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- Assess the potential negative impacts to the institution of various agreement types if they are not handled properly.

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Taking a look at the definition, I chuckled at numbers 3 and 5. I am serving on the Board of Directors, as a Peer Reviewer, member of the Educational issue, like so many over the past several years, astounds me with the diversity through partnership with the Federal Demonstration Partnership and our .. The article focuses on 1) Leading Partnerships: Uniform Guidance Carolyn Elliott-Farino and Samantha Westcott titled Leadership through .. I invite you inside this issue to read an article written by Deborah Smith, these things out together. Taking a look at the definition, I chuckled at numbers 3 and 5. I am sure there may be a research administrator or two who relates the new guidance to “a minor emotional disturbance” or “the process by which the flight of a missile or rocket may be altered in speed.” This issue focuses on the implementation of the guidance (definition 4) and the varied interpretations and approaches which institutions are taking. It doesn’t need to create “a minor emotional disturbance” or be as complicated as rocket science. When we have partnerships and NCURA, we can figure these things out together. I invite you inside this issue to read an article written by Deborah Smith, Carolyn Elliott-Farino and Samantha Westcott titled Leadership through Partnerships: Uniform Guidance. The article focuses on 1) Leading through partnership with the Federal Demonstration Partnership and our faculty; 2) Leading through partnership with the National Science Foundation; and 3) Leading through partnership within an organization. The article illustrates developing a shared understanding of the new guidance is achieved through partnership among and between many. While we each read the guidance, together we create a shared understanding. Roseann Luongo and Denise Moody’s article Renewed Partnerships — Where People Come First and the Business of Research Compliance Follows really spoke to me. Institutions across the nation are collaborating to ensure compliance with the Uniform Guidance. They highlight five key competencies that a research administrator needs to balance service excellence with compliance. Dig in and read the five competencies! This issue is just so jam packed with terrific articles, sidebars, and notes, it’s difficult not to highlight them all. From global issues to institutional issues, there are articles and tidbits for everyone. You can read about research administration in Europe and Japan or read about a single office at one University. This issue, like so many over the past several years, astounds me with the diversity of authors, institutions, and topics. Keep in mind new guidance is an opportunity to develop new partnerships. The great thing about the dynamic field of research administration is that with change comes opportunity. Happy reading! Kris Monahan, PhD, Co-Editor Kris Monahan, PhD, is the Director of Sponsored Research & Programs at Providence College. She is actively involved in NCURA in capacities including serving on the Board of Directors, as a Peer Reviewer, member of the Educational Scholarship Task Force, micrograph co-author, national program committee member, and currently as the Chair-Elect of Region I. Kris can be reached at kmonahan@providence.edu

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I can’t believe it is already time for me to write my presidential message for the May/June issue of NCURA Magazine. So much has already happened this year that the time has just flown by. Since my last article, NCURA put on another highly successful pairing of the PRA and FRA conferences. We had great attendance, and there was a wealth of information shared with our community throughout the week. In addition to these national conferences, the arrival of spring brings the kick-off of the regional meetings. These regional meetings are a wonderful opportunity for our membership to connect and exchange important information and updates which are relevant to the research administration community. As president, I have the privilege of attending regional meetings I never had the opportunity to attend before and get to network with members throughout the organization. Each and every region does a wonderful job with their annual regional meetings, and it is inspiring to see how the volunteers in each region pull together to put on very successful and widely attended regional meetings.

The theme of this issue of the magazine is “New Guidance, Renewed Partnerships.” I find this theme to be extremely fitting for our present research administration community. With the Uniform Guidance now a reality, we find ourselves pulling together to navigate the change this new regulation brings. Everyone within research administration is touched by the new regulation, and it will take time for all of us to work through the various layers of these new rules. For this reason, the collaborations and partnerships that NCURA fosters and facilitates are critical to our members. NCURA is hard at work to ensure that our educational offerings and professional development opportunities stay relevant and in step with the new changes in the regulations. It is during these times of major change in the research administration environment that involvement in the NCURA community becomes priceless. The strength and power that such a large and diverse membership brings to the table facilitates a smoother adoption of the changes for all of us, at our own institutions and organizations. As part of a huge brain trust on research administration, and in the spirit of collegiality, we work collaboratively to determine the right answers going forward.

The NCURA Board and the Executive Committee are working diligently on enhancing the strategic plans for the future of our association. The work that began at the February Board meeting is continuing, and we are soliciting input from our regional leadership and other pivotal leaders within the NCURA membership and staff to ensure the vision for the future is on point and aligned with our community. This work will continue through the year with the expectation that by the end of 2015, we will have a well-defined and comprehensive strategic plan. The stretch goals that are developed will be clearly laid out and will guide our organization over the next 10 years, to ensure NCURA stays on the cutting-edge of what is vital to research administration and is relevant to our membership and community at large. These are exciting times and NCURA is in an excellent position to strive for and achieve many great things by 2025.

To wrap up, let me remind everyone to get your plans in order for attending the annual meeting in August. As you can tell by looking over the preliminary program, you do not want to miss this meeting. Vice-President Bob Andresen and his team have been hard at work this year, and this is going to be a fantastic meeting. So, make sure you have August 2 -5, 2015, marked on your calendar and have everything in place to come to Washington, D.C. this summer. It will be the perfect opportunity to reconnect with your colleagues while keeping apprised of all the key things happening in the research administration arena. I look forward to seeing you at AM57.

Michelle Vazin is NCURA President and serves as the Director of Contract and Grant Accounting at Vanderbilt University. She can be reached at michelle.vazin@vanderbilt.edu

MAY/JUNE 2015
Open Data, Open Science, Open Government

By Jackie Bendall

Open, open, open…everything open seems to be a re-occurring theme these days if you’re in the research enterprise—unless you’re exempt, like one nearby Federal Office called the White House. With its recent March 17th Federal Register Notice, it indicates that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) no longer applies. Hmm, I guess recent inquiries of emails from other fellow Federal Offices which will go unnamed may very well have proved that everything open is not always in one’s best interest, much like the one-size-fits-all approach being consistently applied to various recent draft policies, Advanced Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), and the rules themselves (FOIA, no comments necessary) impacting research.

Let’s take a walk down memory lane for those of us who remember how this open initiative came about. Simply put, our federal government believes that openness in government strengthens our democracy and promotes a more efficient, effective, and accountable government. Quoting from the White House OSTP website, “In our democracy, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which encourages accountability through transparency, is the most prominent expression of a profound national commitment to ensuring an open Government.” Well, it appears the once open government is now closed imposing visiting hours.

Perhaps some of you are still “glass half full” folks in the government regulation arena (I applaud your optimism; you’re an inspiration to the rest of us). For those who still enjoy a positive outlook, we can only hope that despite the federal government pulling back on its own self-imposed transparency doctrine, our government might be more amenable to hearing (and taking action on) our consistent messages in each and every comment letter written. In a nutshell, more is not always best, and the one-size-fits-all approach doesn’t fit every University, public or private, and their many affiliated academic centers and institutes. I certainly hope for the best, but since the release of the Office of Management and Budget’s memo, dated May 9, 2013, “Open Data Policy”, which requires agencies to collect or create information in a way that supports downstream information processing and dissemination activities, my glass has been looking a little empty.

Why? Because this mandate comes just like all other mandates—unfunded! This adds more costs and burden to institutions, with no harmonization from our fellow federal colleagues. The mandate is being implemented and interpreted in various ways, creating much confusion to those of us who are running fearful of the OIG, and outside audit firms assuming we’re out to cheat the public good. I’ll say it again, the one-size-fits-all approach for this particular mandate is applied broadly to all federally funded entities. Who benefits? No one. Everything comes to a screeching halt. Just look, we’re being asked for more data and documentation in the recent DHHS NPRM, “Clinical Trials Registration and Results Reporting,” limited to certain specified clinical trials of drugs and devices. We’re seeing more above and beyond the DHHS NPRM with the recent request for comments on the NIH Draft Guidance on the Dissemination of Clinical Trial Information intended to complement the DHHS NPRM by applying to ALL NIH funded clinical studies. We’re seeing more in terms of the NIH Genomic Data Sharing Policy, more in terms of OHRP’s Draft Guidance on Disclosing Reasonably Foreseeable Risks in Research Evaluating Standards of Care, more in terms of the Draft NIH Policy on the Use of Single Institutional Review Board for Multi-Site Research, and to further add to the quagmire, conflicting interpretations of what constitutes human subjects research. This is certainly not intended to confront other non-public health service agencies, like USAID and NIST to name a few, with their recent interpretations of the Open Data Policy, but ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! While we agree that transparency is important for those that volunteer their lives to science in search of better health outcomes, the openness in data and science should seek to meet the needs of all stakeholders, i.e., the general public, the research community, physicians and Pharma.

What we all need is amnesty, a very long sabbatical (somewhere warm), and our fellow federal colleagues to come together and harmonize with a crosswalk connecting the dots to all proposed policies and recently implemented regulations put upon us. I wonder what picture the connected dots would reveal. Now if you’ll excuse me, I think my glass needs a little filling. Cheers!

Jackie Bendall is the Director of Research Compliance and Administration for the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR). She comes to COGR with over 22 years of research administration experience in both public and private academic settings. She works with the COGR membership on a variety of research compliance matters in areas such as human subjects and animal research, data management and access, misconduct in research, select agent regulations, etc. She can be reached at jbendall@cogr.edu
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Research Administrators are very familiar with guidance from our federal sponsors. We work in a challenging environment that includes the details of what is expected of sponsors and recipients of federal funding, but those details do not include how such guidance is to be put into place. To face the challenge, we have utilized networks and partnerships that have grown and flourished to create best practices and standards — answering the “how.”

The implementation of the Uniform Guidance (UG) (OMB, 2013) has created many opportunities for research administrators, not the least of which is furthering collaboration through existing networks. This is an ideal time for leadership and partnerships. In this article, we explore three areas of leading through partnerships and how research administrators play a key role in each:

1. Leading through Partnership with the Federal Demonstration Partnership and our faculty;
2. Leading through Partnership with the National Science Foundation; and
3. Leading through Partnership within an organization.

**Leading through Partnership with the FDP and our Faculty**

Many of the new requirements of the UG may significantly affect the faculty, as well as the institution and its Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP). As an example, we will briefly discuss the subrecipient assessment and monitoring requirements. Appropriate response to these requirements has been aided by the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) (NOTE: “partnership” is in the name!) and will also involve a partnership with the faculty.

The FDP was established to assist in facilitating collaborations with federal agencies and reducing administrative burden. The FDP has been instrumental in helping institutions respond to the UG, not only through interactions with the member agencies at FDP meetings, but also through committee and task force activities. One example is the subaward working group, which has revised all of the FDP subaward forms to incorporate UG provisions and posted them on the FDP web site¹ for use by member and non-member institutions alike.

Historically, most institutions have relied on faculty to select a subrecipient based on the expertise of the principal investigator (PI) who will be collaborating on the project. Under the UG, institutions — now called “pass-through entities (PEs)” — are required to conduct a risk assessment prior to entering into a subaward and to include additional reporting requirements if the subrecipient is considered higher risk (OMB, 2013, §200.331). The risk assessment may include (1) prior experience, (2) audit reviews, (3) subrecipient personnel or systems, and (4) subrecipient’s status as a direct federal awardee. For subrecipients deemed to be higher risk, PEs may (1) impose greater restrictions such as more frequent and/or more detailed reporting (both technical and financial), (2) require cost-reimbursement rather than advance payments, (3) require milestone payments, (4) establish additional prior approvals, or (5) impose other requirements deemed necessary and consistent with the UG (OMB, 2013, §200.207). The PE’s partnership with the faculty has several facets:

- Educating the faculty about the new regulations and their impact on the institution and the faculty and on the importance of subrecipient selection;
- Eliciting input from the faculty in making the risk assessments and imposing any additional requirements as needed; and
- Emphasizing the importance of the faculty role in monitoring the subrecipient’s technical and financial reports.

¹. [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fdp/index.htm](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fdp/index.htm)
In some cases, the high-risk determination will not be made until after one or more project periods have been completed. For example, if a subrecipient did not submit any invoices in year one of the project, the PI and the PE would need to work together to determine whether no work was conducted or whether the problem was on the financial side. Then a determination would need to be made jointly about whether to continue the subaward, impose additional reporting requirements, or consider discontinuing the subaward and pursuing other options for that part of the project. If the latter, then the funding agency would need to be brought into the partnership.

**Leading through Partnership with the National Science Foundation**

There are several definitions of leadership, one of which is providing vision and guidance to an organization through actions. The National Science Foundation (NSF) has demonstrated this aspect of leadership in its implementation of the Uniform Grant (UG). The organization, in this case, is the research community. NSF has communicated its vision of the UG in action and, in so doing, has provided guidance to the community about actions it must take to comply with these new comprehensive grant regulations.

When the UG was published in December 2013, its effective date was one year hence and the federal grant-making agencies were supposed to submit draft implementation plans to the OMB by June 26, 2014 (OMB, 2013). NSF sought and received permission to implement the Uniform Guidance via its Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) and released a first draft on May 9, 2014—well ahead of the deadline (NSF, May 2014).

Sections of the draft PAPPG were highlighted and annotated with comments explaining new language or references to corresponding sections in the CFR (Code of Federal Regulations, where the UG is codified as law). For example, NSF Award and Administration Guidelines (AAG) Chapter I, C. 2. A (i) stated: “Grant General Terms and Conditions (GC-1) are used in NSF grant awards to all grantees not subject to the conditions specified in a. (ii-iv) below. In conjunction with the relevant portions of the NSF Award & Administration Guide, these conditions serve as the Foundation’s implementation of 2 CFR §200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.” NSF gave an explanation to its stakeholders in a comment: “Note that Research Terms and Conditions will be added to this list, if available, at the time of issuance.” (As of March 2015, the Research Terms and Conditions (RTC) are still not available so they have not yet been added.)

NSF accepted comments for two months after it issued the draft guide, before publishing the revised PAPPG on November 20, 2014, with an effective date of December 26, 2014. NSF shared critical information about how it would implement this major policy reform, allowing the research community its first glimpse at what implementation would look like, as well as the opportunity to comment on the draft document. When the final PAPPG was published, NSF included a helpful list of changes made specifically in implementing the Uniform Guidance. While the UG primarily consolidated eight OMB circulars into one document, it also introduced some significant changes in how research is managed which, fortunately, NSF has highlighted at the front of the PAPPG. A number of budget items are listed, including three with potential impacts on research budgets: Chapter II.C.2.g (i) (b), Administrative and Clerical Salaries & Wages Policy; Chapter II.C.2.g (iv), Travel; and Chapter II.C.2.g (vi) (a), Materials and Supplies. Critical postaward management changes are highlighted in the same way: Chapter II.B.2, Changes in PI/PD, co-PI/co-PD, or Person-Months Devoted to the Project; Chapter II.C, Cost Sharing; and Chapter III.E, Award Financial Reporting Requirements - Final Disbursement Reporting.

In addition to its early publication of the PAPPG, NSF hosted a webinar in January to go over the updated guide. NSF’s Policy Head, Jean Feldman, reviewed the updated PAPPG, paying particular attention to the sections that were revised to comply with the UG. Feldman also discussed how NSF modified the Grant General Conditions (GC-1) to implement the UG for use with all recipient types in the absence of an updated Research Terms and Conditions (RTC) (NSF, November 2014). NSF demonstrated leading through partnership by being the first agency to publish its implementation plans last spring, allowing a two-month period to comment on the draft regulations; publishing a final policy document more than 30 days before the rules were to take effect; and then hosting a webinar to ensure that the research community fully understood the new regulations. Thanks to the leadership shown by NSF and its policy office, the research community has a better understanding of how the Uniform Guidance will impact the management of NSF grants. Moreover, because NSF is a major partner in the development of the RTC, its implementation of the UG should indicate to some extent what the revised RTC will look like, and that impacts other federal agencies.

**Leading through Partnerships within an Organization**

Building partnerships is a challenge. It is a long-term investment toward achievement of mutual goals by creating a structure to maintain interactions. To be effective, partnerships not only must be flexible, mutually beneficial, and have a basis of commitment, but also must include the investment of the stakeholders. In the case of implementation of the UG, our internal partnerships can be built on the mutual need (and benefit) of ensuring institutional compliance. Collectively, then, the partnerships must be created or enhanced on the vision and mission of accomplishing that goal. Often at the center of much of this enterprise is the OSP—which is responsible for the oversight of a sponsored activity from the submission of a proposal throughout the entire life of the award until closeout—as the hub for meeting the compliance requirements. Thus, initiation of partnerships within an organization may logically fall to the OSP.

Whether the partnerships are a collective chain of the divisions of management working together toward UG conformance, or circles that all connect to OSP but not necessarily to one another, the forming of the partnerships is the same.
Example of Partnership
At a private, non-profit, academic medical center that performs sponsored activities ranging from research, to clinical trials, to community service programs, the UG change influences not only the centralized sponsored projects administration, but also Purchasing and Procurement, Capital Equipment Management, Human Resources, and other areas on the campus. The hospital is affiliated with and closely linked to a major university and its school of medicine, but is a separate entity. The policies and procedures for the hospital had been developed to reflect the guidance in OMB Circulars A-110, A-133 and A-122, but also A-21, as much of the sponsored funding for research flowed down from university partners. The institution is also bound to many sections of 42 CFR and 45 CFR, which are also reflected in policies and procedures.

To address the UG, the organization has built a series of partnership teams that bring together key stakeholders from the influenced areas with the goals of reviewing, revising and updating the new policies and procedures for the UG. Working together, the partnership teams update, evaluate, monitor, and review all the related policies and procedures so that there is no contradiction from one service area to another.

Conclusion
Regardless of whether the partnership is among the larger network of research administrators, with the sponsors, or within the organization, there are keys and tools to consider:

Keys to partnership formation:
- Identify the key stakeholders;
- Determine the mutual need;
- Create the vision of the end goal to meet the need;
- Set a path to achieving the goal;
- Communicate the shared values to keep success in mind and reduce or eliminate politics; and
- Stay focused on the partnership.

Tools to consider in working with a partner:
- Establish communication tools to share information and ensure that it flows freely.
- Define structure, procedures, goals, schedule, roles, and responsibilities.
- Assess compatibility and make changes to reduce potential conflict.
- Plan not only for the end goal, but also for communication, training, and delivery of the goal to the rest of the institution.
- Preserve and nurture the created partnership to continue beyond the task, into a long term relationship.
- Seek feedback from within and outside the partnership.
- Consider the changes as an opportunity to consider a new way of doing business.

Leading through partnership has enabled many institutions to be successful in meeting the challenges created by the UG, and Research Administrators have been key players in these leadership activities.  

References:

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Renewed Partnerships: Where People Come First and the Business of Research Compliance Follows

By Rosann Luongo and Denise Moody

Research administrators are continuously challenged to develop, communicate, manage, and enforce institutional policies and federal regulations with many internal and external constituents to include faculty, researchers, central and department administrators, peer institutional collaborators, sponsors, agencies, and auditors. Most recently, the Uniform Guidance has gone into effect, and research administrators have been collaborating nationwide to ensure that their institutions are fully compliant. At the same time, faculty and researchers are faced with administrative burden as described in the National Science Board report on Reducing Investigators’ Administrative Workload for Federally Funded Research (2014).

What is the key to achieving research compliance while not overburdening our faculty and fellow administrators? Focus on people and renewing partnerships first; research compliance will follow. We contend that there are five key competencies that a research administrator needs to establish to effectively balance customer service and compliance.

1. Strong working relationships
   If trust is the foundation, then strong working relationships are the mortar that help us build effective and productive organizations to achieve the research mission. Strong working relationships, overtime can lead to well-founded external and internal partnership. We invest time for developing strong levels of expertise, through training and other methods. Similarly, we must have the commitment for developing working relationships. Developing and managing their relationships helps institutions build strong internal control systems of compliance. These systems include strong communication, clear roles and responsibilities, collaborative business processes, and effective monitoring procedures.

   Strong relationships and trust enhance our customer service ability, facilitate enforcement of policies and procedures, and help us accomplish tasks. They can make having a difficult conversation, about unallowable costs, write-offs, or non-compliance, a little easier. An established relationship with an IRB administrator may help when you need a protocol expedited — you won’t only know who to call, but the person on the other end of that call will be more willing to go that extra mile to help you in an urgent situation.

   Keys to developing strong working relationships include the following:
   - **Focus on people 1st, business 2nd.** It is important to make a personal connection first; once you have established the basis of your relationship, the business naturally follows.
   - **Respect opinions.** We may not always see eye to eye with colleagues or administrators, but it is important to try to understand and respect their point of view on issues.
   - **Listen and communicate.** Active listening is essential for creating a valued partnership. Effective working relationships also need frequent, open, relevant, and direct communication. Our colleagues and faculty need information, in varied forms and at different times, depending on the situation. We need to be flexible and adapt our communication styles according to the individual and the need at any given time.

2. Trust
   Warren Buffet once said, “Trust is like the air we breathe. When it’s present, no one really notices... when it’s absent, everyone notices.” Trust is as critical to working relationships as air and breath is to life. Trust is the foundation of our relationship with our sponsors. If sponsors do not trust that our institutions can manage research funds with care and are committed to following through with the work that was proposed, then they will not grant us research funding. The same methodology applies to our relationships as research administrators with Principal Investigators (PIs) and collaborators. If PIs and collaborators did not trust our expertise and commitment to the work, then they would neither rely on us for advice nor invest their time in a relationship with us. The foundation of our relationships with sponsors, PIs, employees, and collaborators is trust and that is as important as the “air we breathe”.

   We can build trust by:
   1. building a network of collaboration and teamwork through time and shared experiences.
   2. communicating openly, frequently, and honestly.
   3. Providing a high-level of customer service through responsiveness and following through.

3. Collaboration/Teamwork
   Forming strong working relationships and building trust with your colleagues and faculty, fosters a more collaborative, team-building environment that lends itself to accomplishing the task at-hand. Federal regulation updates often result in an institution’s need to develop new or update existing policies, procedures, and/or systems. Often, institutions are provided a short turnaround time for development,
communication, training, and implementation in response to a federal mandate. Therefore, people and resources must be rapidly and strategically organized to problem-solve and implement the necessary changes. Policy, procedures, and/or systems updates must be implemented in full collaboration with the key constituents.

Successful teamwork and collaboration will result in better understanding of and a higher compliance rate for adherence to the new regulation. It is the result of a consensus-driven approach rather than a top-down approach and must be formed on the basis of trust. A team leader must be strong and have the ability to steer a team in the right direction while producing timely and effective results. Spreier states that “A leader’s hunger to achieve…fuels innovation, productivity, and growth…But taken to an extreme, overachievers erode organizational performance, demolishing trust, and undermining morale” (2006). In other words, collaboration is essential. Heifetz states that while “it’s tempting to go it alone when leading a change initiative…It’s also foolish. You need to recruit partners, people who can help protect you from attacks and who can point out potentially fatal flaws in your strategy or initiative” (2002).

When new policies, procedures, or systems are developed, ensure that the team is thoroughly represented and that there is sufficient time to allow for feedback from an even wider constituency. If a policy or system is released without vast user input, the likelihood that people will support, understand, and adhere to the requirements is reduced. Alternatively, successful teamwork and wide collaboration foster mutual understanding and support even the most onerous of new federal mandates.

4. Communication

Effective communication is essential for a research administrator, especially when conveying a new policy in response to a federal regulation update, which can often be perceived as onerous or contentious. First, communication within the research administration office is essential, since these “front-liners” are the staff members who must fully understand the policy and/or systems updates, respond to any questions from external constituents, and ensure compliance with the new federal regulations. Internal staff training should focus on the reasons behind the policy (the “Why”) in order to clearly communicate and provide an explanation to other administrators and faculty.

Next, communication to faculty, department administrators, and other central offices must be effective and efficient. The media type, timing, and content for communication must all be taken into account when conveying a message such as a release of a new research policy. The communication must reach a broad audience, contain the most relevant points, and be easily understood. How often have you received an email blast at your institution that conveys a new institutional policy, but you stop reading after scrolling once or twice down the page? Not only should a policy be easily understood, but the communication message regarding the policy should be even more succinct. Otherwise, the audience and the message are lost altogether.

5. Customer Service Focus

Successful research administrators view all of their constituents, including sponsors, faculty, administrators, and collaborators as their customer base. Knowing who comprises your customer base, or circle of key stakeholders, is important. This circle could be much broader than initially thought. Placing primary importance on customers’ needs helps to develop and sustain positive customer relationships, which is essential when attempting to develop and release a new policy in response to a federal mandate.

A positive customer service attitude requires social skills. Goleman states “Socially skilled people are proficient in managing relationships and building networks and are able to find common ground and build rapport…which leads to effectiveness in leading change, persuasiveness, and expertise in building and leading teams.” Social skill is “not just a matter of friendliness but friendliness with a purpose: moving people in the direction you desire” (2004).

Finally, good customer service requires the research administrator to listen first to the needs of the customer. NCURA’s Holm and Ventimiglia state “A leader should seek input, must want to listen, and must “actively” listen” (2006/2007). The same traits apply to successfully developing and implementing a new policy or system in response to a federal update.

Successful research administration and research compliance oversight involves first listening to the customer needs and then balancing those needs with maintaining compliance with the federal regulations.

Conclusion

Without these five key competencies in place, policy enforcement and research compliance are unachievable. The common theme for all competencies is that people and partnerships come first, and the business side of research administration and compliance then follow naturally. Mutual respect, greater listening skills, and collaborative teamwork can, over time, build effective relationships and trust. In the end, research administrators might (just might!) achieve full compliance through a collegial and even enjoyable process.

References


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2007/2008 Duke University embarked on a university-wide initiative dedicated to the identification, analysis, and proactive management of compliance risk. The initiative, led by the Executive Director of Internal Audit, spanned all areas of the institution—from athletics to tax to sponsored programs—and provided the framework for the development of a robust and still dynamic program designed to anticipate, identify, and mitigate potential areas of risk exposure. Senior level leaders were identified as “owners” of specific risk areas, and various units within the university were asked to develop a strategy for ensuring that appropriate data collection, analysis, remediation, and management occurred. The Office of Research Costing Compliance (RCC), a unit in Cost and Reimbursement Accounting within Duke University’s Financial Services, was tasked with the development of a risk assessment program focused on sponsored program financial activity. RCC also housed a university-wide training program for grant managers, and in subsequent years these two initiatives have combined to produce a unique approach to ensuring high quality research administration, research financial compliance, and support for performance management in the department. The Associate Vice President for Finance and Research Costing Compliance Officer provides the link between RCC operations, central post-award operations, and senior leadership. RACI (Research Administration Continuous Improvement), Duke’s senior research administration leadership group, provided ultimate oversight.

RCC Monitoring and Communication: The program started with the development of a comprehensive inventory of potential financial compliance risks. RCC developed a lengthy list of items gleaned from audits of peer institutions, basic compliance requirements, and feedback from a representative group of practitioners. Each item was evaluated for potential risk level and impact on the institution. A reporting structure was developed that ensured senior leadership would be well-informed of data analysis outcome and resulting recommendations.

From a research financial compliance perspective, several key tenants were developed to drive future development:

- “Good compliance is Good Management and Good Management is Good Compliance” – Compliance must be integral to daily grant management, throughout the entire life-cycle.
- Data must be supportive of quantitative as well as qualitative analysis
- Data must be trusted and must be understood by all end users – there was much discussion as to what was the optimum level of detail (too little or too much).
- Data must be reproducible, consistent, and standardized – “point in time” data, while valuable for some decisions, should also be applicable to long range trending analysis.
- Different audiences should receive different levels of analysis and reporting – RCC developed a communications structure that provided leadership with a focus on high level issues, while supporting more detailed discussion with management centers, and eventually, departments.
- Data supporting root cause identification are critical to provide local management the details to effect change and drive accountability.
RCC encountered a number of challenges in the first years of the monitoring program. There were a significant number of potential issues to be examined, and an entire communication structure to be developed. The large number of risk items issue was resolved by clustering risks into a group of more manageable and inter-related analyses.

Source data was not always readily available. Although the risk areas were clear, leadership often posed questions that required the creation of a new data field in order to collect quantitative data points. Often data from multiple sources were combined to produce comprehensive results. The complexity of building the numerous RCC reports also provided an interesting observation: the skill set needed to develop these inquiries was at a much higher level than originally thought. The current data collection team is led by an individual with two advanced technology degrees and experience in research administration.

**The Foundation Phase – Metrics:** Initially, RCC reporting focused on informing senior management of institutional risk levels associated with the original inventory. A secondary reporting process informed schools of their respective risks. Metrics were developed that correlated with acceptable risk levels. As data collection and analyses progressed, it became possible to develop deeper insights into core problem areas. RCC developed a “Top Ten” department list to attempt to predict where the highest level of potential risk resided. However, these were only marginally useful in understanding root issues or chronic problems. As the monitoring program matured, RCC sought to expand reporting capacity so that data could be reviewed from a more transparent and accountable perspective. The driver for this transition was the desire to review data and make qualitative decisions on core issues that might include system improvement, increased training for grant managers, school intervention, or other measures.

The initial dashboard reporting expanded to include much more detailed analysis of possible root causes. The expansion provided the ability to visualize trending data and make qualitative decisions at the basic level, enabling more informed decisions on the delicate balance between cost/burden of compliance and the necessity to address potential institutional risk. Metric analysis provided the foundation for basic risk level assessment, and enhanced data provided the next step for addressing issues.

**Management:** From initial beginnings in 2007/2008, RCC Monitoring is now a clearly defined process that provides monthly, quarterly, and annually tiered reporting of risk and risk mitigation to departments, management centers, and senior leadership. There is a formal “Scorecard” produced monthly that summarizes risk status and trending over a rolling time period. Metrics have been tested and stabilized to the extent that the information is used formally by some schools and tied to performance management expectations.

RCC is now moving into a future state with the goal of fully integrated metrics with dashboard data and trending analyses to provide a predictive (or at least a highly correlative) tool to support management. In addition to the original items included in the annual risk inventory, RCC now produces a number of complex reports and analyses that collectively support management decisions and more effective grant management.

**The Realization Phase** (Integration of Metrics and Management): Foremost among these is the Portfolio Complexity Index (PCI), an index that summarizes the relative complexity of a grant manager’s portfolio (post-award and pre-award) to better understand the impact on
PCI was developed in response to a comprehensive RACI-HR initiative that sought to identify the workload and related complexity of Duke’s grant managers. While a simple analysis of proposals submitted and/or awarded projects assigned to individual grant managers was readily available, Duke desired to dive deeper into the data to determine variances in complexity, required knowledge/training, and potential risk of non-compliance if assigned portfolios were not managed correctly. The objective of the PCI was to develop a methodology that both quantitatively and qualitatively assessed workload. In the short-term, PCI was to be used to support the HR classification of grant management personnel across departments and schools. Mid-term goals were to support the alignment of complexity within job levels/classifications, training required, and performance management. Ultimately PCI would indicate training and education needs, confirm training outcomes, and provide a powerful workload management tool for departments.

**Methodology PCI 1.0:** Duke utilized the Master Data in its financial system to identify critical elements that might contribute to the complexity of a sponsored project. A team of subject matter experts was convened to conduct the first selection round. For post-award elements, the team reviewed 75+ attributes and scored these on a scale of 1-5. Examples included: NIH mechanism (R01, P50), Direct Cost $, Sponsor, Sponsor Type (federal, commercial, not-for-profit, foreign), number of subcontracts, type of research, utilization of human subjects or animals, etc. A second group of central office experts assigned the expected “relative” complexity score for each specific pilot portfolio based on their review of the attributes included. Duke then worked with statisticians to conduct a regression analysis. The central office group met each time the analysis was run to review their anticipated outcomes matched to the analysis results. At each meeting, the group considered which attributes appeared to be more important and which did not carry the weight originally assumed. For example, it appeared that the requirement for human subject management in an awarded project did not carry the high complexity value originally anticipated. After multiple revisions, the central group was satisfied that the attributes that remained were correct and that the weights assigned to each conveyed a clear picture of the complexity of the portfolio under review. For “Stat Geeks”: ultimately, the coefficient of determination (R²), which represents how closely the data fits the statistical model, was quite high. This is not a perfect measurement and Duke is continuing to refine the process, but this gave the team a high level of comfort in the value of the data. The PCI scores were then shared with departments for vetting and final quality control. In sharing the PCI results with HR and the departments, it was important to note that, regardless of the scientific approach to workload assessment, there would still be subjectivity in the process of classifying grant managers into new positions. Such factors as years of experience, level of autonomy, quality of work, training achieved and maintained, specific PI issues, and the “other” activities and responsibilities the individual is assigned, needed to be taken into account.

**Methodology PCI 2.0:** These discussions led to the development of PCI 2.0. Originally, PCI explored the complexity of the sponsor and elements of the project. The 2.0 version expanded to include a workload metric: number of projects managed, number of transactions managed, total expenditures for the portfolio, and a variability index correlated to the number of PIs and the number of different sponsors. Further enhancements were developed to provide additional guidance. Once the entire population was formally identified, the PCI data produced further informative detail. A quintile analysis was applied to the each of the additional factors in Version 2.0 (number of projects, etc.). For each individual, there are now five quintile scores, allowing for comparison across the entire population. For workload, PCI averaged the quintile scores for number of projects, number of transactions, and total expenditures.
This produced a workload score that allowed for comparison across units, and within units. A similar approach was developed for variability, averaging the quintile scores for number of PI’s and number of different sponsors. The final PCI report also includes details on the RCC training attained by each individual.

Using PCI and other ledger information, Duke sought to integrate data in a manner that could assist in better understanding grant management in schools and departments. KIBCE (or Key Indicators of Business Control Environment) integrated PCI data, ledger transactional analysis, utilization of various procurement tools and their associated internal controls, RCC Metrics, etc. KIBCE data enables informed discussion of such issues as: are you utilizing systems with the most efficient/effective controls? What transaction categories have the largest volumes ($) and #)? Are systems impeding these processes?

Moving further into the Realization stage, RCC also developed a comprehensive analysis of Closeout activity in anticipation of changes in the federal closeout guidance. In addition to standard data such as timely versus untimely close, the new Closeout tool allows Duke to focus on barriers to clean close, identify/verify real issues, and establishes an effective baseline metric for gauging improvements made in process, training, and system enhancements. Future state reporting focuses on Procurement issues, Subrecipient Management, etc.

In creating these management reports RCC moved from an Excel/Access platform to Tableau, a data visualization tool. While RCC data is still collected and analyzed using complex reporting structures, moving this data into Tableau enables management centers and other leadership to shape queries that provide much needed answers to management questions, performance measures, and so forth. For example, a cost transfer analysis at the unit level will reveal the grant manager, the PI, the projects, and the timeliness quotient of cost transfers over an annual period, or other time frame as desired.

Next Steps: The possibilities for the use of metrics and monitoring are significant. When fully integrated with performance oversight, training, policy and structure enhancement, metrics provide the institution with the ability to proactively manage, support and improve research management in all of its facets. Metrics offer the opportunity to ask compelling questions, and at its best, informs the institution as to what questions need to be answered.

As mentioned earlier in this article, the Duke University financial compliance monitoring initiative is housed in the same unit that supports a very robust training program for grant management. A second article in the next edition of the NCURA Magazine will explore how the tools above have evolved and how metrics and training are combining to support performance management for Duke’s grant management community as well as an expanded understanding of the internal control environment in support of post-award management and timely and effective closeouts of research projects.

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This year’s theme is “New Guidance, Renewed Partnerships.” Andresen explained the significance of this title: “Ever since it was announced, the Uniform Guidance has been a topic of great interest for research administrators. We’ve been working very hard to put this in place at our institutions. And during the course of our implementations, we have been working closely with our federal sponsors, our faculty, and all of our campus administrators to come up with ways to work together better. I think many of us have found that working together on the UG has brought us closer. At this year’s meeting, we want everyone to share their experiences and ideas on what the guidance means for their institutions and their best practices going forward.”

In addition to pre-conference workshops, concurrent sessions, senior forums, and discussion groups, AM57 will offer something new: Office Hours. These sessions will offer attendees the opportunity to meet one-on-one with some of NCURA’s esteemed experts for answers and advice on specific questions or issues. “So many of us have been asked to find out the answer to a specific question while we are attending a conference. This year, NCURA is going to provide a chance to sit down with a subject matter expert on topics such the UG, federal contracting, and effort reporting to get those questions answered.” Andresen said, “The response from the subject matter experts has been great. They are really excited about the opportunity to share their perspectives. ‘Office Hours’ are new and we’re looking forward to being able to do it.”

There are also several other major events during AM57. The keynote speaker this year will be Chuck Todd. A self-described political junkie, he has earned a reputation as one of the most passionate journalists and sharpest analysts in American media. Todd previously served as NBC News chief White House correspondent, as well as the host of MSNBC’s The Daily Rundown.
Currently, Todd is the host of NBC’s *Meet the Press*. He will be sharing his perspectives on what’s happening in Washington and what to look forward to in 2016.

There will also be plenty of food, music, entertainment, and fun. Sunday night, plan on joining us for dinner and comedy with the hilarious Jake Johannsen. With forty-four *Letterman* appearances under his belt (not to mention a handful of *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, and *Politically Incorrect* gigs) Jake is no stranger to performing comedy. Prepare for laughs before going global on Tuesday night and heading to Monte Carlo (OK, the Hilton Ballroom) for food, music, and casino-gaming, with the proceeds benefiting the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund. Add in regional activities and the sites of Washington D.C., and you have all the makings of a great Annual Meeting. **See you August 2-5!**

### Jake Johannsen
**Sunday Banquet Entertainer**

### Chuck Todd
**Keynote speaker**

### Snapshot of a Some of the Office Hours Topics and Experts

- **Audit**
  - Tim Reuter, Director of Post-Award, Office of Sponsored Research, Stanford University
  - Michelle Vazin, Director, Office of Contracts and Grants, Vanderbilt University

- **Clinical Research Management**
  - Allecia Harley, Associate Vice President, Clinical Research Operations, Rush University Medical Center
  - Jamie Caldwell, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, University of Kansas Medical Center

- **Contracting**
  - David Mayo, Director of Sponsored Research, California Institute of Technology
  - John Hanold, Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, Pennsylvania State University

- **Effort Reporting**
  - Jennifer W. Mitchell, Director of Cost Studies and Effort Reporting, Northwestern University
  - Jeremy Forsberg, Assistant Vice President of Research, University of Texas at Arlington

- **Export Controls**
  - Kay Ellis, Director, University Export Control Program, Office of Responsible Conduct of Research, University of Arizona
  - Missy Peloso, Associate Vice President, Research Services, University of Pennsylvania

- **Pre-Award**
  - Craig Reynolds, Associate Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
  - Amanda Snyder, Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, University of Washington

- **Subawards**
  - Jennifer Barron, Director, Office Of Research Administration, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University
  - Pamela Webb, Associate Vice President for Research, University of Minnesota

- **Uniform Guidance**
  - Kim Moreland, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research & Sponsored Programs, University of Wisconsin-Madison
  - Sara Bible, Associate Vice Provost for Research, Stanford University
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- OMB Circular A-110 Mini Guide
- OMB Circular A-133 Mini Guide

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Partnering with Your Spreadsheets to Excel in Your Work

By Terri Hall

Spreadsheets. I used to have a love-hate relationship with them. Loved ‘em when things added up correctly… and hated them when I couldn’t find the error. Now, we’re pretty good buddies. Ever meet a spreadsheet you didn’t like? In electronic research administration, spreadsheets are used primarily as digital budgets. For those of us in business intelligence, we use them to track the numbers in research activity: proposal submissions, award dollars, research expenditures, workload, productivity metrics, and more. Taking a twist on this issue’s theme of New Guidance: Renewed Partnerships, this article will introduce you to new ways of partnering with spreadsheets. Its aim is also to provide eight tips to guide you into making your spreadsheets more useful to your work. My hope is that it will enhance, or perhaps be the start of, a beautiful friendship.

1. Good Spreadsheets
   Start the Test of Time

Will you remember the context of the spreadsheet a few months from now? And if so, will you remember where you put the file on your computer or “cloud”? A good spreadsheet is used more than once and you need to be able to easily locate it when you need it. In addition, there are often nuances as to its creation that can be lost over time. Users in the future will need to understand its context - the purpose and goal of your spreadsheet – in order to understand its value. A good way to do this is to add a footnote.

Another way is to add a tab for “data notes”. If you don’t want your audience to see the notes, you can hide the tab. In my daily work, more and more reports are being requested from my team in Excel format. We’ve started adding a ‘data notes’ tab as a standard addition to each Excel file. It has saved us time months down the road in reintroducing us to the spreadsheet’s nuances and it has also enabled us to quickly answer questions about the spreadsheet, its data, the sources, and the methodology used in its creation.

3. Good Spreadsheets Have a Name that Tells the Story

Too often the titles of spreadsheets state what the data is. Instead, add a title that tells the story, or gives one interpretation of the data shown. For example:

   OK title: “Proposals submitted last month”
   Better title: “Proposal Submissions Increased 10% Last Month”

Or let’s say that data for awards received last year show that the College of Engineering is down and College of Science stayed about the same:

   OK title: “Awards Received in 2014”

A more descriptive title saves your readers the time of analyzing the data or graph shown. The people reviewing the spreadsheet may see other data “stories”, but you’ve given them a head start by pointing one out.

4. Good Spreadsheets Are Designed Well

Make it easy for the recipient to see the stories in the data. In addition to the title, one way to make the numbers stand out is to bold them or use a bit of color. Say you are charting the data across several years as blue bars. To draw attention to your standout, change the one that tells the story to dark blue. Column headings can stand out using bold letters or a font one or two sizes bigger than the rest of the data. If your data is about “yes” and “no” answers to some questions and your interest is in those answering “yes”… highlight the “yes” answers using conditional formatting to make them more easily visible.

5. Good Spreadsheets Retain Formulas to Explain Their Methodology

How was THAT number reached? If you copy the calculated numbers and paste them into a new column showing only the numerical values then you lose that audit trail. When possible, leave the formulas in the calculated cell. In addition to explaining how the number shown was achieved, they will help you find and errors. Oh, the frustration of fighting with the numbers when you know something’s not quite right and aren’t sure where the flaw is.

Other spreadsheets may use multiple data sources and follow a specific process. If you are asked to update the spreadsheet next year, will you remember what you did? Not me. I write it all down on a new tab. I often am interrupted when I’m first creating a spreadsheet… and then wonder where I left off. Where was I? Did I already complete that step? By documenting the process, it’s easy to find where I was and to pick up where I left off.

6. Good Spreadsheets
   Leverage Excel’s Functionality

I remember the day I was first shown pivot tables. Blew my mind at how quickly they provided...
Before that I spent way too much time counting and adding things up. I got the answers but it wasn’t fun. I thought I was the last person to find out about pivot tables, but judging from the articles I still see online, my assumption was wrong. So I’m spreading the word. Pivot tables will change your life. In a couple of clicks you can create a pivot table and quickly find answers to your questions or see what the data is trying to tell you.

In addition to pivot tables, spend some time learning as many of the functions and formulas you can. There’s vlookup or index/match, sum, filtering, sorting, charting, conditional formatting, and a whole lot more to save you time, find your errors, and ease your process. Don’t we all want it to be easier? There are also many YouTube videos if you learn best that way. Here are some resources I’ve found helpful:

Chandoo.org – http://chandoo.org
Contextures blog – http://blog.contextures.com/
Excel is Fun youtube channel – https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkndrGoNpUDV-uia6a9jwYg

I’m no Excel expert by any means, but with the available resources and some time, I will get better and so can you. Dive in!

**7. Good Spreadsheets Reveal Their Sources**

There’s no journalistic secrecy needed here. It’s good practice to list where the data originated, at either the top or the bottom of the spreadsheet. This enables the recipients to recreate your results should they so desire. If the source is a website, include the URL so the reader wanting to delve into the source data a bit more knows where to find it. Another reason to list the source is that it says “I didn’t make this up.” A spreadsheet creator should welcome others recreating the results with the same data and providing the source gives them that first step. Finally, say a year has passed and you are asked to recreate the spreadsheet with updated data. That source information provides a good starting point for finding the latest data.

**8. Good Spreadsheets Pass the Test**

If you have time once you’ve completed your spreadsheet, set it aside for a couple of hours or a day and then review it with fresh eyes. Does it meet your goal? Does it make sense? Can you follow the process and logic used to create it? Can you understand what it’s telling you?

There’s no need to be afraid of spreadsheets. Get to know them. Understand them. Make peace with them. Befriend them and your work will never be the same.

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**REFERENCES:**
http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2015/01/07/fiscal-policies-for-2015/

**WANT TO SHARE NUMBERS?**
E-mail Heather Rabinec at hrabinec@uci.edu

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Terri Hall has worked in research administration for sixteen years, and is currently the Director of Research Business Intelligence at the University of Notre Dame. She leads a team responsible for providing business intelligence on the university’s research activity to assist in strategic planning, decision-making, and the determination of next steps. Her team also manages and supports 100+ systems used in research administration. Comments, questions, and feedback are welcome and encouraged. (574) 631-7378 or thall2@nd.edu
When putting together a Facilities & Administrative (F&A) cost proposal, you may encounter various data requirements that change from one proposal to the next. An institution may have had new facilities come into service; departments may have been created or consolidated; and in the course of a few years, new contacts, stakeholders, and data trustees may have come or gone. All of these factors, as well as many others, can affect the scope, schedule, and resources required to complete your F&A proposal in a timely manner. New Uniform Guidance (UG) provides new requirements and opportunities to enhance our F&A proposals.

What are some of these updates, and how can they affect the scope of your institution’s proposal? While some institutions may feel a greater impact than others due to the changes coming through the UG, there are three areas of focus that I have found especially applicable when preparing to manage an upcoming F&A proposal.

**Requesting a Rate Extension (200.414 (g))**

Though requesting a rate extension is not an entirely new practice, its recognition in Uniform Guidance means more institutions will now be aware of the option to extend rate for up to four years. If you have the resources to do so, you will want to put together a mock model of your proposal to justify requesting a rate extension. However, be aware that the cognizant agency that negotiates your rate will want to review your justification, and, if the request for extension is not approved, you will have to commit resources to developing a full proposal anyway.

It is also necessary to consider who will be making the decision to request an extension. Make sure to apprise institutional stakeholders, who would oversee the development of a proposal, or who would sign the finished product, of the option to request an extension as well as the potential benefits or negative repercussions of doing so. Neither the possibility of having a rate decrease nor the shortage of resources for developing a full proposal should be considered reasons to request an extension. Each institution will need to determine, based on their own circumstances, if they can adequately document and justify that there would be little to no change in rates from the ones that were previously negotiated. When developing your schedule for proposal development, remember that a request for extension should be submitted to your cognizant agency at least 60 days prior to the due date of your proposal, so the development of a justification would need to happen before that time.

**Calculating the Organized Research Base (Appendix IV to Part 200; 200.419 (b))**

The Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC), which is used as the base for your Organized Research, and other F&A rates, may be changing slightly. Updates that have come through UG may change your institution’s treatment of particular items of cost - such as administrative salaries and computers, as well as participant support costs. Change management for the treatment of these costs relative to the F&A proposal will need to be handled in three phases:

- Update institutional practices and policies regarding treatment of these costs on sponsored projects. Under what circumstances will your institution allow the involvement of administrative staff on a project? Will this require a minimum level of effort allocated, and if so, what? What type of justification will be required for the purchase of a computer or other electronic devices on a project? If these items are charged as direct costs, how will the potential increase in your direct cost-base affect the calculation of your F&A rate? How will the inclusion of administrative staff on sponsored projects be captured in your institution’s F&A space survey? All of these questions should at least be asked, if not also addressed in the proposal.

- Exclude appropriate costs (which may or may not previously have included participant support costs) from MTDC in your proposal. Some institutions may already have excluded participant support costs from the application of F&A and calculation of MTDC. If not, and F&A was applied to participant support for a portion of your base year, participant support will still need to be excluded from the base year calculation of MTDC, in order to indicate consistent costing practices as will be implemented for future years.

- Update your institution’s Cost Accounting Standards Disclosure Statement (DS-2), if required, to reflect your current costing practices and F&A proposal. In the case that you do not have an F&A proposal due in the near future, submission of a revised DS-2 to
Some points to consider:

Stakeholders – Your facilities management group may need to be more involved in providing detailed information regarding utility metering, facilities, and related accounts in order to develop your utility cost pools appropriately. As is the case with other special studies, submission of a UCA calculation as part of your proposal may have a fair impact on the schedule, cost, and scope of your proposal, and one must decide in advance how the UCA will or will not be handled for your institution.

Cost – Whether the calculation of the UCA is performed internal to your institution, with the use of specialized software, or with the assistance of a contracted consultant, additional cost in hours and manpower may be incurred.

Schedule – Does including a UCA calculation in your proposal affect your ability to meet your submission deadline? Will you need to request an extension of the due date in order to include this in your proposed model?

Scope – Including a UCA will require additional details in the development and submission of your proposal. Rate schedules should be submitted showing the calculation of rates both with and without the UCA. Inclusion of a proposed UCA may require you to create additional cost pools to appropriately allocate utility costs. Additional modeling of your proposal will help you evaluate the difference between allocating costs at a facility or room level. Finally, inclusion of a UCA in your proposal may result in more intensive review of allocations and a deeply scrutinized space walk with federal negotiators.

Lessons Learned

As project managers, one of the most valuable things we can do throughout the life of an F&A proposal is document, document, document! Unless this is your institution’s first time negotiating a rate, lessons learned from previous proposals will be invaluable to you. Along with a high level project plan, you will need procedural documents specific to your institution for conducting a space survey, directing other special cost studies, and allocating costs to particular cost pools. Update project documents every step of the way. The Uniform Guidance will, in some way, affect all our F&A proposals, if not in execution, at least in questions and considerations prior to submission. Anything you can document through a project plan, schedule, stakeholder register, communications plan, roles and responsibilities, etc. will be of great value in managing your current proposal and negotiation and future proposals.

The responsibility of managing a project of this scope is a large one, so don’t do it alone. The F&A proposal provides an opportunity for you, whether a project manager or project team participant, to strengthen engagements and relationships at all levels of your institution. Department administrators, data trustees, and upper-level management will have the chance to collaborate. You may seek expertise from outside sources as well, whether by tapping your professional network at other institutions or contracting the services of a professional consultant in cost accounting. With the updates that are being implemented through the UG, there are more reasons now than ever to see your cognizant agency as a partner in the process. With support from the right people, you will have the best chance of submitting an on-time and well-developed proposal.

Jennifer Smolnik, PMP is a senior officer in Cost Accounting and Analysis in the Fiscal Oversight team at Arizona State University, where she manages the F&A cost proposal as well as central oversight of university recharge centers. She has worked in Research Administration at ASU since 2007. Jennifer is currently a Member-At-Large for NCURA Region VII. She can be reached at Jennifer.Smolnik@asu.edu

References

2 C.F.R. 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/12/26/2015-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards
U.S. Federal Subcontracts to Europe:

WHO IS GETTING WHAT FROM WHICH AGENCY?

By Jesse J.K. Szeto

For many U.S. research universities, subcontracts are one of the key methods by which their researchers and faculty collaborate with one another. With U.S. federal auditors particularly emphasizing subrecipient monitoring in the past few years and the Uniform Guidance’s specific provisions, U.S. universities are more familiar now with the types of institutions that receive subcontracts than they ever have been before. However, while U.S. universities know, on an individual basis, which institutions have received subcontracts from them (and what their audit reports say), they may not have a comprehensive view of which countries are receiving the most subcontracts, and which federal sponsors’ dollars are being flowed to them.

Knowing the difficulty of tracking this type of information on a comprehensive and strategic basis, the BILAT USA 2.0 project, of which NCURA is a partner, set out to analyze the strength of subcontract relationships between the U.S. and the European Union (EU) among a subset of U.S. universities. A number of European embassies in Washington, DC as well as the European Commission itself has expressed great interest in understanding these webs of research relationships, and, on an anecdotal basis, many of us are aware that collaboration between researchers in the U.S. and EU is quite strong. However, this is the first study of its kind to specifically answer the following questions among a select group of 53 U.S. universities:

- Which EU Member States were the largest recipients of U.S. federal subcontracts?
- Which U.S. federal agencies were the largest sponsors of those U.S. federal subcontracts?
- Which U.S. universities have a substantial portfolio of European subrecipients?
- Which EU institutions have a substantial portfolio of U.S. federal subcontracts?
Our study\(^2\) found that from 2009-2013, these 53 U.S. universities had a collective total of 773 subcontracts to EU institutions. These EU institutions spanned over 23 different countries, and there were a total of 17 U.S. federal agencies that were the sponsors of these subcontracts.

A brief description of the methodology of the study, which was spearheaded by Dan Nordquist, Past President of NCURA, Assistant Vice President, Office of Research and Director, Office of Grant & Research Development at Washington State University, includes: (1) the 53 U.S. universities were drawn from among NSF's top 100 research-and-development-expenditure universities and institutions that were represented on NCURA’s Board of Directors, Professional Development Committee, Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, and Financial Management Committee; (2) each of the 53 universities provided data on a spreadsheet template asking for specific data fields, e.g., subrecipient institution, project title, EU Member State, U.S. federal agency sponsor, etc.; (3) the data were analyzed by DLR (German Aerospace Research Agency and Project Coordinator for BILAT USA 2.0).

One of the key findings from the study includes the EU Member States that had the most U.S. federal subcontracts. It is perhaps no surprise that the United Kingdom had the largest percentage of subcontracts (35%), which was close to double the percentage that the next two countries had: Germany at 19% and France at 14%. See Figure A.

A second key finding is related to “Which U.S. federal sponsors were the largest sources of these subcontracts.” In fact, as many would have suspected, it is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and almost exclusively the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which comprised of two-thirds of all subcontracts (514 out of 773). Perhaps a little more surprising, the second largest source of the subcontracts is not the National Science Foundation (NSF) which supplied 61 subcontracts, but rather, it was the Department of Defense (96 subcontracts). These were the 3 largest sources; other agencies such as NASA, Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, etc., each provided less than 5% of the subcontracts. See Figure B.

Of the 53 U.S. universities that reported these subcontracts, the top 10 accounted for two-thirds of the 773 subcontracts. By far, the University of Pennsylvania had the largest portfolio of EU subcontracts at almost 20% (132 subcontracts), followed by another Ivy League school at 12% (89 subcontracts). The remaining top 10 represent 3-6% of the total and include a range of both public and private research universities in the South, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest regions, while Stanford is the sole West Coast university. See Table 1.

On the subrecipient end, UK universities dominate the top 10 list, as exemplified by the top 3: Imperial College London, University College London, and the University of Cambridge. The exceptions to this are two German institutions (the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and the Max Planck Institute) and two Scandinavian universities (Karolinska Institute and the University of Copenhagen). See Table 2.

However, by filtering the data by a particular federal sponsor, it is possible to see that EU Member States have rather different profiles with regards to the types of subcontracts their institutions receive. As an example, by focusing on the Department of Defense or the NSF subcontracts, it is possible to see that, in fact, German and French institutions received more subcontracts than UK institutions.

Overall, this analysis of the data from 53 U.S. universities shows that the UK, Germany, and France are the largest recipients of U.S. federal subcontracts, with the NIH being the main source of these subcontracts. By far, the University of Pennsylvania has the most robust portfolio of European subcontracts, and on the recipient end, UK institutions were the primary beneficiaries. This is a preliminary analysis of some of the data that exist on subcontracts among a subset of U.S. universities. As entering subcontract data into the FSRS (FFATA Subaward Reporting System) has

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1 BILAT USA 2.0 is a project that strengthens the science and technology cooperation between the European Union and the United States. It receives funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement No 312081.

2 The study can be found at: [http://www.euusscienceandtechnology.eu/content/report-eu-research-organizations%E2%80%99-participation-us-programmes](http://www.euusscienceandtechnology.eu/content/report-eu-research-organizations%E2%80%99-participation-us-programmes)
been a requirement of U.S. federal grant recipients since 2010, and all of that data are also available on usaspending.gov, this type of data analysis will be increasingly important in helping universities to understand the breadth of their subcontract portfolio as well as the strength of their global research collaboration. For countries that are looking to understand their competitiveness in receiving U.S. federal subcontracts, this type of analysis can also provide insights into potential areas of growth as well as other countries’ profiles.

The report in its entirety can be seen here: http://www.euusscienceotechnology.eu/content/report-eu-research-organizations-%E2%80%99-participation-us-programmes


Table 1: US Institutions with 10+ Subcontracts to EU organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US Institutions</th>
<th>Subcontracts</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Ivy League School</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Alabama at Birmingham</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Florida</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Rochester</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford University</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington University in St. Louis</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emory University</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanderbilt University Medical Center</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wake Forest University Medical Center</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Institute of Technology</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Top 15 EU Recipients of US Federal Subcontracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU Subrecipients</th>
<th>Subcontracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperial College London, UK</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College London, UK</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Cambridge, UK</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Molecular Biology Laboratory, DE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Manchester, UK</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karolinska Institute, SE</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Copenhagen, DK</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Oxford, UK</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings College London, UK</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Planck Institute, DE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, FR</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Bristol, UK</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Edinburgh, UK</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubrecht Institute, NL</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale, FR</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Since the government initiated establishment of the research administration system at Japanese universities, URA offices have been trying to quickly make themselves useful to researchers in their organizations, learning a lot from good examples from abroad. The Kyoto University Research Administration office (KURA) has been also tackling this issue and has organized workshops three times in the past.

In the workshops, experienced research administrators from leading universities were invited so that their valuable experiences could be shared with the new URA office. Here, I report on the 3rd Kyoto University International URA Workshop where Professor Michael Khor (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) and Dr. Alfonso Avila Robinson (iCeMS, Kyoto University) talked about research metrics and data visualization.

After the kick-start of URA in Japan

Japanese universities have been hiring new administrative staff every year. They are trained as “generalists” through job rotations that occur every three years or so. They do most of the paperwork, and their contributions to researchers are often indirect, and mostly invisible to the researchers. The intention of the program as indicated by MEXT in 2011 was to hire “specialists” called “URAs” who have “research experience” and work for researchers to reduce their non-research burdens. The expected tasks that they would perform are thus not paperwork related; they include helping researchers find external research funds, write research proposals, facilitate international collaborations, and so on.

Being supported by the aforementioned MEXT-initiated program, named “System to Develop and Secure University Research Administrators (URA),” five universities established URA offices, with Kyoto University being one of them. A few early URA staff members in the Kyoto University Research Administration Office (KURA) tried to quickly learn how to operate the URA office during short trips to the US and Europe. However, they were apparently all behind the front line of the URA field. To keep up with the current activities of research administration and to learn administrative skills from good exemplars of successful administration all over the world, the Kyoto University International URA symposium has been organized twice. In 2013, when KURA was launched, we invited
David Richardson, from Pennsylvania State University at that time, and David Langley from the University of Bristol. In the 2014 workshop, Simon Kopp and Christoph Siart, Research Service, Research Division from the University of Heidelberg, discussed how URA could support researchers in the fields of humanities and social sciences. The theme of the workshop this year was discussed by the organizing committee of KURA and “research metrics” and “bibliometrics” were selected. Through our international URA network, we invited Professor Michael Khor, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, and Dr. Alfonso Avila Robinson, iCeMS, Kyoto University. The workshop was held at iCeMS, Kyoto on February 26th, 2015 and had 35 participants from several universities other than Kyoto University.

Athletes must know their records to become competitive

Showing evidence, based on bibliometric analysis of the publications by NTU researchers, Professor Khor explained the reason for the rapid growth of competitiveness of NTU in Asia. He also introduced his original analysis that focused on international collaboration. In this analysis, he showed that there was a tendency for top-ranked researchers to collaborate with similarly top-ranked researchers, and the impact of the outcome of the international collaboration became bigger and more interdisciplinary when the geographical distance between collaborators became larger. This kind of analysis, based on commercially available databases, has become standard for evaluating the competency of individual universities and therefore is one of the essential skills that Japanese URA must acquire.

It is important to note that Professor Khor emphasized that more attention must be given to how feedback of the results of the bibliometric analysis was given to researchers. Researchers tend to question the usefulness of the numerical values of indices that are used to evaluate researchers’ performances. Professor Khor compared bibliometrics to records of athletic sports. “Suppose you are doing running training for competition, would you be satisfied without benchmarks? Don’t you ask yourself how fast you could run this time and how much you could improve your performance? You would not say, ‘I did so-so today.’ You need to know the numeric value.”

Bibliometric mapping: Tools for understanding competencies of universities

Bibliometrics is, by its nature, dealing with multidimensional data. Researchers can be tagged with the impact factor of the journals in which they published, the number of articles that had cited their articles, the number of papers they had published in their career, and so on. Thus bibliometric features of universities and research institutions can be expressed by these high-dimensional data that collect information on individual researchers. Because we live in a three-dimensional world but are used to seeing things in two-dimensional maps, it is very critical to find the best way to “visualize” the useful information embedded in these high-dimensional data.

Dr. Robinson at the iCeMS (Institute for Integrated Cell-Material Sciences), Kyoto University introduced the idea of “knowledge integration” which was originally a subject in machine learning. Based on the bibliometric data on the iCeMS researchers, he showed how to visualize knowledge integration in iCeMS by a three-layer model that consisted of micro-, meso-, (connections among scholarly articles), meso- (connections among
research fields), and macro-levels (inter-institutional connections). Strength of the connections was represented by the thickness of the lines and Dr. Robinson shared many examples of knowledge integration represented in a two-dimensional map at each of the three layers. This sort of analysis could provide useful information for planning the direction of research at iCeMS.

Where will bibliometrics go?
In this workshop, we learned the importance of bibliometrics to analyze the competency of our university. In addition, we also learned the limitations of bibliometrics. For example, because analytic tools often use commercially available databases, the contents of the databases determine the range of the fields of research that can be analyzed. Information on the journals that deal with the humanities and social sciences are also included in the database but usually are not sufficient compared to the extensive collections of, for example, engineering and chemistry. Because bibliometrics is used to determine university rankings, an uneven collection of journal data for different research fields is a problem that cannot be overlooked.

The KURA office is also aware of this problem because research fields covered by Kyoto University are very diverse, from iPS cell research and energy science to Japanese literature as well as Asian and African studies. Many researchers in Japan, especially in the fields of humanities and social sciences, have important publications written in their native language, which is Japanese, and books and the annual reports are also written in Japanese. Nevertheless, these are not documented in the commercially available databases. Therefore, as an initial step toward “bias-corrected” bibliometrics that can grasp the competency of Kyoto University in an appropriate manner, KURA helped in making a new database that is augmented by the publications of the researchers.

In the spring of 2014, the KURA office initiated plans to form a special unit for data analysis headed by Dr. Daich Kohmoto, a URA staff member who has a strong background in mathematical science. He will start the unit called A2D (Analysis to Design) in 2015. Bibliometrics is a powerful tool to evaluate activities of researchers in universities, but it is not perfect. The KURA office will further collaborate with other institutes within Kyoto University and even with URAs in other universities so that the executives will make the right decisions on the strategic plans for the future with the right bibliometrics.

Short Report—Workshop: Visual Thinking Strategy

On the 3rd and 4th of March 2015, a workshop “Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS)” was held in Kyoto. Asa Nakano, Taketo Tsugehara and Yusuke Yamamoto of the Kyoto University Research Administration Office (KURA) organized this “experimental” workshop for researchers to facilitate their ability to touch a “fact” from multiple views by appreciating how others might see the same thing in different ways.

They invited Philip Yenawine, Co-Founding Director of Visual Understanding in Education (VUE) and Amy Chase Gulden, National Program Director, VUE, to facilitate this workshop. Eight URAs and 9 researchers from Kyoto University participated. Participants were encouraged to view artistic images and to report what they saw verbally, under Yenawine and Gulden’s facilitation. Surprisingly different impressions of the identical images were reported and the participants shared their reasoning why they understood the images in that way. Participants became aware of the existence of multiple views of the same image and this is exactly what Yenawine and Gulden expected.

Voices from participants provided impressive testimony as they were all supporting the importance of this kind of education program for their daily jobs. URAs expected that various opinions on the way to solve a daily problem would come out spontaneously through this training. Researchers thought learning the method provided by VTS could break biased interpretations about the raw data, or even that minds freed from bias in this manner might lead research to greater innovation. Well, this is still experimental, but it let the KURA members see the future potentialities of this project that may produce groundbreaking achievements from Kyoto University.

Tadashi Sugihara, Ph. D., is the Deputy Director of the Kyoto University Research Administration Office (KURA), Kyoto, Japan. He is a neuroscientist and has worked in the Zanevyl Krieger Mind/Brain Institute at Johns Hopkins University, the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy at the University of Rochester, and the RIKEN Brain Science Institute in collaboration with Toyota Motor Corporation. In addition to management duties, he is currently involved as an interviewer, writer and photographer with K. U. RESEARCH (http://research.kyoto-u.ac.jp/), a Japanese language website of Kyoto University specifically featuring research activities and researchers at Kyoto University. He can be reached at sugihara@kura.kyoto-u.ac.jp.
The University of Chicago has developed a successful research administration training program “TERA2.0 – Training for Excellence in Research Administration” – a catalyst for learning and development, disseminating new guidance, and creating renewed, strengthened partnerships among the research community.

The comprehensive eleven course certification program, now in its third cycle, boasts a curriculum that includes an introduction to research administration, compliance, proposal and budget development, award acceptance, post-award management, and audit. TERA2.0 is designed to support both novice and seasoned research administrators with efficient and consistent application of practices which increase administrative competency and knowledge, helps to ensure compliance, effectively streamlines processes, works to reduce administrative burden, and creates a repository of resources for the community of research administrators.

Training can be a lightning rod for conversation, connection, and learning: A reason to meet colleagues, with whom communication has only been via email or phone; or perhaps someone in the central office, who reviews funding proposals before they are submitted. Training sessions are the place where one can address those really specific questions that peers can relate to and understand; a place where participants receive guidance and thereafter can apply the information directly in their roles, thus enhancing their knowledge and skills while supporting organizational goals.

How Did We Do It? – Building the Program

BUY-IN, BUY-IN, BUY-IN…is the key! Gaining support and partnering with departmental leadership was imperative in the initial development of the training program. Leadership support facilitated communication of program value while encouraging administrator participation. This strong partnership base allowed us to identify and develop a Training Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of department leadership and Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) throughout the research campus community that would advise throughout program development. We met with the TAC to discuss target audience, preliminary program scope, perceived gaps in current knowledge/skills, and a timeline for implementation.

The TAC proved essential to the success of the overall program. It was no longer just another initiative from central office, but rather one supported by key figures in research administration, from every division. This shift raised the profile and audience base of TERA2.0, allowing us to tap specialists, respected throughout the research community to serve as SMEs for course topics. SMEs now had a reason to connect with peers to clarify business processes and procedures while working together to assist in development of the best, accurate content for course training sessions.

Assessing the Target Audience Needs

Following the kick off meeting with leadership, electronic surveys and focus groups were used to conduct a campus wide needs assessment among over 700 administrators. The goal was to determine the gap between current vs. desired knowledge, skills, and resources. We needed to discover how best to fulfill the needs of the campus community via training; we analyzed feedback and presented recommendations of the program and content design to the TAC.

It would have been presumptuous to launch a training program without taking appropriate steps to assess audience needs. What does the audience need to know? How do they learn best? Do they prefer in-class, on-line, blended learning, etc.? Listen to your audience – they
will guide the way. Nevertheless, like many, we do have a bit of that Steve Jobs, “People don’t know what they want until you show it to them” in us. That is where the addition of mock contract negotiations that demonstrate best practices in language alterations, an effort to procure the strongest contract comes in; or perhaps a multilayered group discussion centered on practical solutions to complicated scenarios lacking clear agency guidelines. Each scenario was facilitated by enthusiastic presenters, fostering dynamic group participation.

**Designing the Learning Program**

Through the survey and focus groups, we identified knowledge/skills, gaps. We found that research administrators preferred instructor-led, modest group learning opportunities. As a result, the program structure consisted of 2-3 hour in-class sessions held weekly (for 11 weeks) with up to 40 persons in each cohort. Upon completion, participants received a certificate commemorating and acknowledging the accomplishment. In fact, we host a formal certification ceremony to award each participant.

Enrollment began with participants completing an application process, which required supervisor approval. After all, this was not a weekend conference, but rather a significant time commitment by participants who were engaged for the next 11 weeks. Registration was capped, which added a level of exclusivity to the program. Having the registration helps set the right tone from the start as acceptance to the program means you are occupying a seat that someone else would have liked to fill. Thus, participants are committed to attending sessions, completing learning assessments, and other program requirements throughout.

Classes are interactive, featuring case studies, learning games, discussion groups, and use of blackboard to maximize engagement, retention, and foster collaboration. Throughout every program, participants expressed excitement over case study activities as they provide real-world examples of project challenges in research administration. Most importantly, case studies provide an opportunity to work together in groups and share experience and best practices while working on examples. Case studies serve as a great way to encourage partnership, among peers that extends beyond the classroom and are hands-down one of our research administrators favorite aspects of the program. Such partnership results in greater knowledge, success, and efficiency managing projects in their roles.

For a full TERA2.0 program description, please visit the University of Chicago Research Administration Website: [http://researchadmin.uchicago.edu/training.shtml](http://researchadmin.uchicago.edu/training.shtml)

**Developing Program Content, Course Material, Resources**

The development phase consumes the maximum time in the process. Using information, gathered from analysis and design, we work closely with department SMEs to develop curriculum outlines and content that aligns with learning objectives for each course. The various learning methods we use – instructor-led presentations, case studies, learning activities – foster an interactive environment focused on the application of material learned in the classroom.

Given new guidance and regulations, we consistently revise course material to include the most current information. The need to continuously revise content provides a reason for administrators to connect and think through the best approach for our research community as a whole. A consistent message and set of practices are catalogued and presented to our audience.

**Implementing the Program**

Project management is a key element in successfully developing and executing a training program as there are many moving pieces that need to come together before the program is delivered. Securing meeting venues, course speakers, setting up websites and LMS resources, confirming enrollment, communicating schedules to participants, and finalizing course and evaluation materials are among the major moving pieces. Once it all comes together, it is time to deliver the program!

Believe it or not, a sense of community partnership is present even in the implementation phase of the process. Speakers, department leads, and facilitators are all invested in delivering the best learning experience to the audience, while the audience, is on the edge of their seats waiting to see what is in store! Participants’ involvement in the program communicates investment in professional development and success in their roles. Together they all make up a community of individuals with shared goals seeking to engage in a learning experience that adds value.

**Evaluating Learning and Program Success**

After all is said and done, how do we know if the program was successful? Moreover, what does success look like? During the design phase, we developed clear learning objectives for each course and determined methods we would use to assess program efficacy. Quantitative and qualitative measurement of training effectiveness revealed strong program value with substantial percent increase in learning across courses. For each course, participants are encouraged to complete a short course evaluation form in-class or on-line. Evaluation forms measured participant reaction (how much did the participants like the class, learning methods,
material, instructors, etc.). Participants were asked to complete on-line pre and post-tests to assess learning transfer (did knowledge transfer occur, how much did knowledge increase as a result of the training). Throughout the program, some participants even formed small work groups outside of class to review tests together, share results, and discuss information learned — how’s that for renewed partnerships!

To highlight a few notable results, over 95% of program participants reported increased confidence on course topics, as a result of attending the program; over 90% can apply what they learned directly in their roles; and 100% of participants would recommend TERA2.0 to colleagues. Data is a powerful companion to participant feedback in measuring success — as one helps to better inform the other on training effectiveness. Information on experience level, department, job functions, among others from administrators allow our training team to gage what success will look like for research administrators at program design, thereby allowing accurate evaluation of program success in the end.

**Key Takeaways**

Training allowed research administrators to put a face with the name of persons whom are now within reach or just a phone call away! Network and connections made among research administrators has increased knowledge, skills, and know-how across departments. Increased knowledge and skills will foster more efficiencies and effectiveness in participants’ roles. While training yields numerous benefits for a research community, its ability to cultivate learning and development, disseminate guidance, and strengthen partnerships is definitely noteworthy.

- Listen to your audience…they will guide the way
- Buy-in is necessary
- Communicate early and often
- Evaluate success

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**Candace D. Washington, MBA, is the Senior Training and Development Lead, in Research Administration at the University of Chicago. She designs, implements, facilitates, and evaluates learning programs and courses for the UC campus research community. Her background includes roles in training, leadership development, coaching, and communications in non-profit and corporate organizations. She can be reached at cdwashington@uchicago.edu**

**Aaron House has seven years’ experience in research administration, and is currently the Assistant Director, Training and eRA at the University of Chicago. Previously, Aaron served as an English teacher in the north suburbs of Chicago and as a technology consultant within the nonprofit community. He can be reached at ahouse@uchicago.edu**

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**Volunteer Pathways**

NCURA has identified three distinct volunteer pathways for its members to get involved - Presenter, Leadership, and Volunteer at the regional and/or national level. “Pathways” is intended to inspire and inform 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/volunteer/volunteeropportunities

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**Jeffrey Ritchie’s Journey**

None of this was supposed to happen. You see, I had this other career pathway lined up for myself and then one day I suddenly found myself working as a research administrator. I was fortunate that a host of people at NCURA were willing to show me how to do this job. They spelled out the acronyms and translated the FOA’s until I was able to do it on my own, and for that, I will be forever grateful. And so when my turn came, I started to volunteer to help the next person along. It was mostly committee work and presenting concurrent sessions. Later I served on the Region IV Board and then as Chair of the Region. I still volunteer because I’m still learning and still feeling the need to return something to NCURA. Because even though none of this was ever supposed to happen, but I’m awfully glad that it did.

**Jeffrey Ritchie, CRA is the Founding Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at Lewis University in Chicago. He can be reached at ritchije@lewisu.edu**
Successful Partnerships are KEY to Developing Employees as Brand Ambassadors

By Rosemary Madnick, Michelle Renfrew, and Melissa Parks

In an increasingly interconnected world within universities facing multiple challenges, successful partnerships must be based on clear collective actions and goals. In higher education, universities are finding that it is no longer effective to focus narrowly on research, student recruitment, and donor communications. Rather, we must explain what the institution does, develop a unique market position, and strengthen the university brand. When it comes to strengthening the university brand, there is no better way than to develop internal brand ambassadors through employees.

A university’s brand can be described as its reputation, the mental image that appears in the minds of its many stakeholders that include prospective students and their parents, employees, community members, legislators, alumni, donors, faculty and staff at other educational institutions, and even funding agencies. When managed well, a strong brand can make a difference in how the university’s stakeholders support, engage with, and contribute to the institution.

Although the marketing and communications department is primarily responsible for developing and maintaining the university brand, and the office of grants and contracts is primarily focused on obtaining and managing research from sponsors, the most powerful way for the university to communicate the brand is through its employees. The Office of Grants and Contracts Administration and Marketing and Communications departments at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) have a common goal: turn every UAF employee into a brand ambassador.

In the fall of 2012, UAF unveiled a new brand strategy for the campus. Part of the strategy included a tool-box of flexible templates and other resources for employees to use. The resources that were provided to campus resulted in many departments becoming early-adopters who embraced the new brand and had the tools they needed to become brand champions. The Office of Grants and Contracts Administration department was one of those early-adopters, and they quickly understood that even though their jobs were very different from those on the marketing and communications team, they too were responsible for shaping and managing the university brand through their day-to-day activities and exchanges with stakeholders both inside and outside the organization.

When developing brand ambassadors for your organization, it is important to understand that brand ambassadors are created organically. The organization can establish a framework to work from, but to be successful, brand ambassadors need to feel a passion and enthusiasm for what they are championing, and a sense of ownership and pride in the organization.

The following are tools to help you establish strong partnerships and become a brand ambassador for your organization.

Commitment
Make a commitment to following your core organizational practices, roles, and responsibilities. This is done by engaging in dialogue and sharing good practices with your partner.

Focus on mutual benefit
Identify what your partnership means and what your goals are. Achieving mutual benefit during the partnership enables both parties to meet their own objectives and common goals.

Understanding the needs of your partner
When you understand the needs of your partner, you can focus on leveraging and building capability and capacity. Make it happen, but be clear and be prepared to adapt to the changing needs of your partner.

Respect
In a successful partnership you have to respect the differences in approach, methodology, and objectives of your partner. Be transparent and actively engage to share experiences.

Here are just a few examples of how to help employees become brand ambassadors for your organization:

- Develop a brand strategy that represents what your organization stands for. Communicate what it means and why it’s important to your employees, and strengthen the brand by incorporating the brand strategy in all that you do.
- Create easy-to-use templates for employees that follow your institutional identity guidelines and represent your brand visually to internal and external stakeholders.
- Create standard responses that use your brand voice and make sure everyone in the department uses the same voice to create consistency. This will not only make sure that the same brand
image is being used, but it also shows others the department is working together.

• Create easy-to-use forms that can be used and signed electronically. By creating easy-to-use electronic forms, they can be processed more quickly and keep the integrity and brand image clean.

• Develop guidelines and templates for creating websites. Multiple templates give individual departments flexibility and choice while making it easy for them to represent the brand appropriately.

• Share notable brand stories about your employees, and make it easy for your employees to share about the organization in meaningful ways.

Remember that we’re all part of the same team and we’re all brand ambassadors for our departments and universities. We have the opportunity to show others what our university stands for with everything we do. We represent not just ourselves as individuals, but the institutions we work for as a whole.

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Rosemary Madnick is the Executive Director of Grants and Contracts Administration at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. As the Executive Director, she oversees the pre and post award functions for the University. Rosemary is actively involved in NCURA, both at the regional and national levels. She has served in a number of capacities including NCURA Peer Reviewer, 2012 Region VI Chair, and presenter to name a few. She is a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute and the Executive Leadership Program. She can be reached at rmadnick@alaska.edu

Michelle Renfrew, APR, has 14 years of experience in marketing, communications and public relations. She currently serves as Director of Marketing and Communications at the University of Alaska Fairbanks where she leads a dynamic team in the research, development, implementation and evaluation of public relations campaigns, marketing, internal communications, and brand management. Michelle has been an active member of the Public Relations Society of America – Alaska Chapter for a number of years and currently serves on the PRSA Alaska Board of Directors. She can be reached at mmrenfrew@alaska.edu

Melissa Parks is a Post Award Grants and Contracts Analyst in the Office of Grants and Contracts at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She has worked in her position for two years. With the ever changing world and “gray” area of research administration, she is constantly looking for ways to have consistency with the way she conducts business. Melissa helps manage awards from setup to closeout, including billing, financial reporting, rebudgeting, and communicating with agencies. She has worked extensively with Federal agencies, and has branched out to local State and other private agencies. Melissa can be reached at mrparks@alaska.edu

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Much like a small fish in the big pond, we are trying to determine how and what we need to do to implement the uniform guidance into our institutional policies. However, while the Uniform Guidance (UG) has been a big change for US institutions, as a foreign institution we are taking it one step at a time and awaiting agency specific guidelines rather than the guidance as a whole. For us, it does not mean our whole funding guidelines have changed. In fact, despite the common misconception, foreign institutions are not eligible for funding from many US agencies.

The two large issues that the UG has raised for our institution are F&A rates and auditing requirements but we await agency specific implementation of the UG for full clarification of these issues.

The UG initially caused confusion regarding the F&A rate we could use from NIH. As a foreign organization we have no negotiated F&A rate. Instead we use the 8% that is allowed to foreign organizations as stated in NOT-OD-01-028 from the 21st of March 2001. From December 26th 2014 we thought we were eligible to apply for a 10% F&A rate from NIH. Applications that went in from our institution in early January requested the 10% rate but we soon learnt, via our NCURA Collaborate colleagues, that the NIH would not use this rate for international participants. This came as a surprise to us and others, and in the time between the introduction of the UG and the release of the NIH Interim Grant General Conditions we experienced confusion and incorrect budgets. However, our NCURA networks provided most of the support during this time and we are grateful for the official news that has been published in the NCURA magazine and the Monday e-Xtra but we are especially thankful to those who communicated unofficially with us via the Collaborate Platform or via direct contact.

In 2011 we implemented a policy at our institution to conform to NIH regulations indicating that F&A costs could only cover compliance and auditing costs. In line with the UG, the NIH has now released new conditions removing the condition that F&A costs support the costs of compliance with NIH requirements. This policy change will be reflected in the NIH GPS and will apply retroactively as of December 26, 2014. This decision will make the distribution of funds at our institution much simpler since we currently have a model whereby NIH F&A costs are centralized to cover compliance and audits, yet part of the overhead costs are waived on NIH grants and these funds are distributed to the appropriate departments in a yearly reimbursement. Our model, although advantageous to the researchers involved, was confusing and led to resentment since researchers assumed they were losing their indirect costs to the central administration. We welcome this new change in policy and the clarity and transparency in the use of funding in NIH grant management.

The second area which was somewhat unclear to us as a foreign institution was whether our option to conduct program specific audits rather than the A-133 audit would be changed. Thankfully the UG has made this clearer. However in terms of changing the amount from $500,000 to $700,000 we need to investigate how many of our subrecipients fall outside the audit requirements and implement stricter subrecipient monitoring. Many of our subrecipients are in countries that are considered high risks and to have more subrecipients that are not required to send an audit is certainly an increased risk. Of course this has implications for us in terms of dedicated resources to NIH-compliance issues.

The International Community of NCURA is rapidly growing and our capacity to support each other is also growing. We receive regular updates from each other via our Region VIII network but we appreciate any information that our primes can provide to us regarding the UG and new rules and changes we need to implement. While the UG is a big change for all involved in grant management, and has had a large impact for US institutions, as foreign institutions we are currently seeing it as a ripple on the water in a larger pond of the unknown.

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. Laura can be reached at Laura.Plant@ki.se

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NCURA Magazine Seeks Senior Editor

The NCURA Magazine seeks applicants for the position of senior editor. The senior editor steers the overall direction of our premier publication. The volunteer position is a three year term, beginning January 1, 2016. The senior editor works with the co-editors, contributing editors, and NCURA staff in ensuring the timely release of six issues during the calendar year and brings in outside feature articles for each issue.

Applicants should be senior research administrators with strong writing and editing skills and strong connections within NCURA and associated professional associations (such as COGR, FDP, EARMA, NORDP, etc.). See the full position description including essential duties, responsibilities, time commitment, and qualifications on Volunteer Central at http://collaborate.ncura.edu/volunteer/volunteeropportunities

We expect to have a candidate selected by the early fall so that the new senior editor can work with the current senior editor, Dan Nordquist, and co-editors in ensuring a smooth transition.

Individuals interested in the position should initially contact
Dan Nordquist at nordquist@wsu.edu and staff liaison Marc Schiffman at schiffman@ncura.edu
Purchasing Computing Devices with Federal Funds (applicable Uniform Guidance Sections 2 CFR Part 200.20 and 200.453)

Computing devices are machines used to acquire, store, analyze, process, and publish data and other information electronically and include accessories (or peripherals) for printing, transmitting and receiving, or storing electronic information. Computing devices costing less than $5,000 are not considered equipment and therefore are treated as supplies and materials. Therefore, if a computing device is to be acquired for use in the performance of a federal award, the computing device may be charged to the federal award provided that:

- it is essential (i.e., necessary) to performing the work under the award, and
- the cost is allocable and reasonable.

Determining whether a computing device is essential — The Principal Investigator should consider (and document) whether performing the work under the award without the computing device would be difficult and inefficient. An important measure of this is determining (and documenting) whether the anticipated cost of performing the work without the computing device is greater than the combined cost of performing the work plus the cost of acquiring the computing device.

Determining whether a computing device is allocable to a federal award — If a computing device is essential to a federal award it is allocable to that award. The total cost may be allocated to the benefiting federal award — even when its usage is not solely dedicated to the award. However, before doing so, the Principal Investigator should first consider and use other reasonable cost allocation methodologies provided that an alternative methodology will (without undue effort) result in a higher degree of accuracy in cost allocation.

Determining whether the cost of a computing device is reasonable — The Principal Investigator must make an informed, prudent decision taking into considering not only the cost, but the utility, quality and value of the device to the project.

If a computing device is not essential to a federal award, it is not allocable (in whole or in part) as a direct cost to that award. In such cases, the computing device is considered to be a “general use” item and must be treated as an indirect cost expense (just like paper, pens and other general use supplies) and charged to an appropriate institutional funding source.

Please remember that all expenses charged to federal awards must conform to the cost principles specified in the OMB Uniform Guidance. Please consult with the Office of Research Administration if you should have any questions about whether you may charge a specific expense to federal funds.

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Suzanne M. Rivera, Ph.D., M.S.W., Vice President for Research, Office of Research and Technology Management, Case Western Reserve University
Bruce Morgan, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, University of California, Irvine Office of Research

MAY/JUNE 2015
New Guidance, Renewed Partnerships: Engaging with the Local Community  

By Katie Plum

When strangers start acting like neighbors…communities are reinvigorated.  — Ralph Nader

Last year, while sitting in a board meeting for a local non-profit, I realized that smaller community agencies were unlikely to have the capacity to fully review and implement the new Uniform Guidance. Even the smallest PUIs typically have an accounting department and information technology staff whereas many community based organizations have to contract out administrative functions, such as bookkeeping services. This glimmer of an idea instigated a ten-month process of planning, implementing and evaluating a community based workshop on the Uniform Guidance.

Planning the Workshop

To determine the extent of the community’s need for such a workshop, our Office of Sponsored Projects partnered with the Director of Angelo State’s Community Development Initiative—who also happens to be a sociologist—to develop and administer a brief survey. We identified key personnel from local non-profit, educational, and government agencies to participate in the survey, and more than 70 individuals responded. The majority of the respondents indicated interest in attending a workshop on the Uniform Guidance, particularly one that addressed themes of: 1) managing compliance requirements, 2) determining allowability of costs, and 3) complying with reporting requirements. Respondents also indicated that they could comfortably handle a workshop cost of $10-40—significantly less than the least-expensive Webinar option.

We asked survey respondents if they would be interested in participating in the workshop planning process and representatives from the regional education agency, local non-profits, and local government accepted the offer.

Together we identified a keynote speaker, discussed possible facilitators and topics for breakout sessions, and developed a tentative list of workshop dates. To cover the cost of the workshop, we relied on two sources of funding: the Office of Sponsored Projects, which had already budgeted for a guest speaker on grants management, and a $15/person fee for a boxed lunch and handouts.

Implementing and Evaluating the Workshop

A total of 60 attendees participated in the daylong workshop. Our keynote speaker, the director of a sponsored programs office from another institution, provided the core of the educational program. Additionally, in response to the pre-workshop survey, an internal auditor provided a session on understanding and implementing internal controls. For handouts, participants received a printed copy of the Uniform Guidance and the presenters’ slides, including a useful “Segregation of Duties” matrix developed by the internal auditor.

Overall evaluation results were quite good. The respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the workshop met their expectation and that the presenters’ sessions were excellent. They did provide us with constructive criticism though, for improving future workshops. For instance, although we had to dispense with the concept of holding breakout sessions because of the unavailability of some speakers, we learned that we need to be more diligent in finding facilitators for sessions that cater to multiple organizations. Being subject to the same guidance does not mean that we all interpret it in the same way or that it has the same level of impact on each of us.

Unexpected Outcomes

Going into the workshop, we knew it would lead to opportunities to engage further with our community partners, but we did not anticipate all of the outcomes. For example, shortly after the workshop we worked on a funding proposal that required significant involvement from our community partners, one of whom was involved in the workshop planning process. Needless to say, the relationship that we had developed expedited their decision to commit to the project.

Additionally, simultaneous to planning our workshop, the regional education agency planned a special workshop on the updates to the Uniform Guidance in the context of EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Requirements. They invited our faculty and staff to participate in their workshop, which we might not otherwise have heard about.

Because of the value our partners bring not only to our institution but to the community as a whole, we will be looking to host events in the future on other topics such as strategic planning, fraud prevention, and grant writing. We did not start the process of collaboration in our community—many good relationships were already in place—but this workshop certainly reinvigorated our neighborhood.

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Katie Plum is director of the office of sponsored projects at Angelo State University. She is chair of the Community Committee in Collaborate and the NCURA Region V Treasurer. She can be reached at katie.plum@angelo.edu
A

s the funding climate tightens and academic institutions streamline administrative services to reduce costs, central research administration and development enterprises often increase their responsibility level without a commensurate resource increase. Successfully increasing capacity requires faculty partnerships that support research endeavors while setting appropriate expectations, leveraging existing resources, and maintaining flexibility in services offered.

The Tufts University Office of Research Development (ORD), a centralized research development office, has accomplished these goals. We have developed best practices to efficiently and effectively support an increasing number of service requests despite constrained resources. These efficiencies have allowed us to expand our portfolio 250% (from 20 proposals per year to ~70), while also adding a variety of services such as training, collaborative proposal team facilitation, mentoring, and funding search support. This expansion has occurred without substantially increasing our staff size. We have made a conscious decision to provide services to all faculty and staff who ask: We take pride in never saying ‘No.’ This article presents our brief case background, shares best practices from our experience for maximizing efficiency throughout the research administration enterprise and provides steps for partnering with the research community to create effective working relationships.

The Office of Research Development: A Case Study in Maximizing Efficiency

In the mid-2000s Tufts University created the centrally-housed Office of Research Development (ORD, formally the Office of Proposal Development) to offer grant writing and administrative assistance for large, administratively burdensome, multi-investigator grants. Internal and external pressures resulted in a near immediate expansion of the ORD’s role within the University. With falling success rates came rising submission rates and increased faculty demand for the ORD’s grant writing and editing assistance. New priorities included those faculty who were new to proposal preparation or who were struggling to maintain their funding. At the same
time, increased pressures on departmental and school-level staff involved with grants management resulted in additional need for the ORD’s project management and administrative services.

Beginning in 2010 these pressures led to a significant increase in the types and number of services the office offered. Over the past four years, we have added multiple modes of training for faculty, staff, and students. Likewise, the number of proposals supported annually grew from ~20 to ~70, and included grants ranging from small individual investigator proposals to large, multi-investigator projects. Additionally, we maintain a website containing templates and outlines for multiple proposal elements, as well as an active Twitter presence (@TuftsORD). Most importantly, we managed this substantial increase in the scope of our mission without a major increase in FTEs (3.25 FTEs and 2 part-time consultants in FY2008, the year before ARRA, compared to 4.25 FTEs and 2 part-time consultants in FY2014).

**Best Practices To Maximize Research Development Efficiency**

To help us expand our services without a commensurate resource expansion, we developed best practices to maximize efficiency while maintaining a high level of service in support of the University’s research development priorities. Applicable throughout the research administration and development enterprises, these simple steps are as follows:

1. **Make smart staffing choices.** With limited FTEs, employees must be able to manage multiple responsibilities and complex workloads. Staff should have skills which prepare them to be immediately effective when hired. Research development offices need staff who display an ability to collaborate across departments, have academic research experience and project management skills. Staff in research administration offices need expertise in federal regulations and best practices. Staff should work together as a seamless team. To build a successful team, management must recognize staff strengths and encourage a collaborative and open culture that allows staff weaknesses to be supported. Cross training is essential to ensure no specific task rests on one staff member alone, which allows for greater flexibility in meeting demand.

2. **Don’t reinvent the wheel.** One of the major ways ORD maximized efficiency is by minimizing unnecessary work. We began by looking for overlap among the tasks required for all or most proposals, subsequently developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and tailoring these general processes to each project’s requirements. In this way, each proposal, training session, or opportunity for team building takes advantage of the lessons learned from previous experiences. These processes will also allow an office to set clear expectations up front, to quickly develop a project management strategy, and to provide a foundation for open and honest communication with stakeholders and customers.

3. **Set clear expectations.** Failing to clearly communicate expectations at the beginning of a project can lead to major challenges, which can substantially add to a research development

![Level of Support Decision Tree](image-url)

**Figure 1.** This figure illustrates a simplified version of the decision processes the Tufts ORD uses to determine level of service. The primary decision points are time to deadline and size of researcher team. We also take into consideration the experience of the faculty and whether it is a research or infrastructure grant (not pictured). Levels of service include all services above that level; for instance, a large group with insufficient departmental support would receive administrative and writing support, in addition to all other levels.
or research administration office’s workload, thus decreasing efficiency and, often, affecting the work quality. We have identified three major constituent groups with whom expectations must be set:

Institutional. Identify priorities in accordance with upper administration and the deans and chairs who know the research community’s needs.

Research Community. Communicate office priorities and guidelines for levels of service to demonstrate fair and reasonable resource allocation. In initial meetings with the researcher(s), make clear who is responsible for each proposal component and set internal deadlines.

Research Administration/Development Office. Develop clear guidelines for setting levels of service based on capacity, time to deadline, researcher(s) needs, and additional resources available. Additionally, provide office staff with guidelines for procedures to implement when more support is needed or when unforeseen challenges arise.

For these strategies to be successful, outreach to the research community is necessary. Researchers and support staff should be aware of the processes for requesting assistance or submitting a proposal, and they should understand the limits of the services available. Be aware, however, that increased visibility can lead to increased requests, making continued growth without additional resources unsustainable. New services and capacity must be balanced with an understanding of the limits of your team and resources, and these limits must be clearly communicated to all partners. Maintaining this balance is a key part of our ability to say ‘Yes’ to all service requests.

Partnering with the Research Community

By creating a collaborative and mutually supportive culture, you can position your research administration or development office as an office that expands on and synergizes with existing resources, rather than duplicating them or adding more administrative hoops to jump through. Being a group that says ‘Yes,’ even if the yes is qualified, helps to create a cooperative partnership. While this process is not easy and takes time, the following steps have helped the ORD to set a positive tone of collaborative service that has improved our relationships with our faculty and staff partners.

Step 1: Develop processes for setting levels of support consistently. Use priorities set by upper administration and your office to determine what services are offered. Take into account the capacity of your office and any other resources available, as well as those services you must offer from a compliance standpoint. Knowing your limits and sticking to them helps set faculty and staff expectations appropriately. The ORD uses a series of decision points to set levels of service fairly and consistently throughout the University. See Fig. 1 on preceding page.

Step 2: Instead of saying ‘no’ to requests for help, say what you can do. Saying a qualified ‘yes’ has a much softer ring than saying a firm ‘no,’ especially when paired with an explanation of what you can do and why that is what you’re able to offer.

Example: “With the deadline only three days away, I will be happy to give your R01 a thorough review for major compliance issues.”

Example: “While we don’t have the capacity to offer grantsmanship edits on graduate student fellowships, here are some resources to help you, and if you have specific questions about your proposal, we will be happy to answer them.”

Step 3: Use project management tools that reduce researchers’ workloads. The Tufts ORD uses project management tools customized to specific RFAs and any agency guidelines — see examples at*. Used to set expectations for roles, responsibilities and internal deadlines, these timelines and checklists are completed by ORD staff after an initial meeting with the research team and shared with all stakeholders. While many researchers do not use these documents themselves, we use them to work collaboratively with a given group and to track proposal elements and progress. Using documents that are mutually constructed helps to make the sometimes-tense process of finalizing a proposal feel more like a partnership.

Conclusion

By working to maximize efficiency and to create an environment in which we partner with faculty and staff across our institution, the Tufts ORD has been able to greatly expand the office’s capacity, without significantly increasing our resources. By effectively managing resources and working with faculty to assess their needs, we’ve been able to avoid saying no to requests for assistance. There is likely more capacity within your existing organization that you never knew existed. While each institution has its own unique challenges, adapting some of these best practices can help increase efficiency and develop strong partnerships with constituents. * http://viceprovost.tufts.edu/grantwriting/resources/checklists-outlines-and-templates

Amy Gantt, MA, Director of the Office of Research Development at Tufts University, oversees the research development enterprise at Tufts. Her interests include innovative ways for expanding research funding, building research teams, and teaching the next generation of scientists about the importance of communication. She can be reached at amy.gantt@tufts.edu

Sarah Marina, BA, MA (in progress), Research Development Specialist for the Office of Research Development at Tufts University, partners with Tufts faculty and staff to prepare competitive proposal submissions. Her interests include the creation and assessment of useful metrics for research administration. She can be reached at sarah.marina@tufts.edu

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The Mickey Mouse ears have been put away, fellow attendees’ business cards filed away for future networking, and notes made to share with staff and colleagues back on campus. Yes, PRA 2015 is officially over, but the benefits have been tremendous!

As 500+ attendees gathered from all corners of the world, folks traveling from colder climates (pretty much everywhere BUT Florida) were pleasantly reminded why Orlando is such a popular destination, with bright sun and warm temperatures greeting everyone upon arrival. The meeting kicked off with a full slate of workshops, including a full day boot camp for departmental administrators and not one, but two workshops dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of the Uniform Guidance without the aid of the Sorcerer’s Apprentice.

Fast forward to day two and our keynote address. McNair Wilson shared his message about taking chances and trying new things, which led into an inspiring discussion about reigniting our creative spirit – and yes, Research Administrators can and must be creative in order to continue meeting the demands of our ever-evolving profession!

Over the next two days, a wide array of topics and issues were addressed within the many concurrent sessions, discussion groups, spark sessions and breakfast roundtables. With seven primary tracks and an international focus interspersed throughout each track, there was something for every learning style and rank of research administrator, ranging from those just entering the field to those of us in a more, ahem, “senior” role. Each day ended with a bang (literally) with the nightly fireworks over EPCOT illuminating the area around the Walt Disney World Dolphin and Swan hotels as attendees opted for various networking opportunities including dinner groups and more informal opportunities, including the shops and eateries of Downtown Disney (and even some parks after dark).

And now, for a few word of thanks… We would like to start by thanking NCURA’s President, Michelle Vazin, who gave us the opportunity to serve as your PRA 2015 co-chairs. Who knew that someone as laid back as Craig and someone as obsessive compulsive as Tony might actually coalesce into a strong partnership? Michelle rolled the dice and we hope she is pleased with the result! We also thank our program committee for developing such an incredible program and for all the diligence throughout the last nine months. We would be remiss if we did not also thank all the fantastic meeting presenters and volunteers, without whom PRA 2015 would have been a pretty quiet affair! And last, but definitely not least, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for all the work that the staff of the NCURA office put into the coordination and facilitation of PRA 2015. We are all truly indebted to this incredible group of people.

In the words of the inimitable Mickey Mouse, see ya’ real soon! Why? Because we like you!

Yours in supporting research… together, Craig and Tony
BELOW: L-R Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director; Tony Ventimiglia (Co-Chair), Auburn University; Craig Reynolds (Co-Chair) University of Michigan; Michelle Vazin, NCURA President.
FRA 2015 Recap

WOW! That’s the word that comes to mind when trying to sum up FRA 2015.

In early March nearly 1,000 of us gathered in Orlando for three days of Guiding FRA from Theory to Practice with lots of sharing, learning, partnering, teaching, networking, and growing. Our programs started on Thursday when hundreds of pre-conference attendees participated in one or two of the 27 half- or full day workshops. Workshops were offered at all levels, with programs ranging from Audits to organizations and a score of topics in between — with no shortage of opportunities to learn more about the Uniform Guidance. People left the workshops energized, inspired, and excited for the sessions of the days ahead.

The conference kicked off with our keynote speaker Kevin Carroll, Vice President of Hanger Clinic, and a prosthetist, researcher, educator, and author. In this emotional session we laughed and cried as we learned about how research and development improves the lives of individuals who have lost limbs through illness or injury. Kevin’s work has even extended to providing a new tail to a dolphin, the basis of the film Dolphin Tale. Kevin’s dedication to healing was further demonstrated to all when he announced to the crowd that his speaker’s fee was donated to Camp No Limits http://www.nolimitsfoundation.org the only camp for children with limb loss and their families. Following the presentation Kevin was given a standing ovation and — something never seen in a previous FRA keynote — many of our colleagues flocked to the front of the room to have their picture taken with him or to receive his autograph.

While such keynote might have been a hard act to follow, the over 130 concurrent sessions, discussion groups, spark sessions, and breakfast roundtables rose to the challenge. The full breadth of Financial Research Administration was covered, providing attendees with the latest practical information on audits, F&A, post-award management, departmental finance, service centers, international considerations, government updates and professional development at levels for both research-intensive and principally undergraduate institutions. Exhibits, breakfasts, luncheons, dinner groups, receptions, and the fitness track provided opportunities for informal learning and networking. Attendees made a generous contribution to the NCURA Educational Scholarship Fund.

We were wonderfully hosted by the Dolphin and Swan Resort at Walt Disney World. While there were no mouse-sightings at the conference, many individuals took a late night or pre- or post-conference opportunity to take a break from the pressures of the profession at one of Orlando’s many recreational venues and enjoy what was for many warmer weather.

Let us take this opportunity to thank all of the participants — program committee, presenters, sponsors, exhibitors, staff and attendees — for great conference. Notwithstanding the overwhelming success of FRA 2015 we know that the Guiding from Theory to Practice is never completed. To that end we look forward to continuing our journey and seeing our friends again at the 17th annual Financial Research Administration meeting, March 6-8, 2016 in New Orleans.

Best Regards,
Charlene Blevens and Jeffrey Silber

Jeff Silber (Co-Chair), Cornell University; Charlene Blevens (Co-Chair), University of Miami; Keynote Speaker Kevin Carroll; Michelle Vazin, NCURA President; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director
Kevin Carroll shows off famous prosthetic dolphin tail
WEBCAST
Uniform Guidance: The Challenges of Implementation
June 17, 2015 • 1:00 – 3:30 pm EDT

We are halfway through our first year with the Uniform Guidance. There was a flurry of activity as we tried to understand the new rules, make changes to our own policies, and educate faculty and staff about the new regulations. Now, it’s time to check in with our colleagues. What have we accomplished? What was postponed? What about all those questions that still need answers? This webcast will look at the astonishing work universities have undertaken to meet the requirements of the UG. We will also look forward to the major issues that are still under discussion. Join us for updates on such topics as subrecipient monitoring, the disclosure statement, procurement, the Utility Cost Adjustment, Research Terms and Conditions and many more.

Moderator:
Kim Moreland, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Sponsored Program, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Panel:
Michelle Christy, Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Mark Davis, Vice President, Higher Education, Attain
Cindy Hope, Assistant Vice President for Research, The University of Alabama
David Kennedy, Director of Costing Policies and Studies, Council on Governmental Relations
Jim Luther, Associate Vice President for Finance, Duke University

For more details and to register visit http://www.ncura.edu/Education/OnlineEducation/Webcast.aspx

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To learn more about us, visit www.attain.com. We’re eager to work with you.
Although unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAVs), also known as drones and unmanned aircraft systems, have been around for decades, they have only recently begun to be used for research purposes. Because of the new development, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is still struggling to define the requirements and parameters of use. Universities and commercial enterprises are anxious to use this technology but at this time the process is onerous and complex.

UAVs are remotely controlled, unmanned aircraft that can be fitted with a small digital camera for aerial video recordings that can be transmitted real time to the pilot on the ground. Small UAVs can weigh as little as three pounds, while large UAVs can have the wing span of an airplane. The FAA first authorized their use in 1990 for first responders in incidences of fire, search & rescue, and border patrol. With very few exceptions, the FAA has prohibited their use for commercial purposes and has limited UAV use to governmental agencies. However, in recent years they have become more popular for research as well as commercial use in real estate, monitoring oil field and pipeline safety, and for observing crop growth, pests, and disease. UAVs can also be used for observing sporting events and for marketing.

UAVs provide a wide variety of opportunities for academic research. Some of the many uses for research include agricultural research, observing and researching wildlife without disrupting them, geologic research, and studying marine life. Currently, there is significant controversy on the possibilities of use and the FAA has established regulations creating obstacles to their use.

Until now, UAV use has been limited by FAA and held to many of the airplane regulations. FAA is pressured in part by the public and state governments because of fears of safety and privacy issues. Several states have also enacted legislation limiting the use of UAVs by both the public and law enforcement due to privacy concerns. It has taken several years for the FAA to promulgate new regulations for the special circumstances surrounding UAV use. Recently, the FAA has come out with proposed regulations that reiterate many of the current standards and provide guidance as to the direction they will take in the near future for UAV operation requirements.
In July 2013, the FAA issued a notice establishing the requirements for non-hobbyist UAV use. These requirements apply only to governmental use of UAV and prohibit commercial use. These regulations require that the “pilot” of the UAV pass a 2nd class airman medical examination, attend private plane ground school, and pass the FAA private pilot written exam. The UAV must have a certificate of airworthiness and be registered with the FAA. Registration has proven to be a challenge since many UAV do not have either a bill of sale or a serial number. FAA is still developing the process of UAV registration and there is significant inconsistency among reviewers as to the process to register the UAVs. Moreover, even when the UAV registration is approved, the challenge still exists as to how you put the N registration number on the side of a 3 pound quadcopter. Even if you have a qualified pilot and the UAV meets the regulatory requirements, there are still obstacles as to when and where the UAV may be operated.

At this time, the FAA limits UAV use to licensed pilots who obtain a certificate of authorization (COA) to fly. The FAA states that it tries to approve the COA applications within 60 days of receipt but often takes several months. This creates a challenge for researchers because of the need to anticipate when and where to make the research will be conducted months in advance. This creates a particular challenge for researchers on a time sensitive grant funded project. It took a year and a half for the first UAV pilot at Western Washington University to qualify and obtain approval to operate a UAV for research purposes.

At this time, the option to apply for COAs has only been available to government entities unless a specific exemption is approved by the FAA. This creates the distinction that State Universities can use UAVs to conduct research but researchers from private colleges cannot. Likewise, the regulations prohibit private companies from commercial or research use. For example, even though University of Virginia is a public institution, the photographer hired to take marketing images of the campus was fined $10,000 by the FAA because marketing was a commercial use. The decision was reversed by the appellate court, but this continues to be an ongoing concern. Recently, the FAA sent a cease and desist order to a hobbyist UAV operator who posted a UAV-generated video on YouTube. The FAA claimed it was a commercial use because there are advertisements on YouTube even though the UAV operator was not paid for the video.

When a COA is issued, the FAA provides the researcher with a map specifying the operation boundaries. Flight is limited to daylight hours, cannot be operated 400 feet above ground level, cannot be within five nautical miles of an airport, can only be operated over sparsely populated areas, and can only be flown within visual line of site of the pilot or a spotter communicating with the pilot.

Given the regulatory challenges facing pilots planning to operate UAVs, Western Washington University (WWU) has appointed a compliance monitor to determine who, when, and where, researchers are allowed to operate. She also registers all University UAVs with the FAA. Unlike several other institutions, where individual faculty or departments own the UAV, all of WWU’s UAVs are owned by the University. All are stored at our Science Technology Center and faculty can borrow them for research or training purposes. The request is routed through the Compliance Officer who approves the request based on pilot qualifications, the operation location, and the time at which the research will occur.

A unique advantage that WWU enjoys is our proximity to Canada. Bellingham, Washington is less than 50 miles from the border with Canada that has significantly relaxed regulations regarding UAVs. Pilots can be from public or private research institutions, do not require ground school training, and authorization to fly can be obtained within two weeks of the request. Because much of our research using the UAVs is environmental, this has been beneficial for our researchers. It is also a valuable educational opportunity for our students because they can get UAV operation experience and participate in research without having to pass ground school.

The Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International forecasts that the drone industry will create more than 100,000 new drone jobs and an $82 billion economic impact within the first 10 years after they are legally allowed to fly. That means a lot of job opportunities for graduates trained in UAV operation. It will provide students with a wide range of research experience and can provide training for job opportunities after graduation.

In February 2015, the FAA issued new proposed regulations for UAV use. As with the current regulations, they limit UAV use to government agencies and include the requirements for ground school license. Unfortunately, they also require a ground school re-examination every two years. The FAA estimates that the licensing process will cost each pilot approximately $500. The regulations continue to require pilots to obtain an FAA approved COA. The regulations are not anticipated to be adopted until 2017.

Ultimately, although UAV technology creates several opportunities for research and commercial use, the FAA continues to maintain complex compliance issues and very limited categories of permitted pilots. The regulatory issues restrict UAV operation to pilots working for government including public universities and provide very limited opportunities for other researchers or commercial use. The fines and consequences of regulatory violation can be expensive and have long term consequences on future UAV use. Thus it is vital for Universities to have policies and procedures in place to provide research opportunities for their researchers.

References:

Janai Powell Symons, J.D., M.L.I.S., is the Research Compliance Officer at Western Washington University for the past five years. She administers human subject research, animal research, responsible conduct of research training, and drafting policies. She can be contacted at janai.symons@wwu.edu
SIX CRITICAL QUESTIONS to Launch a Successful Grant Proposal

By Robert Porter

Pre-abstract
This article describes a practical exercise that proposal writers can use to create a mental outline of the key points that grant reviewers will look for in the early sections of the document, especially on the first page. The principal purpose of the exercise is to break out of the habits and patterns that researchers typically employ when writing their academic papers, and to begin their proposal writing by adopting a style more appropriate to the world of competitive grant proposals. Answers to the six critical questions can also be used to construct a pre-abstract which could be used to obtain early feedback from colleagues and to start a dialogue with grant program officers.

Introduction
When starting to write a grant proposal, researchers are prone to lapse into the same mindset and writing habits they employ when writing an academic paper. This can be risky, as the writing style that works best for competitive grant proposals differs somewhat from the preferred styles of most academic journals. One core difference centers on the expository rhetoric of traditional academic prose, language intended to explain to the reader what the writer has accomplished and how s/he thinks, as opposed to the persuasive rhetoric typical of most successful grant proposals, writing intended to sell the proposed research to skeptical reviewers and convince them that the project is worthy of funding.

A warm up exercise
To start off on the right foot, it is essential for the writer to recognize that grant reviewers are impatient readers who expect to see answers to fundamental questions on the very first page of the proposal. Some will admit they prefer to see those answers in the proposal’s pre-abstract. Before starting on the actual proposal, therefore, the writer is well advised to dwell on six critical questions, the answers to which can provide strong guidance as to the proper tone, content, and structure of the final document.
For the past twelve years, the author has employed these questions in grant writing workshops throughout the US and internationally, with uniformly positive results. It starts with the strong advice for workshop participants to come up with concise, convincing answers to six questions before they decide to write their proposals. The exercise is simple: Participants are given time to write answers to the following questions:

1. What are you passionate about, i.e., where do you think you can make a uniquely significant contribution to your field?
2. What is the need, problem, or issue you want to address and why is it important?
3. If present knowledge or practice is inadequate, why do we need to know more and do better?
4. In what sense is your idea innovative, i.e., how does it differ from what has already been done?
5. What makes you think your idea or approach will have better outcomes?
6. What will your research contribute and who will benefit from it?

Once the writer is satisfied with answers to all six questions, s/he will be in a much stronger position to begin serious work on the proposal. To illustrate the point, it is instructive to look at the NIH peer review video and note how often the panel chair asks reviewers about their level of “enthusiasm” for the proposal at hand. Many successful proposal writers use the first person liberally; one sees “I” and “we” quite frequently in their writing. Adjectives such as “ambitious”, “exciting” and “unprecedented” lend a confident tone to the proposal, and are consciously designed to stir a similar reaction with reviewers. In short, a writing style that is discouraged, even forbidden by academic journals can contribute to success in the competitive peer review of grant proposals.

2. What is the need, problem, or issue you want to address and why is it important? As competition intensifies and budgets flatten for many grant programs, reviewers experience an ever stronger need to be convinced that the proposed research needs to be done, that it addresses a recognized problem, and there is a sense of urgency to find a solution, or to move out in an entirely new direction. It is simply not sufficient to note that “little research has been done” in a given area—perhaps there are very good reasons for the lack of scholarly interest. To answer this question, the grant writer must present a convincing scholarly argument that the research is focused on matters of importance to the discipline, or that it will help us to know more and do better about a significant problem or issue. For most reviewers, the issue of significance is primary, and serves as the gatekeeper question for the rest of the proposal. A weak argument here can doom the entire effort.

3. If present knowledge or practice is inadequate, why do we need to know more and do better? Here the writer must present the case for discovery, for moving ahead, advancing the cause, and carving new pathways. A researcher’s gut sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo can be a strong springboard for a robust research idea. First, the writer must specify precisely how and why present knowledge is inadequate to the task, while convincing the reviewer that the researcher’s new and unique approach has a strong chance to do better.

4. In what sense is your idea innovative, i.e., how does it differ from what has already been done? All grant programs stress innovation as a key criterion for success, but it is not enough for the writer to claim uniqueness; s/he must specify the dimensions of creativity in concrete terms that distinguish the proposed project from past practices.

5. What makes you think your idea or approach will have better outcomes? Although reviewers seek creativity, they also habitually avoid risk, i.e., they are rightly concerned about a project’s likelihood of success, and will turn thumbs down on a project whose outcomes are in doubt. This places a burden on the writer to provide assurance that the proposed project is feasible and very likely to accomplish its stated goals and objectives. The easiest way to do this is to cite any evidence researchers have to indicate they are on the right track. Published citations provide the strongest evidence, but any preliminary results can make the case, especially if they grow out of a line of research that has a history, showing the proposed project is building on what has already been accomplished. The key here is for the writer to display a justified confidence in the strength of the research design and its likely outcomes.

6. What will your research contribute and who will benefit from it? Academics new to sponsored research can make the mistake of thinking that grant programs exist to make them successful, that winning awards will enable them to enhance their professional reputations, attain tenure and work their way up the academic ladder. From a grant writing perspective, however, such a posture is perilous, as it can place too much focus on the researcher’s talents and accomplishments, and not enough on what the funder wants to support. What reviewers and funding agencies want to see, clearly spelled out in the pre-abstract and throughout the proposal itself, is precisely how the research project will benefit the grant program, the funding agency, and society as a whole. In recent years, the National
Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health have jointly enshrined this concept by requiring proposals to cite early on how the research will have “benefits to society” (NSF), or to delineate the project’s “relevance to public health” (NIH). The good news: By adopting a service attitude toward the aims of the funder and the grant program, the proposal is likely to score higher in peer review, and a string of awards will certainly further the writers’ academic careers!

Uses of the exercise

It is best for the writer to take several runs at this exercise before putting it to practical use. An answer that looks perfectly clear today can turn muddy when given a few days’ rest in a drawer or on a computer drive. Likewise, a blank section today might be filled in easily a few days from now; as the import of the question ripens in the writer’s mind. Once the researcher is satisfied with all six answers, two important possibilities present themselves: 1) It is likely the researcher is on to a fundable idea; and 2) s/he is now ready to start working on the proposal. Note the choice of language here: It says the writer is ready to start working on the proposal, not writing. It but how on earth can one work on a proposal without writing it?

Here the researcher should be reminded that, unlike working alone on an academic paper, grant writing is a team sport; feedback is required every step of the way, from the first expression of the proposal’s core theme to its final draft. The more the writer understands how others are reacting to the evolving document, the more able s/he will be to shape the proposal in ways that will gain a favorable review.

Obtaining feedback

Step one: Test the strength of the basic idea with your colleagues, folks steeped in the discipline who can comment knowledgeably on the appeal of the project’s scientific or scholarly foundation, its basic thrust, and the logic of the overall approach. Here is an opportunity to take advantage of a singular skill shared by all academics, one that most enjoy exercising—critiquing other people’s ideas. Especially valuable are perspectives of folks who have served on review panels. For maximum benefit, the writer should request colleagues to be frank, as their responses to the pre-abstract can be early indicators of how grant reviewers will react to the final proposal. Some key questions: If you were to read this in a proposal pre-abstract, how would you react to the basic idea?

Step two: Use the revised and polished pre-abstract to start a dialogue with at least one grant program officer, preferably two or three. Here the researcher seeks preliminary responses to a critical question, one that could determine the fate of the final proposal: How well does this research idea fit what the grant program wants to fund? Seasoned grant writers know that in addition to strong grant writing abilities, relational skills are key to success in sponsored research, and many assert that they do not start writing a proposal until they have initiated a line of communication with the funding agency. Once the conversation has started, answers to the following questions can have a dramatic impact on the tone and structure of the final proposal: What funding mechanism is best for this idea, considering the present stage of my career? What are some of the reasons proposals are rejected by your review panels? Do you have any suggestions that might improve my chances for success? Once again, the pre-abstract should be amended to reflect key points from the PO’s perspective. If possible, a subsequent face-to-face meeting with the PO while still in the pre-proposal phase can yield even richer results.

Launching the proposal

Assuming that there is sufficient encouragement to proceed, the researcher is now ready to begin writing the proposal itself, and is poised to reap the most important benefits of this preliminary exploration—namely, a starting point that will quickly touch upon critical benchmarks sought by grant reviewers, an outline upon which to expand as the proposal is developed, and most importantly, a final document that is likely to land on the right desk.

References


Robert Porter, PhD, has presented grant writing workshops at leading universities and medical schools internationally. Formerly Director of Research Development at the University of Tennessee, Dr. Porter has thirty years’ experience as a tenured professor, private consultant and research administrator. He holds graduate degrees in Speech Communications from the University of Michigan. He can be reached at reporter@grant-winners.com.
UC Irvine and Australian chemists have figured out how to unboil egg whites — an innovation that could dramatically reduce costs for cancer treatments, food production and other segments of the $160 billion global biotechnology industry, according to findings published today in the journal ChemBioChem.

“Yes, we have invented a way to unboil a hen egg,” said Gregory Weiss, UCI professor of chemistry and molecular biology & biochemistry. “In our paper, we describe a device for pulling apart tangled proteins and allowing them to refold. We start with egg whites boiled for 20 minutes at 90 degrees Celsius and return a key protein in the egg to working order.”

Like many researchers, he has struggled to efficiently produce or recycle valuable molecular proteins that have a wide range of applications but which frequently “misfold” into structurally incorrect shapes when they are formed, rendering them useless.

“It’s not so much that we’re interested in processing the eggs; that’s just demonstrating how powerful this process is,” Weiss said. “The real problem is there are lots of cases of gummy proteins that you spend way too much time scraping off your test tubes, and you want some means of recovering that material.”

But older methods are expensive and time-consuming: The equivalent of dialysis at the molecular level must be done for about four days. “The new process takes minutes,” Weiss noted. “It speeds things up by a factor of thousands.”

To re-create a clear protein known as lysozyme once an egg has been boiled, he and his colleagues add a urea substance that chews away at the whites, liquefying the solid material. That’s half the process; at the molecular level, protein bits are still balled up into unusable masses. The scientists then employ a vortex fluid device, a high-powered machine designed by professor Colin Raston’s laboratory at South Australia’s Flinders University. Shear stress within thin, microfluidic films is applied to those tiny pieces, forcing them back into untangled, proper form.

“This method … could transform industrial and research production of proteins,” the researchers write in ChemBioChem.

For example, pharmaceutical companies currently create cancer antibodies in expensive hamster ovary cells that do not often misfold proteins. The ability to quickly and cheaply re-form common proteins from yeast or E. coli bacteria could potentially streamline protein manufacturing and make cancer treatments more affordable. Industrial cheese makers, farmers and others who use recombinant proteins could also achieve more bang for their buck.

UCI has filed for a patent on the work, and its Office of Technology Alliances is working with interested commercial partners.

Besides Weiss and Raston, the paper’s authors are Tom Yuan, Joshua Smith, Stephan Kudlacek, Mariam Iftikhar, Tivoli Olsen, William Brown, Kaitlin Pugliese and Sameeran Kunche of UCI, as well as Callum Ormonde of the University of Western Australia. The research was supported by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (grant R01 GM100700-01) and the Australian Research Council (grants DP1092810 and DP130100066).

The original story can be found here: http://universityofcalifornia.edu/news/chemists-find-way-unboil-eggs

If you want to share a “cool” project idea, please email Kellie Klein at kellie.klein@wsu.edu.
Terms and Conditions

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For federal grants – OMB Circular A-110: Subpart C: Procurement Standards: 48 Contract Provisions applies and further points to additional T/Cs to include, for grants, in Appendix A (scroll down to the bottom). REMINDER – OMB Circular A-110 ends on 12/25/14, see below for the future references.

For federal contracts - FAR 52.244-6, Subcontracts for Commercial Items govern what T/Cs to include, for contracts. Any of the supplements to the FAR, i.e., DFAR, DEAR, etc. likely are what Kathy said below “whatever it says in the contract”. If you come across any federal contract money buying equipment, just let us know and we can help.

A good update for all of us to make sure all is being communicated properly to those we award bids to.

Take care, Kathy

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After receiving an excellent answer, I emailed WSU’s Purchasing Director Eric Rogers and explained to him what is needed for his POs, not only regarding DFAR T/Cs, but all other procurements on federal grants and contracts (take note of the all-important PS. in this reply!)

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I hope that both the FAR and DFAR clauses are in your contract. If not, I think you can still use the instructions provided in the clauses. The accepted practice is to include clauses in your subcontracts that meet both the required flow-downs and support your business needs to support your requirement under the federal prime. As we tell students in our FAR training, the Christian Doctrine only applies to prime contracts.

I hope this answers your question. If not or you have any follow-on questions, please feel free to get back to me. I was also reviewing the new requirements under the OMB uniformed guidance. It looks like OMB is moving grant property and procurement terms to be more in line with the contract side.

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Eric, back on this for just a second. I had worked with Patty Gropp over the years on Purchasing Field Order T/Cs – probably back when I didn’t know as much as I do now…
Audit Issued
In January, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released the report of one of the audits listed on its 2015 audit work plan, the R/V Sikuliaq Construction Project. In 2007, the NSF entered into an agreement for the construction and operation of a ship that was expected to provide a larger platform for complex multidisciplinary research. The project consisted of four phases with a total award of $199.5 million. The construction phase predominantly consisted of a firm fixed-price $148 million contract to construct the ship, of which $31.7 million was in contingency funds. The auditors were only able to review expenditures from other phases of the project for allowability, allocability and reasonableness. A database of transactions relating to the remaining $22.1 million that was not included in the firm fixed price contract was requested for all transactions through September 30, 2012.

The audit report stated that, “In light of previous audit findings of unallowable contingency at other NSF awardees and a lack of visibility over contingency expenditures, our audit also included reviewing oversight of change order requests for contingency funds as well as other project funds to determine if such requests were executed properly and were supported by required documentation.” The examination of the financial transactions found nothing material to indicate that costs claimed on the project were unallowable. The report did contain one finding and one recommendation related to the University’s record-retention policies.

With respect to oversight of the contingency expenditures, the auditors found that the University did not have the required documentation to support approval for ten change-order requests totaling nearly $4.8 million. NSF approval was required for change orders valued at $50,000 or higher. Circular A-110 requires awardees to retain “records pertinent to an award…for three years.” NSF’s internal policy also requires awardees to maintain certain documentation, including “change requests and approvals.” The University’s Project Officer stated that the approval documentation had been deleted when the University moved its email system to a different provider, and that he could not retrieve the documents from the backup system. The NSF Program Officer overseeing the project was able to provide the documentation for all but one change order request.

FBI Press Release
In an FBI Press Release issued on February 5, 2015 a former mining engineering professor at the University of Kentucky admitted in federal court that he defrauded the University out of tens of thousands of dollars in items and services. Tao, 54, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud.

In August of 2014 the Lexington Herald-Leader reported that the university completed two investigations of Tao that made the following allegations:

• From 2008 to 2013, Tao allegedly created fake invoices totaling more than $62,000 for travel, hotels and meals. He allegedly billed the university and consulting clients for the same expenses.

• Tao allegedly fabricated or changed invoices related to consulting work totaling more than $31,000.

• Tao allegedly routinely required visiting scholars and graduate students to work on his private consulting activities. In violation of university policy, students received no compensation for those activities.

• Tao allegedly paid research assistants more than $312,000 from university grants and contracts for work that was done for Tao’s private consulting clients.

• Tao allegedly used grant research funds to buy about $9,000 worth of equipment that was then transported to an unnamed consulting client. He also allegedly billed the client for the equipment.

Tao also admitted that he fabricated and altered invoices to show fictitious costs and submitted those invoices to the University and Georgia-Pacific for payment. Tao then received payment for these fraudulent expenses.

According to his plea agreement, between 2010 and 2013 Tao fraudulently obtained $59,411.86 from the University and $2,280.00 from Georgia-Pacific.

Charlene Blevens has worked in the financial area in both the public and private sector in various capacities for more than 26 years with more than 15 years’ experience in Research at universities. In addition, she is the author of 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.
NCURA Magazine e-Xtra Headline Highlights

Enjoy some of our favorite links from prior e-Xtra mailings!

POLICY/REGULATION/COMPLIANCE NEWS:

NIH Update: General grant conditions to integrate Uniform Guidance language. More... And supplemental information: More... http://fundingattractions.blogs.thompson.com/2015/02/17/nih-issues-interim-general-grant-conditions
And...http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/policy.htm

Human Subjects: Human subjects protections under fire at the University of Minnesota. More... http://news.sciencemag.org/education/2015/03/human-subjects-protections-under-fire-university-minnesota

UNIFORM GUIDANCE:


AGENCY NEWS:


FUNDING NEWS:

Replenishing Research: President Obama’s 2016 budget proposal includes nearly across-the-board increases for research, with heavy focus on biomedical sciences, climate change, advanced manufacturing and STEM education [Inside Higher Ed]. More...https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/02/03/budget-proposal-includes-increase-research-funding

FUN AND CHUCKLES:

Thinking Ahead for Summer Break: For vacationers, an app to guide them to federal destinations. More... http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2015/03/05/for-vacationers-an-app-to-guide-them-to-federal-destinations/?postshare=8231425854974383

E-XTRA NOTABLE AND INTERESTING

Budgets- this is just a good explanation of budgeting, worth Highlighting-Repeatedly!: Proposal budgeting 101. More... http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2015_02_14/caredit.a1500043

Leadership: The number one thing holding you back as a leader. More... http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemyatt/2015/02/19/the-1-thing-holding-you-back-as-a-leader/

This is How to Interact With the Introverted: If only people would understand this. More... http://higherperspective.com/2015/01/interact-introvert.html

If you have any favorite links from e-Xtra that you would like to see in a future issue of NCURA Magazine, please email suggestions to Lourana Swayne at l.swayne@wsu.edu
Marjorie Forster, Assistant Vice President, Research and Global Health Initiatives, University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) will retire on June 1, 2015. She has worked at UMB for over 29 years in various capacities including research administration, technology transfer, export control, and global health initiatives. Prior to UMB, Marjorie served as the Director of Sponsored Programs Academic at the University of Texas Medical Branch, and before that worked at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center, School of Public Health. Her research administration career began at the University of Michigan, School of Public Health. Marjorie has enjoyed serving NCURA in many different capacities including Treasurer, member of the Executive Committee, Regional Chair, chair or member of various national and regional committees, and has given numerous presentations and workshops both at the national and regional level. Marjorie received the NCURA Region V Distinguished Service Award in 2009. In retirement Marjorie plans on doing extensive international travel, first to Malaysia and Indonesia, spending more time with her family in the UK, volunteering with local organizations, and perhaps doing some consulting work.

Ellen Goodman is the new Grants Specialist in the Department of Internal Medicine at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois. She assumed this position on March 30th, having previously worked at Loyola University Chicago Health Sciences Division where she was the Grant Administrator for the Department of Molecular Pharmacology and Therapeutics.

Christa Johnson has a new position as Associate Vice President for Research Administration at Colorado State University in Fort Collins as of May 1, 2015. Christa was an active volunteer in Region IV, served on the national Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, and is a frequent presenter. She previously served as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Research Services at Washington University in St. Louis.

Jeanne Viviani is now Contracts and Grants Manager at Florida Polytechnic University. Jeanne’s previous position was with the New College of Florida as the Director, Office of Research Programs and Services.
Lisa Mosley  
Executive Director, Research Operations, Arizona State University

Post-Uniform Guidance, I think the next big issue will be the implementation of the DATA Act (Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (Public Law 113-101)) which amends the existing FFATA requirements. The law’s intent is to increase the transparency of federal spending by standardizing the data elements used in federal reporting. The good news: the law includes several provisions that should not increase reporting requirements. A pilot will be launched in May 2015 to determine the effectiveness of this initiative. While we are hopeful the DATA Act will streamline our ability to provide reports on the usage of federal funds, it is crucial that we continue to work with our federal partners to maintain the intent of the law - increased transparency without increased burden.

Jeremy Forsberg  
Assistant Vice President of Research, Office of Research Administration, The University of Texas at Arlington

Many believe “to share” and “to serve” are virtues. These statements propel a growing business model to save funding through consolidation, consistency, and uniformity. Shared services can be applied to enterprise systems, offices, policies, and procedures and may encompass a university, university system, or a state. This model can become boundless due to the degree of conformity, self-identity, and decision making a university sacrifices to realize “shared services”. It is this degree of self-sacrifice that can turn the virtuous into the depraved. What is efficient becomes the lowest common denominator, consistent - inflexible, lean - incapable, centralization - unaccountable, and ultimately the cost savings outweigh the opportunity costs and the intangibles of a university’s performance. Strike a balance between self-sacrifice and objectivity. Shared Services should maximize the tangible while preserving the intangible.
Greetings Region I!

Truth be told, I struggle with what to write for these Regional Corner articles because the deadline is several weeks before it goes to print. So, I’m writing this in mid-March for the May/June publication. This is not to say that I lack content to write about as there are many ongoing regional activities, and I can speculate their outcomes but there is, however, the slightest of chances that I’ll get it wrong.

That said, let me tell you about how wonderful the March 24th RADG was. With over 120 registrants attending to learn more about how institutions have handled the implementation of our favorite, the OMB Uniform Guidance. Minessa Konecky and her Curriculum Committee did a fantastic job bringing together a panel to discuss the lessons learned during implementation at their institutions and what preparations they are making for additional changes that may present in the future.

The Spring meeting, which depending on when this is published, is either in full swing or was a rousing success. Either way, hats off to Kris Monahan, Donna Smith and their Programming Committee! With 46 sessions, 6 workshops and so many networking opportunities, all in lovely downtown Portland, Maine; thank you to all who attended and to all who pulled together to plan and present this wonderful meeting. In the next regional corner article I’ll share who received the Region I awards and travel grants.

Upcoming events to keep an eye out for: Travel Grant opportunities for the National Meeting; Nominations for Region I Chair-elect, Treasurer-elect, Secretary-elect, and National Board Member; Mentor Program applications; Executive Shadow Program applications; three more RADGs, one of which is to be held outside of Boston in Western MA; the 2016 Spring meeting in Cape Cod, MA; and news on the 2017 Spring meeting. None of these events and opportunities could be successful without your participation and the dedicated work of the volunteers of the region. If you haven’t yet volunteered, I urge you to do so. It can be as easy as serving at the registration desk at an RADG or the National meeting, which enables you to meet a lot of really great people; or writing an article for this magazine (email me at chair@ncuraregioni.org if you’d like to help with the August Regional Corner article); or volunteering to serve on a committee. It is really up to you and we’d love to have you!

In closing, who could have predicted that Mother Nature would have been so cruel as to send another snowstorm to New England at the end of March. With the record breaking 109 inches in Boston finally melting so that the sidewalks and roads were finally clear, no one expected another 15 inches to fall that last weekend in March. I’m hoping that this is NOT what happened, and if it did, I’m sorry and I will be available to do predictions for parties and events. See you all in August at the National Meeting in Washington DC!

Michelle Auerbach serves as 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.

REGION II
Mid-Atlantic

www.ncuraregionii.org

https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii

I hope everyone enjoyed the Spring Meeting in Baltimore! Thank you to our Program Chair, Anne Albinak, Johns Hopkins University, and Co-Chair, Ted Fehskens, Johns Hopkins University, and the rest of the Program Committee for all of your hard work planning the meeting. It was great to learn, network, and enjoy Baltimore with everyone!

Hope to see you all next year in Philadelphia!

Distinguished Service Award Winners
At the Spring Meeting we announced the winners of the 2015 Region II Distinguished Service Award. The Distinguished Service Award is an annual award that recognizes members of Region II who have made significant and sustained contributions to the Region. Congratulations to Mary Holleran, West Virginia University, and Brian Squilla, Thomas Jefferson University. I’ve worked closely with both Mary and Brian for several years and this award is well deserved. Thank you both for your contributions to Region II.

Spring Meeting Travel Award Winners
Please join me in congratulating the winners of the Spring Meeting travel award. Congratulations to MaryAnn Taylor, Ithaca College, and Sabine Dillingham, St. Mary’s College of Maryland. The travel awards provide a small amount of funding to cover travel, registration and hotel expenses for individuals located within Region II who have not attended a Region II meeting. The awardees are expected to stay for the duration of the Meeting and submit a report about their experience.
Region II Elections

It’s election time! A call for nominations of officers was distributed to the Region in early April. Please keep an eye on your email for the election ballot and make sure you vote!

Professional Development Committee Update

Join the PDC on Monday, July 13th at Christiana Care Health System for a half-day session on Hot Topics in Research Compliance. The very popular Uniform Guidance PDC workshops have recently been updated and expanded to include an offering specifically tailored for the researcher! Visit the PDC section of the Region II website http://ncuraregionii.org/pdc for a current listing of PDC workshops near you! Want a workshop to come to your area or interested in hosting a workshop at your institution? Contact the PDC Chair, Greg Slack gslack@clarkson.edu. Don’t forget - institutions hosting a workshop receive either two free workshop registrations or one free Region II Spring Meeting registration!

Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii/ and Twitter: @NCURAREGII

Jill A. Frankenfield serves as the Chair of Region II and is an Assistant Director, Office of Research Administration, University of Maryland, College Park.

We’d like to recognize our Public Relations Coordinator Tanya Blackwell, Webmaster Coordinator Linnea Minnema (and team Tricia Page and Lawson Calver), and our Social Media Coordinator Brigette Pfister (and team Rob Caudle and Ann Pascucci) for keeping our membership informed about the activities of the Region.

The Honors and Awards Committee Coordinator Rob Bingham-Roy and team reviewed the many Travel Award nominations received. After careful consideration of the 19 nominations, Taylor Dearman (University of Central Florida) and Andrea Moshier (Western Carolina University) received travel awards to attend the Regional meeting. Laura Kingsley (Nova Southeastern University) and Sarah Taverniti (Pennington Biomedical Research Center) received travel awards to attend the National meeting. Congratulations to all of you!

Volunteers are integral to the success of the Regional Spring Meeting, and we thank everyone who contributed their time and talent to this year’s meeting. A special thanks to Volunteer Coordinator Hagan Walker (and team Michelle Gooding) for organizing and recruiting a great team of volunteers. Don’t forget there are year-round opportunities for volunteering! We encourage you to visit our website www.ncuraregionii.com for more information.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Washington, DC for the 57th Annual Meeting, August 2-5, 2015. Until then, stay in the know by connecting with your Region (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and our website) and be on the look-out every third Thursday for your Region III e-blast!

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

REGION III

Southeast

www.ncuraregioniii.com

Do you know why flamingos stand on one leg? Chances are, if you do, it’s because you were at the 2015 Region III Spring Meeting. Those who attended learned more about our beloved flamingo mascot from the distinguished keynote Dr. Matthew J. Anderson (researcher at Saint Joseph’s University), and enjoyed 5 days of great programming, networking, and fun!

Thanks to the work of the Region III Spring Meeting Program Committee, 60 workshops, concurrent sessions, and discussion groups offered a wealth of knowledge for attendees to take back and apply on the job. From novice to expert, this year’s program had something for everyone. We appreciate Program Chair Danielle McElwain and the whole Program Committee team (Debra Alexander, Alex Atkinson, Rob Bingham-Roy, Kay Gilstrap, Bruxanne Hein, David Smelser, Berlyline Temples, Justo Torres, Laurianne Torres, Kristin Wetherbee, and Mo Valentine) for developing an informative, comprehensive, and diverse program. The Hospitality Coordinator Natasha Stark and team offered networking opportunities in a relaxing atmosphere, balancing out all of the hard work and learning. Our Sponsorship Coordinator, Steven Koogler, secured valuable sponsorship contributions – making this meeting possible.

REGION IV

Mid-America

http://www.ncuraregioniv.com

After trudging through a cold and snowy winter in the Midwest, Region IV is welcoming the warmer spring and summer weather that’s finally hit! We kicked off spring with a joint regional meeting with Region VIII in Chicago – Research Administration Goes Global. The meeting was a huge success and offered a unique program with hot topics, concurrent, and sparks sessions and Dr. Robert Murphy kicking off the meeting sharing his experience working in Timbuktu. There was networking galore, with a Sunday evening reception at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Dinner groups to famed local breweries and Michelin Star restaurants, and an evening of Jazz and Dancing with the celebrated artist, Dee Alexander. Look forward to seeing everyone next year in Kansas City for some barbeque!
For those that missed that regional meeting, check out the awards and congratulations to our Region IV members. We’re growing quickly, and it’s great to see old and new faces working together, and those recognized for their many years of service to the region:

**Distinguished Service Award:** Robert Andresen, University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has a mind like a steel trap and the ability to make friends wherever he goes. Bob’s commitment to NCURA spans 25 years in leadership, committee, and educational roles. He’s an incredible role mentor and role model, and passionate leader. He sets the gold standard for what a leader should be. Congratulations Bob!

**Regional Meeting Travel Award:**
- Melanie Thomas, University of Missouri-Columbia
- Bridgett Molinar, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**National Meeting Travel Award:**
- Bethany Friedrich, Washington University-St. Louis

**Congratulations to our second class of mentor/mentee pairs:**
- Jeffrey Ritchie, Lewis University
- Jean Skelton Opitz, Concordia University-Wisconsin
- Craig Reynolds, University of Michigan
- Michelle Porcellino, North Central College
- Diane Hillebrand, University of North Dakota
- Katherine Angevine, Northwestern University
- Jim Maus, Washington University
- Megan Simonson, Northwestern University
- Cheryl Lyons, Washington University
- Brittany Patrick, Northwestern University
- Tricia Callahan, Miami University
- Kaslina Love Mosley, Washington University in St. Louis
- Justine Karungi, University of Kansas Medical Center
- Nicole Nichols, Washington University in St. Louis
- Jennifer Morehead, Governors State University
- Kim Keeley, University of North Dakota
- Kathy Durben, Marquette University
- Amy Kitzman, Northwestern University Medical Center
- Lori Kaser, The Ohio State University
- Carli Carmack, University of Missouri-Columbia
- Roger Wareham, University of Minnesota, Morris
- Chrissy Kelly, Northwestern University
- Jennifer May, University of Missouri-Columbia
- Erin Odell, Northwestern University
- Kaslina Love Mosley, Washington University in St. Louis
- Melissa Karby, University of Michigan Medical School
- Jayne Smith, Drake University
- Erica Franich, Northern Michigan University
- Lynda Wolter, University of Chicago
- Katie Schortgen, Eastern Michigan University
- Connie Motoki, Washington University in St. Louis
- Elaine Walton, Simon Fraser University

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to respond to recent surveys. We received a lot of positive and useful feedback from everyone. You can find a summary of the results posted on the Region IV website. Congratulations to Paul Below, Joel Clendenin, Sandy Fowler and Aaron Neal. Their names were drawn randomly from those who submitted their names after taking the second Region IV survey, and each won a $20 gift card to Amazon.

**Happy summer everyone, hope to see everyone in DC!**

Kirsten Yehl serves as the Chair of Region IV and is an Administrative Director at Northwestern University.

As I write this – my last Regional Corner article – I’m reflecting back on my time as Chair of Region V. Serving in that role (or any executive committee position) is not easy. It’s time consuming, hectic, and sometimes controversial. However, it is also rewarding. On first thought, it may seem that the leaders of our regions should be those with 20+ years of experience in the field – the ones that have seen, experienced and managed it all. It may seem that serving as Chair is all about sharing your own knowledge and experiences with others. But I must say – I think I gained as much knowledge in my tenure as Chair as I imparted.

So, I want to thank those that have made my tenure such a wonderful experience. Scott Davis (University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center), Scott Erwin (Texas State University), and Debbie Newton (University of Tulsa) — thank you for your guidance, mentorship and friendship. Katherine Kissmann and Shelly Berry-Hebb (both of Texas A&M University System), and Katie Plum (Angelo State University) — thank you for having my back and for letting me hand off the reins to some incredibly capable people. To all the executive committee members, committee chairs, and program committee members – thank you for all you do.

My last thank you goes to Melody Bell (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center). Melody was elected Secretary in 2013, and was expecting to serve from January 2014 to December 2015. However, due to my election as Chair-Elect that same year, Melody assumed her Secretary duties immediately upon election. So her two-year term was upsed to 2 years, 9 months. With the recent change in our bylaws introducing
a treasurer-elect position, we had to shift the election of our Secretary back a year, requiring a Chair-appointed Secretary for a year. Melody graciously agreed to serve another year to accommodate that shift, bringing her supposed two-year term to 3 years and 9 months. Thank you for your dedication and service, Melody.

Finally I want to give a shout out to several deserving members. High fives to Theresa Barnhart (Texas State University), Susan Hurley (Sam Houston State University), Elizabeth Kogan (University of Texas at Austin), Kristi Lemmon (University of North Texas Health Sciences Center, Jessica Schneider (Texas State University), Adam Sharp (University of Texas at Austin), Maribeth Start (Sam Houston State University), and Kristie Wright (University of North Texas) on passing the Certified Research Administrator exam! Also, congratulations to Jenna Bazzell (Northern Oklahoma College), Samantha Rea (Oklahoma State University), and Jocelyn Rust (Texas Tech University) on being awarded the travel scholarships to our recent meeting in Houston.

I’m a bit melancholy at leaving my role as Chair. I feel there are a lot of visions unseen, ideas unrealized, and plans unmade, but I believe I’m leaving the region in good hands with Katherine Kissmann. Hope to see many of you in DC at AM 57.

Let the games begin …

Hollie Schreiber now serves as the Immediate Past Chair of Region V and is Manager, Ag Sponsored Programs Administration, at Oklahoma State University.

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

Dear RVI Members,

I have now served as your RVI Chair for nearly 4 months, and my appreciation of the opportunities this role has provided continues to increase to unexpected new heights. With that said, one undeniable and constant theme that keeps coming up is how amazing our research community is. Whenever I work with our fellow members on NCURA related matters, there is a sense of magic that takes place. We are in the same boat, busy at work, dealing with changing regulations and processes, changing management and limited staff resources, project fires, and the various complexities that unite us as research administrators; however, regardless of these work related demands (not to mention our personal demands), the NCURA volunteer work seems to magically get done. I can confirm there are no fantasy elves doing the lifting, but there are a multitude of your fellow region member’s hands that work together as one to accomplish much. Is it as Aristotle quoted “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” or magic? I think both . . . and the results are an amazing, strong, and supportive region. Please join us!

Some highlights of RVI activities:

RVI Special Election: Please join me in congratulating Derick Jones as the 2016 Region VI Chair-elect. Derick has expressed his enthusiasm and desire to serve the region as Chair-elect, and he has already begun to dive into preparations for 2016.

RVI Awards: Congratulations to our PRA and FRA award recipients, Wanda Kao (UC Irvine) and Ikuko Bentii-Barnes (Cedars-Sinai Medical Center). Region VI looks forward to offering travel assistance awards for our upcoming Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. and to our region meeting in Salt Lake City. Please watch for the open call for future travel award applications.

RVI and RVII Joint Region Meeting Updates:

Life Elevated…reaching new heights in research administration — Salt Lake City, Utah, October 4-7, 2015

Call for Proposals: A Call for Proposals for the Salt Lake City meeting announcement went out in March. Please submit your proposal as soon as possible. The link to submit a proposal or suggest a session topic is at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6WBL68R or you can access the link on our website at: http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/6ncura/default.aspx First review of proposals submitted will start in the first week of April.

Program Committee: The program committee is in the early phases of planning and will be “rolling-up-the-sleeves” in April. I look forward to working with the wonderful team of volunteers. If you are interested, but have not heard from us, or would like to join, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

Sub-Committee Program Chair: To build the synergies between the planning of the 2015 SLC Region meetings and to develop opportunities for smooth transitions for the following year’s (2016) program planning, Region VI and Region VII have appointed Derick Jones (RVI Chair-elect) and Marjorie Townsend (RVIII Chair-elect) as our Sub-Committee Program Chairs. Christine Marquez (RVI Chair) and I are grateful to them for their willingness to participate in this role.

Salt Lake City Regional Meeting: The dedicated volunteers are hard at work preparing a dynamic professional development program along with providing you with things to consider doing while in Salt Lake City. The room block and registration notice will be out later this spring. In the meantime, mark your calendars and perhaps consider arriving a day early to catch some additional offerings of the city.

I am very grateful to the many hands of our volunteers that come together to create amazing results and the synergies and energy that magically takes place. It has been fun, and I look forward to seeing everyone in Washington D.C. and Salt Lake City!

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 Members:

As we approach the end of spring and the beginning of summer, the first quarter of the year has passed by quickly. Have you been able to realize major commitments, goals and succeeded in your planning efforts at work, home, and in your current role with NCURA? It has been a struggle to juggle all the demands we have in our lives and we desperately try to ensure that we have not let a major deadline, meeting, or commitment slip through the cracks.

I recently took a really helpful class at my institution called “Time Management”. The theories presented were based on Stephen Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and First Things First. It had been a while since I had attended one of these seminars and it made me rethink my current practices of managing my time. As research administrators, we are under constant demands and deadlines and our home lives aren’t much different. Stress is a daily occurrence. How can we cope?

Technological advancements have dramatically impacted our lives and research administration has not been sheltered from this reality. Changes in our field are constant and we must keep up with the new mandates, submission portals, reporting needs, and what can I say about Uniform Guidance and its impact on our profession. We shouldn’t operate or make decisions in fear or base our decisions on our insecurities. Our vulnerabilities foster negativity and often do not enable us to succeed.

I would like to reintroduce the theory of “re-prioritizing” your life (personal and professional) and identifying the most important things you want to accomplish in the next week, month, and year. Use technology to calendar out your time and schedule the most important things first… Covey calls them, the “big rocks.” Once the “big rocks” have been identified and scheduled, the “little rocks” will fall into place. The concept seems obvious, but many times we don’t take the time to block out time for all the important things first. Take the time to block your time and you will see how this daily/weekly habit will empower you to be successful. Reintroducing this concept in my life, has helped tremendously and I hope that this will be a reminder to you to do the same.

That being said, here are few “big rocks” that we have in Region VII:

Region VI/VII Meetings
Salt Lake City, Utah – October 4-7, 2015
Meeting details at:  http://ncurareregionvii.asu.edu/meetings
Travel award nominee due date: More details coming soon.

Visit our website and select Travel Awards for more info in the next few months: http://ncurareregionvii.asu.edu/travel-awards
Oahu, Hawaii – October 2-5, 2016

National Annual Meeting – Washington, DC
AM57 – August 2-5, 2015
Travel award nominee due date: Friday, April 17, 2015
For more info:  http://ncurareregionvii.asu.edu/travel-awards
AM58 – August 7-10, 2016
AM59 – August 6-9, 2017

Region VII
May 2015: Nominations for Offices to be filled this year are Chair-elect, one member to the Region VII Executive Committee, and the Secretary-Treasurer.

The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. – Stephen Covey

Christine Marquez, serves as the Region VII Chair and is the Senior Sponsored Projects Officer at the University of New Mexico.

REGION VIII International

I am delighted to advise that from next month the International Region will have its first International Region Reporter for the NCURA Magazine Regional Corner. This role will be held by Julie Ward, International Research Manager at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), in Sydney, Australia. I caught up with Julie recently and asked her about being involved in NCURA.

Julie, when did you first become involved in NCURA?
Only a few years ago, I was lucky enough to receive a travel award to attend the NCURA annual meeting in 2012. That meeting really enforced the great learning and training benefits that a well-established and professional society like NCURA can offer its members.

Since then I’ve attended FRA & PRA last year in San Francisco (and also made my NCURA presenting debut!), I’ve assisted with the planning of the first Region VIII annual meeting, I’ve been an adopted member of Region II and attended the Region II/III joint spring meeting last year and was privileged to tag along to a few Region II traveling workshops!

Your position is International Research Manager, what does this involve?
Everything and anything relating to research and international at
UNSW...It’s a new and exciting role where my main focus is to “match-make” researchers at UNSW to international funding opportunities. I also keep busy by looking after all our international research collaboration agreements with our partnering institutions abroad, facilitating visiting delegations and events, and providing data and metrics on international research performance to senior executives at UNSW.

**What would be your best NCURA experience to date?**
Meeting a bunch of wonderful people!

In particular, Denise Clark from the University of Maryland, College Park. A brief meeting in a hospitality suite at an NCURA annual meeting led to an incredible professional opportunity for me to work at the University of Maryland, College Park for 3 months last year.

**What were the highlights from working in the States?**
So, so many things…I’ll try and list only a few…

- Knowledge exchange - being able to discuss in depth the similarities and differences that exist between research management in Australia vs the US.
- Networking and relationship building opportunities – I now have great contacts in the States which is handy when we need advice on a US funding or compliance issue.
- Benchmarking institutional support mechanisms for training, funding and higher degree students – my final report highlighted the different research framework at UNSW & UMD.

**Volunteering to you means?**
Being an active member and contributing to your profession.

If you’re reading this and thinking to yourself, I want to be more involved in NCURA. Please look at our website on volunteering opportunities at: [http://ncuraintlregion.org/volunteer-opportunities](http://ncuraintlregion.org/volunteer-opportunities)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. 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.

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**Education Scholarship Fund Update**

The NCURA Education Scholarship Fund was established in 2012 to build a renewable stream of support for NCURA members seeking additional training to build their research administration skills and expertise who need financial assistance to do so.

Many of you have contributed to the fund at NCURA national meetings by purchasing raffles, throwing change in a bucket, or just writing a check. At the most recent FRA and PRA meetings in Orlando, about $1,600 were raised by generous attendees.

The grand total raised so far is $39,089. That’s really impressive, but we still need to raise about $11,000 more in order to reach the specified level at which we can start giving out scholarships to worthy applicants.

Please join us in this fundraising campaign. There are many ways to give. We will have a donation table at the annual meeting in August and there will be another regional change bucket challenge. In addition, all proceeds from the Tuesday evening “Monte Carlo Night” gaming activities will go to support the fund.

Meanwhile taking place at upcoming regional meetings:

- **Region I (New England)** is holding a silent auction during the Tuesday evening Mission Possible dinner and improv comedy to benefit the Fund. Additionally, Region I will have some smaller FUNDraising activities at the Welcome Reception as well as in the hospitality suite.
- **Region III (Southeastern)** is excited to continue its fundraising efforts in support of the Fund by hosting a State Cup competition (the Region III state that raises the most funds wins the State Cup at our Regional Spring Meeting) and through sales of our ever-popular research administration t-shirts. Get yours at [http://www.ncuraregioniii.com/education-scholarship.php](http://www.ncuraregioniii.com/education-scholarship.php) We’ve raised over $1,500 to date!

For more information about the Fund or to make your donation visit [www.ncura.edu/Education/Educationscholarshipfund.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/Education/Educationscholarshipfund.aspx)

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Today’s environment challenges employees to increase productivity with little to no commensurate increase in resources. Looking at our own work style may be key to “working smarter.”

Preserve time on the calendar to work on complex tasks. We all have a time of day when we feel at our highest energy and peak performance. This is the time to work on major projects, prepare reports and materials, handle demanding communications, etc. This may seem impossible to do with your workload. Some days it won’t be feasible. However, once people see the productivity generated in these peak performance periods, you will find them to be quite respectful of the dedicated work time.

“Purposeful managers” learn to harness their energy for particular purposes. This takes practice especially with the multitude of items thrown at us at any one time. Consider how to focus on highest priority tasks and people by reducing interruptions. Use lower-energy blocks of time to manage less formal communications, complete routine and repetitive tasks, use work-related social media tools, and collect data/information for analysis at peak performance periods.

Make relationship-building a conscious part of your job duties and dedicate time toward it. Trusting, knowledgeable professional relationships enable more rapid disclosure and understanding of issues, problem solving, and more satisfying interactions. In short, they ultimately save you time. Building a network of internal and external professional relationships will hone your skills, sharpen your perspectives, and broaden your influence. And, the happy byproduct of stronger professional relationships is a more positive work environment, job satisfaction, and increased energy.

The most effective way to “work smarter” is to be invested in the “job” we do. Looking at our own work style will help us garner peak performance and job satisfaction through focused energy and rewarding professional relationships.

**Partner with NCURA!**

Provide your organization with more opportunities for added face time with NCURA participants by sponsoring an NCURA event!

SPECIAL THANKS TO BAKER TILLY FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND DURING THE 2015 PRA CONFERENCE.

L-R: Michelle Vazin, NCURA President; Kim Ginn, Baker Tilly, NCURA Contributing Sponsor; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director

To partner with NCURA contact Kathleen Larmett, Executive Director (larmett@ncura.edu), Latasha Johnson (Johnson@ncura.edu), or Kati Barber (barber@ncura.edu) www.ncura.edu
Your To Do List:

- Finish Annual Report
- Complete Staff Training Guide
- Schedule NCURA Peer Review

NCURA Peer Review Program
The only research administration review program that has established Standards reflecting characteristics of effective sponsored program operations. NCURA Peer Review Programs are a parallel administrative process to an academic program review.

NCURA Peer Advisory Services
Research administration expertise brought to your institution to provide assistance in improving your research administration operations: Research Strategic Planning Service, Focused Analysis Service, Directed Education Service.

For questions or further information or to obtain a copy of the National Standards contact peerreview@ncura.edu or call (503) 364-1847. Learn more about the Peer Programs: http://www.ncura.edu/InstitutionalPrograms.aspx
NATIONAL CONFERENCES
57TH ANNUAL MEETING

TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
GLOBAL FUNDAMENTALS OF SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
Zurich, Switzerland..............................................................September 2-4, 2015

FINANCIAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
San Antonio, TX.................................................................September 9-11, 2015

FUNDAMENTALS 2.0: SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
San Antonio, TX.................................................................September 9-11, 2015

LEVEL II: SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
San Antonio, TX.................................................................September 9-11, 2015

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

WEBCAST
UNIFORM GUIDANCE: THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION ........June 17, 2015
1:00 – 3:30 pm Eastern Time

WEBINARS
THE RIGHT METRICS: CHOOSING, MEASURING AND EVALUATING METRICS TO DRIVE PERFORMANCE SUCCESS IN YOUR OFFICE.......................June 18, 2015
2:00 – 3:30 pm Eastern Time

IS IT A GIFT OR A GRANT AND OTHER CRITICAL FUNDING MECHANISM CLARIFICATIONS YOUR STAFF NEED TO KNOW ..................................July 14, 2015
2:00 – 3:30 pm Eastern Time

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 AUGUST 2015
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .........................June 5, 2015
Submission of Articles to Co-editors......................................June 12, 2015
Submission of Advertisements ..............................................June 12, 2015

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