THE PRISM OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

▲ Same Same, But Different
▲ Protecting Sensitive Data: A Team Approach
▲ Research Shared Services: A Case Study in Implementation
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By remembering this, we will all be more effective in our roles as research administrators. Everyone can be happy with. As a valued colleague taught me years ago, “We might not be able to do it your way, but we can find a way to get it done.” We know that in research administration there are more perspectives on a given situation than we can possibly count. A major part of that reality is that there are so many stakeholders in the research enterprise. Vice chancellors and presidents often see situations from the perspective of reporting numbers to the board of trustees. Compliance officers often see situations from the perspective of risk. Faculty members often see situations from the perspective of what most benefits their scholarly activity. The list of ways to view a single situation goes on and on.

This issue will dive into various aspects of research administration and makes a special effort to look at many situations from the other side. In “We Are the Prism,” Jeanne Viviani and Sarah Brown goetz talk about the importance of understanding the entire institution’s operation. We as research administrators must be able guide a faculty member to the next step, whether it is in procurement, human resources, etc. Laura Plant Fuentes does a wonderful job providing insight into the life of a PI in her article, “Perspective with a PhD.” Very few of us have first-hand understanding of what faculty members go through to conduct research, so hearing it from someone who has lived it is very eye-opening. A growing need for understanding different perspectives is highlighted in the article “Same Same, But Different” by Simon Kerridge and Judy Fredenberg, which focuses on international collaborations. As research activities continue to expand and cross borders, the intricacy of varying perspectives also expands.

As the American writer Edmund Wilson said, “No two persons ever read the same book.” We all see the world through our own unique lenses. By remembering this, we will all be more effective in our roles as research administrators.

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 dsmelser@utk.edu
Hello NCURA friends and colleagues. This issue’s theme, “The Prism of Research Administration,” focuses on the importance of understanding topics from a variety of perspectives. With that in mind, I thought it would be good to share what I see while looking at NCURA. What does our organization look like through my eyes while serving as President?

As I look across all of NCURA’s activities, it’s a pretty amazing sight. Many of us are well aware of the outstanding professional development opportunities offered every year. Spring is one of the peak times for offerings, including FRA, PRA, and most regional meetings. All of the programs are full of interesting and informative sessions led by our colleagues who are eager to share their successes and challenges.

Attending a NCURA national meeting or the spring regional conferences is a great chance to learn and network. Unfortunately, institutional budgets are not always able to provide travel funding for all of our members. I’m happy to report that at its January meeting, the Executive Committee launched the “NCURA National Conference Travel Awards” program to provide limited financial assistance for US and global members to attend an annual meeting, FRA, or PRA.

In addition to the on-site training, I also see the numerous online offerings as well as the publications. And, yes, I do see my copy of NCURA’s Uniform Guidance Desk Reference, stuffed with post-it notes, always sitting on my desk.

Beyond professional development, part of our core mission is to advance the field of research administration. NCURA continues to be at the forefront in this area. Did you know that NCURA played a key role in the development of masters programs in research administration? Through a seed grant program, NCURA help fund the start-up of these programs at universities around the country. As research administrators continue to enroll in the programs, NCURA’s commitments have also grown. The Education Scholarship Fund committee is continuing its fund-raising activities with the intent of providing financial assistance to members enrolling in these programs.

Recently, we also launched a beta program dedicated to providing grants to NCURA members and faculty to study areas focused on research administration. The first NCURA Research Grants were issued in December to four worthy proposals and our first set of “NCURA PIs” are hard at work on their awards. Congratulations to our new PIs and it will be interesting to hear if their new role as a PI will give them a different perspective on their research administration roles. I’m looking forward to reading their reports.

NCURA also recently announced the recipients of its Global Fellowship Program and the NCURA-ARMS Fellowships. Both of these programs allow members to experience first-hand what it’s like to be a research administrator in another country. Research administration is truly a global profession with these selected fellows going on-site to various institutions in the USA, Australia, South Africa, Switzerland, and Ireland.

So, what do I see when I look at NCURA? I see a growing group of active, excited members participating in professional development programs (too many to count) and an organization committed to building our profession. I’m happy to be part of NCURA and look forward to continuing to work with all of you.

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
As we well know, research administration is one of the least black and white professions around and one of the most complex. Ask a compliance or administration question of your superior and you will undoubtedly receive the unofficial RA motto “it depends.” Though the answer can be frustrating, it’s most often the case. “I have an award from NIH – does it fall under PHS FCOI rules?” Sure! Except if it’s an SBIR Phase I, of course. “Can I charge clerical salaries as a direct cost to my award?” Well, generally no, unless they meet the criteria under 2 CFR 200.413. This “if then, then maybe” realm we live in can leave even the most seasoned administrators shaking their head. So when the rules are a bit ambiguous (Conflict of Interest, 2 CFR 200.112, anyone?) institutions often rely on benchmarking. While some are quite conservative, others take it to the edge of the cliff without going over (hopefully!), and some are in between. There is fine merit in all three approaches, but the question is, how do you decide?

Enter the importance of understanding effective practices. If someone asked you what an effective practice was in an area of research administration you are closely tied to, how would you answer it? Would you answer it based on your own opinion, or perhaps you’d base it on what your institution sees as an effective practice, or maybe you’d answer it based on your own experience. Answering this question is akin to explaining “reasonable efforts.” It’s complex and subjective. What may be your point of view on the matter, may not be that of others, including faculty from your own institution, and it will most definitely need to be tested over many varying practices before becoming an “effective practice.” Even if it’s effective today, it may be less than effective tomorrow.

Advancements in science and technology have its advantages, but with advancement come more regulation and another practice to implement effectively. As mentioned earlier, Conflict of Interest rules are a prime example. As noted in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, §200.112 Conflict of interest, “The Federal awarding agency must establish conflict of interest policies for Federal awards. The non-Federal entity must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with applicable Federal awarding agency policy.” Since the effective date of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, hereinafter 2 CFR 200, few agencies have implemented policies while some became effective prior to 2 CFR 200. The vast amount of agencies are incorporating COI language into Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs), Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs), or grant award terms and conditions, all absent a glossary of terms. While some institutions have noted success in pushing back citing indifferences in areas such as disclosure requirement timelines, requiring disclosures from everyone under the sun (even those who have no part in the research), it will take patience and perseverance. Funding announcements will need to be updated from previous boilerplate language, and federal employees may be struggling themselves to make sense of the combo COI plate served up in 2 CFR 200, i.e., procurement COI or scientific (for a better word) COI. Complicating matters is the introduction of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) like language. Although not specifically indicated that FAR is introduced, organizational conflict of interest language in some funding announcements and agency policies (e.g., EPA) emulates that in FAR 9.5 and makes several appearances in in other areas equally worthy as standalone topics (e.g., negotiating profit, cost/price analysis), albeit absent federal expectations.

Creating effective practices around ineffective regulations, absent government expectations, creates more undue burden, circular conversations, countless hours lost, and ultimately penalizes the research enterprise as a whole. In the interim while we continue to work things out, we should be prepared for the worst, no changes from Uncle Sam, and a plan B, C and D. Consensus from research institutions on both a scientific policy, one like
the NSF, and a separate one or terminology for organizational conflicts of interest for financial assistance agreements and contracts should be fleshed out now. As easy as it is to take exception, it is more difficult to take control, get in front of the issue and put forth a policy that all can agree to, both public and private institutions.

Making an effective practice in this area may be undetermined for many more months. It is unlikely that the language in 2 CFR 200 will change given that individual agencies have been given the latitude to develop their own policies.

...get in front of the issue and put forth a policy that all can agree to, both public and private institutions.

Until now, it appears that the only win in an effective practice in this area might be to point out the inconsistencies where applicable in funding announcements, pushing for an elimination of disclosures at the application stage and an immediate family definition, consistent with PHS? In short, you could say I’m conflicted about conflicts of interest. Catchy, right?

So, research administrator: Where do you start? I’d be remiss if I didn’t make a plug for COGR’s soon to be released publication Managing Externally Funded Research Programs: A Guide to Effective Management Practices. Last published in July 2009 (see www.cogr.edu/Effective-Management-Practices), we have been working hard to update the entire guide with consideration to new federal policies and regulations. In addition, the revised guide will have several hyperlinks throughout for ease of navigation. It’s been a monumental effort of many fine, seasoned professionals at several of the most research intensive institutions in the nation. Look for the revised guide to go ‘live’ on our website at www.cogr.edu in Spring 2016. In the meantime, COGR’s website has a plethora of information on various research compliance and administration topics you can access at www.cogr.edu.

Cheers!

Jackie Bendall is the Director of Research Compliance and Administration for the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR). She comes to COGR with over 22 years of research administration experience in both public and private academic settings. She works with the COGR membership on a variety of research compliance matters in areas such as human subjects and animal research, data management and access, misconduct in research, select agent regulations, etc. She can be reached at jbendall@cogr.edu

NCURA Magazine Seeks Co-Editor

The NCURA Magazine seeks applicants for the position of Co-Editor. The volunteer position is a three year term, beginning January 1, 2017. The Co-Editors work with the Managing Editor, Senior Editor, and Contributing Editors in ensuring the timely release of six issues during the calendar year.

Each Co-Editor works closely with 3-4 Contributing Editors. Applicants should be senior research administrators with strong writing and editing skills and strong connections within NCURA and associated professional associations (such as COGR, FDP, etc.). We expect to have a candidate selected by the early summer so that the new Co-Editor can work with the existing Co-Editors, Managing Editor, and Senior Editor, in ensuring an orderly transition.

Individuals interested in the position should contact either Managing Editor Marc Schiffman at schiffman@ncura.edu or Senior Editor Pat Hawk at patricia.hawk@oregonstate.edu

NCURA Magazine

supporting research...together™

March/April 2016 5
As research administrators we need to be subject matter experts, institutional protectors, counselors, investigators, data analysts, and project managers. Our jobs revolve around all manner of institutional data, policies, and processes, not to mention having a clear understanding of the same from those agencies – public and private, small to large – that are outside our institutions. Contracts, compliance, and regulations are complex and require us to be vigilant and stay current on changes and trends. However, all Research Administrators (RA) eventually become the locus of knowledge for all processes that intersect with the administration of grants and contracts.

In large centralized offices that manage heavy workloads, administrators need to focus on sponsored research policies and procedures. They are expert resources for sponsored research operations but not particularly helpful when asked by a novice PI how to purchase items on their grants. The RA may quote Uniform Guidance information, but then refer that PI to procurement or to their department or college level coordinator to get the actual answer on how to make a purchase.

While it is important for us to be the sponsored research experts, part of that expertise is understanding why it works the way it works at our institutions. As a research administrator who works with proposal development I need to know how our Human Resources (HR) system works, what institutional polices direct our hiring practices, where one can find salary schedules, and how one accounts for projected rate increases. This micro expertise is required for travel, procurement, and student funding as well (just to name a few).

**From Subject Matter Experts to Institutional Gurus**

Since RAs are distribution centers for institutional knowledge it is sometimes surprising to find ourselves working with colleagues across all functions with a profound lack of knowledge about how our institutions work. A common response seen when working with someone who doesn’t have (what we would consider to be) a basic understanding of how our institution works is to shrug it off, absorb that work, and do what needs to get done in order to complete the task at hand. In particular those of us who work in smaller organizations respond this way. It often falls on us to hold this organizational knowledge because our institutions typically lack the kind of campus-wide training where these policies and procedures would be taught. When we do this, we miss perfect opportunities to educate and build allies of our colleagues as well as ensuring the work they do is most effective. If one’s range of experience is limited by the job they are tasked to do on a daily basis, we can’t always expect them to be one hundred percent effective in their job but we can certainly help them move towards this.

Consider these individuals for example: the travel coordinator for the Institute of Health Information Technology who does not know how a contract is negotiated with a vendor; the PI with an 8 million dollar sea slug grant who does not need (or want) to know how the institution calculates fringe benefits for its research assistants; the HR consultant who does not know what export control means. When we shift our viewpoint we can see that we hold this knowledge for them so that they can focus their time and energy on their area of expertise. We may not know every single nuanced detail of travel, sea slugs, or HR, but we know enough to communicate our needs and to educate them on contract negotiations, fringe rate calculations and export control compliance.

It goes without saying that research administration is complex. In a perfect partnership the PI will trust the RA to manage the business end of a project while she focuses on the science. This is ideal and can be difficult to achieve because of the different perspectives brought to the relationship.

**The pathway to that perfect partnership is through mutual education.** Learning about our institutions is critical but reading outdated webpages and policies does little to help. Spend time getting out of the office and visit faculty labs and departments. The lab is where you experience the passion our researchers have for their projects. All that they do and all that they are is wrapped up in that specific project but to the office bound RA that project is only one of the many awards in their portfolio needing management. Is it any wonder that the PI

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**WE ARE THE PRISM:**

**It’s All about Perspective**

By Jeanne M. Viviani & Sarah Browngoetz
approaches our involvement in her lifework as cumbersome? Particularly if we show no interest in it other than how it impacts the bottom line for our institution.

Instead, go to the labs or out in the field. Demonstrate an interest in the work. This is where collegiality lives. This is the environment in which real change can happen. This is the starting point for changing your reputation from the annoying bureaucrat impeding the research to the partner who is trusted to guide PIs through the bureaucracy, ensuring smooth management and compliance. Indeed, a little perspective and understanding of research administration, you might find opportunities for improvement that were not considered before by the PI. Our jobs are to be of service just as much as it is to be gatekeepers.

You must build trust. Nurture relationships with your researchers in such a way that they have the opportunity to experience and benefit from your expertise. Own the narrative of what you do for your researchers. This can be as easy as guiding a new researcher through their first application for funding or as difficult as hammering out a negotiation that has been confounding your institution for several months (dare we say years). Researchers appreciate data and find comfort in it, particularly if that data helps them understand a bureaucratic process. Fix a problem and tell them how you fixed it. This creates an expectation that you can help. When you use your knowledge to help a PI navigate a tricky purchase or justify a change in the scope of work you are educating them to regard you as a valuable resource.

Listen to your researchers. Give them the opportunity to teach you about their process. This can be very revealing. As they talk about their project, notice what they choose to share with you. This is where your expertise really shines. Your multifaceted understanding of how research is funded and how those funds are administered will make it easy for you to determine areas of uncertainty for that particular researcher. This points an arrow at the areas where you may be able to clarify the process for him. If a researcher will talk your ear off about a project plan but gives a one word answer when you ask about their budget you might surmise that they could use some help with their budget planning. Your expertise is hard won; be willing to share it with your PI’s and colleagues.

We can help PIs to understand work flow and provide insight or helpful suggestions on better and efficient methods for ordering supplies or hiring students. We hold this knowledge so that our faculty doesn’t have to. Our faculty can educate us about why their research is so important and what kind of impact it will have on our communities, within our country and around the world.

True impact comes from forming partnerships not only with those we serve and those we are responsible to but by reaching out to areas that are not traditionally in the research administration domain. Assisting a PI complete a travel form saves her time, conveys your expertise and reinforces your status as a partner in her pursuit of research funding. It builds confidence in you and showcases your project management skills. Most importantly, it builds your professional capacity and allows you to gather experience to suit your career goals.

Jeanne M. Viviani is the Contracts & Grants Manager at Florida Polytechnic University, a brand new university in the State University System. She has been a research administrator for over 12 years and has established sponsored research offices at Florida Poly and New College of Florida. She can be reached at jviviani@flpoly.org

Sarah Brown got z is the Pre-Award Grant Analyst for the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration at University of Alaska Fairbanks. She has over 20 years of experience working for universities and grant funded non-profits. She is also a member of the NCURA Pre-Award Collaborative Community. She can be reached at jviviani@flpoly.org
Hawaii is known as the “melting pot of the Pacific” because so many diverse cultures and ethnicities reside on one of Hawaii’s six major islands where they live, learn, and work amongst one another in the same neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Research Administration at the University of Hawaii (UH) is also a melting pot where ten campuses are organized under one system structure and all utilize the services of the University’s Office of Research Services (ORS) to support research projects and training activities. In order to deliver customized services to UH researchers and staff, ORS houses a main administrative office as well as five service centers:
1. ORS Manoa Service Center, located at the flagship Manoa campus on O‘ahu
2. ORS Kaka‘ako Service Center, located at the medical school and cancer center on O‘ahu
3. ORS West O‘ahu Service Center, located at the West O‘ahu campus on O‘ahu
4. ORS Maui Service Center, located at Maui College on Maui, and which also provides services to Kaua‘i Community College, located on the island of Kaua‘i
5. ORS Hilo Service Center, located at the Hilo campus on the island of Hawaii

While all of ORS’ Service Centers handle essential Research Administration functions, such as proposal submission, award review and negotiation, post-award award modifications, and report submissions, their structures vary. ORS Service Centers are made up of Grants Specialists, who are responsible for proposal submission and grant processing, as well as Contracts Specialists, who are responsible for the review and negotiation of contractual agreements. The Grants Specialist positions require a grant development background while the Contracts Specialist positions require a legal background. There are also Contracts and Grants Specialists, hybrid positions that handle everything Grants Specialists and Contract Specialists do, essentially stewarding an award through its life cycle, from cradle to grave. The Contracts and Grants Specialist backgrounds tend to be broader than the other positions, and require a Research Administration background ranging from grant development, project management, fiscal management, and even compliance experience. The Kaka‘ako, West O‘ahu, Maui and Hilo Service Centers are made up entirely of Contracts and Grants Specialists who handle all aspects of an award, other than duties taken care of by ORS’ main administrative office, such as accounting, financial services, compliance, cost studies, and IT support.

At a glance, the position titles are similar and may appear to cover the same duties, however, upon closer analysis, the responsibilities are quite different. In addition, each campus has its own unique needs. For example, the community college campuses within the UH system tend to initiate more collaborative projects that involve education and training activities while the four-year campuses tend to focus on individual research activities. Therefore, the demands of Grants, Contracts or hybrid Specialists will differ depending upon which campus they are supporting.

The ORS Manoa Service Center staffs mostly Grants Specialists and Contracts Specialists with fewer Contracts and Grants Specialists. The reason for this dates back to the inception of ORS at UH. Manoa was the first UH campus to require research administration assistance, and many years ago, as a response to those needs, ORS organized its staff into divisions in order to handle the various phases of proposals and awards. For example,
during the proposal phase, PIs work with a Grants Specialist, and then a Contracts Specialist during the review and negotiation phase of their award. The goal of this strategy was to create experts for each phase of a project, as a proposal moved from submission to the award stages. The PIs would need to determine which phase their project was in to determine which ORS division to work with.

As sponsored funding continued to grow at UH and more campuses became actively involved in funding their research and training activities with extramural funds, ORS shifted its strategy in order to provide a “one-stop-shop” to better serve the research community. At this time ORS began to hire Contracts and Grants Specialists, the hybrid model, in order for one specialist to oversee the life of an award, from cradle to grave. Today, the ORS Contracts and Grants Specialists are assigned to schools within UH rather than assigned to handle a specific phase of an award and/or agency. The benefits to this strategy allow for the PIs and their staff to work with one ORS Specialist regardless of the stage of their project, and the Specialist becomes intimately familiar with each project, as they are more involved from the project brainstorming and development phase, to the funding phase, through progress reporting, site reviews and finally, award close-out. ORS has observed that this model appears to be a great way to build trust with the PIs and their staff while continuing to develop ORS specialists’ own knowledge and skills. Consequently, as ORS established more Service Centers across UH campuses in order to respond to the emerging needs of the UH research enterprise, and as ORS created new positions within its Manoa Service Center, Contracts and Grants Specialists have been hired.

Exhibit 1 characterizes a sample day of each type of ORS Specialist. With an underlying commitment to customer service, the specialists share commonalities in their activities such as making time to plan their day and then, shortly thereafter, dropping everything to manage rush scenarios that suddenly materialize. Differences in their activities stem from a primary focus on proposal submissions and incoming awards, a review of contracts, or a one-stop-shop position that handles the entire proposal and award process, including PI/field training and education.

**Exhibit 1:** A sample day in the life of University of Hawai‘i Office of Research Services Specialists

### Grants Specialist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Retrieve myGRANT report of upcoming proposals due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 am</td>
<td>Start to review and submit proposals ready for submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 am</td>
<td>Contact PI for proposal status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am</td>
<td>Remind PI’s office that campus approvals are needed before proposal can be submitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Contracts Specialist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Prioritize contracts pending review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15 am</td>
<td>Start to review contracts in order of priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10 am</td>
<td>Drop everything, rush contract just in that needs expedited review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 am</td>
<td>Contact sponsor regarding problematic contract language, propose alternate language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Handle phone call from PI who is concerned problematic contract language under negotiation may delay project implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50 am</td>
<td>Initiate forms for UH Legal Counsel to advise on contract language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 am</td>
<td>Research updates to specific FARs and DFARs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15 pm</td>
<td>Contact PI to discuss research project and assess risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>Contact sponsor regarding problematic contract language, propose alternate language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:50 pm</td>
<td>Draft compliance memos, submit contracts for approval and signature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:35 pm</td>
<td>Drop everything, rush contract in that needs priority review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15 pm</td>
<td>Go back to contract reviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

more than one approach exists for organizing the essential functions of research administration within a university’s sponsored projects office

Exhibit 1: A sample day in the life of University of Hawai‘i Office of Research Services Specialists
## Work Smart in Proposal Development

*By Karen Fletcher and Katie Howard*

Cloud and document sharing capabilities keep lines of communication open, allowing proposal managers to work smarter and increase efficiency. The real-time editing and chat features of the (mostly free!) programs below keep you organized and connected.

### Documents:
Uploading or creating documents on a shared drive allow users to co-edit a document simultaneously. Just think—you could view your PI’s most up-to-date proposal in real time! For version control, share documents in view-only mode or only allow suggestions. Some programs auto-save so you don’t need to worry about losing your work, and you can revert to older versions if needed. [Google Docs | EtherPad | Zoho Writer | ThinkFree | Word 2016]

### Worksheets:
Upload Excel files or create a new spreadsheet in a shared drive. These programs mirror the same basic features as Excel so the learning curve is minimal for those familiar with Microsoft Office. Color-coded edits and corrections make working with your colleagues a breeze! Great for tracking data or reporting. [Zoho Docs | ThinkFree | Google Sheets]

### Presentations:
Working on a collaborative presentation for the next NCURA meeting? Create or import presentations on a shared drive. Insert images and videos using programs that work like the familiar Office Suite. Zoho Show transcribes speech to text on screen and allows you to talk to your audience within the presentation window. [Google Slides | ThinkFree | Zoho Show]

Etherpad: [www.etherpad.org](http://www.etherpad.org)
Google Drive: [www.google.com/drive](http://www.google.com/drive)
ThinkFree: [www.thinkfree.com](http://www.thinkfree.com)
Zoho: [www.zoho.com](http://www.zoho.com)
Microsoft Office (for a fee): [www.office.com](http://www.office.com)

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### Contracts and Grants Specialist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Retrieve myGRANT report of upcoming proposals due; prioritize proposal reviews and contracts pending review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15 am</td>
<td>Review and respond to email inquiries regarding various questions from field that came in overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Attend proposal development meeting with PI and team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:05 am</td>
<td>Take phone call from PI regarding award regulations and Uniform Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 am</td>
<td>Drop everything, rush proposal just in that needs to be submitted before 5:00 pm EST (six hours ahead of Hawai‘i time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:55 am</td>
<td>Assist PI with myGRANT proposal submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 am</td>
<td>Drop everything, received contract that requires expedited review, review and submit for signature ASAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:55 am</td>
<td>Update PI on status of an award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 pm</td>
<td>Hold proposal development brown bag training session on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 pm</td>
<td>Record newly issued grant in myGRANT; notify PI of a new award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:10 pm</td>
<td>Polycom with an ORS Contracts Specialist to get input on problematic contract language; contact sponsor to propose alternate language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:40 pm</td>
<td>Walk-in meeting with PI regarding ideas to strengthen a proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 pm</td>
<td>Review and submit post-award PI change request to sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
<td>Phone call with fiscal administrator regarding allowable costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:40 pm</td>
<td>Record new contract in myGRANT, begin review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 pm</td>
<td>Draft compliance memo, submit contract for approval and signature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:50 pm</td>
<td>Contact PI for proposal status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, more than one approach exists for organizing the essential functions of research administration within a university’s sponsored projects office. The Office of Research Services staffs a melting pot of specialists located throughout the University of Hawai‘i system, housed across islands and over waters. This multi-faceted strategy allows ORS to respond to the blend of needs each campus presents. 🌴

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**Cheryl Reesser** is Contracts and Grants Specialist at the University of Hawai‘i’s Office of Research Services Maui Service Center, located at the University of Hawai‘i Maui College campus. Cheryl has been in her current position for five years and has worked at the University of Hawai‘i in the field of Research Administration for 16 years. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and a Master’s degree in Educational Technology, both earned at the University of Hawai‘i. Cheryl can be reached at reesser@hawaii.edu

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**Have a Work Smart tip to share with your colleagues?** Contact Co-Editor David Smelser at dsmelser@utk.edu
Are you looking for a Research Administration Toolkit?

Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Recommended Practices

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- Research Compliance
- Organizations Models
- Information Systems
- Pre-Award Administration
- Administering Research Contracts
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- F&A Costs
- Interacting with Auditors
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By the Numbers
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Finally, the economy is rebounding in your region. At your university, there is definitely an uptick in the volume of contracts for research, technical services, material transfers, confidentiality, and more. A high-functioning contract team must keep the agreements—and the dollars that come with them—flowing smoothly into the university. Here are some tips to help you successfully support your university’s research mission and keep your faculty and sponsors happy: “T” it up.

Technology. If you don’t have the best technology tools, you won’t be able to do the job. Sure, if you have a spoon, you could dig a grave, but what if you had a shovel, or even better, a backhoe? Let me illustrate.

Let’s say you keep your contracts in paper form in hanging files, with no electronic system. Or you have an electronic system that stores the electronic contracts. Neither system allows you to extract important data in summary form in anything but a dinosaur fashion. As trends shift and workloads change, you aren’t aware and thus, you can’t readily shift resources to address needs. You lumber along. In contrast, if you had a system that allowed you, at any moment, to know how many material transfer agreements your team handled in the past three months, or how many new agreements came in last week compared to the prior month, imagine what you could do with this information. Not only could you shift workloads, you could also report new trends and significant data to your leadership.

Technology is your number one tool to help you guide your contracting team in handling high volume effectively. Pick an inadequate tool or the wrong tool, and you won’t be able to get the job done as well as if you had the best tool. Make sure your university invests in technology and make sure there is a plan in place for support and continued updates. Otherwise, you will be left doing a post-mortem with your spoon.
Talent. We all know how a single toxic employee can bring down the entire team. But when you’re dealing in high-volume work with a fast-running machine, a single mediocre employee can be your downfall. It’s like one piston gone wrong in the engine, and you choke and sputter to a dead stop. Your talent needs to be specialized to high-volume work.

Not just anyone can handle high-volume contracts. You need someone who enjoys detail, reading, and analyzing for key points. Someone who can communicate equally well in person, on the phone, and in writing. Someone who can shift between tasks and handle interruptions. Someone with a high degree of empathy for faculty concerns and needs. These are unique individuals indeed.

You can have the best tools and the smartest talent but if you don’t have teamwork, you are left with me-work…

Some people think you need an attorney to review contracts. The legal training usually doesn’t hurt, but a strategy of hiring lawyers just because they are lawyers can backfire. Some attorneys are so risk-averse that they take a lot of time, turning over every stone to find the dead frog. Who needs a dead frog? You need to focus on the living ones. If you cannot, you are back in the swamp of low-volume processing in a high-volume world. You need a personality who can quickly ascertain risk and call in the experts to assist as needed. The person should be able to move through the detail to resolve outstanding items amicably, not be an adversary over minor items. I’m a lawyer and not opposed to lawyers in the contracting business—just make sure you pick the ones with the traits for this type of work.

We cannot forget that when we are talking about negotiating the university’s research agreements, we are usually talking about funding coming into the university. At my university, 24% of our operating revenue comes through my team’s hands. It’s easy—but misguided—to think we are doing nothing more than a quick agreement to back up our next accounting entry. A deal is being struck and a relationship being built on strong communication and partnership. We have to make a positive impression on our sponsors and build our university’s reputation. This will then turn into more deals and only then will we have more accounting entries. People who are good at the detail and the communication needed for contractual relationships don’t come with a cheap price tag, or if they do, they don’t stick around very long on your team. Any smart university would invest in hiring and retaining staff who can aptly work with publically-traded organizations and multi-national companies, as well as federal entities and labs.

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 interviews like these are important. most people relish in talking about their jobs and what they like and don’t like. top-down cultures don’t work in the high-volume contracting environment, except to create unhappy workers who punch the clock, perhaps not caring as much about the importance of their work. a participatory environment keeps the machinery running well and the staff happily contributing, feeling that they are important. they are.

terms. your contracts need to be written with terms that enhance what you’re trying to accomplish. you need to make sure the language is flexible enough, yet protects your university’s interests adequately. you need to make sure that the language enhances your operations, not slows them down. there is nothing worse than getting caught on meaningless language that no one can agree on. it creates the impression that your university is a thoughtless bureaucracy.

make sure you frequently update your contractual language to keep it up to speed with the law and in line with your operations. set up a system in which you update your templates at least once a year. get feedback from your staff on the issues that your templates are drawing during negotiations and make sure you address those in the yearly revisions.

treats. you need to reward your hard-working team. treats can be anything from a bonus or a raise to teleworking privileges, extra time off, a special recognition, or even some university apparel.

i have never worked in an office where bringing in food was a bad idea. pizza lunch or a bowl of candy will do the trick. every month, i draw a name for a lunch lottery, and i take one of my team members out, saying that there is such a thing as a free lunch.

i won’t consider it a forbidden act of academic plagiarism if you “borrow” these ideas; imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and i’ve got plenty of copycats. but the point is this: follow my tips and give your talented team plenty of treats, and you will be just as rewarded.
When I was a Research Administrator

By Stephen Hansen

To paraphrase an oft-quoted verse, when I was a research administrator, I spoke like a research administrator, I understood like a research administrator, I thought like a research administrator, but when I became a chancellor, I put away my research administrator things. In putting away my responsibilities as a research administrator, I thought it might be useful to share with you some of the things I have learned about what a chancellor wants from a research administrator.

I retired from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 2012, after having served as the Director of the Office of Research and Projects for 14 years and then Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Provost for Research for another 14 years. In January of 2015, I returned to the university as the interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and in August, I was asked to serve as the interim chancellor. SIUE is a comprehensive public master's degree granting institution with 14,000 students and 600 faculty. The university currently receives around $40 million in grants and contracts, exclusive of student aid.

The perspective of research administration from the chancellor's office varies depending upon a number of factors. The chancellor of a Research I institution, for example, will have different expectations of research administration than those of a chancellor at a predominantly undergraduate liberal arts college. Regardless, there are a number of expectations that all chancellors have in common. First, we all want the volume of grants to increase, and second, we all expect the university to be in full legal, ethical, and regulatory compliance. There are other expectations, however, that are a little more nuanced.

Make things happen. Research administrators should be stirring the pot. They should motivate faculty to participate in sponsored programs, think of new opportunities to help the institution meet its mission, and develop new programs that will benefit the faculty. Chancellors don't want just another manager who processes proposals and enforces regulations. We want a research administrator who can generate ideas and implement actions that foster an environment of scholarship and creativity.

Facilitate, don't just control. The university and its faculty and staff are best served by research administrators who understand that their function is to facilitate the process of grants. Facilitate, don't just control.

Compliance is very important, and no institution wants to face the public humiliation and the fiscal and political consequences of non-compliance. Nevertheless, we want research administrators who do more than mindlessly enforce rules. We want administrators who can legally and ethically find solutions to problems.

Control, don't just facilitate. Research administration is the nexus where the interests of the faculty, the university, and the sponsor collide. Universities need research administrators who understand that their role is to mediate these conflicts and protect the interests of the university. Chancellors also want research administrators who prevent faculty from seeking grants that either the university cannot afford or that distort the institution's mission. In other words, research administrators must manage the delicate balance of exercising control while facilitating processes.

It's the means, not the ends. It is important for research administrators to remember that grants are a means to an end, not the end. As a famous research administrator once said, research administration is management for research, not management of research. It is not the job of the research administrator to evaluate the project. Instead, chancellors want research administrators who know how to make it possible for the faculty to conduct research.

Research administration is the nexus where the interests of the faculty, the university, and the sponsor collide.

It's the ends, not the means. Research administrators should always remember that they play an important role in helping to advance knowledge. The reason why faculty pursue grants is because they are either creating, applying, or disseminating knowledge. Be respectful of the noble work in which you and they are engaged.

In the storm of issues surrounding alumni, donors, trustees, legislators, faculty, parents, boosters, staff, and students, a chancellor is grateful to have a research administrator who understands their important role in the university. Such a research administrator is an invaluable asset to the faculty, the university, and the chancellor.

Stephen Hansen, Ph.D., serves as Interim Chancellor of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He can be reached at shansen@siue.edu.
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Reseach administrators play a key role in ensuring institutional compliance with federal regulations and requirements for protecting sensitive federal research data housed on institutional information systems. However, effective compliance requires a comprehensive approach with distributed responsibilities. Cybersecurity concerns have risen exponentially over the past decade and pose one of the biggest concerns and daunting challenges for research institutions. David Shaw, Chief Information Officer at Purdue University, stated “A university environment is very different from a corporation or a government agency, because of the kind of openness and free flow of information you’re trying to promote. Researchers want to collaborate with others, inside and outside the university, and to share their discoveries.”¹ In that same article, a senior official at a research intensive university estimated the daily number of cyberattacks to its information systems at 90-100,000. In response, universities are investing millions of dollars in cybersecurity systems and any strong program requires the vigilance of a multitude of campus constituents.

Federal Regulations
The year 2002 was a watershed year for federal regulations related to the protection of sensitive federal data. The federal regulatory requirements for protecting government information and the systems that house that information including those at federal contractors has its underpinnings in the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA). FISMA required each federal agency to develop, document, and implement an agency-wide program to provide information security for the information and information systems that support the operations of the agency, including those provided or managed by another agency, contractor, or other source. In that same year the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA) was promulgated and established uniform policy across all federal agencies for protecting statistical information collections sponsored by or conducted by those federal agencies, and also provided for sharing of those data.

A presidential directive issued in May 2008 first defined Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) as an overarching moniker for confidential government information to include Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) and For Official Use Only (FOUO) information, and designated the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as the responsible agency for oversight and management of the implementation of the CUI framework. Executive Order 13556 superseded the original directive and further clarified definitions, roles, and responsibilities.

In 2014, the FISMA framework was updated and superseded by the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014. While the acronym remained the same, the requirements were expanded and strengthened. FISMA 2014 provided for “shared governance” between the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of Homeland Security for federal cybersecurity and mandated annual, independent evaluations of agency information systems security. Slowly but surely, those requirements have found their way into federal contracts and in 2015, three significant regulatory actions created even more concern for universities.

- The National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) issued its Special Publication 800-171 which recommended to federal agencies requirements for the protection of CUI.
- The Department of Defense finalized its DFARS 252.204-7012 Safeguarding Covered Defense Information and Cyber Incident Reporting which expanded the requirements for cybersecurity protection of government information and specified reporting of cyber incidents involving covered government information within a 72 hour timeframe.
- The NARA published its proposed rule for implementation of a federal-wide CUI program which upon final rule will establish the policy for federal agencies on designating, safeguarding, disseminating, marking, decontrolling, and disposing of CUI, including self-inspection and oversight requirements.

The Council on Governmental Relations (COGR) and the American Association of Universities (AAU) have issued two joint letters² in response to these regulations. These letters provide succinct insights into the troublesome combined implications of these regulations of greatest concern to universities.

Roles and Responsibilities
The challenge of complying with protecting CUI is complex, costly and requires resources from and oversight by multiple units outside the research administration office as illustrated in Figure 1. Further complicating compliance efforts for some institutions is the fact that agreements are not always handled centrally especially agreements that do not convey funding such as data use agreements, adding another layer of complexity to oversight. Institutions that accept sensitive information under terms that require protections under any of the aforementioned regulations or other sponsor imposed requirements must appoint a responsible official(s) and develop an overarching policy for protecting sensitive data.
Guidelines outlined in the Federal Sentencing Guidelines suggest seven core elements of an effective compliance program. Institutions should consider the following in developing compliance programs:

1. Develop written policies, procedures and internal controls
2. Compliance oversight vested in a responsible official
3. Due diligence in delegating authority for access
4. Education programs coupled with monitoring and audits to strengthen and document compliance
5. Disciplinary actions for non-compliance
6. Prompt response to breaches or issues of non-compliance
7. Corrective actions to prevent reoccurrences of non-compliance

Institutions should be aware that acceptance of CUI should be referred to the institutional official for export controls compliance. Because of the reporting requirements, the normal procedures and template formats utilized for Technology Control Plans in the past might not be adequate to meet these requirements. If your institution does not accept export controlled work, an institution may be prohibited from accepting these clauses under any circumstances. Depending on your institutional procedures, legal review may be required. Offices of Internal Audits can provide that function on an annual basis.

**A Practical Approach**

Even when CUI is not an issue, data use agreement language may include vague language that requires institutional policies and procedures to ensure data are protected but not specify written procedures or other prescriptive requirements. Most institutions have policies in place to address non-research data for protecting private information related to students and employees.

In those cases, an institution’s overarching policy for protecting sensitive data such as Social Security Numbers (SSNs) might suffice if accompanied by requirements for awareness training. In those instances, it is advisable to ensure that each person with access to those data understand the procedures but it is not necessary to require written procedures. Minimum acceptable standards for protecting data include at least the following:

- Anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software provided at no cost
- Requires use of application-level security
- Minimum security standards for systems
- Security of the physical space housing storage devices
- Consideration for storage on portable devices e.g. flash drives or remote access
- Assistance with destruction

When the terms and conditions of an agreement specifically require written procedures to ensure the protection of sensitive digital data, it is the responsibility of the authorizing office to ensure that written procedures are in place before signing the agreement and thereby authorizing access to the data. These conditions may be in the form of a sponsored funding agreement or data use agreement. The complexity of ensuring compliance increases when the data are used solely for student research, most often for dissertations and thesis. In those instances, it is highly advisable that the university require the faculty advisor to be the responsible party at the institution for the agreement. Additionally, the institution should consider the implications for allowing students to house those data on their personal computers. At many institutions, responsibility for authorization for those types of data use agreements with no sponsored funding are handled outside the research administration office.

In either case, it is essential that all persons with access are informed about the required procedures and acknowledge understanding and willingness to comply with same. Written procedures should identify the underlying reason for controlling access by referencing the applicable law, regulation, or legal requirement e.g. agreement language, address the physical and information security requirements, identify the responsible party to whom any concerns about security should be promptly reported, and require training that at a minimum covers:

- Overview of protection procedures
- Awareness of all individual authorized for access
- Physical and information systems security procedures
- Penalties/sanctions for non-compliance
- Contact information for responsible party and responsible official/office

When it comes to procedures for protecting data, one size does not fit all. Procedures should be developed in consideration of the physical location of the storage devices but that doesn’t mean there isn’t a way to streamline and guide the thought process. Using a template form that poses pertinent questions that need to be addressed can minimize the guesswork for principal investigators in developing written procedures. A sample template can be accessed on The University of Texas at Austin’s Office of Sponsored Projects website. That Sensitive Data Control Plan was developed by the Office of Sponsored Projects in consultation with its Office of Information Security and with feedback from the Office of Internal Audits which routinely conducted randomly sampled audits of the plans.

**References**

2. Joint AAU and COGR Letters can be accessed at http://cogr.edu/News-Stories
3. University of Texas at Austin Sensitive Data Control Plan template can be accessed at https://research.utexas.edu/osp/resources/forms

Susan Wyatt Sedwick is a consultant with Attain LLC. She retired from The University of Texas where she served as Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects. She can be reached at ssedwick@attain.com
This issue we asked “From your perspective, what do you see as your biggest challenge?”

**Pamela Napier**  
*Director*  
*Office of Sponsored Programs  
Agnes Scott College (PUI)*

My biggest challenge is trying to be all things to all people on my campus. I am part of a one-and-a-half-position office. Every PUI is different and our campuses range in size from 300 students to 30,000 students, but all of us have fewer research administration professionals than we need. Our grant PIs are often less experienced than those at research intensive institutions and, therefore, need more support from the sponsored programs office. The lower level of human resources and financial resources at a PUI must be countered by the highest level of knowledge and flexibility on the part of the institution’s research administrators. So, as a PUI administrator, I meet the challenge by continuing to learn and grow and add to my skill set in order to be the “Jack of all trades” my institution needs.

**Hollie Schreiber**  
*Manager, Sponsored Programs  
Division of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources  
Oklahoma State University (College/School)*

Managing a college-level pre- and post-award office, in a decentralized University, I sometimes feel as if I have a foot in two different worlds. In one world, I’m responsible for ensuring proposals are submitted, contracts are managed, and funds are spent in compliance with regulations. In the other world, I’m responsible for management-level functions such as reporting, reviewing and creating policies and procedures, and implementing new systems for the college. These responsibilities often compete with each other for my time and my allegiance. I have to balance the duties of both functions, as well as balance conflicting viewpoints. I have to find a way to meet the needs of the administration and faculty in my college, while staying within parameters that are set at a university level. I revel in the days when the planets align just right, and all is well with both worlds.

**Samantha Westcott**  
*Manager, Sponsored Projects  
The Saban Research Institute, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (Hospital Department/Institute)*

The biggest challenge from my perspective right now is allocating resources appropriately to give the research teams what they need to do their best research while remaining fiscally prudent. We are a smaller institution; yet, we still must meet all the compliance and regulatory requirements for both the research and the hospital worlds. Our researchers have the same needs as those at any institution. For example, do we invest in a tool to help identify funding opportunities that may or may not have a return on investment? What do we do in house and what do we outsource? How can we share resources across a very broad organization to the best use of all who need them? These are questions that we are faced with daily and while there are plenty of salespeople out there willing to sell us solutions, lacking any proof of the outcomes, we remain challenged.
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To my mind, research administration is about solving the question: How do we implement the research idea? Implementing global research projects, like the dispersive power of a prism, results in a spectrum of challenges from pre-award to close-out. Each new location requires understanding new culture, laws, finances, and so on. Each project brings its own set of unique characteristics that require more planning, more thinking “outside the box.” Sitting comfortably behind my desk grappling with some of these problems, I began to wonder about the investigators’ experiences as they engage in human subjects research in settings where the language, customs, laws, and much more may be foreign to them. To gain some insight, I interviewed HIV prevention researchers who were working in many locations around the world. In particular, I wanted to understand the challenges in applying for IRB approval in international sites. The stories that follow illustrate the pioneering spirit of our investigators, breaking the research trail for others who come after them.

Controversial Populations
HIV prevention research involves understanding and finding ways to change behaviors that put people at risk for HIV transmission, particularly practices related to injecting drugs and engaging in unsafe sex. Many ethical considerations come into play when you engage populations who may be at risk for HIV transmission. Several investigators I spoke with believe that the population being studied may affect the outcome of the IRB review, that IRB members bring their own biases to reviews, and that institutions consider some research to be too risky for the institution’s reputation. The IRB has the task of balancing academic freedom and faculty autonomy with ethical and institutional constraints intended to protect the institution and research subjects. There are natural tensions between these tasks that make them difficult under the best of circumstances, and protocol reviews require honest conversations between investigators and the IRB.

Our HIV researchers have been working in Russia since 1998 where sharing needles among injection drug users has contributed to the dramatic increase in HIV prevalence. Longitudinal studies are challenging in Russia. A U.S. Certificate of Confidentiality has no force of law in Russia. To protect the participants, all locator information is stored on a secure server outside Russia. Recruiting drug users at drug treatment centers and needle exchange programs operated by foreign dollars through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been problematic. When one NGO prepared to report that police were extorting money from participants as they were leaving the treatment centers, the needle exchange bus was firebombed, not once but twice. To protect the confidentiality of study participants and minimize opportunities for extortion, researchers provide incentive payments in the form of food, phone cards, cosmetics, and gift cards rather than cash.

Establishing IRBs — Capacity Building
“You have to make a long-term commitment so there is an impact. Capacity building makes research easier over time.” This is certainly true for a team of researchers who have been working in Peru, Malaysia, and the Ukraine, focused on the interface between infectious diseases and substance abuse related to adherence to antiretroviral therapy, particularly among HIV-positive drug users and prisoners. With financial support from The Open Society, the PI developed a clinical training program in substance abuse for MDs in the Ukraine. These trained MDs then became members of the first IRB in the Ukraine.

Geography, Language, and Norms
Some IRBs require that you travel to the country to attend the IRB meeting and present your application in person. For example, in China you have five timed minutes to present your case. The review can be extremely lively and intense, with the committee members firing questions at the applicant. Often the investigator is put in the position of being
a “shuttle diplomat”, serving as the liaison between the home institution’s IRB and the international IRB. These issues can be quite intimidating, especially for junior researchers.

One Master’s student spent her three-month summer internship conducting qualitative interviews in a rural hospital in Ecuador. The closest IRB was in another province, so instead she obtained letters of support from the hospital director, the director of the local non-profit organization, and a representative of the community. Some issues regarding confidentiality (e.g., requiring proof of identification for every participant) were difficult to implement. The native language is Spanish, and the literacy level is low in that region. Often young girls are married with children at the age of 14, and considered to be adults in their communities. Many participants wanted their children to complete the surveys on their behalf and didn’t understand why they couldn’t participate in the study.

Another student conducted a qualitative study in Vietnam interviewing officials, providers, and peer educators about HIV prevention. The PI was fluent in Vietnamese and translated the study materials herself. Her preceptor in Vietnam prepared and represented her application to the IRB committee in Vietnam. Close to the start date of the project, the PI had verbal IRB approval with written approval provided near the end of her project.

Opaque Processes

Though information is more readily available now, the India IRB process in 2003 was opaque. Many Indian research institutions had no functioning IRB system. Meetings of existing IRBs were sporadic, and most were unwilling to review independent international research proposals; some indicated that they would be unable to convene unless financial support was provided, which would have resulted in a major conflict of interest. Under these conditions, the PI on this project elected to work with an independent, fee-based IRB.

Establishing Trust

With financial support from her mentor, one postdoctoral fellow went to Kenya to conduct a trial of a peer-led alcohol behavior intervention. Initially, the community was reluctant to research being conducted there. However, several years previously, the mentor’s colleagues had established a sister school at the University of Kenya with a primary care focus. This was a huge advantage for the research team in terms of already-established trust and commitment in the community.

Less access to education, health care, property, and justice when compared to men. Working in this cultural environment became so uncomfortable for one of the women on the research team that she left Liberia and supported the project from the U.S. The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa had its own impact on research projects — research put on hold for months, warnings against non-essential travel, additional screenings at airports, and the potential threat to the researchers’ own health.

Fee-based IRBs

In South Africa, our clinical researcher is developing community-based projects that emphasize the integration of HIV and tuberculosis services. The population in the village is Zulu-speaking, and the setting is rural. It can take six months or longer to get IRB approval from the medical school. However, the South African Medical Association has a national-level IRB which processes applications much faster. The fee for each new protocol is $1,000 and $500 for a renewal or amendment application. The South African Medical Association requires that you use a certified translator to translate documents, which costs $200 minimum to translate a two to three-page informed consent. These challenges are extremely prohibitive for students who want to do human subjects research in South Africa.

Lessons Learned

The increase in global research collaborations necessitates putting into place mechanisms to get ahead of the questions to support those pioneer researchers who are compelled to “explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before.” Answering the questions sometimes takes the combined expertise of a diverse team drawn from pre-award, procurement, human resources, human research protection, general counsel, and international relations. Like a prism, research administration can light the way when we take a multidisciplinary approach to implementing the research plan.

While it is tempting to consign some of the issues to “what used to happen,” the following lessons seem relevant for any investigator contemplating a global research career:

• Before planning a research project, visit the country, talk to a local expert, and see how work gets done. Find the right partners and stay on good terms with them.
• Budget time and resources to train research staff to deliver informed consent in the local language. Develop cultural competency for your research team and your IRB members.
• When necessary, budget for IRB fees and/or travel to present your case in person.
• You have an additional responsibility to be truly ethical. See the IRB process as an opportunity to check your own blind spots.

Like a prism, research administration can light the way when we take a multidisciplinary approach to implementing the research plan.

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NCURA’s 58th Annual Meeting, August 7-10, 2016, at the Washington Hilton in our nation’s capital, will start with everything you have come to expect and then get better. Our Program Committee has outdone itself to bring you not only the workshops and sessions you always count on but also more of what you like best, plus a little something extra.

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We also heard new comers express their need for a little more guidance, so we developed a track especially for them. If you or someone on your staff needs a research administration boot camp, this is the place to start. This track will kick off with an overview of what every research administrator needs to know and then follow with basic topics ranging from the lifecycle of an award to building better relationships with faculty. This track is designed to meet the needs of someone new to research administration from start to finish, but every session stands on its own so you are free to just try the sessions that match your interests.

Of course your other favorite tracks will be strong, too, and there will be other new additions, so watch for full program details over the coming months to see the workshops, sessions, and discussion groups that are just right for you. Along with the great educational offerings, you’ll also find new opportunities for networking, volunteering, and reconnecting. We look forward to seeing you there!

Barbara Gray, Chair
Cindy Hope and Kris Monahan, Co-Chairs
Research Adm inistration in Asia Pacific

Reaching the Truth—Right Decisions and Better Services Using Multiple Sources and Perspectives

By Tadashi Sugihara

To avoid any misconceptions and make appropriate decisions, it is important to observe things using multiple sources from different perspectives. As many of our administrative services are provided to researchers, how they actually perceive our services is very important. In this article, I describe the importance of information acquisition using multiple sources to make decisions by showing the fragility of our inference abilities. This illustrates the importance of using other perspectives to improve our administrative services.

Avoiding Misconceptions and False Beliefs: We live in an uncertain world

Misconceptions are fatal in administration; they occur in all office relationships, including between administrative staff, client researchers, and university executive board members. Humans have the ability to infer others’ minds. A developmental psychologist, Professor Simon Baron-Cohen at the University of Cambridge, compared this action to the “mindoscope” through which we can “read” others’ minds (in *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind*. MIT Press/Bradford Books; 1995). Through cognitive development, we acquire the ability of inference. Because of this ability, we often believe that we know what others are thinking. Yet, as we often experience, this sense of mindreading often turns out to be a “false belief” and the subsequent problems of miscommunication suddenly arise.

Let us explore the fragility of our ability to reach the truth. Can you immediately perceive what photograph 1 shows? Yes. You are right, but someone else may not be certain. Let us look at photograph 2. It is clear to the viewer that the object is a pen. Photograph 1 is taken from a very unusual perspective. Psychologically, this perspective is called an “accidental view.” In contrast, the viewpoints of photograph 2 look familiar to us, which means that the probability of observing this object from this perspective occurs more frequently than in photograph 1. We are unaware of the presence of accidental views simply because we seldom come across them. However, there is a strong likelihood that we perceive things from a very limited viewpoint. We have to open our eyes wide to see if we are trying to understand a thing from a particular stance using limited information channels.

To Increase Inference Reliability: Do not rely on information from a single channel

In communications with others, there are advantages to meeting in person. This allows us to speculate about the other person’s emotions through their facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. While there is no guarantee that our speculations are true, it is better to use mutually available information channels to avoid the risk of misconceptions.

On the other hand, while email is a quick and easy communication tool, the information supplied by emails is very limited. It is purely a sequence of letters comprising words and sentences, which do not always precisely reflect the senders’ underlying true emotions. Thus, an email recipient may perceive a message as blunt and/or impolite.

Face-To-Face Communication Can Correct Misconceptions: An episode

Here is an example of face-to-face communication correcting misconceptions. My office plans and operates a multidisciplinary research program called SPIRITS, which facilitates international joint research and exploration of pioneer works. SPIRITS is a 2-year program, and the annual budget for each adopted project is a maximum of about 5 million Japanese yen, which is about 42,465 US dollars. Because the funds primarily come from a subsidiary program operated by the Japanese government, there are restrictions and regulations on how the SPIRITS budget may be spent. The SPIRITS project members would, at times, receive email messages that requested the approval of more flexible expenditures and increases in the budget to supply funds for expenses directly relevant to the research. Consequently, we were concerned that we might receive a lot of criticism from many SPIRITS project managers because we speculate that the researchers would like to have the ability to use the budget as they see fit.

After the completion of the first 2 years of support, we decided to make a booklet to report the activities of all the projects. As special content for the booklet, I conducted an interview with two selected project managers to ask them how SPIRITS helped them start their research.

At the end of the interview, I asked a difficult question: “The budget for
SPIRITS might not be so huge. However, I am glad to see that the projects supported by SPIRITS have been developed. Would both of you, having obtained support, give us feedback in order to get the SPIRITS Project moving forward in a stronger way?"

One of the project managers gave us an unexpected response. Professor Kono said, “Of course, a larger budget would be great, but large budget allocation is not something SPIRITS should do. Money functions as a form of encouragement, which attracts people. Money functions to bring together various people for discussion. Thus, I believe that budget size is not a serious issue. Even with limited finances, it is possible to take the next step, when the money is used for discussions.”

After the interviews, we were delighted to hear the positive comments about SPIRITS from the project managers. Other members of the SPIRITS project in our office were also encouraged and motivated by the feedback because they began feeling that what they did for researchers meant something. Looking back at the email messages that had sounded harsh to the project members, those messages were not intended to be critical, but to encourage the SPIRITS project members. For this reason, the senders gave their honest opinions in a straightforward fashion.

“Close observation of how customers interact with our services is essential to ensure better services.”

Making Our Services Better:
Reviewing administrative services from the customers’ perspective—the UX design

We also learned the importance of multiple perspectives, especially the views of others using SPIRITS. Following this experience, we identified what we should do as our follow-up. We decided to review our annual activities that are intended (from our perspective) to support researchers from the researchers’ perspective. This action was designed using the concepts of user experience (UX) and service design.

In a workshop, we first reviewed the schedule for the provision of our support services to researchers over the year. In addition, we categorized all of our support services by their intended targets, such as for young researchers or established professors. The way the information about each service (such as emails, phone calls, Internet, meetings) was distributed to researchers was also reviewed and we asked a guest young researcher when, how, and where he noticed each service.

Through this workshop, we found that the schedule of our support services was not optimally determined for researchers (customers). There were months in which multiple services targeting different aims (but meeting the same general targets) were advertised to customers. This means that it is likely that researchers may require more than two services simultaneously, but they only apply for one service at a time because of their limited free time. The schedule of our services was determined by an academic calendar; however, the services were sometimes affected by project delays. We also had the opportunity to think about who our major target customers were for each service. This was in direct relation to our overall vision and mission. Finally, we realized that the effect of advertising our services had to be reconsidered. According to the guest researcher, the distribution of information about our services through a mailing list managed by each department did not always reach individual researchers. In addition, we found that advertisements by email did not always draw customers’ attention sufficiently. We concluded that we have to improve what we put into our email subject lines to encourage customers to read the messages.

Close Observation is Necessary for Excellent Services

The UX design is one of the tools with which we see our activities from the customers’ (researchers’) perspective. This approach makes our activities more suitable to the customers’ needs. As a result, more researchers use the opportunities available, producing a positive feedback loop. Close observation of how customers interact with our services is essential to ensure better service. We now understand that an online questionnaire or survey may not be the best method to capture this feedback.

“When people are looking at Macs in stores, they’re drawn to them in a very physical way. They don’t mind moving them around or touching them.”


* The complete interview is available in English. Please check the following URL: http://research.kyoto-u.ac.jp/service/topic/spirits/report.

** This quotation is from http://goo.gl/hKfz1

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Clinical research, where human subjects participate in the research activities, is an aspect of our profession that brings diverse perspectives, challenges us to see things from and through the perspective of others, and focuses us on the perceived ideals and perceptions of others. Particularly when we are engaged in managing clinical research, we are challenged to bring to bear an understanding and appreciation of many regulatory concepts, ranging from Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to human subjects protections, as well as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines. All of these guidelines should be utilized when considering remunerations of human subjects.

Considerations Relating to Remuneration of Human Subject Participants

Much of the debate at institutions conducting research activities involving human subjects centers on the appropriate remuneration of research participants. By definition, remuneration is defined as any payment received for participation in a research study. For a given study, the sum of reimbursement, outcome incentive payments, and other payments are equal to the remuneration. For the purpose of research studies, reimbursement equates to cash and cash equivalents given to research study participants to defray the actual out-of-pocket cost of participation. They are negotiated with the sponsor and approved by the IRB. These costs include transportation, parking, meals, and hotel stays, which require receipt of these expenditures. These payments are non-taxable income to the research participant, as they are reimbursement of expenses incurred while participating in the research study.

Remuneration also includes outcome incentive payments, which are defined as cash, cash equivalents, or non-monetary items given to research participants for achieving desired outcomes, such as smoking cessation and weight loss. Outcome incentive payments are considered part of the treatment plan. These payments become taxable income and are reportable to the IRS when the amount exceeds $600 (the current IRS rate) in a single calendar year.

The appropriateness of the remuneration of participants focuses on ensuring that their economic situation isn’t adversely impacted by participating in the research study. This doesn’t include performance of medically necessary items and services associated with the research study but rather on the time and effort required to participate. The value of the remuneration must not unduly influence a person to participate or continue to participate in the research study. According to the Code of Federal Regulations, the IRB of each institution is responsible for determining the remuneration for study participants. Their purview for determining the appropriateness of the remuneration includes impacts on specific population targets like vulnerable populations, economically disadvantaged, and child participants. They also consider the amount of time, inconvenience, or discomfort involved in participation as well as the equitable distribution to all participants.

When making remuneration determinations, many IRBs utilize the following models:

- The market model focuses on the principle of supply and demand, which decides the amount and rate of payment to the research participant based on the participant’s location. Supply and demand of research subjects drives the rate.
- The wage payment model focuses on the amount of time and effort of the research participant, as well as the discomfort that the participant will face. This model considers social equality to drive the determination.
- The reimbursement model is directed by approved and negotiated out-of-pocket costs incurred by the research participant. This model considers social equality and requires the research participant’s proof of expenditures based on receipts for the reimbursable activity, such as mileage, parking, lodging, or meals.
- The appreciation model provides gifts such as mugs, keychains, pens, bags, or other such items as compensation for participation in the study.

Some of the buzz words we find in the job description of a research administrator include phrases like “provides analytical support,” “acts as liaison between principal investigator and sponsors,” “promotes compliance with federal and other applicable guidelines and regulations,” and if we look further into position descriptions in academic medical institutions, the expectations for a research administrator expand into areas like research study management, Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), human subject participants, and billing compliance. It is a recognized fact that as research administrators, our role is varied and we often leverage partnerships across institutional functions to influence outcomes that promote compliance, while at the same time, enable the research and safeguard the personal health information (PHI) of the study participants.
Each of these models has advantages and disadvantages relating to undue influence, social equality, and operational concerns. The IRB should carefully consider each model when determining the appropriateness of the remuneration.

IRB approval of the study and remuneration of the research participants is only the beginning of the process. To maintain sufficient controls and mitigate risk, each institution must establish standard operating procedures and policies associated with rendering and tracking research participant remuneration. The mechanics and internal control considerations should focus on the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing petty cash, gift cards, or reloadable bank cards. The decision is further challenged by IRS reporting requirements, which requires the collection and secure storing of the social security number for each research participant being compensated. As directed by HIPPA, safeguarding personal health information (PHI), like social security numbers, is a requirement of the institution and the research administrator.

Many institutions therefore take a conservative approach and put practices in place to ensure that staff at all levels of the research enterprise are trained to understand their roles in ensuring patient safety and ethical practices, including the cautious approach to paying human subjects. This includes research administration offices partnering with offices of finance or general accounting to identify mechanisms that will safeguard against unethical practices and give them the ability to comply and safeguard PHI while still being able to capture, store, and report to satisfy IRS rules. While controversies continue to exist about the ethical considerations of paying participants, there are further controversies about the level of incentive or compensation—for example, what is considered reasonable or excessive, and the forms of payments like cash, courtesies, restaurant cards, and checks given to participants.

Research administrators clearly understand that while they alone do not constitute to be the experts on this topic, they can influence the collection of efforts within their institutions. This collection of efforts includes institutional policy setting, which further includes an appreciation for and clarity in defining roles and responsibilities, and identifying policy governors, stewards, and subject matter experts.

Additionally, we recognize that different stakeholders within our institutions set policies relevant to their functions, for example the IRB, research administration, general accounting, etc. We must be keenly aware and open to aligning all such policies to ensure they collectively convey a consistent message that also supports the IRB-approved remuneration structure for each study participant. An equally critical area where research administrators can influence is approval, workflow, and process design to ensure that financial payments or outlays to study participants are reviewed and approved by the appropriate parties before the outlay occurs. Similarly, research administrators can be critical in developing a crosswalk and labeling convention across diverse applications at their institutions to further promote federal regulations, human subjects protections, data consistency, and reporting strategies.

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Many pre-contract research administrators in Europe are PhD scientists who have made the decision to enter research administration. Some make the switch directly after their PhD but others, including me, have had a long research background. After working 13 years as a researcher after my PhD and running a junior research group, I joined research administration as an attempt to obtain a work-family balance. I still define myself as a researcher and actually, despite working full time as a research administrator, I am still co-supervising students and preparing my final senior author manuscript.

One can never truly understand the stress of a research life until you have lived it. You don’t do research, you live research. It is important to remember that research is about more than just the research itself. Most researchers have spent their entire adult lives working within one area. It is part of who they are. If you ask them to describe themselves in 5 words I can guarantee you that one of those words would be their scientific or medical specialization.

Research is about as far from a 9-5 job as you can get. Research means going to your lab on the weekends, or at 3 am, or on Christmas day since you need to feed your cells, stop a reaction, or run a gel because the samples can’t be refrigerated or frozen until tomorrow. If you add the demands of being a research group leader on top of that, then maybe it is possible to begin to understand the people we interact with most as research administrators.

Research group leaders conduct research, supervise and manage a research team, manage their budget and expenditure, publish papers, review papers, teach, in some cases work clinically, undertake departmental and institutional responsibilities — and on top of that they need to write and obtain research funding. Each aspect of a research group leader’s role is not independent. You can’t obtain research funding without publishing a good paper. You can’t publish a decent paper without obtaining research funding, and you certainly can’t do anything without managing a great team.

Research funding to most researchers is about more than just funding for their research. Most researchers, and almost all members of their teams, are on soft-money. Not many researchers have tenured positions and even if they do they are required to bring in funding to continue their own research and support the people who are employed in their research groups. To fully understand the stress associated with not having confirmation that you will receive your salary in a month or a year is not easy. It also isn’t possible to just ‘get a new job’ since researchers are so specialized in their own field. A full-time, permanent position is not even on the radar for many researchers — at least not in Europe.

At university researchers are taught science or medicine (or another subject) but for the rest they are largely self-taught. Grant writing is definitely an area where researchers don’t receive formal training and they don’t have access to the applications we see or the time to be involved in all of the political agendas that drive research funding decisions. It is important to remember that as research administrators we see many applications, know how to structure a good one, and how a good proposal should read But try writing the application from scratch. In fact, don’t just write it from scratch — go back 15 or 20 years to when the researcher first started that project and think about the time and the effort they have put into that application. We often recommend that researchers get their work read by their peers, which just isn’t possible since their peers are the same people they are competing against for the research funding, as well as for publication of their results.

Recently a researcher I was working with wrote this in an email to me: “You have really improved my proposal big time. I am so happy that I can turn to you. Proposal writing can otherwise be a pretty lonely business.” I remember this feeling from being a researcher myself but it is easy to forget that grant writing is really ‘learning by doing’ and really writing in the dark. One thing that we can do as research administrators to make proposal writing easier for the researcher is to remove the assumption that they actually know what they are doing. We can help them by teaching them what we know, by giving them feedback on their applications, and by encouraging and supporting them through their application procedure.

I’m sure that as research administrators we all support the researchers as much as we can. It is important to remember that these people do what they do for the good of humanity. I can guarantee you that most are not doing it for the high salaries or the prestige! Let’s cut them some slack when they turn up a little late next time or are a little bit rude to us. They’ve put a lot more work than we have into the research grant and have probably pulled at least one all-nighter in the last week trying to get things done to submit this research grant application. Oh, and as they like to remind us, it is their overheads that pay our salaries!  

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Policy/Regulation/Compliance News:
U.S. Office of Research Integrity Update: The office that guards against fraud in federally funded biomedical research has a new chief. More... http://news.sciencemag.org/scientific-community/2015/12/new-director-u-s-office-research-integrity


Uniform Guidance:

Agency News:
ASSIST Gaining Popularity: ASSIST application submission grows in popularity with nearly 8,000 grant applications submitted. More... http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2015/12/31/assist-for-application-submission-grows-in-popularity/

New NIH Salary Cap: The NIH has raised the salary cap to $185,100 effective January 10th, 2016. More... http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-045.html

Funding News:
AAAS Budget Guru Matthew Hourihan: Following the omnibus, most science agencies are at (Or Near) pre-sequestration funding. More... http://www.aaas.org/news/following-omnibus-most-science-agencies-are-or-near-pre-sequestration-funding?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=news+tweet+button&utm_content=following-omnibus-most-science-agencies-are-or-near-pre-sequestration-funding&utm_campaign=aasorg_news


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National IP Strategy: What the U.S. should be doing to protect intellectual property. More... https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-the-u-s-should-be-doing-to-protect-intellectual-property

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If you have any favorite links from e-Xtra that you would like to see in a future issue of NCURA Magazine, please email suggestions to Kellie Klein at kellie.klein@wsu.edu

NCURA Magazine’s e-Xtra
Those of us whose are approaching retirement are familiar with this term. Generally it applies to selling a larger home and going to a smaller home or condominium. In my case and in my career it involved moving from Vanderbilt University, a university with sponsored projects of approximately $500 million dollars to Northern Arizona University (NAU) a university with sponsored projects of approximately $50 million.

I retired from Vanderbilt University June 30, 2014 as the Vice Chancellor for Administration with responsibility for HR, Facilities, Dining, Police, Parking, Wellness, Childcare, Business Services, Payroll, and Contract and Grant Accounting. On June 23, 2015 I began work at Northern Arizona University (NAU) as the Associate Vice President for Sponsored Projects. I was hired at NAU to combine pre and post award offices and to improve services.

Although the last 5 years of my career involved minimal involvement in research administration, over the course of my career I was fortunate to be involved in all aspects of pre and post award research administration.

Viewing this from a different perspective, working in a smaller research university provides you an opportunity to become involved in policy development earlier in your career.

Another observation is that working at a smaller research university you generally have the opportunity to be more of a generalist and thus gain broader experience in research administration. I started out at Mississippi State University as Director of Sponsored Projects (pre-award). By the time I left, I had responsibility for tech transfer, human subjects, and research communications. Similarly, I went to NAU as Associate Vice President for Sponsored Projects to combine the pre and post award offices. As of this writing, I am also serving as the Interim Assistant Vice President for Research Compliance with responsibility for Environmental Health and Safety and Animal Care.

Larger research universities may tend to have the resources and/or the need to purchase sophisticated integrated systems such as effort reporting, IRB, IACUC and financial systems. This allows offices to have the ability to collect and provide numerous reports more easily. This includes tracking compliance requirements, financial reports, performance metrics, and providing reports to leadership on a periodic basis and/or upon request.

In many instances this boils down to automated or routine queries at larger research universities versus manual reporting at smaller universities. As smaller research universities grow and devote more resources to research infrastructure these differences tend to diminish.

These are but a few of the differences I’ve observed. As I stated earlier, there are advantages and disadvantages to each. The key is to make the most of your situation wherever you are. I’m finding that downsizing suits me just fine at this point in my career. I’m having a ball and enjoying the ride!

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Jerry Fife has worked in university administration for 40 years at 5 different universities. He is currently the Associate Vice President for Sponsored Projects at Northern Arizona University. He is a former NCURA President and winner of multiple NCURA awards. He can be reached at jerry.fife@nau.edu
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Ask the Leadership Coach

Q: What do you suggest for someone interested in improving their overall leadership ability? I have a goal of becoming an AVP or possibly Vice President one day (I am a director now). How do I become a better leader to prepare myself?

F ind out how you’re doing. I mean, truly, find out how you’re doing. I think most successful leaders are very good at learning and understanding their own strengths and weaknesses. The less successful leaders either don’t know, don’t ask, or don’t learn from information about themselves when they receive it. Their lack of self-awareness holds them and their teams back. For example, a leader may have been told twice that he or she is ‘good with people,’ and that has translated to a never ending effort to please everyone. Other leaders may believe that they are analytical, in control, and have a mind for operational details, and this translates to a theme park micromanagement ride. The less successful leaders either never start to learn about themselves, or they prematurely stop out of fear.

The good leaders know how they show up in leadership. How do you find out how you are doing? You may be the rare individual who has a boss who dutifully and candidly does performance reviews. Hopefully, those reviews speak in specific terms about interpersonal skills and leadership ability, and do not just cover how you implemented a new policy, or procedure, or business system, or simply pat you on the back with a “you’re doing a nice job” comment and a promise to talk again next year. Few senior leaders focus on their employees’ developmental growth, and, even if you work with that special boss who does, what you learn in a performance review is her or his opinion and judgment only.

Consider getting a 360 degree assessment working with a coach to find out how you are doing. These assessments are separate and distinct from performance evaluations or annual compensation reviews — they belong to the person being assessed (not the boss or the institution, though many institutions support the costs as part of professional development or HR budgets). They typically lead to professional development plans that can influence how you assess yourself versus how others assess you, how you appear to peers and staff versus to your boss. I have learned from each 360 assessment of me, and have found that others I have asked to assess me have respected my interest in my own professional development.

(You mention that you are seeking promotional opportunities: Having served on several higher education executive search committees, I’ve seen many questions to candidates that look for candidate leadership self-awareness. The 360 experience is a positive example to cite.)

Yes, it’s scary to face certain information, so, I don’t want to overstate what a 360 assessment is: it is not the sole universal TRUTH about you and all that you are and do. It’s simply an organized collection of impressions and observations about how others experience you in leadership.

Working with a coach, we look for trends and patterns in 360 data and comments. We ask what rings true. What are we surprised about, if anything? What is gratifying to see? We ask what have we, perhaps, been hiding from ourselves? We ask what is possible to change and does it make sense to try to do so, for what purpose, and how do we go about it? It’s a way, also, to validate the excellent leadership skills one already demonstrates. The positive news can be very energizing and affirming! The challenging news can spur one to action and self-improvement with the support of coaching.

The best leaders know about themselves and take the time to learn what others think of them in leadership. The 360 is a tool to launch a learning conversation. It is to help leaders guide and inspire others, to serve their institutions, and to get better at leadership. It starts with self-awareness and how we connect with others. In my opinion, that defines a leadership journey.

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@assidileadership.com and (518) 588-0992.

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

Want to learn more about challenges, solutions and perspectives of fellow members? Check out our On Campus Profiles. These short interviews are published as a resource on our online professional networking platform Collaborate.

Compliance Community
Elizabeth H. Cothran, Vice President – Chief Regulatory Officer, Baylor Scott & White Health’s Research Regulatory Affairs

Departmental Community
Lisa R. Duer, Grants Manager and Program Coordinator for the Associate Dean for Research, Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine

eRA Community
Janet Bowne, Director of Grants and Contracts, Rutgers University, College of Nursing

Teri Hall, Director, Research Business Intelligence, University of Notre Dame

FRA Community
Patti Dickson, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Chief, Division of Medical Genetics, Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center

Global Community
Eva Björndal, Team Leader, Karolinska Institutet

Tricia Callahan, Director, Proposal Development, Miami University

Pre-Award Community
Matthew Kirk, Assistant Manager, Grant & Contract Services, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

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Like to find out more about getting involved in Collaborate? Contact Rashonda Harris, Collaborate Community Chair and Associate Director, Office of Finance Grants & Contracts Emory University | 404-727-4443 | rharr30@emory.edu

National Council of University Research Administrators
1015 18th Street, NW, Suite 901 | Washington, DC 20036 +1 (202) 466-3894 | www.ncura.edu
Technological advances allow for collaborations to occur smoothly and seamlessly in manner and number like never before. It is not uncommon today for collaborators to be spread across a state, region, country, and even the world. While international research collaborations have long been encouraged, research administrators and managers are seeking ways to learn about professional similarities and differences on a global scale in order to better support and administer such activities.

An obvious way to learn about how different offices of research administration are structured is, of course, to arrange to visit. In-depth conversations while touring another’s office are ideal. When on-site, questions and answers readily flow in a mutually productive dialogue: What do you require to set up an early spending account? Do you do any PI training? Is it mandatory? What is your institutional routing and approval process? How do you handle proposals submissions that arrive at the last minute? Do you have a combined lifecycle shop, or are the pre-award functions separate from post-award? If separate, how is the administrative reporting structured? Are you arranged by department, sponsoring agency, other? Is the coffee subsidised or do I need to pay the kitty?

This dialogue is easily transferrable from a PUI to a research-intensive institution. The surprise for many comes with the realization that such questions are also pertinent to most offices of sponsored program/research management/support/research administration across the globe. For the purposes of this article, such offices will be referenced as OSP.

At the NCURA Annual Meeting in August 2015, many attended a discussion group on this topic. For US institutions, accepting agreements in foreign currency can often lead to disastrous results as the exchange rate ebbs and flows. However, some international sponsors refuse to issue an agreement in US currency. One of the suggestions shared during the discussion group was to accept foreign currency and internally set-up the agreement for a 6- to 12-month period with monthly billing. Frequent billing and a shorter period of performance greatly reduce financial risk associated with exchange fluctuations as the research administrator is able to review the exchange rate when extending.

Another lively discussion was rooted in regulation/legal issues. For example, some of the Uniform Guidance is of little similarity to awards issued by the European Commission, and even when it looks similar there may well be contextual differences. For example, Danish universities are legally prohibited to accept some language that is routine boilerplate by other countries.

So, how do you find out about such issues without wasting months exchanging contract clauses by email? Picking up the phone can be daunting, and indeed difficult with time zone issues, particularly if you don’t really know who to speak to, or indeed what to ask. Consider the seemingly innocuous statement, “I have an issue about public access.” After twelve emails or ten minutes of explanation and examples comes the realization, “Oh you mean open access!”

As in all life experiences, what you really want is a trusted friend who doesn’t mind answering ‘silly’ or ‘trivial’ questions, because you will happily return the favour (favor!). For example, explaining that “the kitty” in our earlier example is where one places contributions to the office coffee fund. This question may well be a perfect example of the confusion that can be created with colloquialisms that may not translate well across a global coffee table!

Of course, finding such friends and building up that trust and rapport is difficult … or is it? You want to do it; is it possible that your counterparts in other countries want to, too? They do! So how do you meet them? Well conferences are great place to connect initially. Do you want to learn more about research management in the UK, and meet a counterpart? Go to the ARMA conference. You will be sure of a warm welcome and are guaranteed to get oodles of business cards. As with all conferences, you’ll find that the handful of colleagues with whom you’re able to spend quality time will
...as research becomes more international, so research administration needs to follow suit.

result in relationships that may well blossom into desirable long term professional contacts. Plus, you will be exposed to a whole host of new acronyms and terminology. Of course, you need not travel to an overseas conference, just look for Region VIII lanyards at the next annual NCURA conference and have a chat with a new colleague.

In summary, as research becomes more international, so research administration needs to follow suit. In order to best support your faculty in their endeavours, you need not understand all the rules, regulations, and cultures of the partner countries; instead, it’s much easier and enjoyable to meet and get to know someone who does. International networking is no different than national or regional networking – just get out there and use existing resources and tools, such as email, listservs, or Collaborate.

If attending an overseas conference, add on a few extra days and arrange to visit OSP colleagues at a nearby university or two. Consider applying to the NCURA Global Fellowship program to visit an international institution’s OSP. Prior to your visit, do your homework and structure your questions and itinerary so that you’re able to make the most of it. You’ll be warmly welcomed, and enjoy an enviable professional experience. Upon returning home, don’t forget to follow up with your new OSP colleagues with an occasional catch-up via email, instant message, or Skype or Google video chat!

Simon R 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

Judy Fredenberg, MPA, Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, University of Montana, is a workshop faculty member for Fundamentals of Research Administration, a Peer Reviewer, a member of the Select Committee on Global Affairs, and a past president of NCURA. She can be reached at judy.fredenberg@umontana.edu

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National Council of University Research Administrators

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Diane Barrett has been appointed Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at Colorado State University, beginning February 1. The office provides a full range of pre- and post-award services, including funding resources information, proposal submission and award negotiation, material transfer and non-disclosure agreements, financial management of accounts, and database management. In addition to other duties, Diane will also oversee the implementation of the Kuali Research grants management software.

Vincent “Bo” Bogdanski, Colorado State University, retired on December 31, 2015. Bo was a very active volunteer for NCURA. He served as a traveling workshop faculty, conference co-chair, Board member, and as one of the developers for the Federal Contracting online tutorial. Bo received the Distinguished Service Award in 2008.

Gai Doran recently accepted the position of Director of Research, School of Forestry & Environmental Sciences, at Yale University, as of January 19, 2016. Gai was formerly Assistant Director of Administration and Development for the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA) at Yale. In her new position, Gai, together with the F&ES Research Team, works to provide comprehensive grants management support (pre-award) to the faculty, administrators, staff, and students at F&ES, and is liaison to the University’s regulatory compliance office.

Bruce Morgan is now Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Administration at University of California, Irvine.

Randi Wasik has recently transferred back to the University of Washington to serve as the Director of Finance and Administration for the College of The Environment. In this role she will be responsible for the College’s financial planning and management, budget development, monitoring, reporting, long-range forecasting, Dean’s level grant and contract oversight, and policy setting regarding fiscal procedures. In her position new she serves as a member of the Dean’s Senior Staff and of the College’s Executive Committee.

Tom Wilson has retired as Assistant Vice President, Research Affairs at Rush University Medical Center. Tom founded the Master of Science in Research Administration Program and had served as Faculty and Associate Director for the Program at Rush University, College of Health Sciences. During his 38+ year career, Tom dedicated himself to research service and excellence at several academic health science centers including the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, Baylor College of Medicine, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and the Beckman Research Institute at the City of Hope.

Tom has a long history of NCURA volunteering. His service includes Co-Editor of NCURA Magazine, Board member, Chair of PDC, traveling faculty, and Chair of Region V. Tom will be retiring in San Diego, CA.

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

Over the past few years there has been increasing attention to the idea of shared services as a model for supporting research administration at research-intensive institutions. As with any type of organization, this model has pros and cons. While there is no one-size-fits-all model for research shared services, this type of organization generally has the following attributes: A level of centralization of services that are traditionally performed by local (school/department) research administration personnel, standardization of these services across the stakeholders served, and a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that guarantees support and level of services provided to customers, which can include a feedback mechanism and metrics to measure the quality of support being given.

While various institutions with this type of organization vary in their approach, there are three primary models for research shared services:

1. Model A: Cradle-to-Grave
   Grants administrators serve as part of teams or pods and are responsible for cradle-to-grave research administration (pre-and post-award)

2. Model B: Specialization
   Grants administrators serve as part of teams or pods, but are responsible solely for pre- or post-award

3. Model C: Hybrid
   Grants administrators serve as part of teams or pods, but each team or pod designs their services in a unique fashion—one may have grants administrators responsible for both pre- and post-award, while another may have their administrators specialize.

In the following paper we outline the high-level steps to launch this type of organization at your institution and outline the experience of one university—Thomas Jefferson University (TJU)—to illustrate the business case for this transformation and lessons learned from their design and implementation. As institutions begin to consider this type of model for research administration, it is critical they approach it with an eye toward change management, engagement of key stakeholders, and ongoing communication and monitoring once the new organization is implemented.

Making the Business Case – Do Research Shared Services Work for Your Institution?

The goal of research shared services is to reorganize transaction-based activities that occur in decentralized units and departments so they become the core services of a new, specialized organization or group. Before implementing, each institution should have a unique business case outlining the opportunity for research shared services. The business case focuses on the unique needs of the principal investigators (PI), central units, and institution at large. It is important to define why research shared services are a good fit for your institution, which elements your model will incorporate, and what results an institution can expect to achieve.

While some institutions may approach research shared services as a cost-savings measure (as they might with finance, IT, or HR shared services), with research, an organization should think about it as an investment. The return on investment for this method of service delivery transformation works by providing high levels of training, professional development, and cross-collaboration to employees, while breaking down organizational silos, and retaining PIs by delivering the services they need with a high level of quality.

Thomas Jefferson University – The Research Shared Service Opportunity

As TJU embarked on a new blueprint for strategic action, one of the areas of focus was high-impact science. The provost’s research strategic vision focused on programmatic team science and a diversification of TJU’s sponsored research portfolio. Research administration was a major component in delivering the provost’s vision. The opportunity was to ensure that TJU’s research administrators were positioned and trained to assist research faculty with preparing more complex proposals from a variety of sponsors. TJU also wanted to ensure that research administrators were trained and had the post-award tools to manage the complex grants once awarded. Another primary driver was minimizing TJU’s compliance risk for their expanding research portfolio. The purchasing function, once fragmented and inconsistent across departments, became a centralized function within TJU’s research shared service center. The goal of centralizing this function was to tighten the controls for purchases made on grants and contracts.
The vision of creating a shared service model was to provide faculty-centric research administration support across TJU by standardizing processes and restructuring positions. This included enhancing service for all researchers across campus, ensuring consistent processes and procedures across schools and departments, and providing grants management staff a clear career path and an opportunity to grow their careers by providing opportunities for professional development and networking.

### Implementation Steps

Implementation is a multi-step process that does not follow a defined footprint. As such, you should allow your institution ample time to evaluate, redefine, and adjust the project implementation timeline, where appropriate. The circuit breaker steps, highlighted in figure 1, are necessary components of any implementation. These defined steps allow project stakeholders to step back and re-evaluate the project goals and institutional impact of the proposed service delivery model. Figure 1 is a sample phased timeline for implementation of a research shared service center.

### Lessons Learned

Implementing any new organization has its challenges, and a research shared service group is no exception. Indeed, because this type of office is integral to the success of PIs and research faculty, it tends to garner much more attention at institutions than other types of organizational change (e.g. an HR or IT shared service organization).

While TJU’s shared service implementation was ultimately successful, there were several critical lessons learned from their process:

1. **Identify the Decision Makers:** It is important to have a clear leader at the helm during a shared service implementation. It should be clear which person or governing body has authority to make the final decisions. As much feedback as you are garnering during this process, keep in mind there will be disagreements. There will be points of impasse and someone at your organization with political clout and authority should be on point to make a final decision and provide an explanation for that decision. While this occurred later in the TJU implementation, it was not immediately clear in the early stages who had ultimate decision-making authority. This caused some confusion at critical junc-

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Primary Outcomes</th>
<th>Expected Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1: Plan</strong></td>
<td>Establish project goals, milestones, and communication strategies</td>
<td>3-4 Weeks</td>
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<td>Establish project goals and objectives with project team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop project plan and timeline</td>
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<td>Identify stakeholders for and create steering committee</td>
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<td>Identify stakeholders for and create faculty advisory committee, if applicable</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2: Evaluate</strong></td>
<td>Assess the current local research administration model and provide potential path to optimization to enable leadership to make a “go/no-go” decision</td>
<td>2-3 Months</td>
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<td>Conduct interviews and workshops with faculty, staff, and leadership to understand the current local research administration support system</td>
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<td>Evaluate service delivery through qualitative surveys to the customers and service providers (e.g. customer satisfaction survey)</td>
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<td>Identify opportunities to improve service delivery</td>
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<td>Evaluate current IT and HR structure supporting research administration and ability to support new, proposed organization</td>
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<td>Propose initial solutions to address opportunities including, but not limited to governance, organizational structure, staffing requirements, etc.</td>
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<td>Conduct impact analysis to evaluate institutional readiness for change</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 3: Design</strong></td>
<td>Create roadmap for transformative change</td>
<td>3-6 Months</td>
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<td>Develop task force(s) in charge of organization implementation, including appropriate committee structure</td>
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<td>Create implementation roadmap</td>
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<td>Finalize organizational structure and staffing requirements, including job descriptions</td>
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<td>Develop and validate new governance model and structure</td>
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<td>Design new processes, including enabling technology, roles and responsibilities matrices, and process documentation</td>
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<td>Develop Service Level Agreements (SLA), as appropriate</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 4: Implement</strong></td>
<td>Provide project management and operational assistance throughout the implementation</td>
<td>6-8 Months</td>
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<td>Identify, revise, and finalize policies and procedures determined as areas of focus by senior leadership</td>
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<td>Document business processes and update documentation and other supporting materials to reflect institutional policy changes</td>
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<td>Complete training and deployment planning, prepare facilities and workspace, and finalize transition steps and timing</td>
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<td>Review and finalize SLA with institutional stakeholders</td>
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<td>Deploy hiring plan</td>
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<td>Support units, as needed, to reorganize the work of unit-based staff to accommodate the new service delivery model</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 5: Optimize</strong></td>
<td>Ensure the sustainability of project goals and optimal results</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Identify maintenance plan for on-going training</td>
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<td>Implement and monitor new process, monitor progress, and identify/resolve issues</td>
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<td>Measure defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), implement continuous improvement, and conduct customer and employee satisfaction assessments</td>
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<td>Expand technology footprint to support service delivery improvements</td>
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<td>Develop/Refine training materials to instruct faculty and staff on changes to policies and its impact on the day-to-day operations</td>
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<td>Devise stakeholder communications and messaging of policy and process changes</td>
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<td>Assess staffing annually as it relates to the size of your institution’s sponsored research portfolio to ensure ongoing SLA criteria is met</td>
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3. Define Flex: A benefit of this type of research administration support is the ability for team members to provide the same type and level of support, no matter what school or department is being served. This is why it is critically important to develop standard operating procedures and an SLA between the new organization and its customers. There is, however, also a need to define the term “flex” within the shared services group. This is often a confusing proposition because many universities are not accustomed to having standardized operating procedures for tasks across schools and departments. Many schools and departments are given almost complete autonomy within the organization for most tasks, and research administration support is no exception. Using team members across shared service teams and flexing support when one team is busier than another is a learned skill rather than something that occurs naturally within the group. This idea of flex should have been better defined at TJU, with pilot groups employed prior to full implementation.

4. Phase Implementation: Inclusion of departments within the research shared service center should span several phases, starting with the units most in need of the service. The last phase should include those departments that previously had established research administrators at the local level.

Conclusion
A research shared services organization has the potential to bring a consistent and high level of service to PIs, while also minimizing compliance risk and ensuring research administrators serving schools and departments are skilled, trained professionals. However, in order to make the transition to this type of organization, research-intensive institutions must approach the process thoughtfully and with attention toward change management and data-driven decisions. Considering the value proposition of this type of change, followed by a detailed assessment of the current state of research administration, is vital. Once a course of action is agreed upon, with clear decision makers at the helm, it is important to create clear and broad-reaching messaging to the research community as the implementation moves forward. Clear messaging and a continuous feedback loop, coupled with clear metrics showing progress toward goals will ensure the shared services organization maintains accountability and superior service now and in the future.

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**What components of TJU’s implementation worked well?**

- Incorporating quarterly open houses, whether by team, specialty, or portfolio
- Including the purchasing function within the organization, allowing schools and departments to utilize shared service personnel to order research supplies
- Hiring a scientific editor as part of the new organization
- Stabilizing support for schools and departments without previous local research administration support increased proposal submissions.
- Incorporating lessons learned from the research shared service implementation into future organizational changes, such as the Jefferson Clinical Research Institute (JCRI)
- Outlining the difference in service between the central offices and the new shared service organization through the Service Level Agreement
- Creating an organizational dashboard, which is currently sent to research administration leadership on a monthly basis for analysis and reporting, to foster organizational transparency and accountability
- Establishing a new culture for research administration centered around customer service and cross-collaboration, involving both RACE and ORA, and replacing the previous tendency towards “policing”

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**Figure 2**

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**Jenna Lee**, Director, Huron Consulting Group, has served in interim leadership positions and as a business advisor to universities and academic medical centers across the country. Jenna focuses on research administration transformation and her areas of expertise include organizational redesign, pre- and post-award administration, and business process redesign. Jenna has presented at multiple industry conferences, including NCURA, SRA, INORMS, and CAURA, on a variety of research administration topics. She can be reached at jlee@huronconsultinggroup.com

**Brian N. Squilla, MBA,** is the Vice President of Administration and Chief of Staff to the Provost and Dean of Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA. His responsibilities include oversight of all research administration at Thomas Jefferson University. Brian works directly with senior level management and faculty involving operations, strategic planning and implementation, information technology, human resources, institutional research, and budget preparation. Brian is past chair of NCURA’s Region II and current co-chair of Region II’s Professional Development Committee. Brian is also a past member of the NCURA Workshop Faculty. He can be reached at brian.squilla@jefferson.edu

**Andrew Steil, CRA,** is an Associate in the Higher Education and Life Sciences practice at Huron Consulting Group. Andrew has experience with research administration operations support, research technology system selections and implementations, and business process analysis and redesign, particularly in the areas of pre- and post-award administration. In addition, he is a member of NCURA and SRA. He can be reached at asteil@huronconsultinggroup.com

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“…it is important to create clear and broad-reaching messaging to the research community as the implementation moves forward.”
For the past 3 years, NCURA has had the privilege to be a part of the BILAT USA 2.0 project, which sought to enhance and develop science, technology, and innovation (STI) partnerships between the U.S. and Europe. That project ended in October 2015, and will be replaced by the new BILAT USA 4.0 project, which will take the partnerships formed and knowledge base created to a higher level of collaboration. As research administrators, we have seen that the trend towards greater collaboration across borders continues, especially as faculty and researchers draw upon experts in their field wherever they may be, irrespective of geography. Thus, NCURA will continue to find opportunities to avail our members and the research administration field with the most up-to-date information and best practices in establishing international research collaborations. We believe that the BILAT USA 4.0 project will enable researchers and research administrators on both sides of the Atlantic to be able to identify funding opportunities, find potential research partners, and to stay in compliance with different grant management regulations as promulgated by the European Commission, the U.S. federal government, and state regulations for public universities.

One of the key opportunities for collaboration is through the European Commission’s grant program, Horizon 2020, which is open to participants from around the world, including the U.S. One of the key differences between the European Commission’s grant program and U.S. federal grants is that funding is allocated on a 7-year basis from 2014-2020. Thus, €80 billion has been pre-approved and set aside for research funding, and there is no annual budgetary drama regarding the size of research funding that is common for U.S. federal agencies.

Because the previous project had introduced Horizon 2020 to a large number of our members and to the U.S. research community in general, there is already a foundational level of awareness of Horizon 2020 and the funding and collaboration opportunities that exist for U.S. researchers and research administrators. What is needed at this point is to take the existing level of knowledge to the next level. In fact, European researchers have the benefit of government-appointed National Contact Points (NCPs) to serve as resources for health, IT, transportation, and legal and financial questions. Furthermore, in Europe, there is an entire sector of specialized consultants and trainers that provide proposal writing advice and actual setup of the multinational consortia that are needed to successfully pursue a Horizon 2020 grant. Neither
of these currently exists in the U.S. Despite these distinct disadvantages, U.S. universities, companies, and research institutes have successfully competed for Horizon 2020 grants in the past year; however, there is ample opportunity for many more U.S. organizations to become aware of the opportunities as well as the steps needed in order to successfully compete for a Horizon 2020 grant.

That is precisely the goal of this new project, BILAT USA 4.0. It is a €2 million ($2.2 million) project to be implemented by 16 partners (6 from the US and 10 from Europe – see Table 1) over the next 3 years. It will deepen the level of knowledge that exists already for a number of U.S. organizations and research administrators by focusing on four thematic areas:

1. Ocean and Arctic
2. Health
3. Transportation
4. NMP (Nanotechnology)

In the past, NCURA has served as a pilot National Contact Point (NCP) in the U.S., and with renewed support from BILAT USA 4.0, NCURA will continue to play this crucial role as an “ambassador” for the EU’s Horizon 2020 Project. NCURA’s roles will include:

- Hosting workshops and trainings promoting and cultivating interest in U.S.-based funding opportunities;
- Encouraging more substantive participation in EU-U.S. research collaborations; and
- Disseminating information on U.S. funding opportunities available to European researchers.

While the BILAT USA 4.0 project has a number of overarching goals and objectives (see Chart 1), one of NCURA’s key deliverables for the project is to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a National Contact Point (NCP) system in the U.S. As mentioned above, there is no officially nominated NCP system in the U.S., which puts U.S. researchers and research administrators at a distinct disadvantage in becoming familiar with Horizon 2020, the specific topics of funding opportunities, and the legal and financial issues surrounding Horizon 2020 grant proposals and grant management. Ideally, it would be feasible to both identify and implement a long-term, sustainable network of NCPs such as exists in countries like Canada, China, and Japan. NCURA will also provide training and study visits for potential U.S.-based NCPs through counterparts in Europe that have a robust and firmly established system for providing training, networking, and information-gathering opportunities for their researchers and research administrators.

Another key NCURA deliverable will be an updated and more comprehensive compendium of U.S. funding opportunities, both federal and non-federal, that are open to European researchers. What has been clear is that both sides of the Atlantic actually have much more opportunities for funding and collaboration than are known. Unfortunately, the overlapping topics, different regulations, and compartmentalized ways in which these have been publicized have made it difficult for researchers in the U.S. and in Europe to know of different funding opportunities that may be available to them. As an example, many European researchers are not aware of the fact that while they are not eligible to be primary grant recipients of NSF (U.S. National Science Foundation) grants, they are eligible to be sub-recipients as long as the prime recipient is a U.S. organization.

Finally, NCURA in partnership with FFG (Austrian Research Funding Agency) will convene two workshops with both U.S. and European funding agencies in order to identify more opportunities where calls can be coordinated, twinned, or refer to one another. These will result in concrete recommendations for funding agencies in both the U.S. and Europe to consider for the purpose of facilitating collaboration and pursuing scientific excellence.

The fact that the project includes 16 partners from 10 different countries will further enhance NCURA’s ability to provide contacts and context to collaborations between the U.S. and Europe. Furthermore, a number of the planned workshops and information sessions will be held concurrently with NCURA's Annual Meeting, a number of regional meetings, and during the FRA and PRA conferences, which will enable maximum opportunities for NCURA members to become knowledgeable about Horizon 2020 and other sources of European collaboration and funding.

In all, we should continue to expect the cross-border collaborations in research teams to continue, and the U.S.-European partnership will continue to be a major component of this trend. We expect that the BILAT USA 4.0 project will provide deeper knowledge and practical skills for research administrators in the U.S. and in Europe to facilitate these collaborations while taking advantage of useful references and compendiums to navigate the sometimes uncharted territory of international research administration.
Chart 1: BILAT USA 4.0 project objectives and goals.

Objectives

- Contributing to research that addresses global needs
- Strengthening research excellence and economic competitiveness that addresses global needs
- Supporting Europe’s role as a global actor
- Providing analysis for decision-making and partnership-building
- Deepening research and innovation partnerships in “established” STI fields
- Enhancing partnerships between research and innovation actors
- Encouraging the private sector
- Enabling researchers to secure funding opportunities in both the U.S. and the EU
- Providing an overview of current STI cooperation patterns
- Examining conditions for transatlantic STI cooperation

Table 1: Project partners for the BILAT USA 4.0 project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German Aerospace Centre</td>
<td>DLR</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council of University Research Administrators</td>
<td>NCURA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Co-Coodinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft MbH</td>
<td>FFG</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zentrum für Soziale Innovation GmbH</td>
<td>ZSI</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inno TSD</td>
<td>inno TSD</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas</td>
<td>FORTH</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europa Media</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenzia per la Promozione della Ricerca Europea</td>
<td>APRE</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrasoft International SA</td>
<td>INTRA</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação</td>
<td>SPI</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eidgenoessische Technische Hochschule Zuerich</td>
<td>ETH Zürich</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars</td>
<td>WWICS</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRI International</td>
<td>SRI</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard</td>
<td>BROAD INST</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida International University</td>
<td>FIU</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Tech Research Corporation</td>
<td>GTRC</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Resources:

- Additional Horizon 2020 Resources for U.S. organizations: [www.ncura.edu/Global/BilatUSA20Horizon2020/PresentationsandWebinars.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/Global/BilatUSA20Horizon2020/PresentationsandWebinars.aspx)

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THE JAD TEAM

“What I would like to propose is a Joint Application Design team – an informal working group of FDP members – to provide Grants.gov with feedback, guidance, and counsel on applicant issues for Grants.gov” [1]

Brief History
2016 marks the 20th anniversary of the first electronic Research Administration (eRA) Conference sponsored by NCURA and hosted by Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Five more NCURA eRA conferences would follow with the final in Portland Oregon in 2001. These events were spurred by the adoption of the PC (personal computer) and the move away from paper-based applications. Beginning on October 1, 2000, all NSF proposals were required to be submitted through FastLane.[2] At that time, many agencies developed their own custom systems, each with unique access requirements, user interfaces, forms and business processes. From a university grants office perspective, eRA seemed to be making things more complex as applicants and university research offices now needed to understand and adhere to separate requirements for not only preparing, but electronically submitting applications for each agency.

The Genesis of Grants.gov
The 2002 President’s Management Agenda stipulated that agencies allow applicants for federal grants to apply for, and ultimately manage, grant funds online through a common Web site, simplifying grant management and eliminating redundancies in the same way as the single procurement portal would simplify purchasing. In addition, Public Law 106-107 included a requirement to simplify Federal financial assistance application and reporting requirements. The original vision saw the combination of the President’s Agenda, and Public Law 106-107 on a grand scale. This vision was referred to as the “E-Grants” solution and included both the application and post-award reporting processes for 600 grant programs across 26 Federal agencies. E-Grants included discretionary, formula, block, research, service, infrastructure, security, and cultural grants made to state, local, academic, tribal and non-profit recipients. The graphic below from a 2002 presentation by Charles Havekost[3] depicts recipients as the “Front Office” (or customer) above the “Back Office” or Federal agency business processes.

In the end, the implementation of the E-Grants solution spawned the idea of a simple, unified “storefront” for all customers to search and find grant opportunities and then apply electronically for grants. The “Grants.gov” portal (focusing only on the “Find and Apply” aspect) was born without any notion of post-award activity. Now, 15 years later, the DATA Act pilot includes the post-award aspect of E-Grants, activities such as progress reports, financial reports and project accounting.
Grants.gov Startup Issues

The Grants.gov concept had great potential, however the execution was difficult. Downloading and installing the PureEdge viewer, filling in mandatory and optional forms, and then uploading the package to the Grants.gov portal was a daunting task for the casual user. There were many rough edges on the “Find and Apply” solution – more than a dozen were cited in a poll conducted by the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP - See Grants.gov wish list. [4]) In 2007, Bob Beattie from the University of Michigan, lead a series of “Grants.gov Self-help Group” discussions at the NCURA Annual Meeting and Federal Demonstration Partnership meetings in Washington D.C. As a cornerstone in improving the process, the group recommended: “Grants.gov needs to establish an applicant user group to give advice on both the new system and on updates that are suggested by the user community.”

With the advent of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), an expected increase in applications caused concern at the Office of Management and Budgets (OMB). In a memo dated March 9, 2009 (M-09-14), Peter Orzag, Director of OMB noted, “One area of risk that has been identified is in the operation of Grants.gov.” He went on to state, “After a close and diligent review of system limitations, we have determined this risk to be unacceptably high.” The same memo allowed agencies to continue to use existing application processes or create new ones: “I am further instructing Federal grant-making agencies to immediately identify alternative methods for accepting grant applications during the Recovery Act’s expected peak period to reduce demand on Grants.gov’s limited resources. These alternatives should focus on minimizing any disruption to the grants application processes.” And with specific reference to the anticipated increase from ARRA, Orzag concluded, “As it currently stands, the existing infrastructure would not be able to handle that influx of applications.”

System to System – “The Shining Light”

The E-Grants development effort focused on web services to enable Federal agencies to pull information into their own systems using eXtensible Markup Language (XML) data streams. This applicant service is appropriately called “System-to-System” or S2S. As the name implies, the S2S service allows software on the applicant’s system to create an XML representation of the application and post it to the Grants.gov system where the Federal agency can retrieve it.
The Case for a Joint Application Design (JAD) Team

In the first year of operation, the Grants.gov portal faced a number of criticisms from the grant community that were focused on limitations of the PureEdge application process including a limit of 256 concurrent users during deadlines, limited bandwidth to upload applications with large attachments, and the potential of interruptions due to the expected volume increase from the ARRA funding.

The Orzag OMB memo directing Federal agencies to find alternatives to Grants.gov threatened university and vendor investments in S2S, and by association, these issues threatened the S2S “Shining Light” and its considerable investment by the grant community and commercial vendors. Understanding the threat, and acknowledging the request from the 2007 NCURA and FDP meetings user community, the Grants.gov Project Management Office head, Ebin Trevino, sent an email to the FDP Executive Committee outlining his request to organize a user group. “What I would like to propose is a Joint Application Design team – an informal working group of FDP members – to provide Grants.gov with feedback, guidance, and counsel on applicant issues for Grants.gov” [1]

The FDP gathered volunteers and in January 2009 formed the Joint Application Design (JAD) team. Working with Grants.gov representatives they brainstormed the mission, vision, purpose and organizational structure for the JAD team. The vision focused on representing the stakeholders, working with advice from federal agencies as a forum for change and improvement, providing a mechanism for two way communications between stakeholders and federal agencies and providing summaries to OMB, and in the long term, exploring broader and deeper solutions for both grantors and grantees as defined by the grant life cycle. The mission adopted had two statements: 1) To be a strong voice for the applicants; and 2) To Help Grants.gov meet the expectations of the users and understand their perspective.

JAD Organization

At the request of the Grants.gov PMO (Program Management Office), the JAD membership is selected from the following groups:

- Faculty representatives
- Administrative representatives
- Technical representatives
- Federal agency representatives
- Grants.gov staff

JAD Meetings

An average of 35 volunteers representing the five membership groups hold face-to-face meetings in January, May and September each year at the National Academies Keck Center in Washington, D.C., as well as conducting interim virtual meetings as needed. Issues addressed in recent meetings include:

- Communicate the value of, and investment in, Grants.gov and S2S to OMB
- Prepare a consolidated response to the Federal Register notice for renewal of the SF424 R&R form family
- Identify duplicative forms and provided list of applications using expired forms
- Provide updated certification installation instructions and updated Adobe Forms documentation for the S2S process
- Document and reduce the number of duplicative forms (e.g., 5 vs 10-yr budget)
- Organize user testing of the new Grants.gov Workspace
- Provide beta testing of upcoming changes to forms/schemas
- Elicit discussion of Common Data Element Repository Library with DATA Act team
- Identify form fields that some agencies repurpose and do not meet the approved form definition

References

1 Eben Trevino, Grants.gov Program Management Office - November 2008 Email to the Federal Demonstration Partnership
2 NSF Important Notice 123 - “Working Toward a Paperless Proposal and Award System”
3 Charles Havelock – e-Grants Program Manager, HHS, July 2002
5 Office of Management and Budgets Memo M09-14 – April 2009

Ron Splittergerber, Director of Research Services at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado where his responsibilities include IT support for the Vice President for Research. Ron has been involved in NCURA conferences and committees since 1995, serving on the program committee for eRA workshops including as Co-Chair for eRA VI in 2001. Ron also served on the Executive Committee and as Co-Chair of the eRA Standing Committee at the Federal Demonstration Partnership for Phase V as well as a member of the JAD team. ron.splittergerber@colostate.edu
Research Administration in the Middle East

THE IDEAL PROJECT:
Enhancing Research Capacity in Lebanon

By Fadia Homeidan

Over the years, the roles and responsibilities of OGC increased when it became clear that more support is needed for the faculty and their research activities. A technology transfer unit (TTU) was formed within the office, which now manages faculty and staff invention disclosures and is responsible for drafting and signing material transfer and non-disclosure agreements, protecting AUB’s intellectual property and transferring inventions and technologies for the public good.

A 2010 UNESCO Science Report for the Arab States¹ (Regional overview for the Arab States: Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010) details a large number of the challenges facing research and development and innovation (RD&I) for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, of which Lebanon is no exception. One of the major challenges is the problem of financial inputs. In many MENA countries, there is extremely low gross domestic expenditure on research and development, which has, expectedly, led to low research outputs. In a study commissioned by the French-based Institut de Recherche pour le Développement and sup-

The main objective of IDEAL is to support universities in increasing intellectual property and the transfer of intellectual property to enterprise.

In responding to the challenges facing research funding and research outputs in Lebanon, AUB was able to attract funding from the European Union through the Tempus IV funding scheme for the project entitled: “Innovation and Development of Academic-Industry Partnership Through Efficient Research Administration in Lebanon” (IDEAL). The project is being coordinated by the OGC. IDEAL (www.ideal4lebanon.org) is a consortium of six Lebanese universities (American University of Beirut, Beirut Arab University, Lebanese American University, Modern University of Business and Sciences, University of Balamand, and University of St Joseph); the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the National Council for Scientific Research, the Lebanese Industrial Research Achievements program and InfoPro S.A.L. in Lebanon; and five European Universities (Staffordshire University, Technological Educational Institute of Thessaly, University of Alicante, University of Bari, FH Joanneum) and the Mowgli foundation (UK).

The main objective of IDEAL is to support universities in increasing inputs and outputs of RD&I also been given the chance to intern in a European research office to learn first-hand how active research offices work, to develop partnerships with European institutions, and to understand the EU funding schemes, which Lebanon and its universities can benefit from.

2. Creating networks between Lebanese researchers and industry interested in RD&I. Databases have been created and are regularly updated and accessible to all interested. The database is already helping Lebanese researchers identify partners in the country and join local and international networks established.

3. Establishing a non-for-profit professional structure to support research administrators in Lebanon.

4. Encouraging entrepreneurship in the partner Lebanese Universities. A student business idea competition was conducted among the six Lebanese partners and out of sixty-two entries, 10 were selected. The 10 teams attended trainings on business modelling, business and financial planning, pitching to investors, boot camp and other relevant trainings. Many of them have already met with investors and some have been able to receive the first round of funding.

At AUB and as a direct result of the IDEAL project, and in an effort to strengthen and elevate AUB’s stature as a world-class research institution, OGC launched a Center for Research and Innovation (CRIhm) with a mission to create a seamless, immersive culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that spans and engages each of the AUB’s faculty, students, alumni and staff. The center is a space and community that encourages, supports and fosters new technologies transforming businesses and lives and currently serves as a hub for emerging technology startups, helping them to succeed by connecting with customers, advisors, influencers and entrepreneurs. The center is currently hosting six of the IDEAL business competition winning teams.

As a result of the successes achieved in the first competition, a second business competition had been launched recently. The winning startups will again have the chance to use the resources of the Centre for Research and Innovation at AUB to establish and grow their businesses.

OGC will continue to play a vital role at AUB and in Lebanon through supporting and enabling faculty to develop their research expertise, to diversify their sources of research funding, increase research outputs, and to raise awareness to the importance of carrying out research of long term impact to the society at large.

References


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Dr. Fadia Homeidan is Director, Office of Grants and Contracts, Technology Transfer Unit and Centre for Research and Innovation at the American University of Beirut. Dr. Homeidan coordinates and actively participates in projects at her institution. She can be reached at fh01@aub.edu.lb
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What’s the biggest difference between working at a small, public liberal arts college in rural Minnesota and being on assignment at a Federal funding agency in the Washington, DC area? The short answer: snow days.

In my entire 15 year association with the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM), classes have been cancelled only once; during the 12 months I was on assignment at the National Science Foundation (NSF), Federal offices were shut down twice due to weather conditions. Of course, this wasn’t the only difference and, in all fairness, we Minnesotans do have a bit more experience driving in snow. The long answer involved an opportunity to change perspective: from July 2014 to July 2015 I was able to experience professional life from the other side of the grants “fence.” For that year I was no longer the director of UMM’s grants development office but instead served as a grant policy specialist at NSF as part of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility program.

Managed by the Office of Personnel Management, the IPA program, according to its website, “provides for the temporary assignment of personnel between the Federal Government and state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, federally funded research and development centers, and other eligible organizations.” At NSF, it is much more common to see program directors who are faculty serving as IPA/rotators than university administrators. IPAs traditionally receive assignments spanning one to four years. While considered Federal employees during their appointment, NSF pays their regular university salary and benefits through their home university by awarding a grant to the institution. As the program benefits both NSF and the home institution, NSF requests a 15 percent cost share and does not allow facilities and administrative costs on the IPA grant.

As a self-described “generalist” with responsibility for day-to-day activity in UMM’s three-person cradle-to-grave shop, I saw my new assignment as an opportunity to step back from my often crisis-driven daily routine and focus on research administration in a more holistic and thoughtful way.

The first thing I realized was that my new position allowed me to study and thoroughly understand how this Federal agency was structured and operated. My assignment was in the Policy Office, which is one of four areas that comprise the Division of Institute and Award Support (DIAS). The other areas are the Cost Analysis and Audit Resolution (CAAR) Branch, Research.gov, and the Systems Office. DIAS is one of six divisions that make up the Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management (BFA); other divisions include Budget (BUD), Financial Management (DFM), and Grants.
and Agreement (DGA). Finally, including BFA, there are nine primary Directorates/Offices that we normally work with: Biological Sciences; Computer and Information/Science and Engineering; Education and Human Resources; Engineering; Geosciences; Mathematical and Physical Sciences; Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences; and the Office of Information and Resource Management.

Though I’m admittedly biased, I’m fairly certain my IPA assignment must have been the most fascinating one last year, particularly since it came just as the Uniform Guidance was being implemented. Led by the legendary Jean Feldman, the Policy Office establishes, implements, and issues proposal and award policy for all NSF programs. While this may sound fairly straightforward, the office’s reach encompasses all areas of the Foundation. It develops both internal and external policy manuals including the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide. The office works closely with all NSF offices, as well as other Federal agencies, on a number of issues and topics. Policy staff respond to all policy-related e-mail and phone questions, help lead beta-testing of electronic proposal and award systems, coordinate outreach activities including office presentations, webinars, NSF grants conferences and targeted outreach programs, and coordinate NSF’s clearance process. This is just a small sampling of the things the terrific five-person team (plus one IPA) does on a regular basis. This breadth of projects and responsibilities meant that, similar to my role at my university, my duties in the Policy Office were varied and encompassed a number of activities. The following are just a few.

For most of the year I was tasked with taking the lead on drafting responses to questions that would come to the office. Each week the office receives numerous questions, comments, and requests for points of clarification or more information from a variety of constituents, both internal and external. Inquiries come from research administrators, principal investigators, other federal agencies, program directors and other NSF offices, among others. Some questions were fairly rudimentary, simply requiring pointing to a specific policy, while others required further investigation and conversations with a number of experts and offices. To respond to these inquiries I would often consult a number of sources including the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedure Guide (PAPPG) — both the Grant Proposal Guide and the Award and Administration Guide — as well as other materials such as internal NSF documents and online resources, the Grant General Conditions (GCC), Program Solicitations, Program Descriptions, FAQs and other specific guidance, 2 CFR § 200 Uniform Guidance, the Research Terms and Conditions, FastLane and Research.gov demo sites, and consultation with lots of people including Policy colleagues, CAAR, DGA, other BFA offices, Systems Office, program officers, Research.gov and FastLane teams. At first it was a bit of a challenge to remember I was now representing NSF and that I had to exercise care to use the Foundation’s specific language rather than terms I had previously considered interchangeable (budget justification vs. budget narrative or submitter vs. proposer, for example).

Another year-long responsibility was assisting with the NSF clearance process. All Program Solicitations, Program Descriptions, Memorandum of Understanding, Dear Colleague Letters, Frequently Asked Questions, Reports and other materials have to be reviewed and approved prior to being issued by the Foundation. I had an opportunity to assist the coordinator of this process in the review of all documents prior to their publication. This was a terrific immersion in the workings of many of the Foundation’s funding programs, and it gave me an opportunity to ask questions and make observations from a research administrator’s standpoint. Synergizing with my question response role, I was also able to review materials taking into account some of the questions that might come to the Policy Office on a fairly regular basis.

Additionally, I was able to participate in meetings and provide input on the Proposal Compliance Validation process. Prior to the rollout of changes or updates to the Research.gov or FastLane systems, the Policy Office would review, beta test and consult on all items that could potentially impact the research community. As someone who actually serves as both the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) and Sponsored Projects Officer (SPO), I believe it was mutually beneficial to have someone on the policy team who was an actual day-to-day user of FastLane, Research.gov and other Federal (and non-Federal) sponsored program submission and management resources. I assumed my role with strong opinions that FastLane is one of the best submission vehicles available, and I still feel that way; however, my NSF experience has given me a better understanding of some of the challenges of updating and maintaining this program, something that many research administrators appreciate but perhaps take for granted.

I particularly relished the opportunity to assist with a number of special projects. This included, with the implementation of the Uniform Guidance, helping to staff the process of developing a revised set of Research Terms and Conditions (RTC’s) as they apply to research and research-related grants made by several Federal awarding agencies to institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations. I also got to develop the draft document for an NSF project to explore a streamlined budgeting process to be piloted by a couple of funding programs, as well as helped develop drafts of notices and responses to be published for public comment in the Federal Register prior to policies actually being approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Day-to-day life was quite different at NSF, yet had parallels to my permanent position; it certainly called on me to use many of the skills I had gained during my years in research administration. My time in the NSF Policy Office was like a master class every day. It both allowed and forced me to become more familiar with NSF policy as well as the Uniform Guidance. It made me realize there is not much difference in the basic goals of our offices — to make sure the policies and procedures are clear, understood and followed so that those receiving Federal funds can do the ground-breaking and transformative work that they are striving to do.

Indeed, it was very interesting to change hats for a while and serve as a Federal employee for a year. The people I worked with — both as colleagues and constituents — were terrific and capable and it was fun to be in our nation’s capital for a year. And, then again, in DC you do get more snow days and that’s not so bad either.

Roger Wareham is director of the Grants Development Office at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He recently returned from a one-year Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignment as a Grant Policy Specialist in the Policy Office at the National Science Foundation. He can be reached at at wareham@morris.umn.edu
Recent reports indicate that nearly a third of the world’s clinical trials are currently being conducted outside of the US and one quarter of investigational new drug (IND) applications include data from clinical trials conducted at international study sites (Rajadhyaksha, 2010). At the same time, recent events such as the clinical trial in France in which one person died and five others were hospitalized have increased scrutiny of clinical research conducted outside the U.S.

There are several challenges to consider when designing and conducting an international clinical trial. While such an undertaking may seem daunting, proper planning, an awareness of the regulatory environment in the country of interest, and due diligence can help avoid costly and time-consuming obstacles.

Planning Is Key: Know Your Market
The critical elements involved in planning an international clinical trial are not dissimilar to those involved in trials conducted in the U.S. These include: (a) inception (protocol design, financial planning, site selection, internal approvals); (b) the IRB approval process, which may involve local review/approval, external site-specific review and approval, and/or central or joint IRB review; (c) study conduct and continuing review at local and external sites, as well as training, study management, and control of the investigational product; and (d) study close-out and results (data analysis and publication). Defining roles and responsibilities, beginning with the coordinating investigator, is crucial and should be well documented and distributed to the study team. Furthermore, successful completion of an international clinical trial depends on planning for a wide array of personnel and administrative time and resources. Investigators should be asking themselves if these investments are affordable.

One of the most complex issues regarding international clinical research is the varied and unfamiliar regulatory environment of research outside of the U.S., which is also monitored by the FDA. According to Alicia Mozzachio, chief of the international compliance branch of the Office of Manufacturing and Product Quality, non-U.S. drug manufacturers experience most of the FDA citations for data integrity failures that included backdating documents, fabricating data, and copying data from past records. Different geographic regions have varying mandates that may include approval by the country’s Ministry of Health (Middle East and North Africa), a ban on the exportation of human embryonic germ cells and permission for the importation of lab kits/devices (Taiwan, Korea, Thailand), a prohibition on mentioning contraception in the informed consent (England), and compensation in cases of accidental injury connected to a trial (India). Complicated and redundant approval and monitoring processes can significantly add to the time it takes to conduct a study, as can local regulatory approval, if applicable, for the study drug or intervention. These restrictions must be weighed in comparison to potential benefits, such as the high literacy rates in Eastern Europe that may contribute to a smoother informed consent process or large populations and good adherence and retention for clinical trials in South America (Petryna, 2005; Nicolau, 2013). Regulatory issues
can potentially be reduced by routinely monitoring site activities via web- or fax-based data entry systems that allow for real-time form completion and data quality monitoring.

In addition to understanding the region’s regulatory environment, it is essential to take financial and contractual issues into consideration. Defining the payment terms, providing investigators and coordinators with adequate compensation (academic medicine physicians do not typically have protected time for research in South America, for example), identifying supply costs, the need to utilize a local CRO to improve efficiency, an understanding of how the grant money is allocated, and fluctuating foreign currencies (for federally funded studies it is advisable to specify that payments are in U.S. dollars) should all be considered when developing a budget. For clinical trial contracts, which may need to be re-issued annually in some countries, indemnification and insurance issues may include indemnifying institutions and their employees; obtaining negligent-harm coverage by a local malpractice insurance policy for study compliance; and such restrictions as refusing coverage for HIV studies, avoidance of certain geographical areas, or involvement of children.

There are other issues to consider when conducting research abroad that don’t apply domestically. In addition to factoring in language barriers and time differences, investigators should consider translation for study documents, community health literacy that may affect recruitment, and differences in the standard of care and cultural practices that could impact implementation of the study protocol.

**Mitigating Risks**

Although there are challenges connected with conducting clinical research outside the U.S., there are a variety of steps that can be taken to mitigate risks (Jordan, 2012):

- Implement a formal due diligence process for all third parties, including an evaluation of their qualifications and business reputations, the rationale for engaging them, and a review of relevant Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) risk areas.
- Require third parties to execute a formal agreement outlining the engagement, scope of services, and their obligations.
- Provide anti-corruption compliance training.
- Conduct regular audits to ensure that research staff and third parties are in compliance, as well as audits of clinical trial transactions and payments.
- Design proactive and predictive analyses to identify activities that may be trending toward a potential corruption or fraud issue (Deloitte, 2014).

**References**


**Tesheia Johnson**

MBA, MHS, is Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of YCCI and the Associate Director for Clinical Research for Yale School of Medicine, where she provides leadership and strategic direction in the area of clinical and translational research. She can be reached at tesheia.johnson@yale.edu
Your regional leadership is pleased to announce the 2016 Executive Shadow Program participants. The competitive program selects individuals who desire to learn more about regional leadership, and provides the opportunity to shadow the advisory board and learn the roles of elected officers and committees. 2016 participants are: Jason Hagan of Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Gai Doran of Yale University. Jason is mentored by Donna Smith of Massachusetts General Hospital. Gai is mentored by Denise Moody of Harvard University. Congratulations to the 2016 participants and thank you to their mentors.

This year, Region I is allocating $1,500 more to travel awards than last year. The region will have three $500 regional travel awards, with one award to PRA ($750), one award to FRA ($750), and three for $1,000 to the national annual meeting. Donna Smith of Massachusetts General Hospital is leading the awards committee. Watch the website for application deadlines and details.

The Curriculum Committee chaired by Minessa Konecky is hard at work planning regional workshops and the very popular Research Administrator Discussion Groups (RADG) for the year. In an effort to expand programming outside of Boston, one meeting will be held at Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA and another will be held in Maine. Region I continues to explore ways to partner with higher education institutions to expand our offerings and keep them affordable. To this end, Region I recently signed a partnership agreement with Emmanuel College to be home to our regional workshops for 2016.

In other news, the regional advisory board has begun discussions on ways the region may recognize the significant impact Julie Norris (formerly of MIT and Region I) had on research administration. Julie passed away on November 17, 2015 after a period of declining health.

Never hesitate to contact NCURA Region I with your thoughts and suggestions.

Kris Monahan is Chair of Region I and Director of Sponsored Research & Programs at Providence College. She can be reached at chair@ncuraregioni.org

By the time you read this I hope spring is in the air and those in the region paralyzed by the blizzard of 2016 have recovered. Speaking of spring, the Region II Spring Meeting is right around the corner. The meeting will be held at the Courtyard Marriott in Philadelphia, May 1–4, 2016. Please visit the region’s website http://ncuraregionii.org for conference and workshop registration, hotel reservations, and program information. If you are asking yourself, why should I attend the Spring Meeting? the answer is that the Spring Meeting offers many opportunities for new and seasoned research administrators to network with colleagues and benefit from some of the best research administration educational offerings available. The conference provides a forum to strike up a conversation with someone you’ve never talked to before while providing an opportunity to explore an area of research administration that may allow you to further augment your knowledge. It is an opportunity to encounter new practices, people, sights, and ideas.

If you are looking for educational opportunities for your institution, I want to remind Region II members of the professional development workshops that are offered. Workshops have been held at various institutions across the region and have been well received. To see a full list of the workshops please visit the website http://ncuraregionii.org/pdc

Over the past few years Region II has worked on the development and implementation of the Region II Cheryl Howard Mentor-Me Program. I am pleased to announce the graduates and mentors of the 2016 Cheryl Howard Mentor-Me Program inaugural class.

Maisha Nelson, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and mentor Brian Squilla, Thomas Jefferson University

Kierra Suggs, the Johns Hopkins University, and mentor Cheryl Williams, University of Rochester

Jennifer Harman, Nazareth College, and mentor Martin Williams, William Patterson University

Anika Bissahoyo, Bowie State University, and mentor Mary Louise Healy, the Johns Hopkins University

Christine Cowan, Christiana Care Health Care Services, Inc., and mentor Brenda Kavanagh, University of Rochester

Congratulations to our graduates and thank you to mentors who volunteered their time working with these individuals.

Finally, Region II will be revamping its website in 2016. The communication committee is working diligently to come up with ideas to improve the overall layout of the website and make it visually appealing to all.

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 https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii/ and on Twitter at @NCURAREGIONII.

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 ecdb@buffalo.edu
Join us as we congratulate our newest recipients of their CRA credentials: Rebecca Bassett, Criston Bell, Nicole Cobb, Kathryn Teasler (Mississippi State); Cameron Craft, Luanne Harley (Medical University of South Carolina); Nicole Hammill (Louisiana State University Health Science Center); Doris Head (Vanderbilt); Dale Meeks (Florida State University); Margaret Mondak (Virginia Commonwealth); Paul Tuttle (North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University); Stacey Wade (University of Tennessee); Matthew Walters (University of Florida); Ashley Williams (Georgia Institute of Technology); and Denise Wynn (North Carolina Central University). Great job, Flamingos! Keep up the hard work and professional excellence. We would also like to remind members to take advantage of the tremendous educational opportunities offered by NCURA. We encourage you to visit [http://www.ncura.edu/Education/OnlineEducation.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/Education/OnlineEducation.aspx) to find out which webinar, tutorial, education series, or webcast is best for you!

Another great way that NCURA members learn and grow professionally is through conferences. Regional spring meetings provide our members with a chance to gather locally to share experiences in a meaningful way. This year, from April 30 to May 4, Region III will be focused on “Building Teams, Breaking Down Barriers” at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa. Recognizing that we accomplish more by working collaboratively, we hope you’ve already registered for the meeting and booked your beachfront accommodations! But if you haven’t, there is still time to make arrangements to join your region in workshops, presentations, discussions, and networking. The Program Committee brings you a keynote address presented by Dr. Stephen M. Fiore, Director of the Cognitive Sciences Laboratory at the University of Central Florida, and a program full of professional development for all levels. This will certainly be a meeting you do not want to miss!

Whether you’re looking for ways to volunteer before, during, or after the Spring Meeting, we need your help! Our Volunteer Coordinator, Sandy Barber, will gladly connect your skills and interests with a need within the region. Please contact her at [sandra.barber@business.gatech.edu](mailto:sandra.barber@business.gatech.edu). Through volunteering with NCURA, you will receive as much as you give and MORE! Volunteering is the perfect way to build teams and break down barriers. Consider contributing your time and talent to Region III. You can also visit our website for detailed information about volunteer opportunities and committee openings.

Lastly, we want to be sure all members receive critical information and updates to make the most of their membership. Be sure to like our page on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn, and read your Third-Thursday newsletters. These are the best ways to stay current on Region III news and events. See you in Sandestin!

Danielle McElwain is Chair of Region III and serves as Senior Sponsored Programs Administrator at the University of South Carolina. She can be reached at dmcelwai@mailbox.sc.edu

Happy spring, Region IV! Just a few updates from the regional office in this issue:

As Region IV is growing, we’re rolling out a new communication plan to try and involve all members, new and seasoned. For those of you who love social media, we have an active Region IV Facebook group and we’re starting to tweet more regularly. We’re posting all regional updates on social media outlets, with a link back to the full story on our website, so keep an eye out for those. Many people like to check the Region IV website at their leisure for news and standing regional information, and this group will be happy to see all the latest updates posted on the home page. And finally, for those of you who like the newsletter, we’re sending out a monthly wrap-up of all the updates you might have missed, which will link you back to the full story on our website.

Besides getting all of the Region IV news, what does this mean for you? You can be an active participant in communicating news to the region! Let us know if a colleague is retiring, or got a great promotion. We love to share this news! Or, maybe you’re opening new searches for research administrators at your institution and would like to get the word out. Let the communication committee know, and we’ll shout it out to the region.

Did everyone see that registration for the Spring Meeting in Kansas City is open? Get your registration in by April 20 for the early bird discount. Registration for the meeting is a fantastic deal for the program, including a well-rounded federal track with both NIH and NSF. There’s a New Concept Expo poster session, lots of networking opportunities, and the World Series champion Kansas City Royals open their season while we are in KC! Yoga in the morning, line dancing at night, and BBQ to your heart’s delight—this is a meeting not to be missed!

Finally, this campaign season is reminding me—don’t forget to vote for this year’s Region IV board. The nominations committee put together an excellent panel of highly qualified candidates, and all of them are well qualified to lead the region over the coming years.

Congratulations to Sue Kelch and Tricia Callahan on their acceptance into the National NCURA Executive Leadership Program (ELP). When you see Tricia and Sue at the spring meeting, ask them about the program; it is truly an exciting opportunity to take part in this leadership and learning opportunity. Last, but not least, a big thank you and congratulations to Suzanne Rivera on her new role representing Region IV on the 2016-2017 National Nomination and Leadership Development Committee.

See you all in KC!!

Kirsten

Kirsten Yehl is outgoing Chair of Region IV and serves as Administrative Director of the Institute of Public Health and Medicine at Northwestern University. She can be reached at k-yehl@northwestern.edu
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Emily Ainsworth
Coordinator, Membership and Volunteer Services
NCURA
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As I near the end of my term as Chair of Region V, I am enthusiastic to see the forward direction that our committees and volunteers have taken towards working together to grow our membership, provide service to our members, and strengthen the networking within our region. As I mentioned in my January article, we want this year to be YOUR YEAR to become more involved in and supported by NCURA. In January we began working on several new initiatives to provide opportunities for you to become involved. We began rolling out a series of surveys to gain a better understanding of opportunities and services that you would like to see provided. We also began providing information on volunteer opportunities. In addition to requesting your input on these surveys, I encourage you to reach out on an individual basis to suggest future endeavors. Beth Milam, our Volunteer Coordinator, is forming the Volunteer Committee for the annual regional meeting…and the volunteer opportunities do not end there! During the last year we also established a Membership and Hospitality Committee and we are working on developing our Mentoring and Leadership Program. If you are interested in volunteering in any of these areas or have an idea that you would like to suggest, please contact Beth at bmilam@tamu.edu

Have you registered for the annual regional meeting yet? You are not going to want to miss this one! Join us April 24-27 in Grapevine, Texas at the beautiful Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center. The Program Committee worked diligently to put together an outstanding agenda. This year’s theme is “Research Administration: Innovating Today and Defining Tomorrow.” Our keynote speaker is Dr. Benjamin Levine, Professor of Internal Medicine and Distinguished Professor of Exercise Sciences at UT Southwestern Medical Center. The meeting tracks include pre-award, professional development, post-award, research compliance, contract negotiations, departmental administration, medical/clinical administration, intellectual property/industry contracts, and federal agency/sponsor updates. Tuesday evening, we will host a “boots and bandana” western-style event at the Austin Ranch, which is located on the venue property. In addition to all the professional development and western fun, we will also be unveiling our new Region V mascot at this meeting! Please make plans to join us for this historic event!

Katherine V. Kissmann serves as the Chair of Region V and is Director of Contracts and Grants at Texas A&M University. She may be reached at kkissmann@tamu.edu

What a year so far! We have been working feverishly to make RMHawaii2016 the absolute best conference ever. Registration is open along with a stellar preliminary program, cheap airfare, and room prices unheard of for the Grand Wailea, all designed with you in mind. This year we have so many new options for our conference attendees. We are proud to partner with ICON to bring the most stellar programming for industry contracting to date. Starting with a Saturday workshop, you can immerse yourself in industry contracting with two additional workshop offerings on Sunday. The program will be rich with sessions exclusively for industry contracting. It is our goal to provide the most rigorous training this year in this area.

We are pleased to announce that we will have a Saturday workshop designed for senior leaders who operate in a managerial role or who are seeking career advancement to a senior role. We are fortunate to have some of the best industry leaders, who we have labeled the Fab Four, to lead the discussion. Marianne Woods, Pam Whitlock, Denise Clark, and Dennis Paffrath will lead this workshop. More information will be announced soon.

We will also offer our NCURA 101 workshop for the third year. This workshop is a free offering to attendees designed for the new or returning member as well as non-member attendees. The workshop is designed to give them an opportunity to discover the benefits of NCURA membership.

Last year in Salt Lake City, I taught this session with Marc Schiffman of NCURA to a room of about 30 attendees. We had an amazing time with great feedback. It gave the attendees an investment in the organization by letting them know that NCURA was invested in them.

Volunteer opportunities are growing this year! In continued collaboration with Regions VII and VIII, we are looking to expand NCURA. We are going to continue outreach not only to target new members but also second and/or third year members to make sure they feel connected and given the opportunity to get involved. Volunteers are needed to complete this massive effort. This effort, coupled with our NCURA 101 workshop, is our attempt to preserve and harvest the rich resource of vibrant research administrators in our region and to keep our leadership pipeline thriving into the future. There is never a dull day in NCURA Region VI. Get involved. Get Active. Get Connected. Stay tuned to our Facebook group for breaking news related to our region. Pack your bag and come and join us in Hawaii. Chat soon!

Derick Jones is Chair of Region VI and serves as Program Manager for The Institute for Translational Genomics and Population Sciences at LA BioMed. He can be reached at derickjones@labiomed.org
Aloha! Derick Jones and I recently went on a site visit to beautiful Maui, Hawaii. For the first time, Regions VI, VII, and VIII are partnering up to hold a joint fall regional meeting. Although it involves a lot of work trying to coordinate a meeting between three regions, we are up to the challenge. Using our think-outside-the-box approach we have many activities planned. We are also pleased to announce we will be offering a Senior Saturday workshop, a first of its kind. This workshop is designed for organizational leaders—supervisors, managers, directors, or anyone who is a senior administrator.

Our approach to this workshop is quite simple: bring in the best of the best presenters to lead it. Faculty for the Senior Leadership full-day workshop include Marianne Woods, Pam Whitlock, Denise Clark, and Dennis Paffrath. As a result of their combined experience and skills, we have dubbed this group the “Fab Four.”

Speaking of our meeting, save the date! Come join us and say “aloha” to beautiful Maui on October 2-5, 2016. This will be a meeting to remember! Calls for proposals are now out, so send in your ideas. RVII leaders invites you to submit your session or workshop proposal through our portal at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/regionsVI-VII-VIII

Don’t forget to like us on Facebook! Our Region VII Facebook site is up and running at https://www.facebook.com/groups/NCURARegionVII/?pnref=tlhc. Join us! As you know, social media is the quickest way to interact and receive information. We’ve been posting information and photos from our recent site visit to Maui.

Please make sure you visit our webpage often for upcoming announcements. Soon we will send out a call for travel award applications for the Annual Meeting in Washington, DC as well as for our Regional Meeting. I am looking forward to working with everyone this year and I am truly honored to be a part of the leadership for Region VII.

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

Dear Region VIII Members,

Spring is moving closer, the days are getting lighter (at least in Sweden), and before we know it summer will be here—and with summer the NCURA annual meeting. The NCURA annual and regional meetings are excellent ways to stay connected and up-to-date with the latest in research administration. Like last year, we are very happy to be able to offer one travel award to an international region member to attend the annual meeting. Keep an eye out for the upcoming travel award announcement. Information will be provided on our website at http://ncuraintlregion.org/

Help us build the region!

We are still looking for volunteers within our region. Every little contribution means so much especially since the region is young and growing. I cannot tell you enough how rewarding it is to volunteer and build great business relations and lifelong friends. There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer both at the annual meeting in August and at the regional meeting in Hawaii in October (together with Region VI and VII). Yes, you read right, Hawaii in October—what could be better? Contact any of the board members (myself, Annika Glauner, Bella Blaher, Susanne Rahner, or Siegfried Huemer) to get more information. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Warm regards,

Eva

Eva Björndal is Chair of Region VIII and serves as Team Leader for the Post-Contract Office, Grants Office, Department of Research Support at Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. She can be reached at Eva.Bjorndal@ki.se
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Sahba Seddighi didn’t know a word of English when she left Iran for the United States. But the precocious fourth-grader quickly learned the language and became fascinated with the potential of the human brain.

Now a junior in UT’s College Scholars Program, she is focusing on neuroplasticity—how the brain changes as a result of experience.

Working with Matthew Cooper, associate professor of psychology, Seddighi is putting stress, or specifically what causes it, under the microscope.

“We all respond to stress in different ways. Some get headaches. Some get heart disease. But the underlying mechanisms for the basis of this variation is not fully understood,” Seddighi said.

To help unlock the mystery, Seddighi is using an unusual tool—a community of 100 Syrian hamsters.

Her investigation centers on restricting the playtime of young hamsters to see if they experience any permanent changes to a part of their brain called the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC). Such a modification could make them more vulnerable to stress later in life, becoming evident through submissive and defensive behavior.

At first, the young hamsters were divided into two groups. One group lived only with their mothers, while the other lived with peers and learned to socialize. Eventually, all hamsters were moved to cages with their peers.

In a rodent version of a reality TV show, the hamsters were then exposed to stressful social situations in which a smaller submissive hamster was put in a cage with a larger aggressive one. Seddighi recorded their activity and counted the frequency and duration of submissive, defensive, aggressive, social, and nonsocial behaviors.

“The hamsters literally fight each other,” Seddighi said. “This social and physical interaction is the basis of psychosocial defeat where a Syrian hamster, known for aggression, loses its aggressive tendency and becomes more stressed.”

In the second phase of the study, Seddighi will look at neurons in the hamsters’ brains under a microscope. She will use tracing software to quantify the structure of the neurons, looking at density, length, and junctions—all clues to the function and communication of the nerve cells.

“We expect that mother-housed animals will show reduced neural activity in the vmPFC compared to peer-housed animals because of lack of play and thus be more vulnerable to stress,” Seddighi said.

If Seddighi’s research supports a link between the vmPFC and stress, better treatment options for stress-related mental illnesses may follow.

“If our hypothesis is proven true, it could lead to novel treatments like using play therapy or drugs that target the underlying biological mechanisms to reduce stress,” she added.

Seddighi has already conducted neuroscience research at the National Institutes of Health and Stanford University. Upon graduation, she plans to enter a doctoral program to explore neurological diseases, with a focus on neuroplasticity as a therapeutic tool.

“We don’t know what causes so many of these often intractable neurological diseases like Alzheimer’s and multiple sclerosis,” she said. “I think there is a lot of potential for discoveries that will make a difference.”

While diligently working to uncover the brain’s hidden secrets, Seddighi has developed a profound thirst for research. “It is the international language of science, a way for the passionately curious to make sense of the world.” Just another language she continues to master on her journey for knowledge.

Courtesy line: Originally published in Quest magazine, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
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Region II – Mid-Atlantic ......................................................... May 1-4, 2016
   Philadelphia, PA
Region III – Southeastern ...................................................... April 30-May 4, 2016
   Miramar Beach, FL
Region IV – Mid-America ......................................................... May 1-4, 2016
   Kansas City, MO
Region V – Southwestern ......................................................... April 24-27, 2016
   Dallas, TX
Regions VI/VII/VIII – Western/Rocky Mountain/International ...... October 2-5, 2016
   Maui, HI

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
Research Administration: The Practical Side of Leadership ..... April 11-13, 2016
   Hilton Head, SC
Export Controls Workshop ................................................. June 27-29, 2016
   Chicago, IL
Departmental Research Administration Workshop ................. June 27-29, 2016
   Chicago, IL
   Chicago, IL
LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project
   Administration Workshop ................................................. June 27-29, 2016
   Chicago, IL

NATIONAL CONFERENCES
58th Annual Meeting ............................................................ August 7-10, 2016
   Washington, DC
Pro-Award Research Administration Conference ................. March 8-10, 2017
   San Diego, CA
Financial Research Administration Conference ................. March 11-13, 2017
   San Diego, CA

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Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .................. March 11, 2016
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