training workshops, print documents, and email. We are sensitive to information overload and the negative impact of spamming, so we limit email communications, and carefully target messages to the appropriate recipients.

We meet with individual applicants, present in classes, and even deliver our workshops to entire departments whenever permits. We also make an effort to reach out to other research administrators and development offices throughout the UT campus. Having good relationships with the units of the University that are involved with sponsored research and compliance is especially important when unusual questions arise during pre- and post-award work.

**Evaluation and Future Goals**

One of our biggest challenges has been evaluating the impact of our office. We use our work-log database to track proposal status, focusing on the number of proposal submissions rather than the dollar amounts of awards to determine our metrics. Our data show that the number of grants processed in our office increased from 102 in 2012-13 to 137 in 2013-14, with an increase of 10 departments submitting applications. These figures suggest that we are engaging the non-traditional units in grant seeking and that we have increased the number of principal investigators who are submitting grant proposals. Because of the time lag involved in the sponsors’ application review process, we do not have complete data to evaluate whether the number of proposals awarded has increased. We continue to collect data to determine whether more grants were awarded in 2013-14 than in 2012-13.

We have made great strides towards meeting our goal of creating a culture of grant-seeking in the UT College of Liberal Arts. We continue to use the cycle outlined in this article — assessing programs and procedures; identifying challenges; developing solutions; and evaluating results — both to measure our success and to identify areas where we can improve. Future goals include attracting more faculty to our workshops and training programs and improving our evaluation methods so that we can better determine our effectiveness and understand how to fine-tune our processes, procedures, policies, and services.

**References**

1. Each of the documents listed in this article is available online at [http://www.utexas.edu/cola/research/grants-contracts/index.php](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/research/grants-contracts/index.php)

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Jason Leubner, Ph.D., is a Grants and Contracts Specialist in the College of Liberal Arts Dean’s Office at The University of Texas at Austin. Jason is responsible for pre-award and training activities for graduate students and for compiling the weekly grants digest. He can be reached at jsn.leubner@austin.utexas.edu
HHS OIG Issues First Audit Report on Pilot Payroll Certification System

The Office of Management and Budget, OMB, requested that NSF and HHS OIG perform audits to assess the payroll certification system pilot (pilot PCS) developed by the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP). Four Universities participated in the pilot program, the University of California—Irvine and the University of California—Riverside, Michigan Technological University and George Mason University. The first audit report was issued in December 2014.

In their report, the HHS OIG stated that the auditors could not express an opinion due to the University's inability to reconcile its accounting records to its FFR's. According to the auditors, the reconciliation showed a total variance of approximately $3.8 million for 666 Federal awards totaling $491 million. The auditors concluded that they could not determine if the University had a valid list of labor transactions to select a statistical sample for review.

In the University's view, the inability to express an opinion was not the result of faulty processes and systems associated with the payroll certification process. Instead, it was the failure to meet an agreed-upon deadline and a misunderstanding that led the audit team to inaccurately imply that their reconciliation showed a variance of $3.8 million. The University did not concur with the recommendations in the report.

Reconciliation Methodology

HHS and NSF OIGs met with the University and other pilot schools on January 29, 2013, to discuss the audit approach, including data and supporting information needed for the audit. On June 6, 2013, the OIG sent the University an engagement letter requesting a list of information to be submitted by June 14, 2013. The list included a request that the University provide a reconciliation of its accounting records to its FFRs for the audit period.

The University reconciled their FFRs to the general ledger (accounting records) quarterly, using an “inception-to-date” methodology which the University stated was consistent with generally accepted accounting practice and was required by the HHS Payment Management System (PMS) for certification of FFRs. The University was informed that NSF wanted to use the FFR-to-general ledger reconciliation process as a means of validating the completeness of general ledger data submitted to NSF. After a discussion of various alternative approaches to completing the reconciliation, the audit team decided that all of the reconciliations be re-created using a quarter-by-quarter methodology. On October 24, 2013, OIG presented the University with another deadline of November 1, 2013. The University stated was consistent with generally accepted accounting practice and was required by the HHS Payment Management System (PMS) for certification of FFRs. The University was informed that NSF wanted to use the FFR-to-general ledger reconciliation process as a means of validating the completeness of general ledger data submitted to NSF. After a discussion of various alternative approaches to completing the reconciliation, the audit team decided that all of the reconciliations be re-created using a quarter-by-quarter methodology. On October 24, 2013, OIG presented the University with another deadline of November 1, 2013. The University acknowledged that it had failed to meet the deadline, stating that they had underestimated the complexity of the quarter-by-quarter method and had not committed enough resources to meet the deadline. The University submitted its reconciliation on November 8, 2013.

In its response, the University acknowledged that it had failed to meet the deadline, stating that they had underestimated the complexity of the quarter-by-quarter method and had not committed enough resources to meet the deadline. The University submitted its reconciliation on November 8, 2013.

Audit Work Plan & Top Management Challenges

National Institutes of Health and Health and Human Services

Specific audits areas to be reviewed for NIH are superfund financial activities for fiscal year 2014, extramural construction grants, and colleges’ and universities’ compliance with cost principles.

Management challenges noted for HHS are SBIR’s, Uniform Guidance implementation, and weaknesses in oversight of grantees. HHS is the second largest payer under the SBIR and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. OIG has noted two significant issues: inconsistent collection of information needed to evaluate commercial success and failures to check for duplicative funding within the Department and across other agencies.

OIG has also noted weaknesses in the oversight of grantees, as demonstrated by late or absent financial and related reports, insufficient documentation on progress toward meeting program goals, and failure to ensure that grantees obtain required annual financial audits. A common problem uncovered in reviews at the grantee level is that grantees lacked robust financial management systems.

National Science Foundation

NSF’s Audit Work Plan includes a review of the health and safety in the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP), an assessment of the R/V Sikuliaq research vessel project, an evaluation of Payroll Certification Pilots, and an inspection of the management fees awarded to Federally Funded Research and Development Centers. OIG has started an examination of management fees in NSF awards, which may encompass two phases. The first phase will include a review of federal and NSF criteria for management fees, including a review of Government Accountability Office reports. The
second phase could include a review of selected awards to determine how management fees were awarded, managed, and expended. The OIG will also audit various universities, non-profits, and for-profit entities. For FY 2015, these audits will include 17 projects that focused on ARRA funded awards. In addition, OIG plans 19 new incurred cost audits at awardees selected from OIG’s FY 2015 risk assessment.

The Foundations Top Management Challenges for 2015 are to establish accountability over large cooperative agreements, improve grant administration and enhance management of the U.S. Antarctic Program. NSF reported that it has taken several steps to strengthen contract administration, including ensuring Cost Accounting Standards Disclosure Statements are adequate for covered contracts and providing additional guidance in its acquisition manual. In addition, OMB changed requirements related to documentation of labor effort, making it more challenging to assess the allowability of salaries and related costs on an ongoing basis. NSF faces the challenge of implementing OMB guidance on awardee spending for research salaries—generally the largest item of expense in research awards—that only requires awardees to ensure salary costs are reasonable at the end of an award.

Charlene Blevens has worked in the financial area in both the public and private sector in various capacities for more than 25 years with more than 13 years’ experience at universities in Research. She is the author of the Summary of University Audits, Settlements and Investigations located on the Cost Accounting Listserv at www.costaccounting.org. Charlene is a certified public accountant, certified research administrator, certified fraud examiner and holds an MBA from the University of Houston.
Call for Traveling Workshop Faculty

Are you a veteran research administrator who likes to teach? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge and expertise with colleagues? Are you looking to give something back? The Professional Development Committee invites members to consider applying or nominating colleagues to serve as faculty for our traveling workshops. NCURA offers four traveling workshops:

- **Departmental Research Administration Workshop**
- **Financial Research Administration Workshop**
- **Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop**
- **Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop**

These positions are very prestigious NCURA roles and are highly competitive. Faculty appointments are three year terms beginning January 2016. An honorarium is provided for each workshop you teach. NCURA reimburses all travel costs.

The Application deadline is April 13. More details including the application and recommendation forms will be available in March.
Have you had the experience of realizing that the person who occupied the seat at the beachfront bar before you, imbibed in a wet swimsuit? Have you ever forgotten your lunch and happily found that a thankful department had sent over bagels for everyone that day? People we never meet impact our environment all the time. Sometimes the outcome is to our benefit, other times it just makes us uncomfortable.

The residual effects of a less-than-stellar manager who has moved on or a lackluster predecessor can pigeonhole you with a reputation you did not earn. From sponsor representatives to researchers and their administrative staff, everyone you need to work with already has a preconceived notion of what they can expect based on their experience with whatever or whoever came before you.

It is an uphill battle to change established perceptions. Use these tips to dig out of a bad reputation, take control of the message and own your expertise.

Know the Goals
Start with acquiring a firm understanding of the mission of your new workgroup. If you want to be of value to your new boss, take an interest in his or her vision and make an effort to align facets of your professional goals with that vision. This will help you integrate smoothly into your immediate workgroup by identifying for yourself what you will get out of these new professional relationships.

Take time to understand where your workgroup stands within the whole institution. Are you valued? Do your co-workers feel supported and respected? Are you, as a group, innovative and accommodating? Solicit feedback from other departments that can clue you in on how much work needs to be done to change perceptions. Identifying recurring problems that pop up across your grant portfolios gives you a place to start implementing positive change with the potential to improve your reputation.

An institution may meticulously map a process from the Principal Investigator to the department to the central office that looks good on paper but no longer works in actuality. Perhaps it was developed several years ago and has not been revised for new circumstances. Completing tasks a certain way simply because “we always have” indicates an office that is not engaged in their work. This can be a problem for central administrative offices who work with rigid sponsor guidelines which lead to a top-down approach to research administration in order to ensure compliance.

There are many areas where rigidity stifles innovation. Identify the processes that need to be flexible and open to improvised strategies. Solicit feedback from your clientele for the purpose of reworking stagnant processes that are outdated or cumbersome. The acceptance of the resulting processes will reinforce the
idea that everyone affected by a system can make improvements to that system.

Build Community to Carry Your Message

If you find yourself working for a centralized office that is viewed as a bunch of button pushing watchdogs, but your boss’ vision is that his or her workgroup be viewed as helpful guides through the bureaucracy of obtaining and managing research funding, you need to spread a new message. It could be: “I work with a team of research administration experts who are here to help you.”

Find ways to convey this message in every interaction. Pepper your emails or phone calls with this message. For instance, instead of saying, “I will get back to you,” say, “Give me a moment to talk to my awesome co-worker who is quite the expert on this. I’ll consult with her and get right back to you.” or say “That’s an interesting interpretation, let me present it to my experts over here and see what they think.” Then follow-up that day with working answers.

The job of re-establishing the institution’s perception of your office starts with you. Create a buzz about your collective expertise by giving people positive, tangible things to say about you and your co-workers. Ideally, everyone within your workgroup will embrace the same message and deliver it to their circle of consumers. We all know people will talk, but it pays to remember that we can direct the conversation.

Softens the “No”

Research Administrators check charges for allowable, ensure compliance with match/cost share requirements, and tell departments and researchers which charges can and cannot be moved between awards. All of these activities create an environment ripe for negative messages.

“I want to order supplies on the day my grant ends, can I?”

“Too bad, those can’t possibly be used within the period of performance. No.”

“I want to purchase toner for the office printer, can I?”

“Nope, office supplies are not allowable as direct costs.”

“Can I use my NSF award to match for a NASA Grant?”

“Uh, no.”

Resist the short, curt answer; it does nothing to endear you to your campus colleagues. Instead, lead the inquirer through a conversation that illustrates the answer. By asking questions while withholding judgment, you create a safe space for someone to ask for help.

“Can you use all these supplies today? Why would you consider toner a direct cost?” I can’t think of a time we’ve been able to match federal funding with federal funding, can you?”

Asking questions engages the inquirer’s critical thinking skills, acknowledges their expertise, and makes them more likely to learn from the interaction. While our positions dictate that we find errors and point out flaws, if we deliver these findings with a positive spin, it becomes less likely that our researchers will see us as obstacles, and it builds respect for our expertise.

Remember, our jobs dictate that we ensure the sponsors’ expectations are met and the integrity of the scope of work of the project is upheld. This is in the best interest of any researcher. It increases the likelihood of future funding, improves the reputation of an institution, and fosters an atmosphere of accountability. Any negative feedback should be framed with these factors in mind. We are not saying “no” because we enjoy it. We are maximizing the outcome of current projects and increasing the probability that future proposals will be funded.

Know Your Researchers and Their Work

Encourage outreach between central offices and researchers; it is far too easy for central offices to forget they work with research. There are no test tubes, beakers, or safety goggles in these offices to forget they work with research. There are no test tubes, beakers, or safety goggles in an office, none of which feels very scientific. Filling out an SF-425 feels more like completing an IRS form than something related to research. Because of this, administrators should take every opportunity to meet with researchers and departments. A visit to a lab is a reminder that there is real work performed behind the charges that show up on the grant ledger. This also shows a PI that the administrators are invested in the science.

Invite your researchers to visit your office. Let them see what that F&A is providing to them other than their laboratory. An in person visit can be used to reinforce the perception that administrators are essential to the research process. We take care of burdens that the PI would never want to perform; it does not hurt to remind them of that.

In order to erase the residual effects of a bad work environment, broken processes need to be fixed. The workgroup must work together to deliver a common message of change. Consumers need to see that change and be given the tools to discuss it within their workgroups. When this happens, you will know that you have successfully changed the conversation by building your community.

Sarah Browngoetz is currently the Pre-Award Grant Analyst for the Office of Grants and Contracts at University of Alaska Fairbanks. She has over 20 years of experience working for universities and grant funded non-profits where she occasionally has had to change an unearned reputation by standing in her power, owning her expertise and changing the conversation. She can be reached at sebrown-goetz@alaska.edu

Ryan Moritz is a Post-Award Grant and Contract Analyst at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In this position he performs award setup, UNBilling, and financial reporting and has experience with federal, private, and local Alaska agencies. He can be contacted at rcmoritz@alaska.edu
NCURA Select Committee on Peer Programs

Goodbye and Welcome

With the close of 2014, NCURA wishes to thank and acknowledge the outgoing chair of the Select Committee on Peer Programs, Kerry Peluso, Emory University, who served as chair of this Select Committee for the past year.

Beginning in 2015, the Select Committee membership will include:

Pete Koch, University of Cincinnati, Chair
Gunta Liders, University of Rochester, Vice Chair
Kerry Peluso, Emory University, Past Chair
Barbara Gray, East Carolina University
David Mayo, California Institute of Technology
Beth Seaton, University of Illinois, Chicago
Peggy Lowry, Director, NCURA Peer Programs
Kathleen Larmett, Executive Director, NCURA
Temple’s National Fatherhood Research Network Funds First Four Projects

The Fatherhood Research and Practice Network (FRPN), a collaboration between Temple University and Denver’s Center for Policy Research, has awarded $350,000 to four projects that will evaluate fatherhood programs in order to determine how to best serve low-income fathers. Selected from an initial group of 71 proposals, the projects are in Goldsboro, North Carolina; Baltimore; Chicago; and Ohio.

Fatherhood programs provide services to help dads become more involved in their children’s lives and remove barriers that may prevent them from doing so. They often serve low-income, nonresident or minority fathers.

The four FRPN-funded projects, listed below, will examine the effectiveness of specific fatherhood programs and services:

**Circle of Parents—Goldsboro, North Carolina**
A research-practice partnership between Paul Lanier at the University of North Carolina School of Social Work, and the Wayne Action Group for Economic Solvency in Goldsboro. The primary purpose is to test the impact of Circle of Parents, a peer support network, on the involvement of 200 fathers of young children receiving Head Start/Early Head Start services.

**Developing All Dads for Manhood and Parenting—Baltimore**
Baltimore’s Center for Urban Families and lead researcher Bright Sarfo of Columbia University will test the effectiveness of Developing All Dads for Manhood and Parenting, a curriculum that helps organizations establish father programs, among 140 low-income, African-American fathers. The study will explore how participation is associated with changes in paternal involvement and economic security, if changes in fathers’ parental behaviors can be correlated to childhood well-being, and how individual characteristics affect the curriculum’s effects on fatherhood behavior and childhood well-being.

**The Home Visiting for Fathers Study—Chicago**
Conducted by University of Denver’s Jennifer Bellamy in collaboration

FRPN-funded programs help fathers overcome the economic and social barriers that prevent them from taking a more active, positive role in the lives of their children.
Working smart means working efficiently and making the most of the day. Below are some tips that help me stay focused while avoiding burnout.

**Jumping in**
For me, jumping in means checking voice mail first thing while opening e-mail, disposing with messages that are simple to address, giving me a jump on the day. I make every effort to avoid scheduling conference calls and meetings prior to 10AM so I can immediately begin prioritizing my workday.

I try to schedule meetings in the afternoons, out of the office if possible. This allows me to move my body and provides a change of scenery, both of which help me re-energize and re-focus.

Having a task list helps me focus throughout the day and provides a sense of accomplishment as I cross off completed items. My to-do list has items that need immediate attention at the top, and items I would like to tackle (like writing an article for the NCURA Magazine) further down. At the close of each day, I update my task list for the next day.

Finally, I try to anticipate upcoming events and avoid procrastination. When faced with a daunting task, I jump in and tackle it one bite at a time. It's about progress, not perfection.

Sound routine? It is. The routine of prioritizing helps me work efficiently, though sometimes it leads to burnout and boredom.

**Jumping out**
When burnout sets in and motivation fails, I jump out by taking a brisk walk or going for a mocha latte. Sometimes it simply takes shifting from daily tasks to longer-term goals to help me re-engage.

When all else fails, I take a mental health day. If you're thinking, "I don't have time for that!" remember that mental rest can help you refocus so you can jump back in and work more efficiently.

Jumping out is about resting, refocusing, and changing your mindset. At the end of the day, view that stack of papers on your desk as job security- they will be there for you tomorrow!

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If you want to share a “cool” project idea, please email Kellie Klein at kellie.klein@wsu.edu
NCURA members have significant impact on the 'National Scene’ – their thoughts on national issues in research administration.

Joe Gindhart
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Finance & Director, Sponsored Projects Accounting, Washington University in St. Louis

DHHS is in the process of converting their awards to subaccounts within their Payment Management System (PMS). New awards have been issued with subaccounts since October 2013, while all other existing awards will start to convert in October 2015. DHHS has also added a wrinkle to subaccounts called “expired funds”. Within PMS, the award amount that is not spent within 90 days of the budget period end date is automatically moved into the Expired Funds column. At the moment, it appears that these funds cannot be accessed until the end of the project period (via a manual process). We have contacted both DHHS and NIH regarding this issue, but a simple solution has not arisen yet. The impact to our cash management operations is being evaluated.

Christa Johnson
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Research Services, Washington University in St. Louis

We have been grappling with how to deal effectively and efficiently with foundations’ increasingly complex research agreements. Given the imperatives of contemporary venture philanthropy, foundations are including extensive intellectual property requirements in research agreements, causing significant delays for sponsored research offices. Universities must grapple with issues such as IP ownership, march-in rights, license terms, and royalty-sharing, which often conflict with university policy and/or business practices. Many universities and national organizations, including FasterCures, are bringing together foundations and institutional stakeholders to discuss the best ways to ensure the translation of intellectual property to the marketplace. We are hopeful that this will result in greater understanding of the various perspectives and the development of standard, mutually acceptable research terms and conditions. Until then, streamlining is our focus.

David Lynch
Executive Director, Office for Sponsored Research, Northwestern University – Chicago Campus

When faced with an emotionally charged situation, it’s important to respond as opposed to react. Gather all of the facts, identify the primary issues and remove the emotional variables – get a clear picture. Then you can formulate a strategy and confirm it with trusted colleagues before outlining your communication plan. Start by sending a preliminary notice within your office. Doing so will alert your staff and also give them an opportunity to identify any ambiguities before the message is broadly distributed.

Don’t be discouraged when everything doesn’t go as planned; be prepared to address unintended consequences. Verify that the situation has been resolved, and invite key players to a post-op review to discuss cause and prevention. Communicate the result, and learn as an organization.

What I Found on Twitter

The Chronicle - @chronicle - Grant agencies, faced with too many applications, are asking researchers to submit a preliminary proposal for review: http://chroni.cl/1yRN43p

The Scientist - @TheScientistLLC - Opinion: Out With the Old: It’s time the research community embraces non-traditional publishing platforms. http://bit.ly/1Cbqk1

ARMA (UK) - @ARMA_UK - Are academics good (research) administrators? http://wp.me/p1dQPE-RW via @researchwhisper

Discover Magazine - @DiscoverMag - All you need to know about the new field of “quantum biology”: http://bit.ly/1Ch0b6P

National Science Board - @NSF_NSB - Did you know we have an app that puts data at your fingertips? Tablet and iPad http://tinyurl.com/otlgewz

USAID Global Health - @USAUDGH - #Didyouknow the #globalhealth community is developing a roadmap to improve health infor syst post-2015? ow.ly/HJzrj #MA4Health

Mashable - @mashable - 4 social trends affecting the dynamics of learning in the workplace http://on.mash.to/1JDNZaQ

Amanda Snyder: Please follow me @travelgirl76 and follow @NCURA

I just started following @AECFNews, @LinkedInPulse, and @FordFoundation.
SPONSORED RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION:
A Guide to Effective Strategies & Recommended Practices

All this... and more!

With over 20 chapters written by recognized experts the two-volume compendium includes the essential principles and practices, features sample policies and procedures and extensive supplementary material.

For more information and to purchase the Guide visit http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/SponsoredResearchSubscription.aspx

NCURA
supporting research...together
Greetings Region I!

Do you know about the awards that our region gives out? I’m guessing that some of you absolutely know about these awards and that some of you are shrugging your shoulders and thinking “what awards?” For those unfamiliar with our awards program, we offer four service awards and several travel awards each year. I’d like to take a few moments to focus on these awards.

The Distinguished Service Award, the Merit Award and the Outstanding New Professional Award are given to individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of Research Administration or NCURA over the course of their careers. The difference between these three awards is the amount of time the recipient has been working in the field, at least 10 years for the Distinguished Service Award, a minimum of 5 years for the Merit Award and less than 5 for the Outstanding New Professional.

The Outstanding Volunteer Award is made to recognize a research administrator who has made a significant contribution volunteering their time to NCURA Region I.

I’m writing about these awards because the deadlines to nominate are fast approaching and to encourage you to nominate a colleague. I believe that we can all think of at least one person who we’d like to see recognized for all their good work and I’m requesting that you take the time to nominate this person. Our Awards Committee has worked to revamp the nomination process so that it is easier than ever to suggest a deserving candidate. Visit the ncuraregioni.org awards page on our website and see for yourself.

Our Travel Awards are designed to help offset the costs associated with attending regional and national NCURA meetings, anyone can apply and self-nomination is encouraged. You might think we receive a lot of nominations for Travel Awards, but this is not always the case. The Awards Committee has also revised the Travel Award nomination process after receiving feedback from some members that it was too onerous. These changes in the nomination process also provide a great example of how the region can be responsive to your needs, if you think we should be doing things differently, we need to hear from you (and you can still reach me at chair@ncuraregioni.org).

The service awards will be presented in May at our annual Spring Meeting in Portland, Maine (May 3-5, 2015 at the Westin Hotel). In keeping with their “Mission Possible: You Can Get There from Here” theme, our programming committee has put together a spectacular program with 6 pre-meeting workshops, 46 educational sessions and Dr. Geraldine Hamilton from the Wyss Institute as the keynote speaker (check out her online TED Talk for a preview). There will also be plenty of networking opportunities to make connections and catch up with old friends. I commend the programming committee on their tremendous effort in planning what promises to be a memorable meeting. I look forward to seeing you in Portland!

Michelle Auerbach serves as the Chair of Region I and is the Executive Director of Research Integrity and Assurance at Boston University. Michelle can be reached at chair@ncuraregioni.org.
REGIONS III  
Southeast  
www.ncuraregioniii.com  
https://www.facebook.com/groups/182985687430137  

Part of NCURA's core purpose and mission is to “advance the field of research administration through education and professional development programs.” With all of the work that goes into national and regional programs, it’s a privilege to witness and celebrate in the advancement of our colleagues. In the last round of CRA exams, 65 NCURA members achieved this certification. Of these new CRAs, 21 of them represent Region III. We would like to congratulate the following for successfully obtaining their CRA: Stacey Bass, Julie Kozyreva, Laura Letherer, and Robert Roy (Georgia Institute of Technology); Kenneth Bauer, III and Melaney McLean (Florida State University); Kerri Bowol and Lauren Kingsley (Nova Southeastern University); Tiffany Buck (Radford University); Vonda Durrer (University of Virginia); Jennifer Easley and Mary Latham (Mississippi State University); Nanette Guzman (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University); Amber Hardie (The University of Tennessee); Tania Osborne (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Mitsuko Pensky (University of Miami); Antonia Pitts (the University of Alabama in Huntsville); John Raynor, Jr. (Elizabeth City State University); Kenneth Sleeper (University of Mississippi); Alisa Stafford-Rodgers (Hampton University); Andrew Volker (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University). Good job everyone! We wish you continued success in your professional development.

Region III is also excited about our fast-approaching spring meeting! There will be tons of “sharing of knowledge and experience” as we join another May 9-13th on the Isle of Palms just minutes from Charleston, South Carolina. If you have not already registered, it’s not too late! Registration information is available on our new and improved webpage: www.ncuraregioniii.com/springmeeting.php The Program Committee worked very hard to put together a series of workshops, presentations, and discussions that will help us all set sail for brighter horizons in our careers. Also, we look forward to hosting Dr. Matthew J. Anderson of Saint Joseph's University as our Keynote Speaker. As an associate professor of psychology, Dr. Anderson studies animal behavior, with a particular interest in flamingos. Did you know that a flock of flamingos is called a flamboyance? Please help us make this flamboyance the largest one that Dr. Anderson has ever seen!

Lastly, volunteering is a great way to make the best of your NCURA membership. Not only does volunteering offer tremendous networking potential, but you’ll also find that it’s a great way to discover and unleash your own potential. Whether you want to sharpen a skill you already have or broaden your repertoire of talents, working with one of the committees in our region will serve you well as you serve NCURA. If you would like to volunteer, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Hagan Walker at hagan@clemson.edu You can also visit our website and use the Volunteer Spot to sign up for the various opportunities available.

Tanya Blackwell serves as Region III’s magazine contributor and is a Contracting Officer at Georgia Institute of Technology/GTRC.

REGION IV  
Mid-America  
http://www.ncuraregioniv.com  
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ncura-Region-IV/134667746605561

“NCURA has enriched my professional career as a research administrator. Attending sessions and networking with colleagues has both informed and challenged my thinking. The personal impact and institutional benefit of belonging to NCURA has been tremendous.” Heather Offhaus, Medical School Director of Grant Review and Analysis, University of Michigan

NCURA is beneficial in countless ways for the research administrator, providing opportunities for professional development and networking opportunities. I hope you have taken advantage of the many opportunities available to you.

Let me first take the opportunity to also post additional names from the first class of Region IV’s Mentoring Our Own mentor/mentee pairs. Congratulations to everyone who participated. In the next NCURA Magazine issue we will post year 2 graduates.

Mentors/Mentees
Diane M. Meyer, Iowa State University
Jason Weitzman, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Larry Westby, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Amy Brush, Kansas State University
Lynda Wolter, University of Chicago
Bonnee Dee, Washington University, St. Louis
Jeff Ritchie, Lewis University
Diane Calabria, College of Saint Benedict
Jim Maus, Washington University, St. Louis
Kim Keely, University of North Dakota
Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan
Elizabeth White, University of Missouri
Jennifer Morehead, Governors State University
Erica Franch, Northern Michigan University
Tom Wilson, Rush University Medical Center
Joe Ekdahl, University of Iowa
Marjorie Piechowski, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Michelle Bobacik, Saint Xavier University, Chicago

So the calendar says spring is here, but as we know in the Midwest March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb… and then there’s April, when we all look forward to the annual regional meeting. This year is a very exciting year for Region IV, as we have worked with Region VIII for a special joint conference in Chicago. But more on that later…

MARCH/APRIL 2015 59
Congratulations to Michael Catlos, Matt Foxen, Toby Schellhase and Heather Schmitz. Their names were drawn randomly from those who submitted their names after taking the first Region IV survey, and each won a $20 gift card to Amazon. Region IV also rolled out a second survey and the results as well as winners of the gift card drawing will be announced in the next regional corner. Thank you everyone for responding to the survey, what you think matters!

**REGION VIII International**

http://www.ncuraintregion.org

In Region VIII (also known as the International Region) news, we extend an enormous thank you to Annika Glauner who has been the Secretary for the international region for several years. Annika’s contribution to the region has made a significant impact on the development of the region. Highlights include her involvement in the 1st international region meeting and strong encouragement for increasing the region network and exceptional work as Secretary. Annika will continue her involvement with NCURA as a member of the Nomination and Leadership Development Committee. We also welcome Melinda Heron, who has recently joined the committee to take up the position of Secretary.

**Region IV and Region VIII Joint Meeting**

In other news, for both Region IV and Region VIII the countdown has begun for their Joint Spring Meeting!

Many of you have already registered for the conference and the hotel and are now deciding which sessions to attend. For those who have not yet done so…don’t worry…it’s not too late. Registration is still open to attend the meeting, which has a focus on “Research Administration Going Global” and is set in Chicago, April 26 – 29. The joint meeting provides a great opportunity to hear from a number of presenters on national and international issues.

The highlights include seven full-day and half-day workshops on Sunday, April 26. On Monday, the meeting will kick off with our keynote, Dr. Robert L. Murphy, M.D. He is the Director of the Center for Global Health at Northwestern University and is Special Advisor to the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in Nigeria. Dr. Murphy will discuss his work and life lessons learned on the importance of partnering research and administration in international collaborations. This will be immediately followed by Hot Topic Discussion Circles and over 60 concurrent sessions. From introductory topics to senior forums to current information on uniform guidance, there is definitely something for everyone.

There will be plenty of opportunities for networking as well – A Sunday evening reception at the Museum of Contemporary Art, just a few blocks from the Drake Hotel; Monday evening dinner groups to a wide selection of Chicago restaurants – ethnic restaurants, local breweries and Michelin mentions; Tuesday evening Taste of Chicago at the Drake Hotel with a local jazz and blues talent. Stay an extra day for an academic research tour of several premier research institutions in the Chicagoland area.

There are also plenty of opportunities to volunteer, which is another great way to build your network. For all of the conference details, please see http://www.ncuraregioniv.com/conferences.html.

We asked some of our members who are involved in the meeting these questions, “What do you like most about Chicago”; “What are you most excited about in attending the upcoming joint meeting” and “Are you involved in the Thursday site visits; if so, what would you say to someone who was thinking about attending the visit?” Responses highlighted that the opportunity to meet with colleagues face to face and discuss common matters from a multitude of perspectives was a key draw card.

Martin Kirk (University of British Columbia) likes the “amazing architecture, great bagels, sailing, public art/spaces and the jazz.” David Lynch (Northwestern University, Chicago) highlights “it’s a big city with the associated challenges and opportunities. Visitors will find Chicago citizens to be friendly, caring, knowledgeable and a delightful blend of backgrounds. We enjoy health, wellness, sports, theater, exhibitions and good conversation; new perspectives are appreciated. Pop into any coffeehouse and you’ll see what I mean.”

When we asked Tiina Berg (University of Helsinki) what she was most excited about, she commented: “The joint meeting itself is the reason to come. I enjoy learning from colleagues and hopefully could inspire other international colleagues to join us. It is wonderful opportunity to learn and share experiences. I always go back home from NCURA conferences with hundreds of new ideas. It’s my pleasure to see and be involved the international region’s first steps. Certainly I look forward to meet all those people who have been preparing this meeting. There is nothing as good as meeting your colleagues worldwide face-to-face.” Similarly, Laura Plant (Karolinska Institutet) is looking forward to: “Making contacts with new people and meeting known colleagues. I’m also looking forward to presenting at the conference and catching up with members of the International region that I met last year in Washington D.C.”

Kathy Durben (Marquette University) says “there are so many things to love about Chicago! The Cupcake ATM has to be one of them. I’m looking forward to both the programmatic sessions and networking opportunities. I hope to come away with new information that really can’t readily be gained elsewhere. Additionally, I’m excited about meeting new people, especially international colleagues, but also catching up with old friends. I’ve seen
the agenda and was amazed at the fabulous opportunities! Chicago is a hub of research excellence and getting a personal tour of such premier institutions is definitely worth staying an extra day.”

Bruno Wöran (Lappeenranta University of Technology) looks forward to: “Networking with colleagues and friends, making new connections, learning and sharing ideas and good practices from all aspects of research management. As program co-chair I’m especially excited about the new Hot Topic Discussion Round Tables on Monday morning. Those are 45 minute discussion rounds on the various topics which are presented throughout the meeting in order to find their audience and discussants on the very first day of the meeting. More details on those can be found in the program.”

Tracy Mrowczynski (Northwestern University) likes the vibrant energy of the city. There is a variety to see and do and the people are so friendly. Also, the view of the skyline from the lake is gorgeous. She is most interested in learning more about international research administration - especially the chance to understand how cultural differences may impact how business is handled at foreign institutions.

Eva Björndal (Karolinska Institute) is eager to attend the Thursday site visits: “I’ll be the first one to sign up… It’s simply an opportunity that cannot be missed….” If you are wondering what’s involved, David Lynch tells us that “Even with my creative juices in full flow, I could only come up with Research Bus Tour as a catchy title. Perhaps something like The Amazing Research Administration Time Machine is more appropriate. We will be visiting some of the most significant research centers in Chicago, each of which has historic roots and is now deeply involved in expanding our envelope of knowledge through research. The strong research presence is supported by an equally strong research administration.”

Next steps… well, if you haven’t already registered to attend the joint meeting, we hope your next step is to register. If you have, then start packing and we look forward to seeing you there.

Sue Kelch serves as the Chair of Region IV and is Research Finance Manager in the Department of Otolaryngology, University of Michigan. Kirsten Yehl serves as the Region IV Chair-Elect and Program Co-Chair for the Region IV/VIII Meeting. Kirsten is Administrative Director at Northwestern University.

Bryony Wakefield serves as the Chair of Region VIII and is the Director, Research Unit, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at The University of Melbourne. Eva Björndal serves at the Region VIII Chair-Elect and Program Co-Chair for the Region IV/VIII Meeting. She is the Team Leader Post-Contract and Financial Compliance at the Karolinska Institutet.

Share Your Skills and Endorse Expertise of Others

✔ Do you have expertise in Subawards/Subcontracting?
✔ Are you responsible for Export Controls or Intellectual Property?

Coming soon in Spring 2015…
The NCURA Website and Collaborate Platform.

Member searchable Demographics, Expertise and Responsibility Feature to enhance your professional network.

Join the conversation at http://collaborate.ncura.edu/home

Areas of Expertise and Responsibilities

- Pre-Award
- Funding Opportunities
- Clinical Trials
- Government Relations
- Conflict of Interest
“You have to learn the rules of the game. And then you have to play better than anyone else.” — Albert Einstein

Our team is recruiting for spring training . . . and WE WANT YOU! If you desire an opportunity to be coached, mentored and trained by some of NCURA’s most successful and winning research administrators, make plans to join us in Houston at the Hyatt Regency-Downtown for our spring meeting from April 19-22, 2015. The program for our meeting, Game Changers: A New Era in Research Administration, will provide a multitude of opportunities for you to strengthen your skills, develop your strategy and build your network. The program committee is planning a full slate of half-day workshops on Sunday, April 19, including the topics of pre- and post-award administration, research compliance, export controls, clinical trial administration and uniform guidance. Also on Sunday, we have arranged with the Research Administrators Certification Council to offer a Certified Research Administrator Body of Knowledge review session. Our concurrent sessions to be held April 20-22 will include topics such as pre- and post-award administration, medical/clinical trials, research compliance and human capital/professional development. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Mothaffar Rimawi, Medical Director and Director of Clinical Research at the Smith Breast Center at Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Rimawi is a Medical Oncologist specializing in breast cancer care and research and received the 2013 Komen Impact Award for Outstanding Project Director.

But, it’s not all work and no play! On Sunday evening plan to join us for an informal networking reception that will provide opportunities for you to meet the players – your fellow research administrators and the coaches – the meeting faculty and the NCURA Region V Executive Committee. You will be able to share ideas and learn how you too can become a valuable member of our team.

After a full slate of concurrent sessions on Monday and Tuesday, we will relax and enjoy a casino and gaming festival on Tuesday evening. The event will have something for everyone including dinner, bingo, casino gaming tables, board games and even a photo booth! We will conclude our concurrent sessions on Wednesday with a challenging and information packed game of Research Administration Jeopardy!

Please visit our webpage at www.ncuraregionv.com where we will provide information about the meeting including hotel booking information, meeting registration and program information. You can also stay current by following Region V on Twitter @ncura5 and invite you to join our Facebook page by searching for NCURA Region V.

Look forward to seeing you in Houston – Let the Games Begin!

Katherine V. Kissmann serves as Chair-Elect of Region V and is Director, Contracts & Grants, at The Texas A & M University System Sponsored Research Services.

Dear RVI Community,

As 2015 Region Chair, I would like to express my appreciation for this opportunity to represent you. Like years past, there is much work to be done, which will take many hands to accomplish. I look forward to your support, and I am truly grateful to the dedicated and dynamic NCURA community for the hard work and generosity that continually fosters the evolution and growth of our region while holding true to the values of NCURA: Integrity, Excellence, Inclusiveness, and Collegiality.

SLC Joint Region Meeting: Our biggest task at hand is the preparations for the upcoming region meeting in:

Salt Lake City, October 4-7, 2015

Life Elevated…reaching new heights in research administration

In January, jointly with RVII, we sent out a survey requesting your input to aid the SLC Program Committee to develop a program that is current, relevant, and with your needs in mind. We are pleased with the survey feedback, which will help shape a diverse, yet focused program. We also had many responses to our call for volunteers to serve on the SLC Program Committee. Next, a Call for Proposals will be announced and the Program Committee will begin the program planning. Room blocks and registration announcements will follow in Spring. Please visit our website for more information: http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura

RVI Awards: In January, we were pleased to announce the opportunity for one travel award for FRA and one award for PRA. We look forward to awarding those travel awards and plan to offer travel awards for AM57 and SLC2015. Stay tuned.

RVI Special Election: The Nominating and Election Committee has been busy working to prepare a slate of candidates for the open 2016 RVI Chair position. We look forward to your vote and welcoming our new Chair-elect. We are sorry to see Randi Wasik leave the post and our region, but we wish her the best and thank her for all the hard work she did on the preparations for a meeting in Maui in 2016. Thank you, Randi.

Your Leadership: I am amazed and proud to be working with such a dedicated and devoted leadership team. We are wholeheartedly interested in meeting you, working with you, and representing you.

Katherine V. Kissmann serves as Chair-Elect of Region V and is Director, Contracts & Grants, at The Texas A & M University System Sponsored Research Services.
2015 Officers and Committee Chairs:

Chair: Melissa Mullen, California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo
Treasurer: Samantha Aleshire, University of Alaska – Fairbanks
Secretary: Matthew Kirk, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

Samantha Westcott (Immediate Past-Chair); Derek Brown (Treasurer-Elect); Allison Ramos (Secretary-Elect); Julie Guggino, Lindsay Demeritt (Elected RAC Members); Heather Kuhne, Nancy Lewis (Appointed RAC Members); Csilla Csaplar (Nominating and Elections Chair); Stella Sung (Travel Awards Chair); Derick Jones (Education and Professional Development Chair); Allison Ramos (Membership and Volunteer Committee Chair); Samantha Westcott, Amanda Snyder (NCURA Board of Directors)

Bruce Morgan Rosemary Madnick Georgette Sakamoto (NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee); Sinnamon Tierney, Dan Nordquist, Csilla Csaplar, Lillie Ryans-Culclager (NCURA Professional Development Committee).

Lastly, I want to thank Sam Westcott for her exemplary service, leadership and support as 2014 RVI Chair, which helped me prepare for this role.

It is going to be a great year! I look forward to meeting you, working with you, and representing you as the 2015 RVI Chair.

Regards, Melissa R. Mullen

Melissa Mullen serves as Region VI Chair and is the Manager of Sponsored Programs at the California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo.

REGION VII
Rocky Mountain
http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu

Spring is upon us and may of the regions are frantically preparing for their spring meetings. Region VII is fortunate in that we have approximately seven months before our regional meeting. There are many things that need to be confirmed and finalized prior to, but the Region VI and VII Program Committee is working hard to provide our membership with a strong program and a great venue.

If you are interested in volunteering at the meeting or presenting, please contact myself at chmarquez@unm.edu, or our Volunteer Coordinator, Elizabeth Sexton at elizabeth.a.sexton@hci.utah.edu. Salt Lake City is a wonderful city with many attractions. Find out more about SLC by visiting the SLC Visitors’ Bureau website at: http://www.visitsaltlake.com. Information regarding meeting registration and hotel accommodations is forthcoming. Keep checking our website and look out for upcoming emails with more information.

KUDOS to our members. I would like to have a section that highlights what our members are involved in and how they are supporting the continued efforts of NCURA and Region VII. NCURA’s core purpose and mission is to “serve its members and advance the field of research administration through education and professional development programs, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and by fostering a professional, collegial, and respected community.”

Tim Edwards – Congratulations to acceptance to NCURA’s 2015 Executive Leadership Program. The ELP is NCURA centric and expressly designed to develop those leadership traits considered necessary to lead NCURA into the future and to ensure future leaders emerge with an understanding of NCURA’s organizational structure, and objectives. KUDOS, Tim!

Vicki Krell – Appointment to Chair the Ad Hoc NCURA Regions VI and VII Long Range Planning Committee. In collaboration with Region VI’s former Chair Rosemary Madnick, Region VII is forming an ad hoc committee to support the long-range and strategic planning goals of Regions VI and VII, develop an actionable plan for a Regional Conference to serve the members in Alaska, develop an actionable plan for a three region Regional Conference in Las Vegas, support the Emeritus activities for the Regions, support the Chairs and Chairs-Elect for both Regions in strategic planning and setting long terms goals to benefit both Regions, along with members: Immediate Past Chair(s); Dan Nordquist, Bruce Morgan, Denise Wallen, and Josie Jimenez. KUDOS, Region VII: Vicki, Denise, and Josie!

Winnie Ennenga – Congratulations to acceptance as our region’s representative to the N&LDC (Nominating & Leadership Development Committee). She was selected by the NCURA Board of Directors and her responsibilities in this position will include identifying, training, promoting and rewarding the future and current leaders of our organization. Winnie will serve a two year term starting on January 1st, 2015. KUDOS, Winnie!

And finally, I would like to welcome Region VII’s 2015 Executive Committee! I am looking forward to working with this group and we are all anxious to serve our membership in 2015. KUDOS, RVII Executive Committee!

Chair- Elect: Marjorie Townsend, ASU
Immediate Past Chair: Leslie Schmidt, MSU
Secretary/Treasurer: Sandra Logue, Univ of Colorado - Anschutz Medical Campus

Members at Large:

Julie Gallegos, UNM Health Science Center (Julie has agreed to take the lead for our region with program evaluations for SLC2015)
Jennifer Smolnik, ASU (Jennifer has also agreed to help update our regional website and to guide us with Guidebook)

Volunteer Coordinator: Elizabeth Sexton, Univ of Utah
NCURA Board of Directors: Tim Edwards, Univ of Montana

Best wishes! Christine Marquez, Chair

Christine Marquez serves as the Region VII Chair and is the Senior Sponsored Projects Officer at the University of New Mexico.
Charlene Blevens retired from research administration in January. She and her husband moved to their retirement home in Lake Worth, Florida and are enjoying spending time with their grandchildren and seeing more of each other.

Elizabeth Demski accepted a position as Director of Sponsored Research at Wellesley College. She had held a position at Emerson College. Elizabeth is currently chairing the Professional Development Committee for Region I.

With 31+ years of Federal service at the NIH, Marcia Hahn retired from her position as the Director, Division of Grants Policy, OPERA on January 2, 2015.

Minessa Konecky accepted a new position as Manager of Operations at The Curadel Companies in Worcester, MA in January 2015. The company performs basic and applied research in the fields of cancer detection and treatment, with an emphasis on the use of invisible near-infrared fluorescent light for image-guided cancer surgery. She was previously a Research Administrative Supervisor at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, MA.

Susie Sedwick has retired from her position as Associate Vice President for Research at The University of Texas at Austin. Susie recently completed a six year term as chair of Phase V of the Federal Demonstration Partnership and as a board member of the Council on Governmental Relations. She will remain active in NCURA activities as she is engaged in university research administration as a consulting associate with Attain LLC.

Lori Schultz, formerly the Assistant Director of Sponsored Projects Services at the University of Arizona, is now the Director for Research Advancement at the same institution. She’ll use 20 years of research administration experience to tackle the integration of analytics/performance metrics, research administration training for faculty and staff, policies that impact research, and eRA and other technology tools to provide services to faculty and reduce administrative burden.

Randi Wasik, M.B.A., is now the Research Administrative Director for the Department of Surgery at Duke University where she will direct, oversee and strategically manage programmatic and administrative aspects of all sponsored research activities for the department.
We have some great sessions planned for everyone – from the novice to the expert, pre-award to post-award and everything in between. In addition, this meeting will feature a new type of session: Office Hours. Many of us are often tasked by our supervisor, researchers or colleagues to find an answer to a burning issue at our institution. Office Hours will be facilitated by subject matter experts who will answer your specific questions in areas such as effort reporting, budget development or training grants. Details on scheduling for these sessions will available as the meeting gets closer.

Not only have we been focused on sessions that expand the brain, we have also been working on the fun stuff! It has been said that laughter is the best medicine, so we have worked hard to make sure AM57 has plenty of opportunities for you to enjoy some of that medicine! And on Tuesday night, be prepared to be transported to Monte Carlo for food, wine, music, casino-gaming, and other fun surprises.

Looking forward to seeing you August 2-5, 2015, at AM57 – and don’t forget to bring your family! Washington, D.C. in August is a great way to transition the kids from ‘fun summer time’ to ‘fun learning time’ before they return to school. Meeting and hotel registration will be available in April – mark your calendars! You don’t want to miss the “best meeting EV-AH”!

Conference Co-Chairs: Lisa Mosley, Arizona State University, Bob Andresen, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Brenda Kavanaugh, University of Rochester
REGIONAL MEETINGS

REGION I - NEW ENGLAND ..............................................May 2-5, 2015
Portland, ME

REGION II - MID-ATLANTIC ..............................................April 26-29, 2015
Baltimore MD

REGION III - SOUTHEASTERN ...........................................May 9-13, 2015
Isle of Palms, SC

REGION IV/VIII - MID-AMERICA/INTERNATIONAL ..............April 26-29, 2015
Chicago, IL

REGION V - SOUTHWESTERN ...........................................April 19-22, 2015
Houston, TX

REGION VI/VII - WESTERN/ROCKY MOUNTAIN .................October 4-7, 2015
Salt Lake City, UT

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

57TH ANNUAL MEETING

ONLINE TUTORIALS

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

DEADLINES FOR MAY/JUNE 2015

Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors...........................March 20, 2015
Submission of Articles to Co-editors .........................................March 27, 2015
Submission of Advertisements..................................................March 27, 2015

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NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

FINANCIAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Portland, OR.............................................................May 27-29, 2015

LEVEL I: RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Portland, OR.............................................................May 27-29, 2015

LEVEL II: SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Portland, OR.............................................................May 27-29, 2015

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Additional information for authors can be found at: http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/NCURAMagazine/Submissions.aspx

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