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## CONTENTS

### FEATURES

**President’s Message**  
By Robert Andresen .......................................................... 3

**Together or Separate: The Great Debate on Pre-Award and Post-Award Duties**  
By Jim Jarvis and Michelle Jarvis ........................................ 4

**Facilities and Administrative Cost Distribution: Is There a One-Size-Fits-All Model?**  
By JoAnn Parsons and Pei-Lin Shi ........................................... 6

**The Value of Propinquity: Why Local Research Administration Matters**  
By Zoya Davis-Hamilton, Sarah Marina, & Diane L. Souvaine ............ 12

**Is Disclosure of FCOI Effective and Is It Enough?**  
By Amy Spicer ................................................................................. 18

**Manufacturing Effective Research Administration**  
By Joseph Gesa ............................................................................. 20

**Subawards under United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Cooperative Agreements**  
By Debra Brodlie ........................................................................ 22

**Research Administration in Asia Pacific: Taking an Analytical Approach to the Debates in Research Management**  
By David Junsong Huang ................................................................. 25

**Collaborative Impact of Research & Advancement: A 3 Million Dollar Idea**  
By Emily Devereux and Jessica Blackburn ........................................ 28

**Changing the Focus from Customer Service to Professional Collaboration**  
By Shella Batelman, Patricia McNulty, and Stephanie Wasserman ........ 30

**DATA Act and the Section 5 Grants Pilot: Why Does it Matter?**  
By Christopher Zeleznak ............................................................... 32

**Considering and Effectively Working within Separate or Combined Pre- and Post-award Organizational Structures**  
By Twila Fisher Reighley ................................................................. 35

**Top 10 Things Every New Research Administrator Should Know**  
By Tricia Callahan ........................................................................... 39

**Research Administration in Europe: Metricide and How to Avoid It**  
By Simon Kerridge ......................................................................... 44

**Leadership and the Art of Swaying the Debate**  
By Laura Letherbet and Carolyn Elliott-Forino ................................. 46

**Research Administration in the Middle East: Syrian Refugees Crisis in Lebanon - The Response from the American University of Beirut and the Role of the Office of Grant Administration**  
By Rabih Shibl ............................................................................ 50

**Ask the Leadership Coach**  
By Garry Sanders ........................................................................ 53

**Risk Assessment: Part 2 - The Project Level**  
By Amanda Humphrey and Stephanie Stone ................................. 54

**Optimize Your O&M Reimbursement: Understanding The UCA**  
By Tony Benigno and Monika Moses .............................................. 56

**Cool Research Project Spotlight**  
By Steven Powell ............................................................................ 64

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2016 NCURA Election Results .............................................. 8
- Gearing Up for Research Administrator Day .......................... 10
- 2016 NCURA Awards .............................................................. 14
- Notable Practices ........................................................................ 19
- NCURATV Subawards Program ............................................. 26
- NCURA Magazine e-Xtra Headline Highlights ..................... 31
- Milestones .................................................................................. 34
- Work Smart ................................................................................. 37
- Education Scholarship Fund Update ..................................... 48
- Research Administration Meme .............................................. 49
- Regional Corner .......................................................................... 60
- Calendar of Events ...................................................................... 64

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In a profession where hardly anything is black or white, research administration is a hotbed of debatable topics. Every day is full of making decisions from the gray area. While this can sometimes be maddening, it’s also what makes research administration such great field to work in.

In this issue of NCURA Magazine, we will dive into some of the debates that we face as research administrators. Some of the debatable points of interest are focused on how our institutions are structured. In “Facilities and Administrative Cost Distribution: Is There a One-Size-Fits-All Model?” by JoAnn Parsons and Pei-Lin Shi, they discuss the pros and cons of various indirect return models. Should F&A all be kept centrally or should some or all of it be returned to those who generated it? In Jim Jarvis and Michelle Jarvis’ article entitled, “Together or Separate: The Great Debate on Pre-Award and Post-Award Duties,” they discuss the age-old question of whether or not it’s better to have combined pre- and post-award offices.

Beyond the debates on how our institutions could be structured, there are numerous debates about how to best operate. In today’s world metrics are all the rage, so much so that the August 2015 issue of NCURA Magazine was devoted to it. A year later, the debate continues. In “Metricide and How to Avoid It,” Simon Kerridge focuses on research outputs and how they were devoted to it. The debate continues. In “Beyond the debates on how our institutions could be structured, there are numerous debates about how to best operate. In today’s world metrics are all the rage, so much so that the August 2015 issue of NCURA Magazine was devoted to it. A year later, the debate continues. In “Metricide and How to Avoid It,” Simon Kerridge focuses on research outputs and how they were devoted to it.”

Given that there are so many debatable topics in research administration—whether it’s how to best structure your office or how to most effectively run your operation—we know there will always be an opportunity to provide our input. Laura Letbetter and Carolyn Elliott-Farino have written a short play called “Leadership and the Art of Swaying the Debate” that illustrates how research administrators can influence decisions being made at our institutions.

While many debates in our profession have no right or wrong answer, it’s always a good idea to understand both sides of the issue so we can make the best decisions given our own institution’s culture. Because, as research administrators, we know the answer will always be “it depends.”

David Smelser, MSM, CRA is the Assistant Director of Sponsored Programs at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. David’s responsibilities include providing oversight of the university’s pre-award operations, primarily focusing on proposal development and submission. He can be reached at dsmeleser@utk.edu
Message from Your President

By Robert Andresen, NCURA President

Hello NCURA Friends and Colleagues —

I hope you are enjoying your summer. The theme of this issue is “Great Debates” and during the summer months here at Madison that means “ice cream or beer?” at the Union Terrace along the lake. It’s a great topic for discussion because there really is no wrong answer.

I want to share with you some of my observations from recent visits with research administrators at our spring regional meetings and at meetings held by our colleagues around the globe. My main observation is that there really are some themes that are universal in our profession. Each of us works at different institutions with different structures, rules, and cultures. Yet, no matter where we work, we all face the challenges of facilitating faculty’s research activities in a world of complex, and often confusing, rules and regulations. Changes stemming from the Uniform Guidance are still unfolding in a tough financial environment for many. Fewer resources in terms of funding and staffing make it difficult to satisfy all of the demands on our time. Nevertheless, at every meeting session from Texas to Canada, I found colleagues eager to share their experiences, successes, and challenges with each other. This open collaboration to support research together is encouraging and a positive sign for NCURA and our profession.

One area where NCURA assists in building collaborations is our fellowship program. NCURA Global Fellowships provide an opportunity for members to visit a host institution for a two-week period. This visit is a chance to experience another organization’s research administration first-hand and also to bring your knowledge to them. The application period for next year is opening soon and I hope you take advantage of this terrific program.

On a different topic, in my last column I wrote about the challenges facing NCURA and the volunteers who choose to run for one of the National Officer (Vice President/President-Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary) positions. As an organization, NCURA relies on its volunteers to provide their talents and skills to lead us forward. Volunteering to serve as an officer is a decision that isn’t made without considerable thought and approvals from home institutions, family, co-workers, and friends. Ultimately, few people make the choice to submit their names for nomination. To ensure the best and strongest candidates are on the ballot each year, we are asking the membership for a change in the by-laws. Section VIII (Elections) of the by-laws currently requires that a “slate of two or more candidates” be presented on the election ballot for officers. The proposed by-law change would require a “slate of one or more candidates.” After a discussion at the Business Meeting at this year’s Annual Meeting, an electronic ballot will be sent to all members seeking approval of the change. I urge you to take part in this process and to support this change to help keep NCURA’s future strong.

Robert Andresen

Robert Andresen is NCURA President and serves as the Director of Research Financial Services/Associate Director, Research and Sponsored Programs, at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Bob can be reached at randresen@rsp.wisc.edu
The University of Pittsburgh Department of Medicine Research Administration Office faces a unique set of challenges due to its size. The office provides support to 10 different divisions that make up the department, with annual direct cost expenditures of over 58 million dollars. Annually over 275 grant applications are submitted.

Until about six years ago, the administrators managed both pre- and post-award functions. The main difficulty that occurred was a result of the deadline-driven nature of pre-award administration. Without successful applications the institution would not have any funds. Any time there is an application deadline, the main focus of the investigators is the upcoming deadline. The expectation is that research administrators will drop everything to work on the application. With a large number of applications being submitted, this was problematic due to the need to manage the millions of dollars already awarded. Without prompt review of the accounts, problems cannot be punctually located and corrected. There are risks for negative audit findings, overdrafts, effort certification issues, and numerous other problems if proper attention is not paid to post-award administration. The determination was made to split these duties to ensure the proper post-award management of the research accounts.

At a college or university level, there are different ways to organize who does what with regards to research administration. Some colleges and universities are highly centralized, some have the bulk of the duties housed within the departments, and some have just a handful of people that handle all aspects of research administration. Just as there are different ways to organize the research administration duties at the college and university level, there are also different ways to organize them at the department level. In this article we will take a look at two different departments within the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. Each department is organized differently, with the Department of Medicine organized with pre-award and post-award duties separated, and the Department of Neurology organized with pre-award and post-award duties together.

**Department of Medicine**

The University of Pittsburgh Department of Medicine Research Administration Office faces a unique set of challenges due to its size. The office provides support to 10 different divisions that make up the department, with annual direct cost expenditures of over 58 million dollars. Annually over 275 grant applications are submitted.

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There is currently a team dedicated to the preparation of applications, progress reports, just-in-time requests, and any other activity required before an award is funded. This team takes care of all functions until the project is awarded and the account is activated by the university. They can devote all their time to the upcoming deadlines without the distractions of post-award duties. This system has helped develop the pre-award administration skills of these individuals. They have become the office experts on anything related to applying for grants. This level of knowledge might not have occurred if they prepared fewer applications and had post-award duties in addition.

The post-award group is able to spend their time reviewing accounts and taking care of any issues that are found in a timely manner. Work can be focused on proper effort distributions, timely transfers, and avoiding overdrafts, which can cost the department money. With critical issues such as effort reporting and subaward monitoring receiving more scrutiny, it is critical to have people in place to address these issues. This system has also helped the post-award group to become the office experts on topics such as allowability of cost and effort certification. The post-award group has been cross-trained so they can assist with applications during busy deadlines.

This division of duties has two significant drawbacks. One problem is that the investigators can sometimes be unsure of whom to contact. This can be minimized with a good working relationship between the pre-award and post-award administrators. Even if the incorrect person is contacted the question can be referred to the correct person for a prompt response. The other problem is that the post-award administrator may not know what funding has been applied for. This can be addressed with a good tracking system so the post-award administrator can quickly determine pending funding. Despite these potential shortcomings, this system has been effective in managing a large volume of applications and funded grants.

**Department of Neurology**

The University of Pittsburgh Department of Neurology Research and Fiscal Office varies from the Department of Medicine in size, scope of work, and division of duties. This office handles not only the research accounts, but the hard money and endowed accounts, as well as clinical trials on both the university and hospital side. This unit has six full-time staff members, three of whom devote the majority, if not all of their time, to research administration. The department has annual direct cost expenditures total 8.5 million dollars and submits over 50 grant applications each year.

Each research accountant is assigned a portfolio of investigators that they are responsible for. This responsibility includes both pre- and post-award functions. Because they are responsible for all aspects of the grant administration process, they are able to more easily look at the complete picture of an investigator’s grant portfolio—both what is currently funded and what the investigator plans to submit.

When preparing a grant submission or a just-in-time request, it is critical to know the effort that is being charged on other grants and where adjustments can be made. It is also important to know what projects are ending and what will be entering into a no cost extension period. Since the research accountant manages all aspects of the investigator’s portfolio, they are well informed on these items.

With the pre- and post-award duties combined, the research accountants have a well-rounded knowledge of research administration, which allows them to anticipate potential post-award issues during the pre-award process. They also have an understanding of the thought process behind the budget, which allows for better management of the money once the grant is funded.

For the investigator, having the pre- and post-award duties combined allows them to have one go-to person, regardless of what the issue may be. This also allows for a much closer working relationship to be forged.

The biggest drawback to having the pre- and post-award duties combined is that during pre-award deadlines post-award responsibilities take a back seat. Since grant submissions and progress reports have firm deadlines, they must take priority, which can result in a backlog of post-award work that needs to be focused on once the deadlines have passed. One thing that can help manage the workload is having conversations with the investigators a few months before the standard NIH deadlines to begin planning for upcoming grant submissions. Another tool is the Commons Quick Query website where research accountants can search for progress reports that will be due in the next few months.

**Conclusion**

There really is no right or wrong way to organize the research administration duties in a department since no two are exactly alike. What works for one department may not work for another. In the case of the Department of Medicine and the Department of Neurology at the University of Pittsburgh, the staffing levels and size of the departmental grant portfolios play a large role in determining the organization of these duties. Since the Department of Medicine has a much larger departmental grant portfolio than the Department of Neurology, combining pre-award and post-award duties would not work. Conversely, due to the staffing size and other responsibilities of the Department of Neurology, separating pre-award and post-award duties like the Department of Medicine would not work.

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**For the investigator, having the pre- and post-award duties combined allows them to have one go-to person, regardless of what the issue may be. This also allows for a much closer working relationship to be forged.**

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**Jim Jarvis, CRA, is a senior sponsored project accountant at the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Medicine. He has been involved in research administration for 15 years. He has worked in a central office as well as at a departmental level. He can be reached at jjj14@pitt.edu**

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**Michelle Jarvis, CRA, is the fiscal and grants administrator at the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Neurology. She has been with the university for 15 years and has worked with grants for the past 10 years. She can be reached at mjarvis@pitt.edu**

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August 2016
In a recent conversation with some top researchers at a large institution, it became evident that despite an increasing interest in doing research, researchers consistently cite institutional barriers as deterrents to the progress of their work. One of the most common barriers discussed was the best model of distribution of facilities and administrative costs (F&A) to support research and infrastructure. In order to overcome this barrier, researchers, administrators, and others have suggested developing a consistent process for sharing F&A cost recovery.

First, it’s important to define F&A. As we all know, there are many terms—indirect costs, overhead, F&A—but they all refer to the same thing: F&A. The term “indirect costs” was changed to facilities and administrative costs in 1996. Per Uniform Guidance,1 “indirect (F&A) costs are those that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored project, and instructional activity or any other institutional activities.” Because these are actual (real) costs of doing business, universities are entitled to F&A on federal grant awards.

F&A recovery is considered differently depending on who is asked. Faculty often believe that these are funds they have “earned” for their research, so F&A should be theirs to use in support of their project. University officials may think that these are dollars the sponsor provides to supplement upfront expenditures for all research projects. Deans and chairs consider F&A funds that their college, school, or department faculty received from the sponsor to further the research in their units. All of these assumptions are correct in a way.

So, how is F&A recovery currently being distributed? According to a survey conducted on the research administration listserv in 2007 (the latest modification was shared in March 2016 on the listserv), there are as many ways of distributing F&A as there are universities. The following is a summary of how the 100 institutions of higher education sampled distribute their F&A recovery:

**Model 1: 100% allocation to administration**

Out of 100 institutions of higher education surveyed, 14 distribute 100% F&A to the administration to supplement the university’s overall needs. Among those surveyed, some reasons for this model are that these funds are used to renovate and increase the available space for research activities, to strengthen the infrastructure for sponsored projects, and to establish adequate library collections for scholarly and creative work.

**Model 2: 100% allocation to the dean or department**

There are five universities who responded that they distribute 100% of F&A to the dean, and one university distributes 100% to the department. The rationale is that colleges and departments play critical roles in the growth of the institution’s research enterprise, and this model of distribution enables chairs and deans to make resource decisions to address immediate needs. These F&A funds support...
each institution is challenged to develop its own model that best suits its needs.”

cost sharing in new faculty startup packages, assist departments with bridge funding for faculty experiencing a lapse in external support, seed funding for new research initiatives, provide research travel support for faculty and students, and more.

As we can see, both models have great merit and serve the common good: to support and further the research enterprise. While each model has its own benefits, they do not cover all scenarios. Therefore, each institution is challenged to develop its own model that best suits its needs.

In conclusion, whether we have a 1% or an 80% F&A rate, F&A is one of the major factors in the support of the research enterprise. Without ownership of F&A, the reality is that these funds only partially cover the cost of doing research. When F&A is further restricted by the sponsor, institutions not only have to pay the cost of doing research up front, they have to pay more than they can actually recover. Regardless of the rate of F&A, there really isn’t a model that is clearly better than the others, since each one is developed to suit the institution. Institutions need to consider their size and recovered F&A to develop their own policy and distribution models. We should always consider challenges and opportunities when we develop and evaluate facilities and administrative cost policies. 

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References

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

Research administration listserv survey, accessed March 2016. Survey disclaimer: Please use the information above as a guide, rather than an absolute representation of what occurs at these institutions.

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Georgette Sakumoto, Contracts and Grants Specialist, University of Hawaii, has been elected Vice President/President-Elect of NCURA. Throughout her 25 years of NCURA membership, Georgette has been extremely active in NCURA, and has held the positions of national secretary, regionally-elected, appointed, and nationally-elected member of the national board of directors, Region VI Chair, and Region VI Secretary-Treasurer. She served as the Co-Chair for the 56th Annual Meeting as well as on numerous regional and national conference Program Committees. Georgette received the national Distinguished Service Award in 2009. Currently, Georgette is on the 58th Annual Meeting Program Committee, several national and regional subcommittees and task forces, and is an NCURA Magazine Contributing Editor. Upon her election as NCURA Vice President/President-Elect, Georgette says, "It is such an exciting and challenging honor to be elected by your peers to represent them as NCURA’s Vice President/President-Elect. I look forward to building bridges to connect all of us in this diverse profession we call Research Administration. We will work together to ensure that we continue to update educational content and methods of delivery to keep NCURA the leader in professional development. We will explore ways to expand and engage our national and international partnerships as we promote our specialized profession. I look forward to bringing the aloha spirit to my NCURA family and making a difference for the future of NCURA."

Lisa Mosley, Assistant Vice President, Research Operations, Arizona State University, has been elected to the position of At-Large Board Member. Since joining NCURA in 2003, Lisa has been active at both the regional and national levels of NCURA. Lisa has served as a member of the Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop Faculty and currently serves as a Departmental Research Administration Workshop Faculty team member. Lisa was the Co-Chair of the 15th Financial Research Administration Conference as well as the Co-Chair of the 57th Annual Meeting. Lisa is also the current Chair of the Professional Development Committee. On being elected as At-Large Board Member, Lisa says, "I am truly honored to be selected to serve as an At-Large member on the Board of Directors. I have benefitted so much from this organization, both professionally and personally. I’m excited by the opportunity to serve the membership in a larger capacity."

Toni Shaklee, Assistant Vice President for Research, Oklahoma State University, has been elected to the position of At-Large Board Member. In Toni’s 26 years of NCURA membership, she has made many contributions to NCURA. Toni is currently a Co-Editor of NCURA Magazine, a member of the Peer Review team, a member of NCURA’s Education Scholarship Fund Task Force, and a former Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Traveling Workshop Faculty. She has been on Annual Meeting Program Committees and served as a Co-Chair for NCURA’s PRA conference. Toni was also a member of NCURA’s Professional Development Committee from 2010-2013. Upon being elected, Toni shares, "I am honored to have been elected to one of the At-Large Board of Directors positions. This is such an exciting time for NCURA as an organization and I am beyond delighted to have an opportunity to work with the members of the Board of Directors and the national leadership to continue this wonderful organization’s growth."

Sakumoto will take office January 1, 2017 for one year after which she will succeed to a one-year term as President of NCURA. Both Mosley and Shaklee will begin serving January 1, 2017 for a two-year term.
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Gearing Up for Research Administrator Day

By Mara Rivet and Amanda Snyder

During a strategic planning meeting before the 57th Annual Meeting in August of 2015, NCURA Board members and regional leadership were brainstorming ways to promote research administration as a profession. What if we had our own day of recognition?

Could it be done? How do we make it official? Modern technology to the rescue! Someone quickly looked up instructions for registering a national day. Within moments, NCURA had registered Research Administrator Day, and our day was born!

A few days later at AM57, Kathleen Larmett announced the first annual Research Administrator day: September 25, 2015. Word quickly spread with follow up announcements via email blasts and social media and in institutions across the U.S. and around the world the planning began.

From cards, certificates of appreciation, cakes, buttons, parties, toasts, Tweets, Facebook posts, websites and the support of campus leaders we came together institutionally as well as individually to celebrate and recognize research administrators globally for the work we do in support of the research enterprise.

Preparing for Research Administrator Day here at the University of Washington in the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), we took the opportunity to review and share with our staff the many notable research achievements at our institution and the history of research administration itself. Publications such as the UW’s 150 year research timeline and Pathbreakers provided a springboard to remind us of the important and varied work we have supported, while reviews of current proposals and interviews throughout the office shed light on work currently being undertaken by our researchers across campus.

Possessing a shared understanding of the rich historical significance of research and research administration helped provide a more meaningful backdrop for the individual certificates of appreciation, support and recognition shared within our office, with colleagues, the handwritten cards of appreciation for central office partners as well as announcements and an e-card to our campus departments.

Our leadership’s acknowledgement of research administrators and this new day of recognition with their heartfelt campus-wide appreciation helped provide additional support in furthering a shared research administrator identity campus-wide.

We weren’t the only ones, school, college, and departmental offices took up the challenge as well and celebrated with parties, cakes and individual appreciation of administrators across campus. Globally peer institutions supported, recognized and showed appreciation for their own research administrators. What do you remember from last year’s celebrations?

What’s in store as we gear up for September 25, 2016?

Almost a year later, UW OSP staff members are still displaying their buttons and individual certificates of appreciation with personal notes from their co-workers. Our staff are looking forward to this year’s celebration, whatever it brings. We are excited to continue the recognition for research administrators into another year as our Office of Sponsored Programs and the Office of Research at the University of Washington work together on plans to celebrate those in this important role across our campus.

What will you do to make September 25th a special day on your campus?

Mara Rivet is the Learning, Outreach and Communications Specialist in the Office of Sponsored Programs, University of Washington. She can be reached at trf@uw.edu

Amanda C. Snyder, MPA is an Associate Director in the Office of Sponsored Programs, University of Washington. Amanda’s responsibilities at the UW include the management of pre-award and post-award non-financial activities. She can be reached at acs229@uw.edu
What IF

- An A-133 audit only happened after a problem was identified?
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Making it easier for faculty to find and use extramural funding to develop their ideas is a major goal of the research administration profession, accomplished by lessening administrative burdens on principal investigators. We frequently hear from faculty that they have many good, fundable ideas, but often do not pursue a search for funding to make these ideas a reality because of administrative burdens. Others may be actively practicing sponsored research, but could do more if some of their time were freed up from the administrative functions associated with such activity.

In response to rising administrative burdens, institutions have intensified efforts to provide quality research administration support to all researchers in a way that balances value and efficiency. As of this writing two distinct organizational models exist nationwide: department-based support and service centers. The more traditional department-based support model often relies on staff that are not full-time research administrators. Because of inequitable distribution of resources across all units and varying business practices, cross-unit collaborations can be difficult. Newer, centralized service centers offer more equitable access to resources, but in doing so remove the personal relationship between faculty and research administrator from the equation. We offer a third, middle solution: Locally-positioned clusters of full-time, highly trained research administrators. While still in the conceptual phase, we believe this model provides the “just right” Goldilocks balance of personal relationship and excellent, accessible service required by modern faculty to empower their work.

From department-centric to service center
Research administration support at many institutions spontaneously arose in the 1970s-2000s to relieve the increasing administrative burdens on faculty associated with extramural research. Because this growth was designed to meet individual needs of researchers and was typically funded by a combination of grant and departmental funds, much of the support began and remained at the department level. As administrative burdens continue to rise, and the work of research administration becomes increasingly complex, it has become clear that this department-centric research administration model faces several logistical challenges. These include unequal support to faculty, non-optimal facilitation of internal research collaborations, and limits to opportunities for professional development, promotion, and retention of talented administrators. Additionally, housing research administration services within departments leads to variable expectations, inconsistent training across staff, and often the absence of backstopping in smaller units.

As a part of an overall movement toward greater efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and consistency of service quality in recent years, a growing number of organizations have transitioned or are transitioning to a research administration service center model. Service centers are an expansion of central research administration, taking over in a centralized way pre- and post-award duties that previously resided in the departments. As part of the transition to the service center model, research administrators are most often removed from physical proximity to investigators. We view this as a major drawback, as it moves research administrators from their previous immersion in sponsored projects and the operations of individual investigators. Instead, interactions are more formal and structured, due to the remote nature of work with investigators largely via phone and email instead of in person.

Advantages of locally-positioned research administration
In the era of telecommuting and digital communications, research administration duties can be successfully performed remotely without being located within a department, and with limited face-to-face interaction. Nevertheless, the factor of physical nearness, or propinquity, has
value that should not be overlooked, due to its ability to enhance social relationships (Huang, 2014, Haylor, 2012), and to build “more productive relationships between grant personnel and researchers” (Davis-Hamilton et al., 2015, p. 3).

Face-to-face interactions and daily exposure allow for a deeper understanding between a research administrator and principal investigator…

In our experience, post-award support and compliance are particularly enhanced by the availability of geographically co-located research administration staff. Face-to-face interactions and daily exposure allow for a deeper understanding between a research administrator and principal investigator, as well as the ability to quickly jump into a project due to a long-term knowledge of the work of a given investigator. These personal relationships strengthen the ability of a research administrator to serve as a link between the investigator and all other institutional units and function as “the locus of knowledge for all processes that intersect with the administration of grants and contracts” (Viviani & Browngoetz, 2016, p. 6).

Local but centrally managed model
Given the lack of flexibility inherent in a department-centric model, and the limits of a centrally located shared services model, we suggest an alternate path: a centrally managed but geographically co-located infrastructure that combines the advantages of local research administration with the benefits of the service center. Such a structure would allow for in-person, on-the-ground support to investigators while also maintaining administrative alignment to maximize efficiency in the management of resources. In terms of design, this middle path could be composed of local research administration clusters of 4-5 staff, geographically and/or program based, potentially crossing departmental and school lines to allow for more efficient use of staff resources. We envision that these clusters would be virtually affiliated under the direction of managers (one per two or three clusters), with central oversight exercised via direct central reporting of the managers, with a dotted line to the schools or centers served to ensure local control is maintained.

In this model managers play the central role as the pivot between school and department needs and central administration responsibilities. Managers are envisioned as responsible for monitoring workflow within their overall unit, ensuring adequate coverage, backstopping, and the assessment of performance via quality control metrics. In addition, managers act as a resource for resolving the most complex matters in both pre- and post-award, and interact and partner with faculty, department managers, and senior leadership of supported schools and centers. Finally, they liaise with other research administration managers to ensure successful alignment of competing priorities across schools and programs. We think such a model would ensure an appropriate balance of local control, while also allowing central leadership to exercise oversight, provide guidance and training, and evaluate the effectiveness of the operation and of investigator support. Its flexibility allows for quickly shifting and reallocating the support as needed, and greater flexibility for research administrators themselves to move within an organization. We recommend that such a model be centrally funded, with departments and schools providing salary offset for research administration personnel proportionate to the time devoted to supporting their portfolios.

An essential benefit of this model is its flexibility. The size and shape of clusters can be based on local cultures, fully adaptable to the needs of a given institution and easily scalable as needs change. This proposed design can also be modified to a school-based model with matrix reporting, as long as a strong network of research administrators is created and maintained by means of excellent communication and collaboration.

Conclusion
As the sponsored research landscape grows ever more complex and burdensome, research administrators will play an increasingly crucial role in maximizing faculty time focused on their research, and not on administrative burdens. To best fill this role, we suggest geographically co-located clusters of dedicated, full-time research administration personnel, close enough to work directly with faculty, but balanced in a way that ensures equitable support. This on-the-ground approach provides the face time of departmental-based staff, while the clustered approach gives the efficiencies found in many service center models. Finally, such a model has the flexibility to adapt to each institution’s unique needs and culture.

References


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Pamela Webb, Associate Vice President for Research, University of Minnesota is the 2016 recipient of the NCURA Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award. This award recognizes a current or past NCURA member who has made 1) noteworthy contributions to NCURA, and 2) significant contributions to the profession of Research Administration. First awarded in 1994, this award is NCURA’s highest honor.

Pamela’s contributions to NCURA are many, spanning more than 25 years of NCURA membership. Pamela has volunteered her time and knowledge at both the regional and national levels. She has served on the national Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, on the Board of Directors, on the Peer Review team, and as national Secretary. Pamela was a Traveling Faculty member for both the Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration and Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshops. Pamela also co-authored the most recent version of NCURA’s Regulation and Compliance: A Compendium of Regulations and Certifications Applicable to Sponsored Programs publication. She has presented many sessions and workshops at both national and regional meetings and has served on meeting program committees. Pamela received the Distinguished Service Award in 2009.

Denise Clark, University of Maryland, College Park and Richard Seligman, California Institute of Technology, shared

For more than thirty years, Pamela Webb has been a research administrator who has made long and lasting contributions to NCURA and to the field of research administration. She is the perfect role model for the rest of us—she unselfishly shares her knowledge, expertise, creativity and tools of the trade with the community at large. We often say, “If you want the best policies and procedures in the country, steal from Pamela.”

Cindy Hope of The University of Alabama says

Even as the seemingly endless work continues, Pamela appears to maintain her enthusiasm for ensuring every opportunity for improvement is pursued. Her colleagues can and do rely on her for her leadership and also as a leader in her profession. She is often the first to create and share a new policy, tool or other method of addressing the latest issues.

Pamela’s colleague Brian Herman, University of Minnesota shares that

Over the course of her thirty-year career, Pamela has made significant contributions to the field of research administration. Sharing her knowledge and expertise, she continually strives to advance the field locally and nationally. She has taken a leading role in the implementation of the new UG guidelines, and has worked with colleagues at COGR, FDP and other institutions of higher education to provide guidance to the research community in order to better understand the new UG requirements.

Timothy Reuter of Stanford University adds that

Pamela is well known for her expertise in research administration, outstanding contributions to and membership in COGR, NCURA, FDP and collaborations with federal agencies. She is viewed by many as the foremost authority in electronic research administration and subawards…Pamela epitomizes professionalism. She is the true professional providing comments in a helpful cooperative manner. She can effectively communicate to top federal officials, experienced senior personnel and newcomers to the profession. She is the ultimate ambassador of research administration.

On receiving the award, Pamela states, “There is nothing quite so special as being recognized by those who do the same job you do - who really understand the joys, challenges, frustrations, and satisfaction. I am humbled to have been so blessed by my community, and I will treasure this honor all my life.”

Pamela Webb will receive the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration on Monday, August 8, 2016, at the 58th Annual Meeting Keynote Address.
This year the NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected five veteran NCURA members to receive the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes members who have made sustained and distinctive contributions to the organization.

Each recipient has contributed to NCURA’s success in numerous ways and for many years. The following summaries provide a snapshot of their service and contributions in addition to the many presentations they have made at regional and national meetings and conferences over the years.

THE 2016 AWARD RECIPIENTS ARE:

Glenda Bullock, Director of Research and Business Administration, Washington University in St. Louis. Glenda has been an active NCURA member for 23 years. She has served at the National level on the Board of Directors, as program Chair of the PRA conference, has been on numerous program committees and has made many workshop and concurrent session presentations both nationally and regionally. Glenda currently serves as a faculty member for the Departmental Research Administration Traveling Workshop, and as an NCURA Peer Reviewer. Glenda has also received the Region IV Distinguished Service Award as well as the Region IV Kevin Reed Outstanding New Professional Award. As a recipient of this award, Glenda states, “I am so greatly humbled and honored to have been nominated, much less receive, the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. I consider it a privilege to assist NCURA members through teaching workshops, presenting at meetings, and through phone calls and emails. I had some pretty spectacular NCURA mentors over the past twenty plus years as a member of NCURA. They didn’t have to answer my multitude of questions and teach numerous sessions and workshops but they did it because they wanted me to succeed in this field. They taught me that by helping others you help yourself be a better person, a better colleague, and a better friend. That is what NCURA is about. I hope that twenty years from now the people that have attended sessions I have presented feel the same responsibility to the attendees of the classes they teach.”

Kris Monahan, Director of Sponsored Research and Programs, Providence College. Kris is currently serving as the Chair of Region I, an NCURA Peer Reviewer, an NCURA Magazine Co-Editor, and a Co-Chair of the 58th Annual Meeting Program Committee. In her 10 years of membership, Kris has served on the National Board of Directors, has been on numerous committees and has made many presentations at both national and regional meetings. Kris shares, “The paradox of involvement with NCURA is the more you give, the more you get. NCURA has given me deep professional connections, access to information and knowledge, and inspiration to advance the profession of research administration. I am deeply honored and humbled to be recognized, along with such an accomplished group of colleagues, for the distinguished service award. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be a part of this organization and to be surrounded by NCURA members who are passionate about the role of research administration in the global research enterprise.”

Denise Moody, Senior Director of Research Compliance, Harvard University. Denise has been an involved NCURA member for the last 12 years. Denise has served on several national conference program committees, the National Board of Directors, and held the position of Secretary. Denise is currently serving as a Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Traveling Workshop
Faculty member, a Contributing Editor for the NCURA Magazine, and was in the 2016 class of the Executive Leadership Program. Denise has presented at both national and regional meetings on a variety of topics. Denise will be serving as a Co-Chair for the 2017 PRA conference in San Diego. In reaction to the award, Denise says, “I am so humbled and honored to be a 2016 Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award recipient, and I am thrilled to be sharing this honor with my NCURA friends. Since I entered the field of research administration, NCURA has always offered me the knowledge and resources needed to do my job as well as a plethora of volunteer opportunities to get involved, meet new colleagues, and make long-lasting friendships. It has been a privilege to dedicate my time to an organization in which I truly believe in its mission to ‘serve its members by advancing the field and profession of research administration.’ Many thanks and gratitude to all of my NCURA friends and colleagues who have supported me throughout my research administration career!”

Craig Reynolds, Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. In Craig’s nearly 20 years of NCURA membership, he has served in many roles at both the regional and national levels. Craig has served on both the National and Region IV Board of Directors, and has served on numerous program committees, including serving as Co-Chair for the 52nd Annual Meeting and the 2015 PRA Conference. Craig is currently a Departmental Research Administration Traveling Workshop Faculty member and was a member of the 2016 class of the Executive Leadership Program. Craig has written articles for the NCURA Magazine and presents regularly at national conferences. As a recipient of this award, Craig adds, “What a tremendous honor! To be recognized by NCURA and to be in the same company as the many previous award recipients who I have admired for years is truly humbling and gratifying experience. Thank you!”

Samantha Westcott, Sponsored Research Manager, Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy, California Institute of Technology. In over 20 years of her NCURA membership, Sam has been involved both regionally and nationally. Sam recently served as the Chair of Region VI, as a mentor for Region VI’s LeadME Program, and on several regional committees. At the national level, Sam has served on the Board of Directors and has served on national conference program committees. She has also led numerous session and workshop presentations at both regional and national meetings. Sam is currently a Departmental Research Administration Traveling Faculty member and on the Presidential Task Forces for Educational Programming and Credentialing. In response to receiving this award, Sam shares, “Working in Research Administration is a privilege which I cherish. NCURA has enriched my life professionally and personally beyond any measure and this recognition fills me with deep gratitude. Thank you to everyone who has mentored and supported and befriended and tolerated and worked with me. It is such an honor to be part of this amazing profession.”

The Distinguished Service Award recipients will be recognized at the upcoming 58th Annual Meeting before the keynote address on Monday, August 8, 2016. Please join us in thanking them for their service and their contributions!

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The Joseph F. Carrabino Award, established in 2003 by the NCURA Board of Directors, is named after the late Joe Carrabino, NSF Grants Officer. This award recognizes a current or former Federal partner who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either by a single project, activity, or innovation, or by a lifetime of service. The NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected Dr. Patricia Watts as the recipient of the 2016 Joseph F. Carrabino Award.

Dr. Patricia Watts is the National Program Director, Air Transportation Centers of Excellence at the Federal Aviation Administration. She is responsible for the development, execution, research administration, and management of various result-oriented newlydesigned partnerships and programs to conduct research, and enhance organizational effectiveness and performance.

Dr. Tristan Fiedler from Florida Institute of Technology shares Dr. Watts’s contributions to university administration touches nearly if not all major universities in the country and several outside the U.S. She meets all the Joseph F. Carrabino Award criteria—making significant contributions to research administration through a single project, activity, innovation, and a lifetime of service… something few achieve. Dr. Watts doesn’t seek personal recognition; she is humble never exalting, charismatic and wholeheartedly committed to university research and student education.

James Vanderploeg from University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston states that Dr. Watts’ upbeat personality and personal demeanor exude professionalism while retaining personal friendliness—a difficult mix in the business world. Dr. Watts’ research administration acumen is a rare talent…Dr. Watts is the personification of the requirements that the Joseph F. Carrabino award was established to honor. Through her collaborative efforts in research administration Dr. Watts has made research, critical to the FAA and the flying public, a reality.

Jennifer Leith, MIT Department of Aeronautics & Astronautics contributed that research administration—and thereby to the research itself—fostering mutually beneficial government-university relationships while administering thousands of awards, facilitating a myriad of technical meetings, workshops, symposia, and awards programs to advance the research missions of her Centers and the education of young scientists…Leading by example, Pat has become a valued mentor and friend to me and to university grant administrators across the country.

Michael Corcoran, Massachusetts Institute of Technology added that in twenty years at MIT I can say that Pat Watts is absolutely the most astute Federal Agency Representative that I have ever dealt with. Her willingness to negotiate the issues and find “win-win” solutions for both the FAA and MIT has been very important and beneficial to the outstanding relationship MIT now has with the FAA. Pat’s tireless efforts, and ability to develop a model that meets the needs of the FAA, Universities, and Industry, has resulted in the FAA Centers of Excellence Program becoming a model of how the Federal Government can provide the means necessary to develop the research necessary to meet the ever changing demands of air transportation, even more importantly, providing the opportunity to educate students, who will be our future leaders and researchers in this area.

In her own words, Pat says, “As a public servant, I am honored to be recognized by NCURA with the esteemed Joseph F. Carrabino Award, and extremely proud to be in the company of so many devoted professionals. I am privileged to have the opportunity to call what I love doing work, and to engage with you in a field where we are truly able to make a difference.

I am forever grateful to my dear colleagues who supported my nomination, you have been a joy to serve over the years. I sincerely thank NCURA for this distinction, and commend the members for fostering important government-university partnerships through this extraordinary award.”

As recipient of the 2016 Joseph F. Carrabino Award, Pat will be recognized at the 58th Annual Meeting before the keynote address on Monday, August 8, 2016.
Is DISCLOSURE of FCOI Effective and Is It Enough? By Amy Spicer

An ongoing debate in the area of management of financial conflicts of interest (FCOI) in academic medicine concerns whether disclosure of financial interests is useful and effective. Those of us responsible for reviewing and managing FCOIs have asked ourselves, “Do potential research participants have the educational background or context to effectively evaluate the disclosure? Can they use that information as part of their decision making process about whether or not to participate in the research? And, if so, would disclosure of a financial interest influence their decision to participate in the research? If disclosure is not effective or valuable, what are the alternatives, if any?”

In order to promote and preserve trust in academic medicine, transparency is the ultimate goal of all FCOI mitigation strategies. Disclosure to interested parties is the most basic way of achieving that goal. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) states that “…disclosure is commonly required as a necessary but frequently insufficient method of management. This includes disclosure to research colleagues, research staff, human subjects participating in the research project, reviewers of the research, funders of the research, and in connection with professional and scientific presentations” (AAMC June 2010). These disclosures are a virtually universal tenet of FCOI management plans. Some of the reasons for disclosure of financial interests include the following:

- establishing or maintaining trust as stated above,
- allowing potential research subjects the opportunity to make informed decisions,
- respecting the right of potential subjects to know about these financial interests,
- minimizing legal and reputational risks to the investigator and the institution,
- mitigating potential bias, or the perception of bias, in the research data,
- and, most importantly, protecting our research subjects from potential harm.

It is important to note that disclosure is only one management strategy. Based on the nature of the FCOI and its relation to the risks of the study and vulnerability of those involved, additional strategies can include prohibition on participation in the informed consent process by the conflicted investigator and in the analysis or interpretation of data, among others.

Some scholars believe that disclosure may be ineffective or not valuable because of the relationships that patients have with their physicians. For example, some patients may think it is better for their physicians to have relationships with industry or be the inventors of devices and drugs because these relationships will give physicians additional knowledge or expertise. Others believe that disclosure is an ineffective way of helping patients make informed decisions without context or background about the implications of the financial interests disclosed when considered against the qualifications of the physician/investigator and the additional safeguards that may be in place.

When my office at the University of Michigan Medical School requires an investigator to disclose a financial interest in an informed consent document, we provide sample language such as “In the interest of transparency, we would like you to know that Dr. Discloser serves as a paid consultant for BigPharma Company. He is not likely to benefit financially from the results of this study.” Or, “Dr. Discloser and the University of Michigan have an interest in one of the devices used in this study. In the future, they might receive a part of the profits from any sales of this device.” While we believe it is important to include these types of disclosures in our informed consent documents, without a broader context, patients do not have the opportunity to evaluate the meaning of the information in relation to the physician’s overall professional activities. Patients also likely do not have enough information to understand how a financial interest could jeopardize the outcome of a research study.

The evidence about the effectiveness of FCOI disclosures is minimal as there have been few studies conducted to date. One qualitative study of individuals actively participating in biomedical research used face-to-face interviews to attempt to determine participants’ views about financial interests of investigators. The study results were mixed. The majority of those interviewed would like to receive information about investigator financial interests; however, few thought such financial information would influence their decisions about research participation. These participants stated that the financial disclosures did not matter to them, or the disclosures were actually a burden and increased their anxiety. The authors state “In contrast to the widely accepted view that such information can help people to assess risks and make decisions, these research participants said it would have no effect on their research participation decisions” (Grady 2006). These participants seemed overwhelmed by trying to learn about their condition and possible treatments, and they believed additional information about financial interests of the researchers was too much to absorb and evaluate.

Of those participants expressing interest in the disclosures, most wanted to know that a relationship existed and that there were safeguards in place to monitor and protect the research. A few said that knowing about the financial interest would make them more likely to participate and believed that their doctor was “really on board with this”. Because the study population...
was culled from those facing serious illness with limited options, a decision about whether to participate in a particular study was based more on their health concerns than with concern about investigator financial interests.

This study concluded that “In the interests of transparency and openness and maintaining public and research participant trust, disclosure of investigator financial relationships to institutions and IRBs, and also to research participants may be extremely important. However, the value of disclosure to research participants is limited” (Grady 2006).

The results of this study seem to suggest that academic medical centers should provide potential research subjects with information about the benefits and value of relationships with industry, along with the disclosure of those financial interests. Further, the results may point to the fact that financial disclosures without a complete picture of the physician’s education, expertise, and commitments may do more harm than good, by creating the perception that all of these relationships are problematic or sources of inappropriate influence.

Today’s reality is that disclosure of investigator FCOIs is the standard practice of academic medical institutions, even though current disclosure practices may be flawed by a lack of context. The prevailing practice seems to be a “caveat emptor” approach, in that by giving people this information we are making them responsible for their own decisions. The extra effort involved in providing context and background to educate potential research subjects about the FCOI disclosure may not be feasible in today’s constrained resource environment. Requiring disclosure may make us feel more ethical, but there isn’t enough evidence to determine whether that is true. As one author stated, “Our data suggest that allowing potential research participants to weigh the risks of financial interests might not be as realistic a goal as the more general goal of honoring a patient’s right to know and avoiding harms to trust if they learn of undisclosed incentives at a later time” (Weinfurt, et al, 2005).

Members should be on the lookout in the NCIURA Magazine December 2016 issue, where the author will continue her FCOI discussion by focusing on recent case studies of non-compliance with OOI management plans and providing further analysis of why compliance is important.

References

Amy L. Spicer, BGS is a Senior Regulatory Specialist at the University of Michigan Medical School. Her responsibilities include reviewing investigator outside interest disclosures and developing plans for managing financial conflicts of interest related to research projects. She can be reached at aspicer@med.umich.edu

Research Advisory Groups
An advisory board is a body that provides non-binding strategic advice to the management of a corporation, organization or institution. The informal nature of an advisory board provides flexibility in structure and broad feedback for institutional decision makers. In academic institutions, developing a research advisory board is often a very important tool to:

- gather information to inform a strategic research vision
- identify research partnerships and research development opportunities
- engage a diverse group of stakeholders in the research vision and/or operations

Division chiefs in academic medical centers, Chief Academic Officers, Vice Chancellors for Research, Department Heads, and Directors of Sponsored Program Operations can all benefit from hearing multiple perspectives on organizational and operational strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Thinking about exploring a practice like this at your institution?

- Put thought into the make-up of the advisory group to ensure broad representation
- Give the group a “charge.” Make sure they understand their purpose (and limitations)
- Ensure the group has an agenda, keeps minutes, and provides written recommendations to leaders.
- Schedule meetings on a regular basis. (i.e. quarterly or biannually)
“Manufacturing” Effective Research Administration

By Joe Gesa

During the National Academies’ forum, Making Things: 21st Century Manufacturing and Design, Lawrence Burns, former vice president for research and development and strategic planning for General Motors Corporation, defined manufacturing as a process that converts resources into desirable customer experiences. It is through these experiences, said Burns, that customers realize value in a product. In many ways, this view is not unlike the practice of research administration as we seek to provide positive experiences for the constituencies we serve.

In his time at GM, Burns also learned that manufacturing needs to transcend mere effective operations and incorporate a strategy that provides a sustainable advantage. This too parallels research administration as we seek to provide the efficiencies necessary for our faculty to pursue their ideas. Doing so drives innovation which, to Burns, “is the only truly sustainable advantage...” So, by explicitly designing and delivering positive experiences in research administration, can we expand this concept of manufacturing from iPods to R01s?

During the forum, Craig Barrett, former chairman and CEO of Intel Corporation, outlined three criteria necessary for creating sustained advantage. First, the production process must be associated with activities that add value. With support for sponsored projects coming with an ever-increasing number of obligations, administrative practices add value through ensured compliance with the rules governing the use of funds for which we are the stewards. Compliance within the context of research administration means that we must, across our entire enterprise, perform the activities proposed to the sponsor and meet all of the obligations agreed upon when accepting funds.

The Council on Governmental Relations’ (COGR) publication, Managing Externally Funded Programs: A Guide to Effective Management Practices, identifies the principles and practices necessary to assess the design of research support enterprises. Principle I of the guide, entitled, “Institutional Program for Effective Compliance Practices,” establishes an overarching set of practices aimed at ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and institutional policies. Because compliance is not the responsibility of any one person, the guide outlines the organizational need to document policies, practices, and controls. It highlights the need for clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, and dictates a need for educational programs that describe those roles and responsibilities for anyone who comes in contact with sponsored projects.

While this constant drive for compliance provides outstanding experiences for our sponsors and institutions, it causes a great deal of dissatisfaction in our faculty. Therefore, research administrators must balance this need for compliance with superior problem-solving and customer service skills. Employing people capable of this satisfies the second critical criterion for value-added production. That is the idea that people must bring value to processes.

Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO, an award winning global design firm, describes such people as being “T-shaped.” The two main characteristics of T-shaped people are represented by the strokes comprising the “T”. The vertical stroke measures the depth of technical skill a person brings to any given area of expertise. Fortunately, for the current wave of research administrators, more professional development resources are available to them than have been at any other time in the profession’s history for developing this depth. What is more difficult to acquire is the horizontal stroke. This stroke represents the breadth of knowledge an individual possesses. It is indicative of one’s ability to work across disciplines and around barriers to collaborate in ways that produce creative solutions to problems. This too is comprised of two components. The first is empathy and the second, enthusiasm. While both are important, the ability to feel empathetic allows us to view those with whom we work as more than just bio-sketches and budget narratives. Empathy allows us to see the world from another’s perspective and to understand that human behaviors can be viewed as strategies utilized to deal with new, confusing, complex, and occasionally contradictory processes.

The institution of the Uniform Guidance presents research administrators with the opportunity to act on our empathy by minimizing the impact...
of our procedures on our faculty. The Uniform Guidance document has shifted oversight of sponsored projects to a “reasonable assurance” standard of internal control. It states that institutions must maintain effective internal controls over federal awards to the extent that they, “… provide reasonable assurance that the entity is managing the award in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the federal award.” In what ways could we use this latitude to examine procedures? Can we still provide this assurance while lessening burdens on faculty? One specific area of interest is time and effort reporting. While the general principles of time and effort still apply, we now have the ability to implement independent practices, the flexibility to determine the timing of such efforts, and a say in who certifies effort reports. This is just one example of how this new flexibility could be used to reexamine processes and add value to them.

The final component of effective manufacturing/research administration is the existence of a favorable regulatory environment. The processes of administrative law allow the Office of Management and Budget to set the basic structures of award management; individual agencies to adapt that structure to fit their own needs; and programs within those agencies to produce yet another layer of regulation. With this increasing regulatory complexity, research administrators must maintain a high degree of knowledge regarding current issues affecting our profession. We must use this knowledge to engage with federal agency-decision makers and advocate for less burdensome rule-making. To do so, we must become active in professional organizations such as NCURA and seek out programs such as the Federal Demonstration Partnership and COGR. These entities offer a critical link to the legislative process by providing forums in which to collaborate with federal agencies, discuss mutual interests and disparate roles, identify problems, test new processes, and develop solutions that impact our day-to-day work.

For much of the 20th century, the United States derived its economic power and quality of life from its ability to innovate and initiate manufacturing across a wide variety of industries. The nation embodied the 1989 assertion of an MIT study that concluded, “To live well, a nation must produce well.” It is much the same for maintaining a vibrant and healthy research enterprise. To teach well, we must research well. To research well, those of us who bear the administrative burden of that research must add value to processes through best practices, professional development, and advocacy for our profession.

References

Joe Gesa, is an Electronic Research Administrator at American University in Washington, DC. He has been in his current position for five years and in December of 2015 earned his Master of Management Science with specialization in Research Administration from Emmanuel College. He can be reached at gesa@american.edu

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Under United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Cooperative Agreements

By Debra Brodlie

As the Associate Director in Johns Hopkins University Research Administration ("JHURA"), I manage the Subawards team and oversee the drafting and negotiating of over 1,200 outgoing Subawards each year. Although the bulk of the Subawards are written under NIH, NSF, DOD and foundation grants or contracts ("More Traditional Sponsors," or "MTS"), approximately 35% of the Subawards are written under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) cooperative agreements. USAID is the United States Government agency that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid. This significant volume is largely because our office handles all contracting work for the JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH). There are several departments in BSPH which focus primarily on international work and therefore collaborate with international universities and nonprofits. As I learned, early in my career, a Subaward written under a USAID Cooperative Agreement, looks very different than subawards and nonprofits. As I learned, early in my career, a Subaward written under a USAID Cooperative Agreement, looks very different than subawards and nonprofits.

President John F. Kennedy created USAID from its predecessor agencies in 1961 by Executive Order. USAID’s programs are authorized by the Congress in the Foreign Assistance Act, which the Congress supplements through directions in annual funding appropriation acts and other legislation. Although it is technically an independent agency, USAID operates subject to the foreign policy guidance of the President, Secretary of State, and the National Security Council.

USAID seeks to: promote gender equality and female empowerment; apply science, technology, and innovation strategically; apply selectivity and focus; measure and evaluate impact; build in sustainability from the start; apply integrated approaches to development; and leverage “solution holders” and partner strategically.

USAID goals are: (1) strengthening America’s economic reach and positive economic impact; (2) strengthening America’s foreign policy impact on its strategic challenges (3) promoting the transition to a low-emission, climate-resilient world while expanding global access to sustainable energy; (4) protecting core U.S. interests by advancing democracy and human rights and strengthening civil society; and (5) modernizing U.S. diplomacy and development efforts.

USAID operates mainly in the following countries: Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, West Bank and Gaza, Ghana, Bangladesh, Colombia, Indonesia, Liberia, Yemen, Mozambique and India and Eastern Europe.

USAID delivers both technical and financial assistance to recipients. Technical assistance is for the implementation of programs that contribute to the public good and further the objectives of the Foreign Assistance Act. This article will focus on these awards.

Unlike traditional research agreements, the deliverables and outcomes under technical assistance are for concrete services, such as: writing a script for AIDS prevention that might air on local radio stations or be performed as a theatre production in schools, distribution of literature and documenting its impact, distributing mosquito preventive netting to local populations. Subaward sites are normally not asked to investigate the deliverables, which is why these types of subawards are frequently written as fixed price awards.

Funds for technical assistance from USAID may take the form of grants, contracts, or most often, Cooperative Agreements. A Cooperative Agreement is a type of grant which supports the recipient’s own program but USAID remains substantially involved in the direction and implementation of the program. In FY2013, cooperative agreements represented 46% of all grant assistance disbursed by USAID.

In this context substantial involvement means the right of USAID to retain and maintain some control over an assistance project funded through a Cooperative Agreement. In these cases the recipient is considered a partner to USAID, and less like a contractor. This right usually includes the ability to approve work plans, budgets, Key Personnel, monitoring and evaluation plans, and subrecipients. The Agreement will specify the areas where USAID will expect to be substantially involved. As a recipient writing subawards, we often have to clarify with USAID what substantial involvement will mean for a given project.

In most cases, USAID must approve any proposed sub-awards. This can take place at the time an organization responds to a solicitation and is selected for an award, or later on an as-needed basis after a prime award is in place. USAID does not have a direct relationship with the subawardee, so the prime recipient is always responsible and accountable for the performance of the subrecipient.

A full 90% of the Subawards JHURA writes under USAID Cooperative Agreements are to foreign entities, and therefore constitute higher risk. We cannot use the traditional Federal
Demonstration Partnership (FDP) forms for these agreements because USAID operates under a different regulatory scheme than Health and Human Services (HHS).

Subawards under USAID are governed by 2 CFR 200, Uniform Guidance (“UG”), 2 CFR 700, USAID implementing provisions and the applicable USAID Standard Provisions. The Standard Provisions are a variety of laws, regulations, and requirements that apply to entities receiving United States Government funding. Which standard provisions apply depend on whether the subaward is domestic or foreign and if the sub is fixed price.

In the standard provisions document, some terms are MANDATORY (“mandatory standard provisions”); others are only included if they are relevant to the specific program (“required as applicable standard provisions”).

Specific things to note with USAID subawards: 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 do not apply to foreign partners; those subawards are governed strictly by the Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-US institutions; domestic subawards are governed by the Uniform Guidance as well as the Mandatory Standard Provisions for US Non-Governmental Organizations; A fixed price Subaward to a foreign entity needs prior approval from the Agreement Officer and the dollar ceiling is $500,000 per year for a max of 3 years, for a total of $1.5 million; fixed price subawards to domestic organizations also need the Agreement Officer’s approval and can only be for a total of $150,000 for a maximum of three years.

As indicated in this article, writing subawards under a USAID Cooperative Agreement requires knowledge of the regulatory framework and a strict and careful reading of the cooperative agreement itself. Usual terms in a subaward, such as intellectual property, publications and prior approvals are often replaced by USAID required terms on those topics.

How many JHU USAID templates do we have? A LOT! It is important to remember that the goals of USAID programs are worth the extra time and effort required to prepare accurate subawards.

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Research Administration in Asia Pacific

Taking an Analytical Approach to the Debates in Research Management:

On the Need to Build the Science of Research Management

By David Junsong Huang

Debates in research management

The field of research management is filled with debates. While some enjoy the debating process, others prefer a more pragmatic approach. The latter holds the view that any research management approach is possible, and that the challenge is simply making an approach work in practice. Hence, many people think that debates are just a waste of time.

Are debates really a waste of time? I don’t believe so. Experienced research administrators will not be surprised to note that universities often oscillate back and forth between different research management models. I came across a university which adopted a decentralized model at the start of its research management journey. It recognized research as a bottom-up initiative, driven by individual researchers’ research interests. However, three years ago, this university switched to a centralized model, due to a need for greater synergy and efficiency in research administration. The university argued that if computer service could be provided centrally, there is no reason research administration could not. Furthermore, the centralized approach enabled research administrators to develop specialized skills in research management functions. Nevertheless, even as this university advances towards an institutionally driven research agenda, recently, it is contemplating returning to its original decentralized research management model. This is due to the need to stimulate researchers’ agency and autonomy. Such oscillations might create instability at staff and organizational levels, undermining universities’ research performance. A lesson I learned from this example is that for management to make sound decisions and to minimize destructive oscillations in practice, they need to develop solid understanding of the affordances and limitations of each research management option. Debate is an important approach to develop such understanding.

However, not all debates are helpful. This article does not seek to substantiate any specific debates in research management. They have already been well addressed by other articles in this issue. Instead, I hope to share an approach in dealing with the debates and to argue for the need to build the science of research management through the debates.
An analogy to the debates
Let me start off with an analogy that can inform research management. One day, as I was driving into a car park to visit my in-laws, I asked my eight-year-old son an open-ended question to stimulate his thinking: If I park my car at the car park frequently, will it be more beneficial for me to buy season parking or to continue to pay for hourly parking? Through my scaffolding, my son gathered information in five areas before deriving at a conclusion. These areas are the cost of season parking, the cost of hourly parking, the number of hours we park at the car park per month, the cost of switching between hourly parking and season parking, and my personal habit. He then constructed analytical models to compare the costs and benefits of each parking method. He also evaluated the transition cost between the two payment methods, for example, the administrative fee charged for changing from hourly parking to season parking. Eventually, he derived that there is no one clear better parking method, “it depends”. Both methods are debatable until we collect sufficient evidence and deal with it analytically.

Research management often involves competing goals such as research performance and administrative efficiency.

If the choice of parking methods is analogous to the debates in research management, it suggests that we can take an analytical approach towards research management debates, too. At least this approach would enable us to appreciate the reasons behind why different universities deal with seemingly similar research administration issues in entirely different ways.

An analytical approach to the debates
Firstly, to take an analytical approach to the debates, we need to have the end in mind. It is impossible to compare apples to oranges unless we are clear about the desired outcome and the mechanisms in which the debatable options lead to the desired outcome. This includes, for example, the debate on centralization versus decentralization of research management. The differences in desired outcome across universities would determine the differences in research management models each university adopts.

Of course, research management is a lot more complex compared to the choice of parking methods given in the analogy. Research management often involves competing goals such as research performance and administrative efficiency. Also, there is a lack of adequate knowledge on how the mechanisms of debatable options in research management

It is a challenge to know whether the research administration profession has more acronyms than subawards have moving parts - we'll call it a tie.

With the additional Uniform Guidance requirements being added to the subaward realm, it has become even more important to understand and be able to navigate subaward waters efficiently and effectively. This webcast will take the participants through a fictional life story of a financial assistance federally funded subaward - from conception to closeout.

The story will demonstrate the component requirements and responsibilities that most commonly arise and must be dealt with by the agency, the pass-through entity and the subrecipient on both the technical and research administrator side. Not sure what the risk assessment rules are? When you need an audit review? When the de minimis F&A rate is supposed to apply? How to decide if you should go (or can go) fixed-price or cost-reimbursement? How to tell when progress isn’t satisfactory? What is happening nationally that may offer future relief? This webcast - targeted to those actively involved in issuing or managing subawards subject to the Uniform Guidance - will answer these questions and more.

The Subaward Players:
Denise Clark, Associate Vice President for Research, University of Maryland, College Park
Ann Holmes, Assistant Dean, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Maryland, College Park
Richard P. Seligman, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, California Institute of Technology
Pamela A. Webb, Associate Vice President for Research, University of Minnesota
management leads to competing goals. The next section of this article responds to these challenges, highlighting the need to build more scientific knowledge about research management.

Secondly, an analytical approach requires us to attend to a university’s path dependency in research management. Just as there is a switching cost from hourly parking to season parking, there are also costs involved in switching from one research management model to another for each university. If the transaction cost is high, the incentive to switch is lesser, and the university would most likely continue with its existing research management model. This phenomenon is known as path dependency, which may in part explain why universities operate on different models, even though they have similar goals in mind. Hence, taking a developmental approach to analyzing the debate in research management is necessary.

To add on, not all costs and benefits need to be quantified for comparison. For example, path dependency in research management might be due to contextual and cultural considerations, too. In Asian countries that have a strong centralized government, a centralized research management model is more widespread and preferred than a decentralized model. Such a centralized research management model is more aligned with the sociocultural context that a university operates in, making it more prevailing in Asian countries.

The need for building the science of research management
As noted in the earlier part of this article, taking an analytical approach to research management requires us to deal with at least two key challenges. Firstly, a university may have competing goals to achieve. Secondly, we may not have sufficient understanding of the mechanisms in which the debatable options in research management lead to the competing goals. As such, we often take an intuitive approach in choosing one model over another, and subsequently feeling that the other approach which we have not taken might be better.

I propose these challenges be dealt with through building the science of research management. Let’s take the debate of centralization versus decentralization as an example for illustration. The goal of research management may involve research productivity and administrative efficiency. The two objectives may be optimized with a cost/benefit analysis. Research productivity may further involve productivities in publication and social impact, which are different dimensions that may not always be in alignment or dichotomy. Management research on fuzzy multiple criteria decision-making could be relevant in helping us deal with multiple goals in research management.

The need for understanding the mechanisms in which each research management model leads to the desired outcome also supports the argument of building the science of research management. This special issue seeks to compare advantages and disadvantages of the debatable options in research management. While the pros and cons may be synthesized from our experience, I argue that such understanding may also arise from the scientific knowledge related to research management. For example, in a paper published in the Journal of Research Administration in 2014, I demonstrated a case that social network theories and analytical tools can be used to help us understand and facilitate research collaboration and productivity.

It is worth noting that building the science of research management does not preclude creativity in research management. Very often debatable options in research management, such as the centralization-versus-decentralization debate and the research-quality-versus-social-impact debate, are not necessarily in dichotomy. Instead of taking a binary approach to choosing one over another, we often need to calibrate at an optimal balance. The task of calibration often requires creating new ways of managing research, informed by the science of research management. For example, innovation management theories may inform us how to facilitate research activities that are both innovative in the scientific field and impactful to practice. Hence, like any other management fields, research management is both science and art.

Significance and the journey ahead
The debate in research management is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it grows the field of research management. Debates arise because research administrators are reflective and critical, and universities are progressing. This brings to light strategic choices for discourse. As a result, the field of research management progresses. On the other hand, debates can be detrimental. People often do what they believe in, and a lack of consensus in debates may lead to confusion and division among people, potentially undermining the performance of research administration.

This article advocates an analytical approach to the debates in research management, arguing for a need to build deeper scientific understanding of the phenomena of research management. Dealing with the debates through this approach would foster more consensus building rather than dividing, hence making a constructive contribution to the debates in research management.

My conviction is for the profession of research management to go beyond just doing research management and to build a scientific understanding about research management. While the future is promising, the journey can be tough. It requires inspiration, commitment, capacity building, leadership, and more from the field. This tough journey we take in building the science of research management contributes to the uplifting of the research management profession.

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Collaborative Impact of Research & Advancement

A 3 Million Dollar Idea

By Emily Devereux and Jessica Blackburn

As university campuses push to obtain more external funding, both restricted and unrestricted funds, the question arises how an Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) and Advancement offices should be aligned at the Predominantly Undergraduate Institution (PUI). Should ORSP and Advancement be wholly separate versus partially integrated? Should a research administrator report to a Vice Chancellor of Advancement or a foundation relations administrator report to a Chief Research Officer, and how should faculty interests versus institutional interests be prioritized while strategizing external funding sources? And, should research administrators even be in the business of helping to secure foundation and philanthropic gifts?

Similar to many PUIs, the responsibility of the Arkansas State University’s Research Development office (A-State,) encompasses multiple functions of research administration that are handled by separate divisions at research intensive institutions. The research administrator at the PUI has to be a “jack of all trades,” thus the PUI has to devote significant emphasis on workflow structure and balancing of priorities with available resources. Resource creativity becomes an essential skill in accomplishing identification of funding opportunities, keeping abreast of the Uniform Guidance and agency specific guidelines, providing hands-on guidance and oversight of the proposal development process and submission, assuring institutional and research compliance, facilitating contract negotiations and award acceptance, developing and presenting campus trainings and workshops, and cultivating communication between agencies and faculty. With the emphasis on growing competitive research funding and ensuring adherence to federal assurances and guidelines, not much time is left to spend in cultivating advancement relationships with their foundation funding proposal submissions.

Over the past two years, through creative collaboration, which saw Research Development and Advancement becoming partially integrated by team efforts, A-State has achieved impact in both competitive research and foundation funding. This collaborative impact has led to serving both faculty interests and institutional interests in securing external funding, along with achieving improvement in office productivity, specialization and fiscal efficacy.

Cultivating Change. Previously, all funding proposals were facilitated by Research Development, whether they were submitted in response to funding agencies, contracts or foundations. This started to change two years ago when Advancement developed a new position to cultivate foundation relations for the University. In the position’s creation stage the team discussed housing this person in Research Development to facilitate focus on strategic submission and growth of foundation proposals, yet the new hire would officially be an employee of Advancement. After much discussion, it was decided it would be beneficial to house the foundation relations position in Advancement’s Development office, but the individual would serve as a bridge in coordinating funding and communication efforts between the two offices. This led to the collaboration which became essential for the development, coordination, and management of potential external funding opportunities for researchers on campus. The collaboration has been a catalyst for effectively applying resources for funding submissions and managing restricted versus unrestricted funding.

An advantage provided to A-State by placing a focused foundation relations position in the Advancement’s Development office versus the Research Development office includes benefit of specialization for both offices. The workload of the Research Development office at a PUI is at times overwhelming given the amount of proposals and due diligence required in submission for restrictive funding, compliance and the negotiations at receipt of awards. With a focused research administration focus, the Research Development office can better provide the opportunity for research administrators to stay abreast of sponsor regulations and federal guidelines, and to make time available for strategizing and meeting agency missions for competitive restrictive funds. Additionally, a concentrated foundation focus in Advancement gives more opportunity to cultivate relationships with foundations, their boards, to match opportunities with foundations’ missions and to apply for more asks based on institutional interests. Budgetary resources are also maximized by the position being located under Advancement, as most PUI ORSP offices do not have the capability of dedicating a research administrator position solely to foundation submissions.
Collaborative Organization and Impact. At A-State, we have worked to successfully align resources in Research Development and Advancement to achieve optimal impact in securing both restricted and unrestricted funding. Research Development focuses on the federal and state agency funding, along with association and foundation funding that is considered restricted and audituble. Advancement focuses on submissions to foundations and associations that present funding as a gift or philanthropic support. Funding agency relations and research sponsor opportunities, along with cross-institutional collaborations are facilitated by Research Development, while foundation board relations, service on local and state philanthropic boards and research foundation opportunities are facilitated by Advancement. Although the funding mechanisms are defined by what type of funding is made and which office is responsible for submissions and receipt, both offices communicate when proposals are in preparation for submission. Strategic communication and efforts between offices is vital, as Advancement monitors applications to foundations and industry of which are already tapped by the institution for fundraising efforts.

The coined phrase “sharing of knowledge is power” is an underlying principle of the collaborative efforts between the two offices in assisting faculty from the idea stage to the submission phase of the grant process. White papers or one-pagers are shared between the offices, and both offices attend brainstorming and creative sessions. Faculty funding workshops and sessions are co-presented as a team to emphasize cohesiveness. The associate director of foundation relations meets weekly with the director of research development to coordinate opportunities and to secure communicative efforts, allowing both offices to be on the lookout for potential funding mechanisms to match research and programming objectives.

This collaborative impact has led to serving both faculty interests and institutional interests in securing external funding, along with achieving improvement in office productivity, specialization and fiscal efficacy.

Again, fiscal efficacy is demonstrated in joining forces and databases to search, identify and submit. Searching for funding opportunities is very time consuming and PUIs are limited both by office size and budgetary resources. With both offices concentrating their searches based on funding type, a divide and conquer mechanism is achieved both in employee time resources and by two different budgets to support funding database subscriptions.

Cultivating Relationships. The cultivation of sponsor relationships is parallel between the offices and in both instances is often time intensive. For research administration, it is cultivating the relationship between the faculty and the program officers of the various agencies, along with forming a working relationship between the ORSP and the policy or grants management offices of the sponsoring agencies. Research proposals have a higher chance of meeting agency missions and aligning with agency priorities than those that are not. With both offices concentrating their searches based on funding type, a divide and conquer mechanism is achieved both in employee time resources and by two different budgets to support funding database subscriptions.

Quantitative Impact. As PUIs do not all have the same organizational structure, this collaborative effort may or may not be an option at other institutions. Yet, at A-State, we have seen impactful quantitative measurements in secured funding over the past two years. This collaborative effort garnered a quantifiable impact. Research Development has seen an increase of more than $2 million in federally awarded research funding during the first fiscal year of this effort, and Advancement more than doubled the secured foundation awards at right over $1 million. As this effort is further developed, we look forward to reporting additional growth and initiatives aimed at this creative collaboration within the PUI.

Research or Advancement? As often experienced in research administration at PUIs, A-State has to make many situational based decisions, but we look to be as consistent as possible. The determination if foundation funding will be treated as restricted versus unrestricted funding depends on how the majority of questions are answered. If the following applies to the source of funds, then it is most likely handled through Research Development:

- Is funding based on required deliverables?
- Will it require financial reporting?
- What type of final reporting is required?
- Is it subject to Uniform Guidance regulations?

Advancement provides oversight of the following applicable questions:

- Is it considered a donation to the project?
- Is it required to be submitted through a 501(c)3 status?

As always, exceptions do arise. It is many times a joint submission between the offices when the proposal is required to be submitted through 501(c)3 status, but it requires restricted financial management or if there are any restrictions to the project or finances after the receipt of funds.

Reporting efforts reflect restricted awards submitted and awarded through Research Development, and reflect unrestricted awards submitted and awarded through Advancement. As the collaboration has evolved, a separate reporting mechanism is now needed to accurately measure the foundation funds submitted and secured requiring both offices for cultivation of the proposal and post award management.

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Research Administration is a Profession, Not Merely a Collection of Tasks

Over the last ten years research administration has evolved significantly and garnered enough respect to warrant its own major degree program at institutions of higher education nationally. As indicated by the number of students pursuing this field of study, it is clear that research administration has evolved from a collection of clerical tasks into a true profession. What has not changed is the focus on the service component with job descriptions containing references to “service oriented”, “customer focused”, “client-driven” all along with expectations of financial management expertise, strategic planning proficiency, knowledge of regulatory requirements and an ability to navigate the complexities of the research administration field.

Who is the “Customer”?
The principal investigator, the institution, the sponsor, and the auditors could all be considered “customers” because each is a recipient of some sort of service. Yet, if you please one “customer”, you run the risk of displeasing the rest. The “customer service” term implies a transactional relationship whereas a professional partnership refers to a joint effort of multiple individuals or groups with an established relationship of trust and respect. Rather than a transactional relationship, the ideal analogue would be the crew of a ship with the captain as the PI, the ship as the institution, the seas as the sponsor and the harbormaster as the auditors – and what’s our role? The navigators – part of the crew but with the latest charts and maps to guide the way.

Relationships Matter
Semantics, word associations, and background experience impact the way we are defined and perceived, often on a subconscious level. The term “customer service” which was initially borrowed from the service industry, trivializes the complexity of the relationships that must be created and the information curated and applied by research administration professionals. It negatively impacts institutional culture by creating clerically subjective standards to which professionals may be held. Research administration professionals have already made a volitional commitment to promote the mission of their institutions, maintain the compliance requirements of their sponsors, support their investigators, and reduce administrative burden to the extent they are able. “Professionalism” is more valuable and conveys more commitment than “customer service.”

What’s Next?
As we continue to gather at conferences to expand our knowledge, enhance our profession, and establish best practices, we also need to promote the evolution of research administration and the terms we use. It is our responsibility to help define and convey the value of professional expertise. Emphasis on “professionalism” rather than “servicing” will strengthen our value proposition within the institutional hierarchy and consequently enhance our ability to perform at the highest level of excellence with greater professional satisfaction.

“Customer Service” is a term that has become increasingly popular as evidenced by the frequency with which it appears as a required skill in research administration job descriptions. The spirit of the term conveys a desire to please a customer, but its application to research administration is outdated. Just as the definition of “customer” has evolved from a purchaser of goods or services to a term that implies a recipient of goods, services, or ideas, there must also be an evolution of the perceived role of the research administrator from pleaser to partner.
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DATA Act and the Section 5 Grants Pilot:

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

By Christopher Zeleznik

Forming Partnerships

Close to a year after its official launch, the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act) Section 5 Grants Pilot (Pilot) is underway.

Federal agencies, grant recipients, and contractors all report Federal financial spending in different ways, which can lead to inconsistencies and unnecessary reporting burden. The DATA Act aims to standardize data and make it more transparent to the public by requiring the Federal Government to establish Government-wide data standards and publish all Federal spending data so that it is accessible, searchable, and reliable. To help meet this goal, the legislation contains Section 5, which calls for a grants Pilot to help inform recommendations to Congress on methods for: 1) standardized reporting; 2) elimination of duplication; and 3) reduction of compliance costs.

Through collaboration with the public, advocacy groups, grant recipients, and Federal agencies, the United States Department of Health and Human Services DATA Act Program Management Office (HHS DAP) has established the Section 5 Grants Pilot, which tests models, tools, and methods to inform recommendations to Congress.

Through the Pilot program, grantees are not only able to voice their feedback to Congress, but also impact existing technologies that may reduce their reporting burden, ultimately saving time and money.

Improving the Government

Since May 2015, HHS DAP has been working in partnership with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop and execute Pilot Test Models that focus on finding ways to promote government efficiency and improve the public’s experience throughout the grants lifecycle.

Test Models include the Common Data Element Repository (CDER) Library, Consolidated Federal Financial Reporting, Single Audit, Notice of Award – Proof of Concept (NOA – POC), and Learn Grants. DAP is using these existing tools, forms, and/or processes to ascertain if recipient burden may be reduced.

The Test Model results collected between May 2016 and May 2017 will inform recommendations to Congress for legislative action including, but not limited to, consolidating/automating aspects of the Federal financial reporting process, simplifying reporting requirements for Federal awards, and improving financial transparency.

Making a Difference – Learn Grants Test Model

Learn Grants is a tab on Grants.gov that provides information on the entire grants lifecycle process — from the pre-award to post-award phases. It can provide a comprehensive point of reference to access Federal grants lifecycle information including finding and applying for Federal grants. This single point of reference can provide clarity on the responsibilities of recipients and sub-recipients, support grant recipient compliance during post-award activities, and potentially foster greater public transparency into the grants lifecycle.

DAP plans to conduct the Learn Grants Test Model at the NCURA Annual Conference in August 2016. Through this Test Model, DAP will assess the site’s effectiveness for increasing a grant recipient’s knowledge of the grants lifecycle. The feedback obtained through the Test Model will be used to inform recommendations to Congress to help reduce grantee recipient reporting burden.

Learn More

DAP will continue to engage the public at several events through May 2017. Look for DAP at the NCURA Annual Conference in August! You can also email Christopher Zeleznik, Intergovernmental and Public Engagement Lead, at Christopher.Zeleznik@hhs.gov to participate in the Pilot, follow DAP on Twitter (@HHS_DAP), or visit www.hhs.gov/dataactpmo to learn more about the Section 5 Grants Pilot.

Remember – this is an unprecedented opportunity to significantly impact the future of the grant recipient reporting process!
NCURA’s TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

September 7 – 9, 2016
PROVIDENCE, RI
Registration open now!

- Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration
- Financial Research Administration
- Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop - Critical Issues in Research Administration

December 5 – 7, 2016
AUSTIN, TX
Registration opening in September!

- Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration
- Financial Research Administration
- Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop - Critical Issues in Research Administration
- Departmental Research Administration

NCURA
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+1 202.466.3894 | www.ncura.edu
Emily Devereux is now the Director of Research Development at Arkansas State University.

Susan Zipkin is now Manager of Accounting and Financial Compliance at the University of New Hampshire.

Samantha Westcott has returned to Caltech and is now Sponsored Research Manager in the Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy. Sam is responsible for the restructuring of research administration for the largest division at Caltech into a centralized structure and leadership of the team of Grant Managers.

Scott Niles, Ph.D., has accepted a position there as the Director of Research Integrity and Compliance. Scott looks forward to expanding his understanding of research administration in this new compliance role.

Do you have a milestone to share? Email schiffman@ncura.edu

Grant and Financial Management solutions designed to perfectly fit the world you live in. Recognized industry wide for simplicity, power and affordability. The leading choice of the top educational, research and healthcare institutions. This is your world. Discover it now at itworks-inc.com.
common debate in research administration focuses on whether traditional pre- and post-award functions should be combined in one organizational unit or separated into two or possibly more offices. The debate is conceptually interesting and is a natural option to consider when functional improvements are needed. Organizational restructuring is not the only alternative, but whether the decision is to restructure or not, there is often an expectation for improved prioritization of tasks, filtering of work, and client satisfaction.

Research Administration/Sponsored Program Offices (SPO’s) have evolved based on institutional values, cultures, resources, structures, and functions in response to external factors, especially sponsor requirements. Pre-award offices often developed out of a desire to support faculty in increasing award dollars for graduate research and many times were associated with the academic side of the university infrastructure, frequently the graduate college, because of research's integral role in graduate education. Post-award offices primarily developed out of the need to be accountable to sponsors and receive payment for expenditures incurred, which are functions closely aligned with the financial side of the institution.

Separating and integrating pre- and post-award. With the increased volume and complexity in federal and other sponsor requirements, we are seeing more segregation and specialization of duties, particularly at large institutions. Specialization is easier to manage when pre- and post-award functions are in separate offices, which contributes to the continued recurrence of the separated model. Specialization comes with pros and cons. For example, by assigning one group of people to focus on awards, we see benefit because the group will not be regularly pulled away by proposal activity with immediate proposal deadlines. The downside of re-assigning personnel is coping with the huge cyclical peaks in proposal deadlines from the remaining staff. When specialized units or groups handle facets of research administration, it is important to allocate time for coordination of efforts, which can include developing consistent approaches and figuring out who is responsible for identifying and implementing requirements of a new regulation.

I wouldn’t be surprised to hear that many reading this article have experienced more than one organizational model. In addition to the increased complexity and size of the research enterprise, the last decade of budget constraints also created an impetus for continued organizational model

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**Table 1**

**Typical Organizational Models**

- **Separate pre- and post-award models**
  - Pre-award offices report to one Vice President (VP)
  - Common reporting is to a VP or Asst. VP for Research, a Graduate College Dean, or Provost.
  - May see dotted line reporting to a second VP.
  - Post-award offices report under a second Vice President (VP)
  - Common reporting is to a VP or Asst. VP for Finance or Controller.
  - May see dotted line reporting to a second VP.

- **Combined pre- and post-award models**

  **Typical variations:**
  - Pre- and post-award functions are combined under one Vice President (or Vice Chancellor) in one office, though different people may focus on pre-award functions and post-award functions.
  - Pre- and post-award functions are combined into one office and one person handles each project from proposal development through award to completion. With this variation, functions that benefit multiple projects are likely pulled out separately, e.g., letter of credit draws on multiple projects.

  **Reporting may vary:**
  - Common reporting for the combined model is:
    - VP or Asst. VP for Finance or Research
    - May see dotted line reporting to a second VP or reporting through a Provost or Chancellor.
  - Less common, but sometimes sponsored programs offices will have dual reporting to two VPs.
evolution. My experience includes seven structure variations. Although a wide spectrum of organizational structures exist, they primarily coalesce around the models described in Table 1.

**Pros and cons.** Being aware of the advantages and disadvantages of various organizational models will help an institution play to its strengths and develop mitigating strategies and controls. In practical terms, one of the advantages of a model in which one person handles everything in the life cycle related to a particular project is that a faculty member or project administrator contacts one person and ideally that one person provides the solution every time. This is more common, as you might expect, for practical reasons at smaller institutions, which are more likely to have one person or office handle a wide variety of duties. In larger institutions, consistency between projects may suffer and backup coverage during times of absence can be difficult. It also means that certain items tend to take precedence over other items, which can result in negative impacts to covering the whole gamut of work assigned to the office.

**Variations.** A variation on the one person “does it all” is that a combined team “does it all.” My personal favorite is a structure that allows the amount of specialization appropriate for the organization’s size, but provides integration accountability at an operational or oversight level by a person whose primary focus is supporting pre- and post-award, i.e., normally below the VP level. Early in my career, I prepared the operational budget request for the SPO of a combined operation and I remember the office director being grilled as two bosses (VP for Finance and Provost) took turns asking the “harder” question. (The director of course did a great job!) I recall thinking: No way would I want to report to two VPs. Fast forward a few decades and I see benefits to the current organization structure in which I work having oversight of two offices, one managing pre-award and the other post-award administration, and reporting to two VPs (Finance and Research). The joint reporting to two VPs supports the link to faculty and development while providing access to systems and promoting accountability. While I will acknowledge a bias, I’ll also note that having oversight for both offices helps keep people talking and supports integration.

**Factors to consider.** Some ways of structuring work better than others, but a variety of ways can be effective. Please see Table 2 for a summary of some advantages and disadvantages of two typical organizational structures.

When looking at the advantages and disadvantages and determining structure, the following organizational or award attributes merit consideration:

- **Volume of awards:** two offices and specialization makes more sense when dealing with large volumes as it allows more focus and development of expertise in the subject area.
- **Sponsors and variety of sponsors:** a portfolio of predominately NIH and foundation funding is different to administer than having a large breadth of sponsors.
- **Types and mix of awards:** contracts vs. grants, size of awards, types of compliance issues
- **Expertise and number of staff:** the larger the institution, the more likely the benefit from specialized units. Expanded responsibility in one unit is sometimes determined by who is available to serve when a new regulation or challenge is identified.
- **Information systems or lack of systems:** impact of computer/electronic systems becomes apparent when filtering criteria to sort and route transactions are limited.

**Working within current structure.** In addition to considering the advantages and disadvantages of various models and the institutional

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**Table 2**

**Considering Separate and Combined Organizational Models**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Separate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows more depth and focus on either area.</td>
<td>Increased integration, communication, and consistency in management of an award.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves ability to allocate resources and prioritize at a management level instead of the rush proposal and other emergencies always taking precedence.</td>
<td>Less duplication of effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-award: when reporting to a Provost or VP for research, the leader is normally aligned with the academic community; the primary emphasis is supporting principal investigators and the research mission.</td>
<td>Client convenience: one point of contact for all or many project life cycle stages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-award: more likely to have a strong operational leader and integration with other campus systems; the emphasis is normally on managing financial and regulatory compliance.</td>
<td>Dual emphasis on supporting: a) principal investigators and the research mission and b) accountability and compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus and prioritization challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff size (particularly for large institutions) may contribute to a lack of cohesiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May not find a leader with expertise in all areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Depending on the priorities of the leader, the institution may see less client support or more compliance risk than with the segregated model.
Being aware of the advantages and disadvantages of various organizational models will help an institution play to its strengths and develop mitigating strategies and controls.

attributes, it is also worth weighing the costs versus benefits of organizational restructuring. If the benefits don’t exceed the costs or if you’re not the one making the decision, there are additional ways to make improvements.

**Understand each other’s challenges.** It helps to remember when duties are separated that both pre- and post-award staff face pressure from being at the end of a cycle, i.e., 1) pre-award offices are often the last step in getting: a) a proposal submitted, which results in compressed time-frames to review and pressure to make hasty decisions, or b) an award executed allowing projects to start; and 2) post-award offices are downstream of pre-award decisions and sometimes those decisions can negatively impact post-award workload or capacity.

**Making it work.** No matter what organization model is used, *pre-award staff can influence successful implementation at a campus by: understanding and caring about the post-award impacts of pre-award decisions; keeping costing knowledge current; and getting feedback and learning from post-award offices as to what works in the institution’s accounting/information system(s).*

*Post-award staff can influence successful implementation by: being flexible to the needs of the project and the sponsor; providing constructive feedback to pre-award staff; and understanding that creating proposals in short timeframes is challenging and not always conducive to perfection. Both areas can benefit by: striving for transparency in approach; working through roles and responsibility; reviewing processes, coordinating efforts and collaborating, not competing for resources.

**In summary.** Organizational models, associated advantages and disadvantages, and organizational attributes have been reviewed above and in Tables 1 and 2. Thoughtful consideration of the organizational structure that effectively balances focus and integration in supporting clients, work completion, and the research mission can have positive impacts. Significant variances in organizational structure can work if the unit directors are committed to work within the roles established, have or develop the expertise to competently execute defined roles, and support each other in their defined roles. Considering non-structural changes such as education, policy, procedure and system changes, rather than organizational restructuring can minimize disruption and still yield improved outcomes.

It isn’t always easy or clear cut, but finding ways to effectively improve our support for research and other scholarly work of faculty at our institutions is rewarding.

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**Twila Fisher Reighley**, MBA, Assistant Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies at Michigan State University has oversight responsibility for MSU centralized offices providing pre- and post-award administration and accounting. Her NCURA roles have included Chair of the NCURA Professional Development Committee and member of the NCURA Board of Directors. She can be reached at reighley@osp.msu.edu

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### Agile Work Strategies (aka Telework)

I have had this *Great Debate* with myself repeatedly over the years: whether or not to allow employees to telework. The single most critical challenge to implementing telework for me has always been information security. But after enjoying the benefits of telework for over a year, I would try harder to make it work. The literature on the topic repeatedly cites increased productivity as a major benefit along with improved employee satisfaction, reduced attrition and unscheduled absences, and teleworking employees’ sense of empowerment. Additionally, the option to telework expands the talent pool and facilitates diversity recruitment while providing valuable career opportunities for the under- and under-employed, such as those with disabilities. It can also provide access to a flexible part-time workforce that can be activated when demand increases, enhances community efforts to reduce environmental emissions and demands on transportation infrastructure, and alleviates pressures on additional space requirements when a research administration unit experiences growth.

But there are lots of considerations beyond information security that must be overcome to comfortably initiate telework: institutional policy, or lack thereof, for telework; for some, collective bargaining agreements; eligibility criteria; the need for revised job descriptions and performance evaluations; and an employee’s access to reliable internet connectivity, office support, materials and equipment (e.g. laptop, phone, supplies and copier). Managers may be reluctant to take on the additional stressors associated with supervising distant and present workers thus training is needed for all impacted including those who telework, their supervisors, and their peers.

And then there are those pesky legal concerns for taxation, occupational health and safety, and human resource management.

Telework is not for everyone and participation should be voluntary, but for the right people engaged in suitable work, telework can be a viable recruitment and retention tool for research administration.

### References


The **FULL Research Lifecycle**

Pre-Award • Post-Award • COI • IRB • IACUC

KualiResearch
kuali.co/research
In planning for AM58, a good friend and NCURA colleague contacted me asking if I’d be interested in participating in a panel discussion. She told me the discussion would focus on the top ten things I wish I’d known early in my career — those things that have gotten me to where I am today, those things that I rely on daily.

“Only ten?” was my first thought. It’s kind of like being asked about your favorite movie or song. It depends on the day, on the current situation, and where you stand on your career path. I mulled it over. Then I began developing my list. While it’s subject to change, right now it looks like this:

1. Understand the basics of the grant lifecycle.

Like most of us, I knew next to nothing about research administration when I began my first position in a central pre-award office. I was responsible for searching for funding opportunities, aiding in proposal submissions, developing proposal budgets, and delivering grant-writing workshops to faculty and staff. I quickly learned that I needed to understand the entire lifecycle of the grant because faculty had questions, not only about budgeting and proposal submission, but also about how to expend their funds, how to hire personnel, how to request no-cost extensions, how to submit their technical reports, and more. All of these things were outside my primary area of oversight, and while I could have simply directed their questions to the appropriate unit — which I did and still do — I realized that by understanding the entire lifecycle of the grant I could better assist my faculty as well as my colleagues.

What pre- learns from post-award: As a pre-award administrator, it’s important to understand the basics of post-award. If you don’t understand how items should be budgeted and don’t understand the difference between an allowable and unallowable cost, then you won’t be able to assist faculty in developing budgets that are sound and manageable.

What post- learns from pre-award: As a post-award person, understanding the dynamic nature of research, recognizing that goals and objectives change over the course of a project, can help you ask questions, instead of defaulting to “no.”

I could go on to list the learning exchanged between pre- and post- with compliance, technology transfer, export controls, and other offices. Suffice it to say that understanding the grant process, from project development and administration to legal requirements through financial management and project closeout, helps me to effectively guide my faculty, pointing them in the right direction, and putting them in contact with the right people.
It’s not enough to understand the grant lifecycle and all the sponsoring agencies’ budgeting and expenditure rules; it’s also important to understand how your institution operates. How do people get paid at your institution? How do people get reimbursed for travel and what is the dollar threshold for equipment? What are the processes for purchasing equipment and paying participants? Knowing the answers to these questions will help you effectively shepherd your faculty through the entire grant lifecycle, from project idea to award closeout.

When I began my position at Miami University my first two questions were, “Who can serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) at Miami?” and “Who is responsible for submitting the final proposal?” From there my list of questions about how grant administration operated at Miami grew exponentially.

Seeking answers to my questions, I began by reviewing Miami’s faculty handbook to learn about Miami’s rules regarding research leave, consulting, and ownership of intellectual property. Then I reviewed Miami’s purchasing policies in order to learn about the threshold for capital equipment at Miami, bid requirements, how to pay participants, limits on purchasing cards, and more. I reviewed Miami’s travel policies and policies for hiring personnel. And when I couldn’t get my hands on a policy that addressed my question, or when a policy seemed unclear, I asked questions. (See #6 below.)

Understanding how my university operates helps me to assist my faculty in developing sound, manageable projects. It also ensures that I don’t let faculty propose something that might be in conflict with our institutional policies. Finally, when faculty have questions about administering their grants, I can point them to the best person or policy that addresses their question.

Learn what you don’t know.

Knowing what you don’t know goes back to becoming familiar with the entire grant lifecycle. Working in pre-award, I thought I had a good understanding of the areas that touch on pre-award, including post-award, compliance, and export control. However, when I studied for and took the examination to become a CRA (Certified Research Administrator), I realized there were gaps in my knowledge base.

The Research Administrators Certification Council offers certification on the entire grant lifecycle (CRA), on pre-award (CPRA), and on post-award, financial research administration (CFRA). The CRA broadly covers the following aspects of research administration:

- Project development and administration (30%)
- Legal requirements and sponsor (30%)
- Financial management (25%)
- General management (15%)

The CPRA digs deeper into pre-award administration, covering:

- Research partnership and funding (25%)
- Project development and proposal submission (30%)
- Budget design and development (30%)
- Awards and pre-award compliance considerations (15%)

The CFRA digs into the financial aspects of post-award administration, including agency policies from some of the large, Federal grant-making agencies. Specifically, it covers:

- Governing framework (25%)
- Project costs (35%)
- Reporting (25%)
- Fiscal compliance (15%)

Certification will not only help you to discover what you don’t know, it can bring you both personal satisfaction as well as professional recognition, opening doors for increased job opportunities and opportunities for job advancement. Earning and maintaining your certification shows that you have mastered core content in a particular area and that you are keeping apprised of changes in the research administration enterprise. (You might also consider a Master’s programs in research administration, like the ones at Johns Hopkins University and University of Central Florida).
It’s okay to ask questions and communicate.

Once you’ve identified the gaps in your knowledge base, you can begin filling those gaps by asking questions. Don’t be afraid to pick up the phone or stop by and ask a colleague for a few minutes of their time to answer a specific question.

If you work in a small or single-person office, attending NCURA regional and annual meetings, or attending special offerings like PRA (Pre-award Research Administration) Conference or FRA (Financial Research Administration) Conference is a good way to meet the people who have the knowledge and experience to answer your questions. Even if you don’t work in a small office, attending an NCURA meeting gives you access to a broad network of individuals who volunteer to share their knowledge and expertise by leading workshops, concurrent sessions, and discussion groups. At the upcoming AM58 meeting, you can even schedule one-on-one time with an expert.

If you are unable to attend an NCURA meeting and need an immediate answer to a particular question, consider joining NCURA’s professional networking platform, Collaborate. Ask one question and get answers from colleagues around the country!

Finally, check to see if your NCURA region has a mentoring program that you might get involved with, either as a newer member with questions or as a more experienced administrator with knowledge and experience to share.

Know where to find the best conference locations.

Knowing where to find the best conference locations is really about finding a conference that best suits your professional needs as well as your institution’s travel budget. Keep in mind that NCURA and other research administration professional organizations, including the Federal funding agencies, host conferences and workshops around the world, and will offer a number of trainings via webcast. Find one close to you and plan to attend or plan to send your faculty and staff. (For webcasts, we like to invite faculty and staff to view the presentation with us, leaving time after for discussion).

Have you always wanted to travel to the nation’s capital? Then consider attending NCURA’s Annual Meeting (AM), held yearly in Washington, D.C. This year’s AM will be held August 7-10 at the Washington Hilton in D.C. If you are more of a West-Coast person or the West Coast is better suited to your travel budget, consider the 2017 PRA/FRA spring meetings in San Diego, which will be held March 8-13, 2017 (PRA will be March 8-10; FRA will be March 11-13). Or visit a new location in your own region by attending your annual regional meeting. Find out more about NCURA’s regions and regional meetings by visiting the Regions page on the NCURA website.

You could even attend a conference right at home. If you work at a large institution that is easy to travel to, or is within driving distance of several other institutions, consider hosting a regional event such as an NSF or NIH regional workshop, a webcast, or one of the NCURA traveling workshops which include “Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration” (Levels I & II), “Financial Research Administration,” “Departmental Research Administration,” “The Practical Side of Leadership,” and the “Export Controls Workshop.”

Learn which professional organizations offer the best networking and learning opportunities.

Tools, networking, training, knowledge, and opportunities for growth. These are just some of the benefits you glean when you get involved with professional organizations.

Of the many sites I have bookmarked in my web browser, NCURA is front and center. I probably visit the NCURA website three to four times a week, whether it’s to follow a discussion on Collaborate, to look up an NCURA colleague because I have a question or need to find a volunteer to present at a meeting I’m involved with, or to learn when the next set of training opportunities will be within proximity or available via webcast. I also use the NCURA Career Center to search for jobs in research administration. In fact, that’s where I learned about my current position at Miami University.

In addition to providing resources like those mentioned above, involvement in professional organizations equips us with the tools we need to perform our work. Recently, my institution decided to adopt a questionnaire to help faculty determine if an outside collaborator should be classified as a subcontract or as a vendor. Instead of starting from scratch, we reached out to our professional contacts and within a day we had several example questionnaires that we were able to adapt to fit our needs.

In addition to NCURA, there are several other organizations serving the research administration profession, including:

- AUTM - Association of University Technology Managers
- NORDP - National Organization of Research Development Professionals
- NCURA - National Council of University Research Administrators
- SoCRA - Society of Clinical Research Associates, Inc.
- SRA - Society of Research Administrators International

Whatever professional organization you choose, it’s important to connect to the people and resources in your profession. Connecting and then communicating (see #6 above) can expand your opportunities for networking, training, knowledge, and professional growth.
Research administration is a viable career.

Currently, there are thousands and thousands of research administrators scattered across the globe in universities, research institutes, hospitals, Federal agencies, state agencies, community colleges, non-profit organizations, and on and on and on. The types of positions available range from entry level positions to Vice President, Vice Provost, and Vice Chancellor. Currently NCURA’s Career Center has nearly 70 posted positions in research administration across the nation, at every level and in various organizational units (e.g., department or central office, research laboratory or center, hospital or research foundation).

Until recently, there were no educational programs that taught research administration. While to my knowledge there are no undergraduate programs dedicated to training research administrators, several institutions offer Masters programs in research administration (see #7). Even so, the fact remains that most research administrators learn on-the-job. This offers opportunities to advance on the career ladders that exist at many institutions and organizations. For example, I started out in a central sponsored research office as an entry-level proposal development officer. From there, I worked my way up to become a Level II development officer, then an assistant director and associate director before taking on my current role as Director of Proposal Development.

So whether you are in pre-award, post award, compliance or technology transfer; whether you are in a central or departmental office; whether you are at a large university or small college; and whether you are at a for-profit or non-profit organization, there are ample opportunities to challenge yourself and develop a lifelong career in research administration.

Sharing is good.

Because there are thousands of us scattered across the globe, we have a vast network of human resources at our fingertips. With such an elaborate network, there is no need to work in a silo or to reinvent the wheel. Sometimes the wheel just needs realigned a little and our colleagues can help us do that.

One way of connecting with our human resources network is via NCURA Collaborate. Collaborate is designed for communities to share their knowledge and tools, to create ideas and content, and to network.

Another option is the Research Administration listserv, RESADM-L. There are currently over 4,000 research administrators subscribed to this listserv. In a recent month alone, there were over 100 discussions, including job postings, information on CRA study sessions, sharing of policies and agreements, sharing of training materials, assistance with eRA issues, including Grants.gov, and general research administration questions about such things as purchasing, travel, patents, and time and effort reporting.

And don’t forget that you have something valuable to offer others. Give back by responding to questions posted in Collaborate or on the RESADM listserv to share your knowledge and experience. Or volunteer with your professional organization, whether that means working at the registration table or presenting on a topic.

We’re all in this together.

The words from High School Musical “We’re all in this together, and it shows, when we stand, hand in hand” were playing through my head as I developed this list. We truly are all in this together because research administration is rich with networking and learning opportunities. We only need to reach out our hands to connect, to learn, to grow, and to give back.

I hope this list has shed some light on the vast resources available to assist you in your daily work and professional growth. But don’t just take my word for it! Join the panel discussion at AM58, led by Mary Louise Healy of Johns Hopkins’ Krieger School of Arts & Sciences, to find out what other seasoned research administrators list as their top ten “need to knows” for a successful career in research administration.

Tricia L. Callahan, M.A., CRA, is the Director for Proposal Development at Miami University in Oxford, OH, a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute and Executive Leadership Program (ELP). A 17-year member of NCURA, Tricia currently serves on the NCURA Peer Review Council and traveling workshop faculty for fundamentals and global initiatives. At Miami, Tricia oversees all training and education programs while assisting with pre-and post-award research administrative functions. She can be reached at callahl@MiamiOH.edu
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www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore.aspx
Another week, another league table, or at least that is how it seems. With the UEFA Euro2016 tournament due to kick off as I write, I thought I’d start with a football (soccer, if you must) analogy. Which is the best football team in Europe? Well, come Sunday 10th July we will know – it will be the team in the final that scores the most goals (having also done that in the semi- and quarter-final games; you get the idea). Simple. So which is the best university in Europe… (or indeed a country, or the World, isn’t it the same issue)? Not so simple. There is no league competition or knock-out competition, but many league tables.

Back to football, who is the best player? Well, there will be a “golden boot” award for the one that scores the most goals; this of course favours strikers. But there are stats for everything, distance run, passes made, tackles made, fouls conceded, longest beard (well OK, I made that one up, but I wouldn’t be surprised to see it next time). The point is there are metrics everywhere. Which is the most important, and how do you interpret them? If player X scored 7 goals and gets the golden boot is he really better than player Y who only scored 6 goals? Well on the face of it, yes. But then you look in more detail; perhaps player Y played for the winning team, and hence played in all 7 possible games – a goal a game. However player Y played for a team that got knocked out after 3 games – that is two goals a game – surely Y is better than X? But wait, what if X only played in the last 2 games (due to an injury), so that is over 3 goals per game. But then, what if Y only played half of each of his three games – and so the debate continues. And that is before you consider other factors, such as how many goal-scoring opportunities did each player have.

Anyway, back to the university sector, a somewhat more complex one than soccer (I mean football). Firstly, let’s assume that we are focussing on research excellence. How can you measure excellence? In the UK we have a multi-annual exercise called the Research Excellence Framework, the last one, REF2014; having been conducted in 2014 (there is a clue in the name). There are a whole host of things that are assessed, but it is explicitly described as that: assessment, not measurement. In the UK, excellence is seen as something to be assessed qualitatively (by peer review) rather than
quantitatively – however there is a place for metrics to inform the peer review process. This approach is espoused in the influential Metric Tide report which also warns against using metrics in isolation – a basket of metrics to inform decision making.

There are many possible areas for metrics: research income, research student numbers, research outputs, and awards and prizes. I will restrict the discussion to research outputs (publications).

There is a large body of work that advocates against using proxy measures incorrectly. If a metric is readily available it is easy to use it, but also tempting to use it out of context or extrapolate it inappropriately. For example, the more an article is cited the higher quality it is. Well once we get past the outlier case for an article being highly cited as a bad example; do more citations really mean higher quality? The Metric Tide analysis did find a low correlation (to the results of peer review assessment, itself not an unflawed process) in some subject areas, but nowhere near high enough to suggest that it could replace peer review. Even if it were the case, there are many other pitfalls. For example, citation numbers can vary depending on the database used: Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar all have different coverages. As Mike Thelwall says, in bibliometrics “12 is not a bigger number than 10”. And of course some subject areas have better coverage than others; indeed in some subject areas journal articles are not as important as, say, monographs, or exhibitions.

Another issue for citations is the differing subject norms. Some have a propensity for citation and others less so, so the idea of a field weighting has been developed, akin to the goals per football game example. If the average number of citations in subject X for a particular year is $20$, but for subject $Y$ it is only $5$; then an article in subject area $X$ with 15 citations can be considered to be less cited that a subject $Y$ article with 7 citations $(15/20 < 7/5)$. There are, of course, additional issues in terms of how the field is determined – what about interdisciplinary papers, and so on. But it is perhaps a less flawed metric than a raw citation count.

As alluded to, the year of publication is also a factor that needs to be taken into account. A paper that is 5 years old has had more time and hence opportunity to be cited than one that is only 2 years old. The relationship is not linear but it is relatively easily mapped and adjusted for in the same way as the field weighting. There are, again, even more issues, particularly with recent papers – adjustment calculations are generally only made at the granularity of year. If we imagine that it is January 2016; there would be a single adjustment for papers produced in 2014. However a January 2014 article would have had 24 months to attract citations whereas a December 2014 one would only have just over half that time, 15 months. Clearly, time-weighted citation counts become more reliable for older outputs - not particularly useful when you only have just over half that time, 13 months. Clearly, time-weighted citation counts become more reliable for older outputs - not particularly useful when trying to assess research excellence in any sort of contemporary way.

This has led to the rise of so called alternative metrics – things like article downloads, on-line ‘reads’ of articles, blog post mentions, tweets, and even Facebook mentions. These have the advantage of more immediacy, but the disadvantage of being even further divorced from a measure of the quality of the research. They do, however, give a good indication of the visibility of the research, perhaps a proxy for the ‘significance’ which is related to the quality; and there have been some (weak) correlations shown between tweets and quality – see again The Metric Tide.

Given the foibles of article level metrics of all sorts, there are those that are proponents of group level metrics, an example being an h-index applied at department level, such as described by Dorothy Bishop in her blog. These do appear to show some promise with some good correlations to funding derived from peer review in the predecessor to the REF, but their predictive power is, to say the least, unproven.

If you have more time then the near 500 page The Metric Tide report and appendices is well worth dipping into, honestly!

Perhaps the worst sin is using a group metric to ascribe a value to elements within the group. The classic example of this misuse is Journal Impact Factor, JIF, which gives the average citation count to papers in the journal over a certain time period. This is not an unreasonable measure of the impact that a journal has. The problem is when this value is ascribed to individual articles, some articles will have many more than the average, and some will have many fewer, indeed, some will have no citations. Thus the distribution is very skewed. Clearly using the JIF as a proxy for the number of citations for a particular article (and hence a proxy for the article quality) is nonsensical, as detailed in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). However, the urge to use this short-cut can be overwhelming as the data are readily available.

So what can we do? Well there are a number of things, as encapsulated in the ten principles of the excellent Leiden Manifesto. I urge you to read this before ascribing too much weight to the next set of metrics you are presented with; it is only a couple of pages long. If you have more time then the near 500 page The report and appendices is well worth dipping into, honestly!

Oh, and the best football team in Europe? England, of course, notwithstanding the fact that we will no doubt have been knocked out in the quarter finals. We invented the modern game in 1863 and hence have been playing it for longer than anyone else – that is my favourite metric and I’m sticking to it!

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14. Note: in the interests of transparency, I should declare that I am one of the authors of The Metric Tide.

Simon Kerridge, D.Prof., Director of Research Services, University of Kent, UK, is also the chair of the board of directors of ARMA, the UK Association of Research Managers and Administrators. Simon’s responsibilities at Kent include pre- and post-award administration, ethics and governance, compliance, open access, research information and metrics, and research strategy and policy. He can be reached at s.r.kerridge@kent.ac.uk
**SCENE 1**

[The scene is Monica’s office. Her phone is ringing while she busily types on her computer. Monica glances at the phone briefly, sighs, and continues typing. The phone rings a second time. We hear Arthur’s voice from offstage.]

**Arthur:** Hey Monica? Arthur here. Sorry for blowing up your phone like this. I know you’re up to your eyeballs in this deadline, but I need a quick second. It’s Dr. Carol again. She forwarded a proposal late last night and it’s due today!

**Monica:** Today? Well, that’s fantastic! The only way I can work hers in is to bump someone else. I guess I can make Dr. Plum wait since his isn’t due until tomorrow, but that’s hardly fair.

**Arthur:** I had no idea she was even applying! I wanted to tell her that it was too late, but it’s pointless with her. She brings in so much funding that we have to submit her proposals whenever they come in. And the chair is no help.

**Monica:** I know, you don’t get to say no. Neither do I, for that matter. But did you at least remind her about our five day review policy?

**Arthur:** I had no idea she was even applying! I wanted to tell her that it was too late, but it’s pointless with her. She brings in so much funding that we have to submit her proposals whenever they come in. And the chair is no help.

**Monica:** I know, you don’t get to say no. Neither do I, for that matter. But did you at least remind her about our five day review policy?

**Arthur:** Are you kidding? You know how she is. I think it’s going to be fine… it’s all very standard… all the pieces are there… she used the current fringe and F&A rates… no cost sharing, no foreign collaborators. I just wanted you to give you heads up that I have not read this one very closely. Like I said, it’s been in my inbox since 11:34 p.m. last night (growls).

**Monica:** OK, I’ll see what I can do.

[Lights dim]

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**SCENE 2**

[Lights come back on. Monica’s office again. She picks up the phone and dials.]

**Monica:** Hey Arthur, it’s Monica again. I did a quick review of Dr. Carol’s proposal and I noticed that it actually does have cost sharing after all. There’s no requirement in the solicitation, but it’s also not expressly forbidden like with NSF. I don’t see a cost share form – do you have any idea what this is all about? I thought you said no cost sharing.

**Arthur:** I didn’t have a lot of time but I did a quick budget check and there was no cost sharing, so I didn’t ask for a cost share form. Where did you find it? The cost share, I mean.

**Monica:** Not in the budget! It’s in the methodology section – “I will have a course release in the fall to work on the research.” She hasn’t budgeted any effort. She also says that her department will provide a $15,000 piece of equipment but I see no commitment from her chair to this effect.

**Arthur:** Oh, shoot. What do we do?

**Monica:** We need to take out the cost share. We don’t allow cost share unless it’s mandatory or the solicitation says it’s strongly recommended or something similar. I can’t submit this as is.

**Arthur:** If I can get a signed cost share form?

**Monica:** There’s no time, and I can’t submit it without it. Anyway, I went through the solicitation and there is no mention of cost sharing. Normally I would tell the PI we can’t do this, make the necessary changes, and submit, but this is Dr. Carol. I need to check with my director and get back to you.

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**CHARACTERS**

**Janice Carol:** A full professor who runs a highly respected and well-funded lab.

**Arthur Williams:** A departmental research administrator with two years’ experience and no authority to enforce institutional rules.

**Monica Brown:** A central research administrator with signing authority and eight years’ experience. She has recently participated in a leadership development program.

**Dave Fort:** OSP director with many years of experience in research administration, frequent presenter at NCURA, and member of travelling workshop faculty.
Dave: That's okay, then. Just consider it.

Monica: If it's urgent, yes.

Dave: Monica, you've got this. You know the regulations as well as anyone in the office, perhaps more so. This is a good opportunity for you to practice some leadership skills from the program you attended.

Monica: What do you mean?

Dave: I mean that you need to talk to Dr. Carol directly. I have confidence in you. If she tries to go over your head, I'll back you up. But the first step is yours. As long as you are doing the right thing and are respectful, you should be confident in your decision and proceed.

Monica: Proceed how? Just tell her no?

Dave: Not exactly. Don't try to dictate. You'll just end up in an argument. You've seen how that works. It only generates tension and drama. You need to work the problem. Try to sway her to your position. Appeal to what is important to her. Convince her that cost sharing is not a good thing — unless it's required, of course. And then it's still not a good thing, but if we have to do it, oh well. (Laughs).

Monica: Easy for you to say!

Dave: It's not easy in the moment. But I promise you it will make things easier in the long run. Do the right thing, and I will back you up. I'm confident my boss will back us both. She always does. Even when I'm wrong, she doesn't throw me under the bus. She takes responsibility for what happens in the office, good and bad alike, but gives recognition to those who have done good work. That enables me to take stands on positions and feel confident when I do it. And it should enable you to do it, too.

Monica: Okay. I'll give it a shot.

Dave: Do you have time to see her in person? That would be best.

Monica: No. This has to be submitted this afternoon and I'm slammed.

Dave: Okay. Understood. Call her. One more thing: pay attention to how you say it. Avoid too much “I” phrasing. Go for a lot of “you” and “we.” It’s a subtle way to build common ground. And consider calling her Janice. If she's Dr. Carol, you're Ms. Brown. If you're Monica, then she's Janice.

Monica: I'm not sure I'm comfortable with that!

Dave: That's okay, then. Just consider it.

[Monica walks back to her office, picks up the phone, and dials.]
understandable. He may not even be aware of the change in the regulations. It’s his job to focus on the science, not the administrative details. Under the latest federal guidelines, he’s absolutely not allowed to pressure you like that.

Janice: Yeah, I’ve heard something about that, but no one really believes it. I can’t possibly keep up with all the bureaucratic rules about who is allowed to do what. Neither can my colleagues who sit on the review panels. Maybe they’re not supposed to hold it against me if I don’t show cost share, but they will. I live in the real world. What the reviewers think and what they say about my proposal is what matters to me. Not some bureaucratic notion about what they’re supposed to think or say.

Monica: I think we can find a solution that will work for you. Let me suggest a different way to talk about the time and equipment. You could say, “The PI's annual workload is split between teaching and research and she will devote some of her research time to this grant.” That way, we are still showing commitment but we aren’t quantifying it.

Janice: I see what you’re trying to do, but that’s too vague. That doesn’t help me with equipment.

Monica: I’m assuming you actually have the equipment you need to do the work. Is that correct?

Janice: Yes, of course, but I wanted to show that the university was willing to get me this extra equipment.

Monica: I see. There’s another way to say that too. You can use your facilities and resources statement to show how much the university has invested in you. You don’t want that buried in the methodology section anyway. You could add some language to the resources section about your well-appointed lab. This way, you can get your point across without generating a bunch of extra paperwork or lowering our indirect cost rate.

Janice: Okay, okay. Go ahead and make the changes.

Monica: Thank you, Janice. We’ll make sure your proposal goes out on time.

[Monica walks back to Dave’s office and sticks her head in.]

Dave (looks up): How’d it go?

Monica: She wasn’t necessarily happy about it, but she agreed to take out the cost share …

Dave: So you were able to sway her to your position? How’d you do that?

Monica: I helped her see that her qualifications and proposal-writing were so strong that we didn’t need to use a dollar figure to show university commitment. I focused on that instead of our rules against cost sharing. I acknowledged what she had to say about her experience as a reviewer. I also realized that part of the reason she was digging in was fear. You wouldn’t think someone that accomplished and successful

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**Education Scholarship Fund Update**

The NCURA Education Scholarship Fund was established to support the professional development of members who seek graduate education in research administration.

The Fund was started with a generous gift by one visionary NCURA member. Since the Fund’s inception, we have raised over $65,000 in donations from individual NCURA members. But we cannot start making scholarship awards until we have raised at least $100K.

As in previous years, we will have a raffle ticket table at AM 58, where attendees can make donations in exchange for the chance to win wonderful prizes.

In addition, to help put us "over the top" so we can start making awards, several new ways of giving are now available.

1. At AM 58 we are debuting Research Administrator Day greeting cards and a brand new children’s book, The Best Job of All, promoting the profession. All proceeds will go to the Fund.

2. Regional hospitality suites will collect change for the "Bucket Challenge" and all funds raised in the regions throughout the year can be added to their bucket totals for the regional competition.

3. A GoFundMe campaign has been set up by Research Administration Memes. You can say "Thanks for all the laughs!" by donating on-line: www.gofundme.com/resadmmemes

As of July 12 we’ve raised $1650 so we are hoping to shatter the original goal and ultimately reach $1,900 by August 10th!

Remember, even a little makes a difference!

And, as always, you can donate directly to NCURA online at www.ncura.edu/Education/EducationScholarshipFund/DonateToday.aspx
would be afraid, but sometimes they are. Not only does she have a publication record to maintain, but she also has people in her lab depending on her for employment and for academic opportunities. So I explained to her that cost share reduces our indirects rate and would reduce her share of indirects on future grants. I think she also sees now that cost sharing means an extra burden on her colleagues. But she’s not really going to be convinced until the funding agencies stop sending a mixed message, and frankly we can’t control that part.

**Director:** So you took charge of the situation, were confident, and held true to your values. You were firm and respectful. And most importantly in this case, you managed to convince her that your position was the correct position. You displayed some impressive leadership qualities. (Smiles)

**Monica:** Dave, thank you. I really appreciate your support.

**Dave:** You’re welcome, of course. One more thing: please follow up with her about that email from her PO. We need to share that information with our FDP representatives.

**Monica:** Will do. Thanks again!

[Walks back to office. Looks at watch, picks up bag as if she’s about to leave for lunch, then turns back, sits down, picks up phone, and dials.]  

**Monica:** Hi Arthur. It’s Monica. I wanted to let you know we worked it out with Dr. Carol. We were able to get her to agree to taking out the cost sharing.

**Arthur:** Seriously? How?

**Monica:** Let’s have lunch next week and I’ll tell you about it. For now, I just want to offer a suggestion. We worked out the cost sharing, but the lack of review time that she gave you is still an issue. I think you still need to remind her of the policy, and you need to do it in writing. Even if she doesn’t listen, you have an advisory role. You can remind her in a respectful and professional way. Copy me on the email and I will reply and back you up. If you want to draft the email first and have me look at it before you send it, I’ll be glad to do it after this deadline is over.

**Arthur:** OK, thanks. I’ll be able to think about that after we get this out the door.

Laura Letbetter is a contracting officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, GA. She began her research administration career in 2004 at Kennesaw State University and is a graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program. Her background includes teaching, editing, and program administration. She can be reached at laura.letbetter@osp.gatech.edu

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August 2016  49
Lebanon currently hosts the highest per-capita concentration of refugees worldwide with nearly 1.1 million Syrians registered with UNCHR to an overall local population of around 4 million. This official tally does not include the Palestinian refugees living in and around the UNRWA camps, nor does it include the many thousands of Iraqis fleeing from civil war in their own country. The massive influx of refugees across Lebanon’s borders has placed serious strain on the country’s already fragile economic and political stability. Due to financial and political constraints, the Lebanese government has not yet formulated a comprehensive national plan for responding to the unfolding crisis. Within this mired landscape, the majority of refugees live under dire conditions in unfinished structures, empty depots, and informal tented settlements with limited access to basic services.

Building on its strong track record in community service, the wealth of expertise among its faculty and staff and the dynamism of its clubs and student activists, the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) initiated the Syria Relief Project (SRP) in October 2012 to offer support to communities of Syrian refugees directly and to attempt to influence national policies and interventions. The SRP started with a clothes donation drive whereby students collected, sorted, and distributed items to refugee families. The initiative soon developed into rehabilitating an underground facility that accommodated around 200 refugee families and provided them with the basic humane shelter requirements. At the time, the use of primitive sanitation facilities in collective shelters and in informal tented settlements caused widespread pollution among refugees and the host communities. Accordingly, the AUB team designed and implemented sanitation systems in order to reduce water usage and wastewater treatment.

**Ghata Project:**
Over half of the Syrian refugees living in Lebanon are school-aged children, under the age of 18. Despite increasing efforts by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to alleviate the education gap, an estimated 40% of refugee children of primary school age (6-14) and only 2% of secondary school age (15-18) are enrolled in formal schooling (Government of Lebanon, 2015). Meanwhile, the UNICEF *No Lost Generation* initiative is facing major challenges as dropouts are rising due to refugees’ financial constraints, limited mobility, security threats, discrimination, and lack of psychological and social support, among other concerns.

In August 2013, AUB-CCECS designed a multifunctional structure that is convenient to serve as a classroom unit. The first Ghata unit, which means “cover” in English, was implemented by AUB volunteer students in an Informal Tented Settlement in South Lebanon. The guiding principle of the project is to contextualize the model along with its programs within the informal refugees landscape and to empower Syrian teachers to lead the educational process. The design of the Ghata unit is based on simplicity and portability, adaptability and scalability, climatic responsiveness, and economic efficiency, with sufficient durability to ensure decent shelter requirements. In collaboration with the departments of education, nutrition and food security, engineering and architecture, and through partnerships with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs and a local NGO (KAYANY), AUB-CCECS have successfully assembled eight portable Ghata schools in the Beqaa region, a district which has the largest number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Each Ghata School provides for an average of 700 refugee students (age groups 4 to 14) on a double shift-basis, and serves as a distribution hub used by relief agencies during school breaks. The schoolyards are fit to unload shelter equipment and supplies, clothing donations, winterization kits, food rations, wood logs, and the like. Awareness campaigns for local community members are frequently held in the Ghata classrooms, addressing a variety of practices and issues related to hygiene, child protection, gender-based violence, and resilience. The outdoors schoolyard of every Ghata campus hosts cultural events that are celebrated by refugees in commemoration of their traditional cultural values. The schools also shift function into community shelters in times of severe weather conditions. 

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**Research Administration in the Middle East**

**Syrian Refugees Crisis in Lebanon:**

The Response from the American University of Beirut and the Role of the Office of Grant Administration  
By Rabih Shibli
Role of AUB partners

Office of Grants and Contracts at AUB

The Technology Transfer Unit (TTU) under the Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) at AUB filed for intellectual property protection of the Ghata design in 2013. Since then, the design and the know-how have been licensed to many non-governmental agencies (for no or little monetary return to AUB) to use for building mobile structures in support of the refugees in Lebanon and abroad such as the schools being built in Irbil, Iraq, by Offre D’Joie or by KAYANY in the Bekaa region of Lebanon. OGC is responsible for negotiating and finalizing collaborative and/or service agreements between the implementing NGOs, and governmental agencies (whenever required) and AUB to ensure that relief efforts are managed appropriately. The office also manages the research and development funding awarded to different departments, mainly Education, Nutrition and Sustainable Development, and engineering and architecture, in support of the relief project.

Relief, Reconstruction, and Recovery

As the Syrian crisis shifts into a protracted conflict, the landscape in which aid agencies are operating is only becoming more mired. Complexities aside, there is widespread recognition that relief and humanitarian efforts must be connected directly to the beneficiaries and designed in accordance to local needs. Implementing projects in complex settings enabled the SRP team to better understand the covert and overt dynamics that govern the relief architecture in Lebanon. As such, AUB-CCECS developed and offered a course guided by the foundational 3Rs of Crisis Management: Relief, Reconstruction, and Recovery, with the aim to prepare students to lead progressive approaches to improve aid delivery, and to develop interventions that bring about strategic impact within the humanitarian realm. Currently, AUB-CCECS is in the process of developing a program certificate in the 3Rs to be offered to refugees (age groups between 20 and 40) living in the collective shelters and the informal tented settlements. This conceptual framework is envisioned to extend knowledge that is gleaned from the grassroots in order to upgrade the unstructured landscapes from within.

Regional and International Recognition of AUB and CCECS

AUB has won first place in the 2016 MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship in recognition of its Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) developing a “culture of service and civic leadership within the AUB community.” The “MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship” recognizes and supports exceptional student community engagement initiatives and public service efforts and promotes global citizenship and civic engagement initiatives.

This year, the selection committee evaluated 48 nominations of student leadership and civic engagement programs sent from 38 member universities in 18 countries. More specifically, AUB and the Center were recognized “for actively addressing the refugee crisis in Lebanon through student-based projects such as waste management campaigns, workshops, and toolkits to improve the communication and interpersonal skills of refugee students in the Bekaa region.” The Center also works with six refugee schools run by AUB, providing psychosocial treatment to thousands of refugee children.

In 2015, AUB, represented by CCECS, was ranked as the “most civically engaged campus” in the Middle East and North Africa by the Ma’an Alliance for Arab Universities.

Rabih Shibli is the Director of the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Mr. Shibli holds a bachelor’s degree in Architecture, masters in Urban Design, and a program certificate in Refugee Trauma.
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Contents Overview

Subpart A – Acronyms and Definitions
Subpart B – General Provisions
Subpart C – Pre-Federal Award Requirements and Contents of Federal Awards
Subpart D – Post-Federal Award Requirements
Subpart E – Cost Principles
Subpart F – Audit Requirements
Appendix I to Part 200 – Full Text of Notice of Funding Opportunity
Appendix I to Part 200 – Indirect (F&A) Costs Identification and Assignment and Rate Determination for Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)
Appendix V to Part 200 – Indirect (F&A) Costs Identification and Assignment, and Rate Determination for Nonprofit Organizations
Appendix V to Part 200 – State/Local Governmentwide Central Service Cost Allocation Plans
Appendix VI to Part 200 – Public Assistance Cost Allocation Plans
Appendix VII to Part 200 – States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals

Appendix VII to Part 200 – Nonprofit Organizations Exempted from Subpart E – Cost Principles of Part 200
Appendix X to Part 200 – Hospital Cost Principles
Appendix X to Part 200 – Data Collection Form (Form SF-SAC)
Appendix XI to Part 200 – Compliance Supplement
Appendix XI to Part 200 – Award Terms and Conditions for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters
Preamble to the Uniform Guidance (Published in Federal Register; Vol. 78, No. 248; Thursday, December 26, 2013, 78590-78608)

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Frequently Asked Questions

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I have been feeling guilty about signing a contract recently that I know could have been a lot better, and I know that I agreed to terms that were less than what our university would have wanted me to accept. They were okay, but not the best. What’s bothering me is that I have so much work to do that I just wanted this contract off my plate. The faculty member has been pressuring me to finish up the deal. I am also tired and need to get away with my husband on vacation and we haven’t done enough planning. I feel like I’ve let a lot of people down. Do you have any ideas?

Thanks for your question and for describing what sounds like a challenging period in your life. You started your question with regrets about a work product that you finished (i.e. contract) but then moved to broader questions of multiple matters. I do not know from the description whether this state-of-being describes you some of the time, rarely, or frequently. In other words, how often do you use words or phrases like “guilty”, “bothering”, “pressuring”, “tired”, “letting people down”? What I am wondering is if this sense of worry and, perhaps, feeling overwhelmed is a pervasive part of your life?

You might ask yourself how often you are experiencing life in this way. Some may read your question and think that you would benefit from better time management or prioritization. Others may be stuck on the facts about the contract you signed and whether this caused harm to the university in some way. Or, are you revealing something else by saying that the contract terms “were okay, but not the best.” I would imagine that few of us have ever signed a perfect contract, because a contract is a product of negotiations between flawed human beings and institutions. Perfection is a tough expectation for negotiations, or for vacation planning for that matter!

I think there are plenty of books and articles about time management, so I will leave that to you to pursue. And, there are seminars about contract negotiations and strategies. What I will discuss with you is the relevance of energy as a factor in managing your work and life. Maybe this will help you think of your challenges in different and new terms. There is growing literature in the coaching world about energy, and how we acquire it, use it, and how we replenish it. It’s a great coaching topic.

As human beings we get energy from food, from sleep, exercise, and from a sense of flow in our work and personal lives. We get it from our passions, from sports, arts, music, from walking in nature, from listening to birds or the sounds of waves. Some people meditate to gain control from a sense of flow in our work and personal lives. We get it from our environment. Katherine Ebner, director of the Institute for Transformational Leadership at Georgetown University, wrote a series of questions for coaches to ask clients relating to energy in the book On Becoming a Leadership Coach. Among my favorites are: “What gives you energy?” “What drains your energy away?” “What do you look forward to doing?” “What is your typical energy level in the morning? Midday? Evening?” “What do you do to refuel your energy?” And many more energy-inventory types of questions. What would your answers be to her questions?

But, how does this relate to your question? I am suggesting that thinking of life’s challenges and time pressures in terms of the energy and capacity we have, and can create for ourselves, will help us “budget” ourselves (minds, bodies, spirit) to deal with the most pressing issues at hand. And to deal with them well. Energy is not a panacea, but a way to help us understand ourselves better and to help us be aware of our own personal gas tanks. So, when we see we are running low, we can take care of ourselves and restore ourselves so we can better cope with the challenges we face.

You mention guilt and letting people down. So, that might be another approach to take were we in a coaching relationship. I might ask you how you feel you are letting someone down, and how is that serving you or the situation. What would you need to do to let go of guilt? That is a very challenging topic for most of us, so I do not imply that the matter of guilt is addressed with a few questions, in the manner of a 30 minute television sitcom! It is just that guilt may be draining energy from you in ways that are keeping you from being more productive, happy, and forward focused.

Finally, the situation you presented juxtaposed signing a contract, with keeping a PI happy, and with taking a vacation with your husband. It sounded to me like you were thinking of all of these parts of the situation as separate, as either/or. I would simply challenge you to think that no one needs to be let down, starting with you. And, you could have the energy and capacity to do all of the responsibilities you take on, and to do them well. Be intentional about it.

Do you have a leadership question? Send questions to me at the email below. Thank you to those who have sent questions and comments!

Garry Sanders is an executive coach and graduate of Georgetown University’s Certificate Program in Leadership Coaching. Garry is a long-time research administrator and recipient of NCURA’s Distinguished Service Award. He can be reached at gsanders@asstleadership.com and (518) 588-0992.
In our last article we talked about devising a streamlined institutional risk assessment process. This article will focus on risk assessment at the project level and the various areas to consider when developing a sensible management plan for high risk projects. The extent of such plans will be based on many factors. Low risk organizations can carry out high risk projects. A mitigation plan with respect to a project will differ from an institutional risk mitigation plan. You must be precise with your project level risk assessments to minimize burden for both the pass through entity (PTE) and the subrecipient. We will address the implementation of mitigation plans and how to leverage the subaward drafting and negotiation stage in part three of our series. First, let’s start by thinking about some key issues that could impact risk levels for a particular project. The following four baseline characteristics used to determine project risk can often be quickly gathered at the preaward stage by assessing the subrecipient statement of work and proposal:

- Subrecipient is conducting work at a foreign performance site (even if subrecipient institution is domestic)
- Subrecipient is performing an interventional clinical trial
- Subrecipient’s budget is more than 50% of the overall project
- The parties are exchanging or handling sensitive intellectual property (i.e. patent pending material or material the government has determined to be sensitive)

Flag these characteristics to the Principal Investigator (PI) during proposal preparation and remind the PI that further conversations will need to happen if the award is selected for funding (for federal awards, the Just in Time (JIT) stage is a useful indicator). Developing a plan at the JIT stage saves time for the PI. Often PIs are grateful for any efforts to ensure efficient processing of their subcontracts, so we recommend emphasizing that you are leveraging the JIT stage to resolve any potential issues in order for subcontracts to move more quickly when the award is made.

We mentioned that a low-risk institution could be performing high-risk work. Let’s take a look at an example: with the expansion of global collaborations and business, many domestic higher education institutions are opening up facilities in foreign countries. Several, large, high-profile institutions have international campuses and/or research facilities. These institutions are leaders in research with solid single audits. While you might be more than comfortable sending a subaward template suitable for a low-risk subrecipient for work performed domestically, you may pause when you realize that the subrecipient is actually overseeing work in a foreign country.

How do you parse out the issues in assessing project risk in a scenario like this? First, let’s look at the financial risks. Financial risk may be low if the subrecipient is using business processes consistent with their domestic business processes and not giving any of the funding to a foreign person or institution. Rather than going straight to adding additional contract terms, we suggest contacting the subrecipient and confirming how they enforce financial policies and procedures at their international campus or facility.

Risk factors in foreign performance sites are not always financial (although that seems to be the most straightforward area in which to add additional oversight); the risks may lie more in the complex regulatory landscape of executing research in a foreign country. Have you, as the PTE, ensured that there is appropriate insurance for the work to be performed, especially if it is related to human subjects, and that the subrecipient has cleared all regulatory hurdles needed to perform the work?

You may also see high risk in the area of liability, such as subject injury. For instance, in some countries (India is a good example), the regulatory sponsor (most likely the PTE) is required to pay for all issues that arise while a subject is part of a drug or device trial, even if the medical issue is not specifically linked to the drug or device.

Do you and the subrecipient understand and accept the legal requirements for the transfer of human subject data or materials from the foreign country back to the U.S. (or vice versa)? Will any data or materials transferred between the countries be subject to export controls or embargoes?
As you work through these regulatory and administrative issues, be sure to check in with your risk management/insurance office, compliance/export control office, OGC, the IRB and/or the IACUC, as needed.

Because you are considering the complexities of a number of legal and regulatory issues, it does not mean you must mitigate the risks through pages of contract terms to cover every eventuality. We will discuss contracts in more detail in our next installment. Scrupulous risk assessment is about understanding potential exposure for your institution and making an informed decision about how to mitigate and plan for such risks.

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of good communication. Keep the PI updated, either directly or through their administrator. Frequent updates will help them to better understand the process and will often mitigate frustration. Your connection can also generate goodwill that is useful when you need to work through a complex issue with the PI and the subrecipient.

You should also consider the project management logistics of a foreign site. Have the PI and/or the department administrator considered any potential difficulties of the in-country operations, such as translation to local language, availability of computers, reliable internet, and other resources we may take for granted? Are they well-versed in the cultural context of the area?

We do not mean to say that doing work with the foreign arm of a domestic entity is always riskier; however, you as the PTE are responsible for understanding and managing the expectations of the parties. Understanding potential barriers to accomplishing the project aims, such as issues with exchange of data and materials and compliance with complex foreign laws, is important to ensuring the scientific success of the project and the ability to craft a well-tailored management plan.

Also with foreign performance sites, JIT is a great time to have a conversation with the subrecipient about their budget, comparing current currency and commodity pricing from proposal stage to JIT. You need to have a feel for what the market has done over the past few years. The department should be prepared to have discussions with the subrecipient about increasing the budget, if needed, due to increased commodity pricing or work with the subrecipient to reassess the current budget and confirm additional funding will not be available.

You should also get a sense of how crucial the subrecipient is to the project. What if the subrecipient is not able to perform due to political or safety issues in country? Does the department have an alternate plan?

Project risk assessment is about having a deep understanding of the individual scenario and tailoring a plan to the specificities of the risk. Look at the totality of the circumstances and have an open dialogue with the PI about options. Document your conversations and get a written guarantee from the department chair accepting the risk and confirming that they are willing to use department funds to fill in financial gaps in the event there are unallowable charges to the grant, there is a cost overrun, or the subrecipient fails to perform. Departments may also need to purchase additional insurance.

We have focused on foreign performance sites as a major project risk issue because that issue is illustrative of how to approach all four of the risk issues we outlined at the beginning of the article. The remaining three we will discuss in more detail in the next article:

- Subrecipient is performing an interventional clinical trial
- Subrecipient’s budget is more than 50% of the overall project
- The parties are exchanging sensitive intellectual property (i.e. patent pending material or material the government has determined to be sensitive)

These three project risk factors are best addressed during contract drafting and negotiations. Notwithstanding, you should have detailed conversations with your PI to understand the subrecipient’s scope of work and their ability to carry out the project given the circumstances.

In managing high risk subrecipients, you may want to consider adding the cost of a desk audit to your proposal. Under Uniform Guidance, PTEs may budget for desk audits as part of the grant budget. The desk audit is only allowable when the subrecipient is not subject to the single audit requirements of Uniform Guidance (e.g. they expend less than $750,000 USD per year in federal monies). A desk audit is a more informal audit, looking at the expenses directly related to the project, so the commitment of time and funding should be relatively minimal. Subrecipient monitoring under Uniform Guidance is new and a little daunting in its administrative complexity to many investigators. Thus, providing some thoughtful, but brief

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**Stephanie Stone** is a Manager on the Post-Award team in Research Management at Partners HealthCare. Stephanie holds degrees from the University of Michigan and the University of San Diego-School of Law and is a licensed attorney in Massachusetts. She can be reached at sestone@partners.org
UNIFORM GUIDANCE ESTABLISHES NEW UCA CALCULATION

With the implementation of OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards 2 CFR Part 200, or Uniform Guidance (UG), all Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) are now eligible to receive the UCA rate. While the UG does not change the methodology used to allocate O&M costs—utilities included—to Organized Research (OR), the UG now requires all IHE's on the long form to calculate and justify the UCA up to a cap of 1.3 points.

Reaction to the new calculation of the UCA rate in the UG is varied. The Council on Government Relations (COGR) indicated in their response to OMB-2015-0001, that the section in the UG related to calculating the UCA “…may be the single most confusing section of Uniform Guidance…”. So let’s clear things up. First, it’s important to understand where the UCA came from and why it’s used at all. Then we’ll examine the calculation and show you how it’s applied through two example cases.

THE PAST – FROM UCAS TO UCA

Starting in the 1980’s colleges and universities performed Utility Cost Allocation Studies (UCAS) that distributed utility costs on a room by room basis using the results of energy audits. The Utility Cost Adjustment (UCA) was then introduced in 1998 under OMB Circular A-21 to replace the complex UCAS. The UCAS served as the basis for 65 universities included in OMB Circular A-21 Exhibit B to earn the eligibility to claim a flat 1.3 additional points in their F&A cost rate proposal; the 1.3 was added to their calculated F&A rate.

But why have a UCA at all? Within a building there are many different room types, including research labs and office spaces. A typical research lab requires 100% outside air and has four or more times the number of air changes per hour compared to an office. And, since a large percentage of energy goes into conditioning air, you start to see that there are very large differences in energy density within a building – and that is only one of many variables. The UCA is, in simplest terms, a means of addressing such energy differences without conducting detailed, room level energy audits.

Thus, with the disallowance of the UCAS in OMB Circular A-21, it became more important to identify opportunities to improve the allocation of cost by using existing utility meters, and to further optimize cost recovery with additional strategically placed meters. Building level utility meters became the tool to identify and allocate utility costs to a building.

CALCULATING UCA – WHAT IS THE REUI?

In a multifunction space where metering can’t isolate utility cost to a single function (which is most common) the UCA justification begins with the calculation of an “effective square footage”. All research laboratory space is multiplied by a Research Energy Use Index (REUI). The REUI established in the UG is 2.0, and the regulations stipulate that the REUI will be adjusted not less often than every five years, nor more frequently than every year.

The REUI weighting factor defined in the UG 2 CFR Appendix III, section B.4.c (2) (ii) B was calculated as follows:
Effective square footage is calculated by multiplying the actual research laboratory space by the REUI; utility costs are then reallocated in the same manner, but with the new proportion of areas. The overall result is more utility costs allocated to Organizational Research (OR) within the F&A rate calculation. The difference between the F&A rate calculation with the weighting factor applied and without it (all else being equal) reflects the percentage increase in the F&A rate, or the UCA. The UCA is currently capped at 1.3%.

OPTIMIZING UTILITY COST ALLOCATION

Since the Uniform Guidance went into effect, we’ve repeatedly heard two very important questions from two predominant groups of institutions. The first group represents institutions eligible for the UCA for the first time asking, “Any UCA is a windfall compared to before so I am done, right?” Whereas the second group is comprised of institutions that previously received the UCA of 1.3 points asking, “How do I maintain my UCA of 1.3 points?”

As consultants and engineers by trade, we have worked closely with the allocation of utility costs since the 1990’s, and we welcome the renewed interest in all things utility related. Keeping in mind that every IHE has its own unique blend of challenges related to the extent and types of utility metering, space assignment, and service agreements, we present two case studies that emphasize the implementation of the new UCA calculation— for institutions applying the UCA for the first time and those trying to maintain their 1.3 points—and the overall importance of utility metering and cost identification.

CASE STUDY NO. 1 – I FINALLY GET THE UCA, I'VE CALCULATED IT, SO NOW I AM DONE

IHE No. 1 was not previously eligible for the UCA. The IHE allocated all of the O&M costs equitably at the same cost density across the entire campus. Being new to the UCA, and uncertain as to the calculation, Attain was engaged to calculate the UCA (Column C) and identify utility costs to OR (Line 1 Column A). The IHE was delighted that the UCA was calculated at 1.65 points, though disappointed to learn that there would have to be an adjustment down to the 1.3 point cap. The net result was $832,000 identified to OR using the campus wide allocation, which was based on a claim there were no meters.

Because we speak “Facilities,” we were skeptical about the claims of no building meters. Not surprisingly, there were meters, but they were only being used to track energy usage for operational purposes (internal benchmarking, energy conservation tracking, etc.) rather than to track energy cost by building. So, we rolled up our sleeves, jumped into a few steam tunnels, and closely examined the distribution systems and meter data. A revised cost allocation and UCA calculation was then developed that incorporated the metered data (Line 2).

Although using the metered data resulted in a lower UCA and net loss of $29,000 (Line 3 E) related to the UCA, the combined impact was substantially offset by the gain from using the metered data to allocate utility costs to OR. This resulted in a total of $1.26M identified to OR, which represented a $426,000, or 2.1 point increase (Line 3 F) above the default methodology that the IHE was previously using.

CASE STUDY 1: DID NOT RECEIVE UCA PRIOR TO UG

Comparison of Allocation Models with the UCA
(MTDC = $20 mil)
CASE STUDY NO. 2 - WE USED TO GET 1.3 UCA POINTS. HOW DO WE MAINTAIN IT?

IHE No. 2 was one of the 65 schools permitted to add the UCA of 1.3 percentage points under OMB A-21. The default allocation (Line 1) included some metered data, and the UCA was calculated at 0.84 points, with a cost to OR of $2.2M (Line 1 F). Pulling all of the meter data out of the allocation and resorting to a uniform cost density similar to Case Study No. 1 did result in meeting the 1.3 UCA rate, but it provided the worst combined cost to OR (Line 2 F) of $1.9M. After an analysis of the IHE’s utility distribution systems, it was determined that additional building level meters would improve the overall identification of utility costs to OR (Line 3 A). Similar to Case Study No. 1, the UCA did decrease further, but the overall cost identified to OR increased an additional $351,000, or almost a point a year (Line 3 F). The added metering cost met with the institution’s requirement of a simple payback of approximately one year.

CASE STUDY 2: FORMERLY RECEIVED UCA OF 1.3 UNDER OMB A-21
Comparison of Allocation Models with the UCA
(MTDC = $50 mil)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Line</th>
<th>Allocation Bases</th>
<th>Allocation to OR of Utility &amp; Related Cost</th>
<th>UCA Impact on Cost to OR</th>
<th>Total $ to OR (POINTS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Default - Some meters</td>
<td>$1,783,000</td>
<td>$2,226,000</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maximize UCA - no metering</td>
<td>$1,198,000</td>
<td>$2,464,000</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recommended Allocation using Enhanced Meters</td>
<td>$2,192,000</td>
<td>$2,577,000</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Impact (Line 3 - 1)</td>
<td>$409,000</td>
<td>($58,000)</td>
<td>($58,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPROVING COST ALLOCATION AND RECOVERY

There are a number of metrics that can be defensibly utilized to improve cost allocation and subsequent recovery through the F&A cost rate. For the typical multifunction building, utility costs should be apportioned to function in the same manner as depreciation: identified at the building level (or for groups of buildings), and then allocated by functional activity within the building(s) based on the assignable square footage. Meters are used to track utility consumption to a building or group of buildings. Although the number of buildings that are individually metered have increased significantly over the years to track and manage energy costs and to identify opportunities to reduce energy and water waste, it is not uncommon to find additional opportunities, through additional metering or corrective action, to increase F&A recovery.

While improving cost allocation through use of metered data can improve overall cost recovery, it’s important to understand that it doesn’t always lead to the highest UCA rate. Understanding the interaction between the cost allocation methodology and UCA calculation is key.
CONCLUSIONS
It should be understood that each institution is unique, and there is not a one size fits all approach to improve the identification and recovery of utility costs to Organized Research. The calculation of the UCA presents some challenges in and of itself, and the focus should be to understand the interaction of the UCA and an institution’s allocation of utility costs. The objective should be to maximize the recovery of utility costs from the cumulative results of the prescribed allocation methodology plus the additive UCA.

When it comes to allocation methodology, utility metering is an equally important component of the evaluation because the cost of utilities (as well as costs that are related to utilities such as mechanical maintenance) normally comprise the largest component of the O&M cost pool. Therefore, it is critically important to understand the institution’s utility metering and distribution systems.

Some of the issues that should be examined might include:
- How are utility costs allocated to buildings?
- How are the utility related costs (i.e. operator costs, equipment maintenance and repair costs) tracked and assigned to utilities?
- How are line losses tracked and assigned to utilities?
- What initiatives (new buildings, new plants, or other modifications) are underway that will impact the allocation of costs?
- Is metered data defensible?

The appropriate use of existing meters, or developing a plan to implement additional meters where necessary, should be a focus of all institutions. It should be noted that building meters themselves are expensive to install and maintain properly, and so locations that provide meaningful payback should be modeled and selected carefully – do not just put meters everywhere. Finally, always remember that although the use of building level meters may reduce the UCA, the gain by using (and possibly adding) meters will likely far outweigh the benefit of a UCA, even one at the cap of 1.3 percentage points.

Tony Benigno is a Manager with Attain, LLC’s Higher Education Facilities and Administration Services Practice. Tony has more than 20 years of experience in the HVAC industry, ranging from routine assessments and troubleshooting of existing meters and collection and reporting systems, to Project Management, Commissioning, and M&V related to the identification and recovery of utility and utility related costs including, but not limited to, F&A rate proposals.

Monika Moses, PE is a Manager with Attain, LLC’s Higher Education Facilities and Administration Services Practice. Monika has more than 20 years of engineering experience, including energy benchmarking, energy utilization studies, conceptual design and implementation of metering programs, costing studies for cogeneration systems, and identification of strategies to improve the allocation of costs in the Operation and Maintenance cost pool.
Region I sends congratulations to the Region I award winners. These individuals have made substantial contributions to NCURA Region I and were recognized for their contributions at the 2016 Spring meeting.

**Distinguished Service Award**
- Vivian Holmes, Broad Institute

**Outstanding Volunteer**
- David Barnett, MIT

**Merit Award**
- Denise Moody, Harvard University

**Outstanding New Professional**
- Katherine King, Tufts University

Your region is investing in its members! We added one more national travel award this year by offering 3 ($1,000) awards. Congratulations to the 2016 NCURA National Meeting travel awardees.

- Louise Brogan, Bates College
- Brenda Pillot, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center
- Jodi Barry, Harvard University

The Curriculum Committee, chaired by Anastacia Feldman, has several workshops and two more RADGs planned for this year. The next RADG is scheduled for September 23, 2016, Case Studies: Learning from Audits.

This year’s meeting offered workshops and sessions, and discussion groups to further their knowledge of research administration, share best practices, and network with other research administrators. I would like to take the time to recognize the meeting Chair, Ted Fehskens, the Co-Chair, Katie McKeon, as well as the rest of the program committee for the outstanding job they did putting this program together.

This year’s Region II Distinguished Service Award was given to Mary Louise Healy, Director of Research Administration, Krieger School of Arts and Sciences at The Johns Hopkins University. Mary Louise is a long-time member of NCURA and has served as Chair for Region II, Co-Chair for the Pre-Award Research Administration conference in 2014, Chair for the Region II Spring Meeting in 2013, Co-Chair for the Region II Spring Meeting in 2012, and as a member of the Region II Steering Committee (most recently for a term ending in 2015) and Leadership Development and Nominating Committee (2013-2015). She is currently serving as a mentor in the Region II Cheryl-Lee Howard Mentor-Me Program and as a traveling workshop faculty member for Region II. She has presented extensively at National and regional meetings. In addition to the regional work detailed above, she is a graduate of the NCURA Leadership Development Institute and Executive Leadership Program.

I would also like to congratulate the 2016 recipients of the Region II Spring Meeting travel awards: Jane Edwards, University of Maryland College Park, and Karen Giovinniello, St. John’s University.

A final thank you to our sponsors for the 2016 Spring Meeting, Vivantech, Kuali, Huron Consulting, InfoReady, and Evisions.

Don’t forget to hold the date for the 2017 spring meeting to be held at the Gideon Resort in Saratoga Springs, NY, April 30, 2017 – May 3, 2017.

If you’d like to learn more about maximizing the benefits of your Region II membership, exploring ideas for enhancing professional development and programming, or volunteering at regional and national activities, feel free to contact me directly or through our website: http://ncuraregionii.org/contact

Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii


eedb@buffalo.edu

Erin Bailey, MSM, CRA serves as the Chair of Region II and is the Chief Financial Officer, Clinical Translational Science Award, University at Buffalo. She can be reached at cedh@buffalo.edu
In Appreciation to Outgoing Leadership
As I step into the position as Chair of Region III, it is a privilege to have worked with outgoing Chair, Danielle McElwain. I would like to thank her for guidance over the past year and look forward to working with her as Immediate Past-Chair. Thank you also to Laurianne Torres for her service as Immediate-Past Chair. Her vast contributions to the Region for the past three years will be felt for many years. We would like to thank Erica Gambrell for serving as the regionally elected member of the National NCURA Board of Directors. We wish her well as she moves to a position outside of research administration. We also would like to thank David Smelser for his service to Region III as the Chair-Appointed Executive Committee Member and we look forward to David’s continued contributions. We would like to thank the following Standing Committee Coordinators for their terms of service: Tanya Blackwell (Public Relations), Natasha Stark (Hospitality), Steve Koogler (Sponsorship), Adam Lawler (Philanthropy), Brigitte Pfister (Social Media), Nancy Thoman (Elections), and Melanie Hicks (Professional Development). We look forward to working with them in future positions.

Region III’s National Contributions
One of the remarkable traits about Region III is that our membership is comprised of professionals who are committed to the success of our profession and NCURA. This is evidenced, not only by the number of volunteers that serve at the Regional level, but also by Region III’s contributions at the National level. At this time, we proudly recognize the following members who currently hold National positions:

a. Vice-President – Barbara Gray
b. Secretary – Tony Ventimiglia
c. Immediate Past President – Michelle Vazin
d. Board of Directors – Cathy Snyder
e. Nominating and Leadership Development Committee – Debbie Smith, Kerry Peluso, Michelle Vazin
f. Professional Development Committee – Stephanie L. Gray, Rashonda Harris, Robert Holm, Laurianne Torres
g. Financial Management Committee – Linda Bucy
h. 2016 Annual Meeting Program Committee – Barbara Gray (Chair), Cynthia Hope (Co-Chair), Jilda Garton, Kerry Peluso, Linda Bucy, Tricia Callahan, Pamela Napier
i. 2016 PRV/FRA Program Committee Co-Chair – Laurianne Torres
j. NCURA Magazine Co-Editor – David Smelser
k. NCURA Magazine Copy Editor – Jennifer Webster
l. NCURA Magazine Contributing Editor – Pamela Napier
m. Research Management Review Editor – Jo Ann Smith
n. Research Management Review Editorial Assistant – Brigitte Pfister, Beryline Temples

To get more involved contact Sandy Barber, Volunteer Coordinator at sandy.barber@business.gatech.edu

Kay Gilstrap, C.R.A., is Chair of Region III and serves as Grants & Contracts Officer III at Georgia State University. She can be reached at kgilstrap@gsu.edu

The Annual Meeting (AM 58) in August is sure to be a success. There are many ways Region IV members can get involved. The popular DC After Dark tour bus provides a great way to see the monuments at night. The Region IV dinner group offers a fun way to connect with your NCURA family. Region IV shirts will be sold at the meeting so be sure to sport your new look. I look forward to seeing you in DC in August!

2016 Election Results
Chair-Elect Katherine Durben, Marquette University
Treasurer Elect Gayn Classemann-Ryan, Indiana University
Secretary Katie Shortgen, Eastern Michigan University
At-Large Board Members
Tricia Callahan, Miami University (Ohio)
Sue Grimes, Purdue University
Nicole Nichols, Washington University

Other Board Members
Chair Diane Hillebrand, University of North Dakota
Past Chair Kirsten Yehl, Northwestern University
Treasurer Bonniejean Zitske, University of Wisconsin-Madison
At-Large Board Members
Charlie Giese, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Patience Graybill Condellone, Washington University in St. Louis

Regional Representative to the National Board
Craig Reynolds, University of Michigan

Diane Hillebrand, CRA is Chair of Region IV and serves as the Grants Manager for the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She can be reached at d.hillebrand@med.und.edu
What a successful meeting in Grapevine! The facility was wonderful and catered to our every need. We had 75 first time attendees and 25 new members attend the meeting. Welcome to all of you.

**Newly Elected Officers**

We would like to congratulate our newly elected officers for the 2016-2017 year: Chair-elect is **Thomas Spencer**, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Thomas stepped into his role on April 27 and will be busy coordinating the 2017 meeting to be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Our newly elected Secretary, **Tonya Pinkerton**, Texas Tech University, and At-Large Executive Committee representative, **Krystal Toups** from University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston, will begin their tenure on January 1, 2017. **Roxanne Smith Parks** from Lamar University will be serving as the Chair Appointed At Large member. Her appointment will run concurrent with my tenure as the Chair of Region V.

**Travel Award Winners**

Travel award recipients for the regional meeting included **Maria Garcia**, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston; **Lori Watts**, University of Tulsa; and **Latisha Betts**, University of Texas at Austin. Thanks to **Tribbie Sandner**, Texas A&M Agrilife Research; **Connie Barton**, UTMB-Galveston; **Beverly Endicott**, University of Central Oklahoma; and **Lizette Gonzales**, Texas A&M University Kingsville, for serving on the selection committee.

We would also like to congratulate **Robyn Taylor** from University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center on receiving a 2016 Catherine Core Minority Travel Award.

2016 has been a busy time, and the executive committee is gearing up to start making things happen. We look forward to making this a great year.

*Be sure to follow us on Facebook at NCURA Region 5 and Twitter @NCURAS*

**Shelly Berry Hebb** is the Chair of Region V and is Assistant Director of Proposal Services at Texas A&M University. She can be reached at sberry@tamu.edu

Aloha Region VI. I would like to formally congratulate **Cynthia Ruiz** from Loyola Marymount University on winning the Catherine Core Minority Travel Award and **Rocquael Gaines** from the University of California-Irvine for being our regional travel award winner for the National meeting. Congratulations to both of you. I would like to encourage more of our region members to take advantage of travel award opportunities. It is a great honor and helps tremendously with your travel budget.

As we are rapidly approaching RMHawaii2016, I would like to personally thank everyone who has contributed to the planning of this conference. Tremendous effort has gone into making sure this is an amazing conference with a stellar educational component. I am honeymoon happy and peacock proud to be the chair this year helping make all of this happen.

If you have yet to book your flight to Hawaii, be sure to go to the region VI website and take advantage of our discounted rate with Hawaiian Airlines. You will also find the link for Speedi Shuttle for ground transportation to and from Kauai Airport, OGG, on the island of Maui. Our goal is to make this conference affordable for everyone. It is my sincere desire that you all find these links useful for your conference travel planning.

It’s still not too late to sign up for workshops. You can find the workshop listings on our Region VI website. Movie night and guest luau tickets can be purchased in advance. All attendees must purchase a movie night ticket. Luau tickets can be purchased for guests: $125 for adults and $85.00 for children under the age of thirteen. We have designed this event with families in mind. We would love to have you join in the festivities.

We are also seeking volunteers for the conference. Our volunteer spot will be active shortly. We need your participation to help make this conference a success. Please contact Allison Ramos, Angie Karchmer or Samantha Aleshire for additional information regarding volunteer opportunities. I will definitely have them put you to work in Hawaii.

Until Hawaii, Mahalo!

**Derick Jones** is Chair of Region VI and serves as program manager for the Institute for Translational Genomics and Population Science at LA BioMed. He can be reached at derickjones@labiomed.org

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“Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it. Autograph your work with excellence.” – Author Unknown

Aloha! As we get closer to our fall meeting in Maui, efforts have been seriously ramped up. I am simply amazed at everyone’s effort. The preliminary program is now out, so please take some time and review it. Rooms are filling fast so be sure to book now. Remember, our goal is to have a very interactive, fun, and engaging meeting. This will be a meeting to remember!

The National Meeting is right around the corner. With that, I am happy to announce our travel award recipient for the national meeting. Please join me in congratulating Karen Kimes from the University of Colorado – Denver. We also have our two Regional Meeting recipients selected. Please join me in congratulating Sarah Alexander from the University of Utah, and Laura Stewart-Burch from Idaho State University. I am excited to see you all at the meetings!

Continuing with the congratulations, I would also like to announce this year’s Catherine Core Minority Travel Award recipient from Region VII, Mia McNulty from Arizona State University. Congratulations to all of Region VII’s travel awardees.

In May, Derick Jones, chair of Region VI, and I travelled to Anchorage, Alaska to do a site visit. The city rolled out the red carpet to us and the city has much to offer as a potential site for a joint regional meeting. I am confident there will be more to come on this.

Remember, our upcoming meeting theme is Connecting the World Through Research Administration. What better way to embrace this theme than by joining us by the beach! Maui sunsets, awesome networking, and having a meeting at the Grand Wailea will be fantastic. It’s still not too late to sign up for our workshops. We are offering some fantastic topics and speakers.

To help, we have partnered with Hawaiian Airlines for discounted flights. We are also working with local companies for discounted transportation rates. All this is in addition to discounted rates offered by the hotel. Our goal is to make this meeting as affordable as possible, and we have designed this meeting with families in mind. For example, come check out our movie night on Monday. Tickets can be purchased in advance as well as for our luau on Tuesday.

Volunteers are needed also for the conference. Tolise Miles has graciously volunteered to be our new volunteer coordinator for the region.

Please make sure you visit our webpage often for upcoming announcements. I hope to see you in DC in August and Hawaii in October.

Marj Townsend serves as Region VII Chair and is the Research Advancement Manager for the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University. She can be reached at Marj.Townsend@asu.edu

A good reason to cheer!

This is the fifth official year of Region VIII, and certainly worth an anniversary toast with a glass of champagne!

In February 2011, the International Region was established. The mission was: “… to give a sense of identity and community to NCURA Members located outside the U.S…. The International Region facilitates the flow of information and collaboration between international members and the colleagues in the U.S.”

This mission is still going strong:

Since 2011 a sound base of our members has developed. We are now 112 members in Region VIII. With the successful meeting in Zurich in September 2015 – thanks to the engagement of Annika Glauner and Agatha Keller – we have also established a sound financial base. Thus we are able - for the first time – to establish two travel awards in 2016 of $1000 each:

The NCURA International Region Travel Award reimburses travel, registration and hotel expenses up to $1,000 for one Region VIII research administrator to attend an NCURA Annual Meeting which takes place in Washington, D.C. in August each year.

The NCURA International Region Travel Award for one research administrator to attend the joint meeting of Regions VI, VII, and VIII in Maui, Hawaii, 2-5 October 2016. It reimburses travel, registration and hotel expenses up to $1000. Please look at our website - www.ncuraintlregion.org for details.

We are pleased to announce a Business Meeting for all Region VIII Members at the 58th Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. It will take place on Monday, 8th of August 2016 from 3:00 – 3:45 pm. Please keep your eyes open for the location announcement on the AM Program.

The business meeting is targeted at our Regional VIII members, however, all NCURA AM members are welcome to join. Led by the Region’s chair, Eva Björndal, she will introduce current and incoming new officers and share ongoing regional initiatives and new ideas.

We cordially invite our members to join, get to know each other, and network. We are looking forward to meeting you!

Best regards!
Susanne Rahner and Siegfried Huemer

Susanne Rahner, member of Region VIII as of 2011, treasurer 2011-2016, EARMA Ambassador, founder and chief executive of YGGDRASIL, Berlin, Germany. Susanne is active in environmental management, international project management and trainings. She can be reached at info@yggdrasil-dr-rahner.de

Siegfried Huemer, member of Region VIII as of 2012, treasurer-elect 2016, EARMA Ambassador, Head of the EU Research Support unit at Vienna University of Technology, Austria. He can be reached at siegfried.huemer@tuwien.ac.at
Success in the engineering laboratory opened an unexpected door to the world of forensic science for one undergraduate at Carolina. Shana Mussel, who will earn her bachelor’s degree later this year, excelled in computer assisted design (CAD) in her mechanical engineering curriculum. It was a skill that her professor Joshua Tarbutton knew would carry her to success in a forensic reconstruction project he agreed to oversee last summer.

Through connections in the community, Tarbutton had learned about a death row inmate, near the end of his appeals, who needed help in the courtroom. Convicted of murder more than 20 years ago, the inmate has been trying to establish his contention that he did not know he was being confronted by a police officer and had been startled at the time of the shooting. He tried to reconstruct the shooting scene with a model to make the point, but the cardboard contraption he managed to assemble in prison didn’t do much to strengthen his argument.

At the behest of Justice 360, a non-profit that provides quality legal representation to death row inmates, Tarbutton enlisted Mussel to re-create the scene of the crime. Using forensic photographs and other evidence, she modeled the house and porch from which the police officer was shot using Sketchup, a three-dimensional modeling platform to which her CAD skills were readily transferred. They then brought the scene to life through 3-D printing, generating a scale model of the house, its porch and the two men involved.

Tarbutton and Mussel then prepared a report based on the geometry of the shooting established by the evidence. It showed that the inmate’s view of the officer was obscured when he fired, and that his gun was fired from the hip.

Those conclusions could make a difference for a man whose life hangs in the balance, and a hearing on the case is expected later this year. If a new trial takes place, both engineers likely will testify.

Mussel won’t appear as a surprise witness in court by any means, except perhaps to herself. “Possibly saving a man’s life, through being an engineer — that’s pretty cool,” Mussel says. “Definitely not something you think you’ll be doing with this kind of degree.”

Originally published at: http://sc.edu/uofsc/posts/2016/04/tarbutton_mussel_forensic_reconstruction.php#.V172FqLDsrh
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