Creative Collaborations

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of previously unsung pioneers in the early days of Big Science. Ventimiglia and Robyn Remotigue. We may find ourselves tasked with building collaborations beyond the boundaries of our own institutions, facilitate faculty collaborations are described in an article by Tony much like the efforts undertaken at Southern Illinois University in successful partnerships. The Leadership Coach gives his advice on collaboration isn’t always easy but a little work along the way can result of Public Health that are improving the research enterprise by strategic administrators in successful collaborative research. Programs at Auburn and departments at Tufts University and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health that are improving the research enterprise by strategic placement of highly skilled research administrators.

Marianne Rinaldo Woods provides an overview of our role as research administrators in successful collaborative research. Programs at Auburn University and the University of North Texas Health Science Center that facilitate faculty collaborations are described in an article by Tony Ventimiglia and Robyn Remotigue. We may find ourselves tasked with building collaborations beyond the boundaries of our own institutions, much like the efforts undertaken at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. The team identified significant barriers for faculty and then developed a plan to address the barriers.

Sarah Browngoetz, Patti Carey and Samantha Aleshire remind us that collaboration isn’t always easy but a little work along the way can result in successful partnerships. The Leadership Coach gives his advice on growing into management and leadership roles.

Looking for some interesting autumn reads? Andre Walker reviews two books We Could Not Fail: The First African Americans in the Space Program and Rise of Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us from Missiles to the Moon to Mars. These books focus on two groups of previously unsung pioneers in the early days of Big Science.

This issue is PACKED, but no worries. Because it is electronic you are able to download it to all your devices and read it anywhere.

Toni Shaklee is the assistant vice president for research at Oklahoma State University. She serves NCURA on the Board of Directors and the Education Scholarship Fund Committee (please give generously). She can be reached at toni.shaklee@okstate.edu

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The National Council of University Research Administrators NCURA Magazine is printed on recycled paper, using Agri-based inks.
In this issue, we’re focusing on Creative Collaborations. I’m not sure if you asked most people to define traits of a typical research administrator that the word “creative” would be one of the first that comes to mind. Nevertheless, after many years in the profession and working with colleagues at home and abroad, I do find us to be creative and innovative in accomplishing unique tasks and solving problems.

One area that best demonstrates our ability to be creative partners is working on international collaborations. Over the past few months, I have been fortunate to meet with research administrators and managers from around the world. We’ve shared our common experiences from identifying increasingly competitive funding opportunities to working with faculty and sponsors with high expectations and short timelines. No matter where you work, awards are harder to get with more terms and conditions and greater scrutiny.

So, what does this mean for research administrators and how can NCURA provide assistance?

When a global project is proposed, a research administrator needs to plan on being pro-active, flexible, and open to new ideas and approaches. The systems, forms, and languages that we are so accustomed to using likely won’t work in many scenarios. Be prepared to improvise, learn how to mime or draw to express your ideas, and learn different histories and social customs. It’s important to be open to other ideas and constructive feedback when things are not working as well as hoped. Learn to be more patient while at the same time teaching others to understand times of urgency. In other words, be creative!

NCURA continues to offer resources to facilitate these global collaborations. We offer several international fellowship programs which provide opportunities for individual members to visit another university to learn first-hand how research administration is handled there. My institution, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was fortunate to host a visiting fellow from Russia this past summer. It was a great opportunity for both sides to learn from each other. The visit also confirmed that there are more similarities than differences in our work and play. No matter whether you live in Moscow or Madison, everyone enjoys good food, good weather, and everyone has a dislike for pesky mosquitos.

Our programming includes new offerings that emphasize the importance of building strong global collaborations. For example, we presented a workshop focusing on finding funding and writing strong proposals for humanitarian projects. NCURA also continues to offer insights into international subawards and subrecipient monitoring.

Also, NCURA sent a travel delegation to Cuba this spring to explore the possibilities of establishing closer collaborations. We continue to build on that initial visit and look forward to strengthening our connections.

Speaking of creative collaborations, I’d like to take a moment to mention (or plug shamelessly) NCURA’s first children’s book, The Best Job of All, written by myself and beautifully illustrated by Emily Dore. The book is meant to help pre-schoolers, and maybe some not-so-young folks, understand the essence of what a research administrator does. It’s on sale on the NCURA website with all proceeds going to the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund.

I thought you might be interested in taking a behind-the-scenes look at the writing of the book since the process mirrors what many of us do in our regular role as a research administrator. I got a call asking for help, not from a PI, but from NCURA: could I help write a book? After agreeing to help, I found out there was, of course, a tight deadline. I wrote a draft and emailed it back. Next, the illustrator, who I hadn’t met, took my data and went to work. The project was done via email, phone calls, and shared cloud storage. Then it was off to the publisher. The book was delivered just in time for presenting at the NCURA annual meeting where I met the illustrator for the first time in person. And just like our faculty experience at their conferences, we both got ideas and suggestions from our colleagues on future projects. So, yes, research administration definitely facilitates creative collaborations!

Sincerely,

Robert C. Andresen
Collaborative or participatory research can be defined as “researchers working together to achieve the common goal of producing new scientific knowledge” (Kishk, 2008). Collaborative Research is also called “teaming research” as it involves teams of people working together to produce a research proposal and submit it to a sponsor for funding consideration. If the proposal is funded each member of the team must work to implement the research and produce research results.

There are different types of research collaborations, including various hybrids. Yet the three primary collaborations remain constant and include:

1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration within the same Institution;
2. Intercollegiate Collaboration; and,
3. University(s)/Public Institution/Private Institution Collaborations.
All of these various types of collaborations and hybrids of the ones mentioned above, can be found in a university setting. Although the collaboration of University(s)/Industry cannot be overlooked this article will only examine this type of collaboration in respect to universities and public and private institutions.

In understanding collaborative research one must first look at the various roles played by people that make up a research collaboration. Kishk describes five elements which are essential in determining the participants in a collaboration. These are:

1. Individuals involved throughout the project’s duration or who make frequent/substantial contribution(s);
2. Those whose names appear on the original research proposal;
3. Those responsible for at least working on the main elements of the project, such as design or analysis;
4. If appropriate, an individual responsible for a key step in the process, such as producing the original hypothesis; and,
5. If appropriate, the original project proposer or funder who serves in a more managerial role rather than directly conducting the research (Kishk, 2008).

I believe that the first element in Kishk’s list includes the role of the Lead Research Administrator (LRA) as well as the role of the other Research Administrators (RAs) involved with the project. The roles of the LRA and RA are critical to the success of the collaborative research. Now we will look at the three primary types of collaboration and the role of the LRA and RA in each of these collaborations:

**Interdisciplinary Collaborations**

The first type of collaboration is an interdisciplinary collaboration. This type of collaboration is between various departments, colleges and/or disciplines within a single university. As an example it may include the need for engineering faculty to work with the education faculty in creating an interdisciplinary proposal. As pointed out in Kulakowski and Chronister (2006), “Much of the funding previously directed toward single-investigator research has been redirected toward big science, for example the National Science Foundation (NSF) Centers, the NIH Roadmap Initiative, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Centers of Excellence.”

In addition to collaborations for big science, NSF and other agencies, through what is referred to on many campuses as “limited submission,” require that universities submit a limited number of proposals on a topic. This means that while many faculty may want to submit a proposal to an agency for funding consideration, the funding agency has limited the number of proposals that an organization can submit. Quite often the submission is geared toward curricular or research enhancement of an institution and must involve a variety of departments and disciplines on campus. As an example, NSF has a program on Major Research Instrumentation (MRI).

“The Major Research Instrumentation Program (MRI) serves to increase access to shared scientific and engineering instruments for research and research training in our Nation’s institutions of higher education, not-for-profit museums, science centers and scientific/engineering research organizations. The program provides organizations with opportunities to acquire major instrumentation that supports the research and research training goals of the organization and that may be used by other researchers regionally or nationally” (NSF, 2016).

The key element to this solicitation is that multiple parties need to be involved in order to meet the goal of supporting the research and research training goals of the organization and in making the instrumentation available to different entities.

How to successfully manage this type of collaboration involves bringing researchers together to talk with one another across interdisciplinary lines. Many researchers have not worked with others outside of their particular department. There are several strategies that the LRA as well as other RAs can use to enhance faculty communication that will result in developing, submitting, and getting funded a successful proposal. These include:

- Creating and maintaining an online database of researcher interests. The research interests of faculty can be listed and cross-referenced based on key words, allowing researchers to identify collaborative colleagues across the various departments and colleges.
- Holding a special event such as a “speed-dating forum.” This type of forum involves faculty coming together and talking face to face with other faculty outside of their discipline. The idea involves each participant sitting face to face with one other faculty member for two minutes with each describing their research interests and exchanging business cards. At the end of the “speed-dating forum” every faculty member would have met with all the other faculty and learned about their research interests.
- Holding topical open house forums in which faculty will mingle with one another and then sit down to a round table discussion on the contents needed for the proposal submission.

Within the RA environment there are several successful strategies to enhance communication among the staff that is supporting the research collaboration. These would include:

- Meeting with other RAs throughout the campus on a monthly or semimonthly basis to discuss the collaborative proposals in the works or coming up.
- Discussion of each RA’s role in helping to put a major collaborative proposal together. These tasks would include:
  - Determining the LRA. This is usually determined by identifying the Lead Principal Investigator (LPI) and his/her RA becomes the LRA.
  - Identifying who will work on various aspects of the collaborative proposal;
  - Managing the logistics of the collaborative get-togethers.
  - Working with the LPI in understanding the proposal content and statement of work required of each collaborator or Co-PI.
  - Assisting collaborators in budget preparation.
  - Determining if Co-PI accounts under the award will need to be set-up so that each Co-PI will have their own budget, thus allowing each Co-PI’s department to get credit for research expenditures.
  - Creating and managing deadlines for proposal submission.
  - Submitting the proposal to the sponsoring agency.
**Intercolligate Collaborations**

Intercolligate collaborations involve one or more institutions of higher education working together to create and submit a proposal. Often the LPI will come to the LRA requesting assistance in establishing contacts at other institutions. Given the very nature of moving outside of the institution and involving other universities, the LRA may be charged with designing and implementing a plan to coordinate the proposal submission processes. In order to make the collaboration successful quite often some pre-agreed contractual terms have to be established by the collaborative parties. This will include each party signing a “teaming agreement” that includes the scope and nature of the role of each of the collaborating researchers as well as some pre-agreed terms of the collaboration. These terms may include agreement as to:

- Ownership of intellectual property.
- Compliance with legal and regulatory issues.
- Budgets and budget justification from each participating institution
- Agreement to not work with an institution outside of the collaboration that may be submitting a proposal on the same subject and to the same agency.
- Length of the collaboration, with starting and ending dates.
- If needed, agreement on elements in a proposed subcontract or subaward document.

Once these key considerations have been addressed the logistics of the proposal submission and the management of the collaboration rests in the hands of the LRA and RAs. Many times it is up to the LRA to develop and implement a timeline outlining when components to the proposal content are due for inclusion into the proposal. In addition, the LRA and RA may be responsible for obtaining a written work plan from each participating institution, a detailed budget with appropriate justifications, biosketches of the collaborating faculty (if applicable), the collection of resumes from all researchers who will be conducting the research, and timely coordination of all aspects of the proposal geared toward a successful proposal submission. In some proposal cases each participating institution may be required to submit their own proposal through their institution. If this is the case, the RA work is not as extensive.

In most successful collaborations the success lies in the details. As an example, if your institution is serving as the prime institution and other institutions are serving as subrecipients, it is often beneficial to provide the subrecipients with preliminary subaward/subcontract agreements so that the terms of the agreements can be ironed out prior to an award being issued. This type of proactive approach allows for the leading institution to be ready to start the program quickly if a proposal is funded.

**University(s)/Public or Private Institution(s) Collaboration**

This type of collaboration may involve more than one institution of higher education and either one or more public institution and/or not for profit institution including research foundations. A good example of this type of collaboration can be seen in the National Institutes for Health Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA). CTSA programs are designed to implement clinical and translational methodologies for the purpose of reducing the time taken to bring laboratory discoveries to the public. Furthermore, they are designed to engage in community based treatment of patients. Built into the program is the requirement of having the leading institution “engage patients and communities in every phase of the translational process” (NIH, 2016). According to NIH, the “CTSA Program support enables research teams including scientists, patient advocacy organizations and community members to tackle system-wide scientific and operational problems in clinical and translational research that no one team can overcome.”

With the variety of participants ranging from the research scientists to advocacy organizations and members of the community, the RA is needed primarily for the management of the logistics for proposal submission. A successful technique in managing the logistics for proposal submission may include bringing collaborators together for a day-long meeting, which can be done in person or virtually, to discuss the many elements of the proposal. Then the collaborators should be divided into groups based on the proposal requirements and content, with the goal of each group being to discuss the preselected proposal criteria that will be needed to assist the lead principal investigator in developing the proposal content. As an example, if the CTSA involves rural medicine, bringing the rural doctors together either in person or through a satellite connection to discuss their needs is a successful strategy in assessing the needs of the rural medicine component of the project. Another successful strategy would be to engage community leaders and members of the community in a community outreach dialogue, the basis of which can enhance the needs assessments required in these large proposals.

**Conclusion**

In summation, successful collaborations take work. The LRA and other RAs involved with the collaboration must pay attention not only to the needs of the PI and Co-PIs but also to the needs of their participating institution. Each party must have a thorough understanding of what their role is in the collaboration and strive to work together for the submission of a successful proposal and the betterment of science and society.

**References**


The National Science Foundation, 2016, Major Research Instrumentation Program at [www.nsf.gov/mri](http://www.nsf.gov/mri)


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Thank you. Your kindness and welcoming over the decades means more to me than you will ever know.

I’ve a short story to share with you. On the surface, it will probably impress you as a story about technology. At its heart, though, it is about something else altogether different.

My first job after college was in the Academic Advising Office at Oberlin College. My husband, Jamie, had been accepted at the Conservatory of Music, and we were newlyweds with a shared lifetime of opportunities ahead.

In the Academic Advising Office, one of our responsibilities was to help students through the difficulties of academic probation and suspension. I typed the letters that went to these students and their parents — and those letters had to be perfect. If we were going to tell a student that their academic career was in trouble, the least we could do was give them a wholly professional looking letter.

One day, the head of the Academic Standing Committee, a physicist, noticed me struggling to get each letter typed (ON AN IBM SELECTRIC!) without any errors. He asked me if I’d like to try a different approach — he was a part of the Academic Computing Department as well as a physicist and they had figured out a coding scheme that would enable text to be typed into a dumb terminal connected to the mainframe. I was game, and Oberlin students never were subjected to my typing skills — or lack thereof — again.

Jamie’s graduation day arrived, and like many kids with stars in our eyes, we moved west to Southern California. Jamie became a teacher and I went to work as a Contract and Grant Assistant at UCLA. It was love at first sight, and within three weeks, I knew I wanted to do research administration for the rest of my life.

At the time, there were NO computers in the UCLA Office of Contract and Grant Administration. Think about that for a second. Startling, isn’t it? Back in that day we lived with carbon paper, gallons of white-out (color coded to match our multi-part carbon forms) — and the bane of my existence dictaphones. I missed my dumb terminal from Oberlin.

Dick Seligman, my mentor, recently reminded me that I talked our boss at that time, Terry Feuerborn, into creating an office computer network for our sponsored projects office at UCLA. Terry had thought about my request for a while and then agreed — so long as I could promise that all the cables would be neat — but he privately asked Dick, “What are we going to do with these things?”

Pamela Webb, received the Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award at the 58th Annual Meeting. This is NCURA’s most prestigious award given to the member who has made a significant contribution to the profession and demonstrated noteworthy service to NCURA. The following is her acceptance speech:

LOOK FORWARD AND IMAGINE.
Two years later, we submitted — over the course of 3 hours in the middle of the night, via file transfer protocol — a test electronic proposal to NIH’s “Electronic Grant Application Development” program.

Soon, Baylor and UCLA jointly developed an “electronic” proposal routing form application that allowed users to put a 3.5” diskette into their computer, input some demographic data about the proposal, and then print out their proposal routing form to be manually routed for signatures around the campus. We thought we were hot stuff!

Three years later, UCLA was well positioned to submit one of the first FastLane proposals in the country.

A few years later, what had seemed impossible had become the norm — FastLane was a requirement.

After many happy years at UCLA, Louise Moore invited me to become a member of her team at UC Santa Barbara. David Mayo, then an Associate Director at UCSB, and I approached Louise with a proposal to create a certificated training program in Contract and Grant Administration similar to the program Dick had developed at UCLA. Louise wasn’t entirely sure whether the campus needed a full program, but she trusted our judgement and gave us the latitude to proceed. David and I spent a lot of hours late at night making that program real, sometimes (shhhh!) the night before we were teaching that particular course. Three years later, the expectation for that pre-award certification was showing up on departmental job position offerings, and Internal Audit was asking departments without a certificated administrator why they hadn’t sent someone through the program. Change happens!

So why am I sharing this ancient history with you?

What is striking about these experiences is not how far we’ve come, but the common thread of leaders of those times who were willing to experiment with the unknown and the barely-known — even when they weren’t completely confident that the experiment would bear fruit. These leaders were willing to take risks and offer opportunities for their staff to IMAGINE THE FUTURE. These leaders showcased trust in their people. They recognized that perhaps there was an opportunity that lay beyond the scope of what they had already created — even when what they had created was good and solid and functional, and something that they were deservedly proud of. In a nutshell, they recognized that a shared vision of the future might be more powerful than their own.

I was blessed to work for leaders like these. I want to be their kind of leader.

You inspire me to re-dedicate myself to SUPPORTING THOSE WHO IMAGINE OUR FUTURE. People like:

- Lisa Mosley and Jeremy Forsberg and David Ngo and their group — who are busy creating new Payroll Confirmation standards that will fundamentally change how we document the accuracy of salary charges in the future
- Lynette Arias and Jennifer Barron and FDP for creating the FDP Expanded Clearinghouse (there is a session on that this afternoon!), an online repository of audit history and F&A and fringe benefit and other demographic information that will streamline subrecipient monitoring
- NCURA for recognizing that we need to have targeted Annual Meeting sessions streamed to the 90% of research administrators who can’t come to this meeting

Earlier this year, I had a young staff member who completely re-imagined what had been a very clumsy award setup process at our University. You see, we were down for 3 days for a . . . WAIT FOR IT . . . Peoplesoft upgrade, so since she couldn’t do her regular job of generating awards in the financial system

she decided — on her own — that she could build a better way to capture 100+ data elements needed for award setup. She cared, and she created, and she solved — and I learned from her. I was vividly reminded of what passionate, caring staff can do IF we give them the time and if we support them — or at the very least, get out of their way. The most precious things I could have given her before this? Or any of my staff?

- Time to imagine work differently.
- Latitude to look at the work afresh — still bounded by our policies but not limited by procedures or systems or forms.
- Encouragement when ideas are rolling.
- Resources — including access to others who want to think about the same problem.
- Willingness to look at a new way of doing business, or being open to listening to a challenge about whether something is really needed.
- Constructive fine-tuning if that is needed, and staying out of the solution when it isn’t!

You know, my work with NCURA has taught me one thing above all else — we IMAGINE and EXECUTE best in groups. Take a minute and think of some of your most treasured memories as a research administrator — I’d be willing to bet it is going to involve other people in this room or those at home wishing they could be here today.

My most treasured memories are times when we were learning, working, or playing as a group. Like when I was on a rollercoaster in Santa Cruz with my boss and thinking my career would be over if I threw up on him. Like David Mayo teaching me line dancing in the office hallway when we were waiting for our training class copies to finish printing. Or watching Steve Dowdy showing that a grant proposal could actually be transmitted electronically from a grantee’s computer database to Grants Gov. Or receiving a thank you note from a PI on a copy of his first published article in Nature. Like being given the chance to co-chair NCURA’s third national ERA conference with a treasured friend, Denise Clark, or having the once in a lifetime opportunity to participate in a UG meeting at the White House Conference Center (my shoes set off the security buzzer). Or sitting at a Program Committee dinner with Jean Feldman, telling the group that I’m the only person she knows whose emails need executive summaries.

- I thank Terry Feuerborn, Dick Seligman, Connie Whitley, Cheryl Tyler, Louise Moore, and Tim Mulcahy for everything I have learned from you about our profession and about how to be the right kind of boss.
- I thank my close colleagues joining me today for showing me what it means to be a consummate professional and my making my life so much fun.
- I thank my senior staff — especially Kevin McKoskey, Judy Krzyzek, April Coon, David Hagen, Sarah Waldemar, Roger Wareham, and Laura Geno — for doing all the heavy lifting, and for making it a joy to come to work every day.
- And most of all, I thank my beloved husband of 38 years, Jamie, who knows more about research administration than he ever bargained for, and whose unfailing support makes my heart sing.

I hope to still be here and watch the future unfold for a number of years yet, and I can’t wait to see the ideas that are being imagined now become our new reality. I hope that you will join me in fostering those who will create our future. Thank you.
Sharing knowledge with a common goal is often called collaboration, and as strange as it sounds to modern NCURA members, research administration collaboration is a relatively new idea. In fact, research and research administration have not always held a positive attitude toward collaboration. However in 1959, NCURA was created in an effort to bring collaboration to the forefront of the research administration discussion. Looking closely at the NCURA mission statement, it is clear that the leadership believes that sharing knowledge and experience is one of the main objectives of the organization. Over the past six decades, NCURA leadership has sought to nurture the sharing of ideas, and over time has learned that collaboration begins and ends with conversations. The NCURA leadership continues to be poised and able to help members begin or improve collaborative conversations at the local university level. This will happen if there is a continued shift in thinking.

In the past, competition for limited resources was often the primary reason that collaboration was a touchy subject. Funding resources remain limited today, but the attitude in academia and research administration has changed. As more and more research institutions look to work together, research administrators are called upon to lead the way in discovering creative collaboration methods. The most common collaboration opportunities are regularly used and often surround us, but are either not identified or taken for granted. An example of this is the internal collaboration of groups within institutions.

Internal collaborations across groups in local institutions are quickly becoming the norm. In the last ten years, the emergence of research information systems teams has changed the entire process of form creation and submission for the funding as well as the regulatory side of research administration. The subject matter experts must pair with information technology to ensure our complex environment functions. Ongoing communication and collaboration keeps those technical lifelines working and helps players keep pace with the burgeoning medical profession. Across the spectrum from Microsoft Word forms to deep integrations using system-to-system submission for Grants.gov, the growing complexity of research administration requirements has driven collaboration actors to solve the problems and create opportunities for excellent teamwork and specialization of tasks. Collaboration is also occurring through partnership with industry.
Expanding beyond the borders of research institutions, collaboration with communities and local businesses is frequent. The Bayh–Dole Act of 1980 changed the way that universities were allowed to own intellectual property (IP). Part of the stagnation of the United States economy was tied to the idea that the universities did not have the right to take their discoveries to the market. When the Bayh–Dole Act passed, this restriction was lifted and a floodgate of collaboration between universities and private industry was opened (Kelch 2002). Universities and offices of research administration were able to collaborate; the use of contracts and patents grew exponentially. A collaborative ripple effect of the Bayh-Dole Act can be found in university/industry relationships.

Trust is a key component of successful relationships. One way to build trust involves taking time to understand alternate points of view and explaining “the why” or motivation behind every action to demonstrate transparent perspective and intent. For example, when collaborating with industry, it is important to understand that the mission of industry is to create value for stakeholders, whereas university missions revolve around education of students, creation of knowledge, and dissemination of information. Being able to understand “the why” for each party allows for collaboration with a foundation built on trust. Collaboration based on trust moves beyond a single project and allows for lasting relationships that benefit both parties. A win-win relationship is established when the motivation is understood and the search for creative ways to help each other begins. For instance, universities contribute to the mission of industry by training current and future workforces, advancing state-of-the-art, filtering knowledge, performing research for industry, licensing university technology, and objectively testing, evaluating, and fostering economic development. In turn, industry contributes to the mission of universities by employing students and graduates, providing gifts and equipment, giving access to specialized industry resources, sponsoring research, creating pathways for publication, and making university technology available to the public.

Even as private funding expands, the overall world of research funding opportunities becomes more competitive (Anderson 2007) and one of the outcomes of funding often mandates collaboration. Grant applications often ask for collaboration through the use of subaward agreements. Subawards allow for specialization or the requirement that work is done in an environment that meets the expectations of the funding agency. This collaboration allows others to make meaningful contributions to a project. Subawards have continuously trended upward in popularity in recent years, especially as sponsors increasingly favor interdisciplinary research. This type of research often involves multiple departments within an institution as well as multiple institutions. Along with the principal investigator, the subrecipient is responsible for the end results of the research effort. Depending on the nature of the agreement, subrecipients may have some or all of the research requirements and their performance is measured against meeting the objectives of the program. Subrecipients have authority for administrative and programmatic decisions, are responsible for applicable program compliance requirements, and they provide ongoing research or collaboration for the life of the program. In the eyes of the sponsor, these subrecipients are collaborators, with a vested interest in the prime scope of work. They make significant intellectual contributions to the project with the expectation of retaining the same rights as the prime awardee.

Beyond these common collaboration opportunities, more creative choices are available to those who wish to start the conversation, and NCURA can serve as the catalyst that gets people talking. Ultimately research administrators work best when learning from experiences and perspectives that differ from our own. One example of conversation opportunities that foster creative collaboration is NCURA membership itself. As NCURA members, we are empowered with an opportunity that is rooted in that membership. NCURA offers an excellent network of peers and mentors, the common tools of social media, and a culture of problem solving using technical solutions. In addition, NCURA Collaborate (collaborate.ncura.edu), the online professional networking platform of NCURA, can generate opportunities to discuss ideas and funding sources beyond the borders of the United States—thus providing an entirely new outlook on how to address research administration. For those who prefer face-to-face discussion, NCURA continues to host a series of meetings each year. The FRA and PRA conferences allow like-minded research administrators to form networking bonds and collaborate. And for the budget-conscious, virtual collaboration sessions can be hosted without travel costs.

A second creative facilitator of collaboration is to explore ways to provide a safe space for brainstorming in order to utilize subject matter experts effectively. Principal investigators have made this common practice, but it is not yet a common occurrence in research administration. As we all look to solve similar concerns across agencies and universities, putting groups of research administration leaders together and giving them a week to discuss their current issues and proposed solutions could push ideas and actions months ahead of internal discussion. Consider hosting real-world or virtual collaboration sessions as a means to let the conversation grow.

Another creative collaboration opportunity is the international community. NCURA welcomes many members from outside the United States, and the resulting collaborative learning opportunities are amazing. As political changes occur in Europe, the international members of NCURA have proven to be valuable team members with deep insight.

Creative collaboration does not need a significant budget or a detailed project plan; it just needs a willingness to communicate. Simply one voice starting a conversation with the intent to collaborate can solve a complex issue, dip institutional toes into the unknown, or become a source of best practices. Collaboration can ease frustration, or simply seek better ways. One thing is certain, however: no matter your goal, starting the conversation is up to you.

References

Thomas B. Spencer, Ph.D., M.B.A., is the director for operations for Academic and Administrative Information Resources at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, supporting research and education. He is currently a lecturer at the School of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences at UT Dallas, focusing on research administration burden. Thomas joined NCURA in 2007, completed the Executive Leadership Program in 2014, and has served in a number of regional roles, including chair of the Publications and Communications Committee, and was chosen as chair-elect for Region V in 2016. He can be reached at Thomas.Spencer@utsouthwestern.edu

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AM 58 was a rousing success! With more than 1,750 people attending the meeting, there was undoubtedly a plethora of sessions, networking events, and fun for everyone. New enhancements to the meeting this year were warmly received:

- **Timely Keynote Addresses** - Dr. Geraldine Hamilton challenging us to envision a future of testing drugs and personalizing medical treatments through use of “organs on chips” and Kelly O’Donnell’s informative and balanced analysis of presidential politics through the eyes of a journalist.

- **Enhanced focus on acclimating New Professionals** - New Professionals breakfast roundtable and concurrent sessions, Map my Meeting assistance, “May I help you find your meeting room” wayfinding service, Meeting mentors.

- **Tuesday Night at the Museum** - Participants gathered for an evening reception at the National American History Museum where NCURA members enjoyed the unique experience of private access to the museum’s exhibits. Delectable food, light music, conversation, and networking were followed by a dessert reception at the Washington Hilton.

- **New Research Administrator, Current & Aspiring Managers, Senior Tracks** - Added to focus on the professional development needs of members across experience levels.

  There was a depth and breadth of expertise across all facets of research administration. Evaluations indicate that 90 percent of participants said the conference will help them do their jobs better. Evaluations also revealed:

  - 94.1% of attendees rated the overall conference as good or excellent.
  - 94.1% found program content relevant to their job.
  - 92.1% would recommend this conference to a colleague.

Annual meeting contributions bumped the fund total to over $81,000.

Kudos to Co-Chairs Cindy Hope and Kris Monahan, the Program Committee, and all the presenters for ensuring exceptional sessions with something for everyone. Also, a special thanks to our sponsors and vendors and the army of volunteers who assisted with logistics and services. And last but never least, thank you to the phenomenal staff of NCURA for pulling it all together!

*Barbara Gray*

The NCURA education scholarship fund raised $11,480 at the meeting through contributions made by individuals, regions, and through sales of Research Administrator Day greeting cards and a children’s book, *The Best Job of All*, penned by NCURA’s very own Robert Andresen.
1 2016 Board of Directors:
Seated: Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan Medical School; Barbara Gray, East Carolina University; Bob Andresen, University of Wisconsin – Madison; Glenda Bullock, Washington University in St. Louis
Standing: Tony Ventimiglia, Auburn University; Kathleen Larmett, NCURA; Scott Davis, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center; Craig Reynolds, University of Michigan; Denise Moody, Harvard University; Cathy Snyder, Vanderbilt University; Michelle Vazin, Vanderbilt University; Samantha Westcott, Caltech; Cheryl Williams, University of Rochester; Tim Edwards, University of Montana; Susan Zipkin, University of New Hampshire; Leslie Schmidt, Montana State University; Brenda Kavanaugh, University of Rochester; Christa Johnson, Colorado State University
Not pictured: Toni Shaklee, Oklahoma State University; Bryony Wakefield, University of Melbourne

2 2016 Executive Committee:
Seated: Barbara Gray, Vice President (East Carolina University); Bob Andresen, President (University of Wisconsin – Madison)
Standing: Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director; Tony Ventimiglia, Secretary (Auburn University); Heather Offhaus, Treasurer (University of Michigan Medical School);Michelle Vazin, Immediate Past President (Vanderbilt University)

3 2016 Award Winners:
Glenda Bullock, Kris Monahan, Denise Moody, Craig Reynolds, Samantha Westcott, Patricia Watts

4 Luncheon Keynote Speaker:
Kelly O’Donnell

5 Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Geraldine Hamilton
Here’s what members had to say:

“Very well-organized, efficient and informational meeting. I had a great time!”

“I truly enjoyed attending AM58 and I am looking forward to implementing what I learned and attending next year’s Annual Meeting”

“The sessions were great, and the night at the museum was fantastic!”

“I thought this year’s meeting was really well organized with so many sessions and events to choose from. I appreciate the variety — truly something for everyone.”
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A positive and productive relationship can occur when a departmental research administrator (DRA) and a central administration research administrator (CRA) team up. This article provides some best practices for creating and maintaining this relationship.

Respect Individual Roles
Successful interaction between central and departmental offices requires respect for each individual’s role to allow complementation between the two. The role of the central office is to facilitate the submission of grants and the review and negotiation of sponsored research agreements, serve as the contact point for negotiations, assist with challenging conversations, and house the signatory official for sponsored projects for the university. The role of the departmental office is to serve research faculty on a more individual and personal level while complying with sponsor and university policies, and to be a liaison between the faculty and central administration. Because DRAs work with their researchers on an individual basis, they are familiar with faculty’s research interests and needs and can advocate for them when processing proposals and sponsored research contracts with central administration. DRAs handle faculty’s research from cradle to grave, which gives them a knowledgeable and unique perspective that central administration may not have. Conversely, CRAs are well versed in the policies of the university and most sponsors, which enable them to work toward mitigating any potential liabilities. While both of these roles work together hand-in-hand to foster a successful research environment, work flow and efficiency is disrupted when DRAs inadvertently attempt to take on the roles and responsibilities of CRAs (and vice versa). For example, if an individual faculty member contacts the central office regarding proposal preparation, the CRA receiving the request should respectfully redirect them back to their departmental contact. This allows the CRA to focus their time and energy on their role and their strengths instead of taking on the DRA’s role. In contrast, if a DRA attempts to negotiate the intellectual property language of a contract with a potential
sponsor and does so incorrectly, this not only creates more work for the CRA during the review and approval process, but could also damage the working relationship between the university and the sponsor. Thus it is to the university’s advantage for DRAs and CRAs to play to each other’s strengths.

The importance of this positive and well-defined relationship should not be underestimated. The amount of time and effort saved by these individuals working in sync with each other is very valuable to the institution. The resulting efficiencies, transparency, and time gains are valuable and lead to a strong proposal. Having a DRA in a department is invaluable to CRAs because of the in-depth knowledge the DRAs have regarding their researcher’s specific interests. At times, questions from CRAs can be answered much more quickly by a DRA and if the DRA can’t answer the question, they may have faster access to the researcher than the CRA would simply because of their proximity to faculty. The CRA can also be a resource/partner for a DRA when engaging in a challenging conversation with faculty.

**Remember the Common Goal**

DRAs face the challenge of maintaining the delicate balance between advocating for their faculty and ensuring their sponsored activities are in compliance with university and sponsor policies. CRAs are tasked with protecting the university’s legal well-being while cultivating productive research collaborations. DRAs could easily fall under the misapprehension that they are “for” faculty while CRAs are “against.” It is essential that both the DRA and the CRA remember the common goal: to provide a full range of assistance to faculty in obtaining and administering funding to support the university’s creative and scholarly activities. The administration of sponsored activities will operate at peak performance when both DRAs and CRAs jointly focus their efforts on a unified mission.

**Establish a Protocol for Flow of Agreements**

There are a myriad of working parts in the sponsored activities office, which is why it is crucial to have an established and transparent system for the flow of proposals and research agreements. Creating a protocol for how sponsored activities are processed will provide consistency and promote efficient work flow. Below is an example of how a research agreement might flow through a DRA and CRA.

**Maintain Communication**

While establishing standard operating procedures is important, research administration is constantly changing, which makes adaptation crucial. Changes in regulations, compliance, and/or faculty needs may require changes in protocols or processes. Proactive communication between the DRA and CRA is essential for effective problem solving and can prevent unnecessary debates so that the real issue or challenge can be overcome. It is also crucial for the central office to work toward consistent information flow—i.e., the CRAs will give consistent answers or work together to agree on an answer regardless of whom you speak with, thereby eliminating the potential for faculty to surf for the answer they want rather than the correct answer they need.

Communication can also play an important role in mitigating the challenges faced when working with a non-compliant researcher. Utilizing the strengths and expertise of the DRA and CRA as a unit can, at times, bring the non-compliant researcher into compliance using team-delivered negotiation tactics. All players should be encouraged to indicate when they may need to research an answer, set a time limit for this investigation, and then follow up. It is better to pause and make sure answers are solid and coordinated, especially when dealing with a difficult faculty member or complicated issue.

**Apologize and Mean It**

Although this article is discussing the interactions of a professional relationship between a DRA and CRA, there are still personal relationship aspects that must be considered purely due to the fact that both are human. Mistakes are inevitable in any field of work, but especially in research administration due to its complex nature. If one side of the team makes an error, the offending side should make the effort to apologize and move forward to correct the error. In response, the other side should accept the apology and also move forward toward a resolution. If the team has a high trust factor because of the positive relationship built, this happens easily and quickly. Contrite behavior can reduce retaliation, initiate forgiveness and empathy for wrongdoers, and help repair broken trust. Sincere apologies also have the
physiological effect of lowering blood pressure more quickly than if someone doesn’t receive an apology, particularly among those who are prone to hold on to anger.

Avoid the “Dump and Run”
Research administrators all experience this phenomenon, usually as a result of faculty attempting to get out the door to a conference or other event and hoping their research administrators can magically finalize a proposal or agreement in their absence. Fortunately the DRA-CRA team can often make this happen; however, this problematic behavior should be avoided in interactions between the DRA and CRA. Establish a “the buck stops with me” mentality. In other words, both should take responsibility for a situation or problem. If one or both can’t resolve a problem with either’s available expertise, create a plan to attempt to resolve it using other resources. It isn’t helpful to “dump and run” on the other half if a solution isn’t easily seen. Many times this situation comes back to haunt the dumper and is more problematic the next time. The CRA and DRA should also partner around pending deadlines to try and create back-up timelines to allow for the required review time. This will allow planning and the ability to account for all factors that could impact a proposal beyond just the deadline. The DRA should also have an established communication methodology so when the researcher is traveling, they can still maintain contact for emergent questions.

Celebrate Accomplishments
Each individual should be proud of who they are and respect the other’s gifts and talents. Celebrate the working relationship with reciprocal praise. Research administration is not for the faint of heart and can be a difficult field to work in. Research shows it takes three years to create a well-trained research administrator. Those who have taken the Certified Research Administrator’s exam administered by the Research Administrators Certification Council know that the amount of expertise and knowledge required to pass is almost overwhelming. Make an effort to celebrate with colleagues the successes that have been achieved individually and as a team and also let the faculty know of these successes as well. A successful collaboration between a DRA and CRA initiates a ripple effect that trickles down through an institution’s research, resulting in benefits to society.

Do Not Be Afraid
A favorite leadership book of one of the authors is The Coalwood Way. It’s based on the philosophy of the inhabitants of the town of Coalwood, West Virginia, whose men worked in dangerous coal mines every day. Although these families faced possible disaster and death daily, they “were not afraid.” While the research administration work environment certainly doesn’t involve life or death situations such as those of Coalwood, it is helpful to remember this frame of mind when confronted with a difficult researcher or unpleasant situation. Focus on the problem, remove the emotions from the situation, and make a plan to overcome the problem. Together, both individuals can move forward with confidence, causing positive interactions and solutions, while keeping fear at bay. Once the team has performed their best, no one can reasonably ask for more.

In Conclusion
Working as a team, the departmental office and central office can provide effective and efficient research administration by applying the practices discussed above. A positive interaction between the two is crucial not only for the individual research administrators involved, but for the faculty as well. A successful collaboration between a DRA and CRA initiates a ripple effect that trickles down through an institution’s research, resulting in benefits to society.

References

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Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pride that we invite you to join us on our adventure westward to beautiful San Diego, CA for the 2017 Financial Research Administration Conference. Our theme this year, “Charting Your Course in Research Administration,” is a direct reflection of our desire that everyone who attends is able to take a tool, a plan, a course of action back to their institutions. This perspective, owed in part, if not in whole, to our current status navigating new regulations, adapting to the Uniform Guidance, and plotting our way through uncharted audit requirements, has led us to streamline the track offerings while also “tagging” sessions for key content areas/subjects. Check back next time for a full listing of the “tags.”

The conference will be held March 11-13 at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina, with evening transportation provided downtown so that we can all enjoy everything that San Diego has to offer. Additionally, FRA will be immediately preceded by the Pre-Award Research Administration conference, March 8-10.

Owing directly to the dedication of a fabulous Program Committee, we will be able to offer over 120 sessions, across 8 tracks, 18 workshops and Federal update sessions from our Agency Partners.
Senior Departmental Research Administrators and Floating Research Administration Specialists:

MODELS FOR INCREASING RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION PARTNERING & COLLABORATION

By Gregory Simpson and Elizabeth Solinga

Henry Ford is attributed for the following aphorism: “coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”

When you think of how to promote successful research administration, the terms “collaboration” and “partnership” are often used. Partnerships and collaborations can reduce barriers or perceived complexities between central offices and schools or departments (units) through various means. Sometimes it is via collaborative events, projects, or trainings; sometimes it is through long-range changes to current organizational arrangements. Collaborative efforts are important because strengthening partnerships can decrease inefficiencies and complexity.

Designs for reducing the complexity of the research enterprise in universities must focus in part on the integration of Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) outcomes. Two specific outcomes drive many university E&E initiatives: the development or consistent management of institution-wide standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the implementation of a new or changed vision for management of a university’s research administration enterprise. The latter often includes challenges inherent in implementing changes to the existing organizational structure(s). Perhaps the most important set of challenges are how to
implement identified changes with limited disruption while also addressing immediate needs and tying the actions designed to address immediate needs with long-term improvements.

In a university setting, the implementation of change procedures is often incremental and transitional and thus may not have a rapid payoff. The goal then is to create specific short-term changes or inputs that have the ability to bring about immediate outcomes that positively impact the success of long-term goals. One goal related to the integration of E&OE is to implement methods that can immediately support partnerships and collaboration between central offices and schools or departments. This can have a measurable impact on increasing the capabilities, administration, and management of a university’s research administration SOPs, and thus the broader research enterprise.

One way of accomplishing collaboration between a university’s central office and its schools or departments is through strategic placement of highly skilled research administrators. These administrators, who are managed and supervised by central offices, are stationed as needed in units identified as lacking research support and thus inconsistent, ineffective, and/or inefficient in the management and use of research administration SOPs. Two institutions that have successfully implemented this model are Tufts University and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

At Tufts University, senior departmental research administrators (SDRAs) who have demonstrated, comprehensive knowledge and professional expertise were hired centrally by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) to provide support and service for units with the dual intent of providing consistent and effective pre-award and post-award support while aiding and building partnerships. This model increases understanding between units and central research administration and related offices. SDRAs have to be knowledgeable in the body of knowledge as specified by the Certified Research Administrator (CRA) examination and must possess professional expertise in working successfully in units. Additionally they must have demonstrable expertise in mediating differences that may arise between key stakeholders, i.e. faculty, central office administrators and unit personnel. A senior or higher level position is necessary as these positions work independently and must solve issues cooperatively. The SDRAs must be able to self-manage using professional discretion and work autonomously at levels greater than junior level research administrators. They must be able to identify opportunities where increased training, communication, and cooperation are needed. Additionally, SDRAs should identify and facilitate solutions in response to opportunities for increasing backstopping and streamlining of processes, while employing consistent service standards and leveraging resources. This model can help standardize operational procedures in units that are under-supported, and can identify resource gaps that can be altered via short-term and long-term changes. The model preserves the importance of contiguity and alters the “we have always done things” toward “the way we should do things.” SDRAs also contribute to OVPR initiatives by participating in OVPR committees, meetings and discussions, and, when appropriate, contribute to redesigns of unit research administration structures.

The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (SPH) employs a similar model. SPH’s floating research administration specialists are hired into the central Office of Research Administration at three experience levels: Junior, Senior and Research Project Managers. Junior Grants and Projects Managers are brought in with limited experience but strong potential and are trained centrally in both central office and departmental responsibilities. Senior Grants and Projects Managers are highly skilled in both pre- and post-award work, as well as central office roles. A Research Projects Manager is the senior team member, with a strong background in all aspects of research administration.

The team fills a number of needs at SPH, from reducing pre-award burden on departments by preparing and submitting proposals ad hoc, to longer-term assignments filling departmental vacancies due to leaves of absence or employee turnover. Team members also assist the central office in School initiatives and lead targeted School-wide trainings.

In addition to their day-to-day responsibilities, these specialists serve as de facto ambassadors bridging the gap between the central office and SPH departments. Like the team at Tufts, they are uniquely positioned to advocate for multiple perspectives, strengthening partnerships and collaborations and lessening the mentality of “us and them.” The model and size of the SPH team has grown and changed significantly over the last two years, with fluidity between the team and departmental positions. By hiring and centrally training qualified candidates, the SPH has built its own ever-evolving pool of internal candidates for departmental positions. Whether a department fills a vacancy from the pool or engages the team for a short-term assignment or long-term commitment, it is supported by well trained, knowledgeable research administrators.

For this model to be successful and effectively measure expected benefits versus actual outcomes, communication and monitoring of personnel duties and responsibilities have to be coordinated between the central office and individual units. The overall goals should be consistent between central offices and units. If a university’s long range outcome is a systemic change to the research administration organization and structure, positions may be defined as transitional, leading to a cluster model of centrally managed but department-centric research administrators of differing levels, working day-to-day in schools or in adjacent areas. If a university’s long range plan is not to change organizational structures, the model might simply expand to include more units, as needed. Thus, universities can implement this model in two ways: 1) as a transitional, stop gap model that could lead to a more systematic change in how research administration is organized and structured; or 2) as a permanent model that is used flexibly where the positions explained above are long-lasting but personnel and priority areas may change.

Funding such positions can be accomplished in different ways. The central office can implement a fee for service agreement, where the unit is charged a flat fee or hourly rate, much like a cost center or professional services model. Alternatively, the units and the central office can offset the cost through a mutually agreed to formula, or combination of cost allocations.

Summary: The use of centrally-managed, unit-deployed research administrators can help alleviate immediate administrative burden and strengthen organizational capacity and capabilities while forming successful collaborations and partnerships between units and central offices. This relationship creates an atmosphere where both parties can collaborate in a successful, effective, and efficient manner.

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here’s an age-old challenge regarding professional development and primarily undergraduate (and other) institutions: a terrific opportunity presents itself but the time, funds or resources required may not be available to allow one to take advantage of it. This is the story of how one team worked collaboratively and creatively to help a colleague take a one-year leave to work at a Federal agency.

In spring 2014 Roger Wareham, the director of a three-person cradle-to-grave grants office at the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) was offered a one-year grant policy specialist position at the National Science Foundation (NSF) as part of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility program. As part of the IPA, NSF would pay 85% of his university salary and benefits. But the big question was how to convince senior administration that a director can be gone for an entire year without services being impacted and the research enterprise being comprised? It quickly became helpful to reframe the issue: could there be a way to use this absence to actually present new opportunities and experiences for other personnel across the UMM campus or within the University of Minnesota (UofM) system?

The University of Minnesota has its main campus in the Twin Cities area, with system campuses in Crookston, Duluth, Morris and Rochester. The Twin Cities campus issues system-wide policies for official University business, including sponsored projects. Depending on the level of sponsored projects, each system campus has a unique set up; however all receive support from and collaborate with the Twin Cities campus. The Morris campus has its own Grants Development Office, with delegated authority to submit proposals (see Figure 1) and access to Twin Cities resources as needed for legal review, post-award administration, and policy guidance (see Figure 2).

Working closely with both the UMM and UofM administrations, a plan was developed that all felt would serve the needs of the campus and system, create new opportunities for a number of individuals, and that had the possibility of bringing fresh perspectives to sponsored programs at UMM. It would be used as a pilot project to see whether some duties and services could be shared across system campus offices while still acknowledging and providing the individual services needed on the Morris campus.

A UMM faculty member with a strong record of research activity was asked to serve as the 50%-time interim director of the office, primarily responsible for office oversight, research support services and campus leadership. The assistant director and grant accountant agreed to take on additional tasks as well as help fill any gaps as needed. Additionally, a former employee who moved to Massachusetts was brought on, from a distance, to assist the office with special projects and hands-on research and writing assistance of institutional proposals. Amy Bicek-Skog, a Twin Cities grant administrator, was asked to serve as the 20%-time grants administrator for UMM, assisting with proposal review and submission, award negotiation, account set up and providing some post-award expertise.

**Figure 1: Proposal Development**

- **Morris**
  - Proposal Development
  - Internal Review
  - Submission to Twin Cities (during pilot only)
  - Submission to Sponsor

- **Twin Cities**
  - Administrative proposal review
  - Submission to Sponsor (during pilot only)

**Figure 2: Award Setup**

- **Twin Cities**
  - Award received
  - Review and negotiate award (not during pilot)
  - Forward to Twin Cities for acceptance
  - Review and negotiate award (during pilot only)
  - Sign and accept award
  - Setup award in financial system
  - Financial reporting/billing

- **Morris**
  - Monitor award
  - Work with Twin Cities as needed to manage award during pilot (no-cost extensions, rebudget, etc)
The team and the transition plan were put into place in mid-May in anticipation of Roger’s late July start-date at NSF. A resource-neutral budget was developed that included backfill pay (for the interim director and Amy), potential overtime/salary costs for the other UMM employees, travel for meetings and visits to/from the Twin Cities and Massachusetts, and any other necessary programmatic costs. A UMM conference room was outfitted to accommodate long-distance staff meetings so that team members from Morris, the Twin Cities and Massachusetts could regularly meet “together.”

After the UMM campus was informed of and consulted about the plan, the entire team assembled in Morris in early July to determine how this creative collaboration was going to work. There were meetings, get-togethers and an open house to welcome Amy to campus and for faculty and staff to ask questions as well as to meet her. There were silly games to get to know one another, questions, and plenty of laughs. Conversations ranged from who would submit proposals on behalf of the Morris campus, to how, and where, would various internal documents be kept, to award setup questions, to invoicing questions, to who would act as the Authorized Organizational Representative, and everything in between. After many meetings and discussions, the team collaboratively identified the most important and critical tasks and made sure those were discussed and assigned to the right people. Once the critical tasks were assigned, most of the other pieces fell into place.

It was decided the team would rely on the University’s Google office products as a primary communication tool. A Google Drive folder was set up where various documents were kept; team members could see if a colleague was around for a quick conversation via “g-chat.” Finally, the team used Google Hangouts, which allowed everyone, from all locations (Morris, Minneapolis and Massachusetts), to “be together” for an hour or so every other week. Google provided everyone with an opportunity to see, and share, the same documents and to see where someone had posted a question. The team kept an “online agenda” document in the Google Drive folder where each member had their own section to provide notes, questions, and updates on their items before the Google Hangout started. The document served as the agenda during the Google Hangouts as well as a reference document between calls.

As Roger transitioned to the NSF and the academic year began, faculty and staff on the Morris campus were still intrigued as to how sponsored projects would be handled. Amy, along with other staff, made presentations to the campus, including one at UMM’s fall Professional Development Day. The sessions focused on how sponsored projects would be handled during Roger’s time at NSF, as well as provided tips for preparing an “award winning” proposal and budget.

As the year progressed some team members found they needed additional time together. Extra post-award meetings were scheduled between Amy and the grant accountant while other team members communicated more by email and everyone was able to provide high level updates during weekly Google Hangouts meetings. Additionally, Amy and the distance staff member would make periodic trips to Morris as projects and workloads required.

With a firm foundation in place, the year went by both quickly and smoothly. There were, of course, a few bumps along the way. In the beginning team members experienced the usual learning curves that come with new roles. It soon became evident that the Morris campus offered more hands-on services to its faculty and staff than the Twin Cities central office provided. Amy discovered that Morris essentially served as the unit, departmental, collegiate and campus support all in one office and that more one-on-one support to UMM was necessary given the level of hands-on support the Morris campus faculty and staff received and expected. There were the periodic “Why did they do it that way?” or “Where did Roger put that?” questions and new challenges for staff to approach issues in new ways. The assistant director was offered a new opportunity in the University system and departed mid-year. Roger was invited to stay an extra year at NSF, which he eventually
declined. The interim director worked to balance teaching (albeit a reduced load), research and administrative duties. Except for a few periodic e-mails and phone calls, Roger was allowed to focus primarily on his year at NSF. For the most part, all obstacles were addressed and resolved fairly easily.

The new opportunities afforded from collaborating by design (and necessity) far outweighed these challenges. The grants office staff worked with new people on a more regular basis and benefitted from different experiences and perspectives. Amy was able to approach sponsored programs from a cradle-to-grave perspective and work more closely with faculty and college administrators than she had previously. This allowed her to be more collaborative with others and see issues from the faculty and department perspective rather than just the central office. The interim director had an opportunity to cross to “the dark side” of administration for a year and gained valuable administrative experience that rarely comes to faculty at a PUI. Roger was able to live life as a federal employee and worked daily with NSF policy documents and the Uniform Guidance; most importantly, he was able to see how sponsored programs operated from the Federal perspective.

Throughout the year much time was taken for reflection and assessment of this pilot project. All involved – the immediate team, the UoM and UMM administrations – felt the year was quite successful and that this model did serve the campus well during the year of the director’s absence. This project provided many different individuals with both professional and personal development opportunities -- including the opportunity to take on a new role with faculty and staff, to understand sponsored research from a different angle, and to appreciate the differences between the large research university and a smaller PUI in the same system. This unique opportunity was both fulfilling and valuable to both campuses for the potential it provides for considering shared service arrangements in the future.

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I was a very good research administrator and enjoyed my role very much. Now I was promoted to team leader and I need to manage people. I am finding, truthfully, that I don’t enjoy it very much and wish I never accepted my promotion. What should I do?

It takes an intentional attitude of patience with oneself and others, and a willingness to be vulnerable by asking questions and learning about your new role.

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@assistleadership.com and (518) 588-0992.
For most investigators, the thrill of receiving a request for "Just in Time" information from an NIH funding agency is dampened by the realization that they must immediately seek Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for their project. For many investigators, and particularly new investigators, having to submit their research to the IRB is a daunting task, and to make the ordeal even more anxiety provoking, a "Just in Time" request usually requires that IRB approval be obtained within a horrifyingly short time period. Even the most prepared and experienced research investigators may feel they are at the mercy of their IRB office, since it may require that the protocol undergo not one but several rounds of corrections and revisions. And while the investigator may be willing to work overtime to submit revisions back to the IRB as quickly as possible, IRB reviewers may not be quick to respond. When they do respond, they may request additional changes that appear to have nothing to do with the protection of human subjects, but rather, for "verbiage or aesthetic changes to protocols and documentation" (Hirshon et al., 2002).

Some commentators have characterized IRBs as "systemic bullies" who exert "undue negative pressure" on research investigators (Carr, 2015). Koerner (2005) reported that researchers perceived IRBs to be antagonistic towards their work by delaying and interfering with their research, using inappropriate standards to evaluate their research, making "absurd" requests that had nothing to do with protection of human subjects, or giving unclear or contradictory feedback, to name a few examples. Dougherty and Kraemer (2005) found that many researchers reported feeling totally mystified in their interactions with their IRB. Reviews appeared to be based on the caprices of individual IRB reviewers rather than on a systematic application of the regulations.

The consequences of these kinds of negative perceptions on the part of researchers towards their IRB can be serious. Keith-Spiegle and colleagues (2006) surveyed research investigators from a variety of disciplines and found those who perceived their IRB reviewers to be fair, impartial, and willing to listen respectfully to them when disagreements arose were more likely to be satisfied with the IRB process. But those who had the perception of their IRB as unfair, disrespectful, and unwilling to hear the investigator's point of view may be motivated to "engage in subterfuge and misconduct designed to 'level the playing field'.” Ashcraft and Krause (2007) found that for some of the social and behavioral researchers they surveyed, slow IRB turnaround, especially for those whose research involves no more than minimal risk, "is a primary source of frustration and is rather closely related to going solo on a project and introducing modifications without notifying the IRB.” Clearly, there is a lot at stake both for individual research investigators and the institutions that employ them to improve relations between the research community and the IRB.

So what's to be done? What's an investigator to do? I would like to suggest that rather than assuming that the IRB is an adversary whose mission is to delay and capriciously deny approval of their research, investigators should instead reach out to their IRB and establish a collaborative relationship. Cartwright and colleagues (2013) surveyed a variety of research investigators and found that those who cultivated a "climate of partnership" with IRB staff or board members felt
investigator with a Just in Time deadline comes online IRB submission process. I currently fill to my office looking fearful and overwrought but offered the services of an IRB Faculty Research and adolescents, and international clinical trials. Ininars on topics ranging from genomic research, IRB staff in advance of submission, they were able to learn about issues of concern and work with the IRB to resolve potential problems.

At our university, we are grateful that the senior administration supports a robust and proactive Human Research Protection Office that allows HRPO staff to conduct outreach by providing support and education activities to the research community. But not all IRB offices have adequate resources and staff to provide these kinds of services to their research community, and this may well lead investigators at those institutions to feel that they are not being treated fairly by their IRB. Keith-Spiegel and colleagues (2006) found that the main reason investigators gave for being dissatisfied with their IRBs was their perception of not being given the opportunity to have a dialogue with their IRB reviewers about negative comments issued about their submission. These authors conclude that the "ideal ethics committee appears to be a just body that employs fair procedures, treats investigators with respect, and accords them the opportunity to have a voice when disagreements arise." They note that "proactive measures could enhance the perception that provided little or no assistance or feedback to the investigator beyond identifying potential issues or concerns. In these situations, IRBs identified problems and expected investigators to determine how to satisfactorily resolve the concerns before the study could receive final approval. Investigators noted that the absence of shared problem-solving could result in substantial delays in the final approval of study protocols as they tried to guess what would be acceptable to the IRBs. From the perspective of the IRB staff, I believe that all of these deficiencies could well be due to those IRB offices having insufficient staffing and resources.

Investigators should not be reluctant to reach out to their IRB staff for assistance, regardless of how their IRB office is perceived. Investigators should also advocate to their senior administration to ensure that their IRB office is sufficiently funded and supported by the institution. One important way of showing support is to volunteer to serve as an IRB member. In our experience, an investigator who has been a harsh critic of the IRB process generally turns out to be a highly valued member of the IRB; and that old axiom, "if you can't beat them, join them," rings true.

“Clearly there is a lot at stake for both individual research investigators and the institutions that employ them to improve relations between the research community and the IRB”

presented. During these sessions, researchers and their staff are also invited to ask HRPO staff questions about their own research. Other outreach activities include HRPO-sponsored seminars on topics ranging from genomic research, guidance on conducting research with children and adolescents, and international clinical trials.

Investigators who are new to the university are offered the services of an IRB Faculty Research Liaison, who personally guides them through the online IRB submission process. I currently fill this role and am always gratified when a new investigator with a Just in Time deadline comes to my office looking fearful and overwrought but leaves an hour later with a smile on their face.

tion of an ethics committee as fair and respectful." Cartwright and colleagues (2013) note that IRBs differed "in the extent to which they encouraged interaction between investigators and IRB staff and board members." Some of the investigators surveyed felt they had a partnership with their IRB staff that enabled them to discuss IRB concerns and devise effective strategies to manage those concerns. Other investigators felt that their IRB “operated with a more autocratic style that provided little or no assistance or feedback to the investigator beyond identifying potential issues or concerns. In these situations, IRBs identified problems and expected investigators to determine how to satisfactorily resolve the concerns before the study could receive final approval. Investigators noted that the absence of shared problem-solving could result in substantial delays in the final approval of study protocols as they tried to guess what would be acceptable to the IRBs. From the perspective of the IRB staff, I believe that all of these deficiencies could well be due to those IRB offices having insufficient staffing and resources.

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“Clearly there is a lot at stake for both individual research investigators and the institutions that employ them to improve relations between the research community and the IRB”

References

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Regardless of what your role is as a research administrator (RA), the majority of your workday generally consists of sitting in front of a computer and navigating some software programs. For some of us that means managing countless spreadsheets and databases but for others everything is built into a single electronic Research Administration (eRA) program. The software that we use will inevitably have a major impact on how productive we can be at our job, as well as (in the case of those who are frustrated by their limited technology), how much we enjoy our work. Luckily, technology is advancing at a rate that is faster now than it ever has in the past, which leaves some exciting possibilities for how much software programs can enhance the abilities of RAs of the future.

By Randy Ozden and Jennifer Taylor

At this point, some of you are probably thinking, “That’s not my job though. I’m a research administrator; let the IT people handle all that computer stuff,” while others are fully aware of how much they need to provide leadership in helping to shape decisions regarding the eRA tools and approaches selected. Unfortunately, even those RAs with the latter perspective are often not familiar with all the technology at their disposal and are forced to use the tools they have to deal with the myriad issues that currently plague the offices of sponsored programs. Developing a greater awareness of the software that is available can help us better understand that there are already better solutions out there that offer highly effective solutions for their everyday tasks. These solutions go beyond, often augment, and increasingly take the lead, on the assistance from your IT department. Although IT departments provide critical services they may not be familiar with or have the on-site expertise for enabling your research office to incorporate the eRA tools most useful for your needs. Becoming more fully versed in the software tools and options available may be an important long-term knowledge base for RAs to develop.

Though cloud computing is a buzzword you have likely heard, for those of you who are still a bit hazy as to what it means, cloud computing is a form of internet-based computing that provides on-demand access to shared programs, data/reporting systems, resources, and data. Rather than running on powerful computers and data centers in the back of your office or IT building, it is a way to ‘rent’ the computing power and software/database expertise you need over the internet, allowing for incredible flexibility and scalability. In these instances, the services provided to research offices combine SaaS (Software as a Service) with their ‘cloud’ access given that most modern SaaS is enabled by cloud technologies.

Though SaaS has been around in many forms for a while, it has taken some time for it to come to eRA systems in a meaningful way. Now that it has been here over the last five years or so as a serious alternative, the recent advances in cloud computing will help to expand the capabilities and improve the usability of cloud-based eRA SaaS systems.

What benefits might SaaS cloud-based services offer to a RA? For starters, all members of your team can access it anytime from anywhere. Have
you ever wanted to work from home but needed to use your computer at the office to access to the core programs and databases you need to accomplish your tasks? Now you can have as much mobility with your work essential programs as you currently do with your email. Are your approvals being held up because someone important is on vacation? Let them login from Fiji and sign off on a proposal so they don’t hold up the process. Cloud systems also have incredibly high reliability. Software companies promise stats like 99.999% or better uptime, so any worries about not being able to run the software practically disappear. Instant scalability of the software also lets you achieve virtually unlimited storage. No matter how much data you need to keep, there will always be room. Management loves it too, because leasing virtual hardware means you can get rid of all that in-house tech infrastructure, which often means some huge cost savings including removing the need for your organization to pay for hardware upgrade cycles.

Updates, refinements, and other efforts at continuous improvement are easier with the cloud as well. Are you experiencing down-time processing important documents such as proposals and awards due to having insufficient systems, or problematic software in place? Is there a particular feature you want added to make things easier? With an on-premise solution, the software is going to stay mostly stagnant as, often the expertise or human resources required to make these fixes may be limited. Doesn’t it seem a little unfair that just because your institution bought Microsoft Office back in the 2003, you don’t get any of the feature enhancements that are now available in Office 2016? Why shouldn’t our eRA systems be any different! In the cloud, fixes and upgrades can be developed and pushed live after they are finished, so you are always using the latest and greatest version.

The cloud also enables data warehousing. You can take a snapshot of your data at any point in time and keep it in the warehouse to refer back to later. This is usually combined with built-in auditing of data access so you can also see who has looked at what data.

Like a fire extinguisher, disaster recovery is one of those things that nobody really cares much about, until one fateful day comes along and you are very glad that you had the foresight to get it. Cloud infrastructure makes it easy to replicate all of your data across multiple geographic locations for simplified disaster recovery. Although it won’t affect your day-to-day routine, for one single day in your career, it might make all the difference.

As most of you may know, eRA systems, including cloud-based SaaS, are by no means turnkey products. They require an entire team to implement correctly in a process that can take months, even a year or longer, when more extensive enhancements are sought. Cloud computing can’t miraculously solve this one yet, but it can help at least to some extent. Server setups and other configurations in on-premise solutions can complicate the process. Nevertheless, just the fact that a cloud-based solution is established within a uniform environment can drastically cut down on the time it takes to get your new software and research management processes up and running. Cloud computing, along with SaaS, lets you automate the creation and configuration of the infrastructure, making the transition as easy as it possibly can be for now.

All of the issues raised in this article, and many others, were ones that we had to work through and continue to address as we carefully evaluated and selected the SaaS/Cloud provider for a major upgrade cycle of our eRA systems. We have had to learn to listen carefully to each other and those constituencies we seek to serve — investigators, units, other users, and our organizations. As might be expected some of the transformations made have not quite fit or been as user friendly as we hoped. But, a partnership that provides the capacity with specialized expertise in eRA systems means that we have been able to adopt a continuous improvement, multi-phase approach. We can test new templates and processes, obtain user input, and have solutions offered that we might not have considered had the broad expertise of the combined team not been available. To be sure, this work requires close collaboration among all constituent groups-especially the university-external provider group. However, because the focus is on eRA systems and not just part of the broader IT services of the university, the time and focus seems more readily available and the processes are highly responsive for those of us who aren’t fortunate enough to have our own eRA-focused IT teams.

“We have had to learn to listen carefully to each other and those constituencies we seek to serve — investigators, units, other users, and our organizations.”

A major problem that often causes hesitation about moving to cloud-based systems is that many people and organizations perceive security may be jeopardized. The cloud is a rather nebulous concept for some people, and if they can’t physically see where their data is being stored, they worry about how safe it really is. The hard truth is, nothing can ever be completely secure and vulnerable to hackers. For the most part though, cloud security is very similar to that of on-premise data centers, and trying to determine the relative levels of security between the two should be done on a case-by-case basis. Consider for yourself though, how much time and resources do you think your institution places on security? Perhaps it is a rather formidable amount. Now consider how much security cloud-hosting providers like Amazon, Google put in place to protect the data in your cloud form unauthorized users. Cloud providers are just a part of the equation though, so be sure to look into the specific measures through the use of software and vendor as well. When the SaaS systems and cloud hosting are provided by the same group the greater integration enhances both service quality and security.

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In our first two articles we outlined a streamlined methodology for conducting institutional and project level risk assessment of potential subrecipients. We focused on the evaluation and identification of risks to lay the groundwork for a successful collaboration while reducing administrative burden by targeting assessments on key risk areas.

This article will focus how to implement mitigation plans for the risks already identified by leveraging the terms of the subaward. This article will suggest certain business and legal terms that may be considered for high-risk transactions, both at the institutional and project levels.

Before we dive into the specifics, we want to share one piece of advice that has helped us both immeasurably in our work. If you are adding additional terms to your standard subaward template, having a conversation with the subrecipient prior to sending the contract is often valuable. The subrecipient is more familiar with the operations at their institution and with a little lead time may be able to resolve important issues in advance. They may even suggest contract language they've used in the past to manage certain issues. The PIs consider their collaborators as crucial components of a project and it is important the central office takes this stance as well.

All subawards, even with low-risk institutions, should incorporate contingency plans, including the Pass-through Entity’s (PTE) right to audit, right to review a third party audit, and right to reject invoices if they are not compliant with the PTE’s or the sponsor’s terms. Most subawards should be set up in one year increments, providing an annual opportunity to assess if terms need to change due to risks that have arisen throughout the year.

With a high-risk institution your focus should be on financial management/control ability and familiarity with federal funds. Think about a special template for high risk situations to ensure that terms are consistently applied to these situations. We also suggest building guidance and options into the template to assist staff as they draft subawards. A well-structured template will provide consistency and helpful prompts to ensure key risks are identified and discussed prior to issuing the subaward.

With high-risk projects with low-risk institutions, it may be as simple as tailoring the standard template to the specific risk. For instance, in the first article we mentioned the potential for a low-risk, domestic institution to be overseeing work in a foreign country. If we had investigated that scenario further and found the work was low-risk, such as a survey in a non-embargoed country, we might only want to add a statement into the subaward such that the subrecipient takes responsibility for ensuring the foreign country work will be done in accordance with local law and sponsor terms.

When working with a high-risk institution, a clear and comprehensive subaward is a key component to minimizing risk and establishing a good relationship. Accordingly, tailoring the subaward to fit the circumstances is in the best interest of both parties. We suggest separating out the institutional (financial) terms from the project-related terms.

Financial Risks

If the issue is troublesome audit findings, you have two relatively simple mechanisms to mitigate the risk. If you are planning to issue a cost reimbursable subaward, require backup either automatically with every invoice or with the final, annual invoice. Specify the backup requirements (i.e., general ledger print outs, effort reports, receipts, etc.). Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200.332 has also provided us with another mechanism to mitigate this type of risk: fixed amount subawards. This mechanism is capped at $150,000 annually, but the best perk of using the fixed amount subaward is fewer financial oversight requirements. If the milestone is completed, payment may be issued to the subrecipient, thus obviating the need for back up on specific charges. More work is required on the pre-award end to validate the cost proposal, but less monitoring may be required on the back end.

Another common scenario related to high risk institutions is a lack of capital to start up a project and keep it moving. A subrecipient may need advance payments either at the initial phase of the project or throughout. In this model, currency fluctuations may also need to be addressed if the
institution is foreign. In our experience, capping the advance payment at a percentage of the anticipated budget is helpful. A common model we have used is dividing the budget into quarters and issuing 25% of the budget up front with requirements for detailed quarterly accounting of expenditures, including back up. Future payments may be adjusted down or up based on how much the subrecipient actually spends; if they only spend 10% of the first payment, a second payment may be held until they spend 80% of the funds on hand and demonstrate programmatic progress. Ensure the milestones and/or statement of work is clear and detailed: this is important for all subawards, but especially important for risky situations.

Outline the procedures and methods to be used by the subrecipient to accomplish the goals of the subaward: aims/goals, performance standards, due dates, deliverables and/or milestones. An effective statement of work provides support for the budget but is NOT a budget justification or a resume of the subrecipient PI.

All subawards should contain a provision permitting the PTE to audit at any time and that any improperly expended funds found during audit must be refunded promptly. Ensure that high-risk subawards contain explicit language on this point, especially when working with organizations that do not have a lot of experience with federal or other sponsored awards. You may also want to state that any penalties or other fines imposed on the PTE due to subrecipient’s non-compliance must be paid by the subrecipient.

When working with a high-risk subrecipient on either the project or institutional level, ensure that the subaward contains the level of reporting that is appropriate to support any additional financial requirements. If you are making quarterly advance payments, match that with a quarterly progress report. You may also want frequent and structured progress reporting to ensure the work is being done to specifications to avoid problems before they start.

Other Project-Specific Risks
In addition to potential financial recording and reporting risks, the statement of work may reveal project specific risks, as we outlined in our last installment. Such risks may include foreign sites conducting human subjects work or subrecipients working with an experimental drug or device, among other scenarios.

Ensure that the subaward clearly identifies whether the subrecipient is conducting human or animal subject work and explicitly states that approvals must be produced upon request, annually prior to renewing the subaward, and when the applicable committee completes its continuing review. The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Subawards Committee is in the process of updating the subaward template to address and better manage these risk areas by creating check boxes that clearly identify human or animal subjects work. While we both come from institutions that only require low-risk subrecipients produce institutional approvals upon request, opinion on this point varies widely. Some institutions do require copies of the institutional approval for each project. This approach may need to be re-thought with the implementation of single IRBs (sIRBs) on NIH funded research.

The trend in recent years on indemnification seems to be going in the right direction: omitting it in most cases when the agreement is between non-profit entities. However, there are still some instances where a broad indemnification for subrecipient’s negligent acts that lead to damages, including reasonable attorney’s fees, may be in the best interest of the PTE. We urge institutions to use indemnification judiciously and be mindful that most state or government institutions are not able to accept it. Consider limiting this requirement only to foreign subrecipients performing human subjects work or in especially high-risk situations.

While indemnification has become more difficult to include in every award, most institutions are able to provide assurances regarding insurance coverage; setting minimum insurance requirements is a good method to ensure that the subrecipient has a mechanism to cover any obligations that may arise in their conduct of the work. Since insurance requirements vary widely from state to state and country to country, we recommend broadly worded language that clearly states the subrecipient has insurance adequate to cover their obligations under the subaward. Consider requiring the subrecipient add you as an additional insured to their policy. Especially when working with foreign institutions with different insurance requirements, we strongly recommend requiring a copy of their insurance policy and prompt notification if the policy changes.

It is also prudent to include warranties for the following when working with foreign subrecipients or domestic subrecipients performing high-risk work in a foreign country: compliance with applicable laws, adherence to export controls, and anti-terrorist or anti-bribery laws. List out the specific laws they must comply with, using citations. When negotiating the subaward, it might also be helpful to draw the subrecipient’s attention to the compliance section or any other areas of concern, such as financial conflict of interest policy. Ask if they have any questions to ensure they understand their obligations. Sometimes assumptions are made that local law is analogous enough when really the requirements may be quite different.

Finally, ensure that the termination clause goes beyond the standard 30 days for any reason and add a right to terminate or suspend work immediately at any time if the subrecipient is not adhering to the terms of the subaward.

In summary, by having well-defined categories of risk for your institution, most assessments will yield low-risk subrecipients with whom you can use your standard subaward templates. You are then free to focus on the terms and conditions of the high-risk subrecipients and allocate time and resources accordingly. Streamlining terms and conditions for low-risk subrecipients by using terms similar to (or just using the publicly available version of) the FDP template, will ease negotiations on low-risk subrecipients, permitting your institution to focus its efforts on having conversations with and drafting realistic and clear subawards for high-risk subrecipients.

A well-structured template will provide consistency and helpful prompts to ensure keys risks are identified and discussed prior to issuing the subaward.

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October/November 2016
Save the date for NCURA’s 11th Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA) Conference to be held on March 8-10, 2017 in beautiful San Diego, California, aptly named America’s Finest City. Our theme, Together Towards Tomorrow, represents an extension of NCURA’s tag line Supporting Research… Together. It is our vision to provide a program that encourages collaboration while providing tactical tools and tips for pre-award research administrators to be able to implement immediately. We recognize that PRA is attended by research administrators at every level, from entry through mid-level to executive-level, as well as every role, from departmental through pre-award to predominantly undergraduate institutions that “do it all”. Therefore, the program committee is hard at work to provide a comprehensive offering of sessions and discussion groups that will offer all attendees something to “take home with them”.

With San Diego’s great weather, miles of sandy beaches, and major attractions, we cordially invite you to join us to be renewed and inspired! The program will be filled with events offering open collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing. It’s an opportunity to invest in yourself, your career, and your institution.

Two new tracks to look out for are the Systems, Metrics, and Data track and the Senior/Executive track. Recognizing the ever-changing field of research administration, we felt if we are to go Together Towards Tomorrow, we need to equip our attendees with new subject content that mattered. The Systems, Metrics, and Data track will focus on what data matters, analyzing the data, and using the resulting metrics to make data-driven decisions that are essential to building an effective organization.

As senior research administrators at institutions are evolving into more complex leadership roles, we realized the scope of senior leaders expands beyond managing people. The new Senior/Executive track will provide useful information for executive-level leaders to address institution-wide issues.

We hope you join us in San Diego in March 2017!

Yours…Together Towards Tomorrow,

Denise Moody and Rosemary Madnick
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<td>Denise Moody, Harvard University</td>
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<td>Suzanne Rivera, Case Western University</td>
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<td>Robyn Remotigue, University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth</td>
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Evisions is Research Administration

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The role of the research administrator has taken many forms over the years with the expansion of science and research both domestically and internationally. Along with this dramatic growth and diversity of research comes complicated legal and regulatory requirements, complex and difficult-to-navigate bureaucracies, and the increased demand for public accountability. Indeed, the research enterprise today is vast and the knowledge and skills needed and required by a research administrator encompass a broad spectrum.

**RATIONALE AND BENEFITS OF OBTAINING A CRA**

While research administration requires exceptional organizational, communication, and critical thinking skills, the research administration profession can require and/or easily utilize various backgrounds including financial, military, business administration, and international studies.

Given the skill sets needed for a research administrator, how best should an organization go about finding the best qualified candidates and determine if an individual can carry out the responsibilities? Conversely, how could a research administrator ensure that they stay current and stand apart from the rest?

Obtaining a Certified Research Administrator certificate (CRA) is a clear way to show that you have demonstrated achievement of an advanced level of knowledge and understanding of the principles, concepts, and regulations for administering research. Below is an outline of the additional benefits of the CRA designation:

**Validation of experience and professional recognition.** Research administration is a profession; obtaining a CRA validates you as a professional. In 1993 the Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC) ([http://cra-cert.org](http://cra-cert.org)) was formed as an independent non-profit organization. The Council is composed of active certified research administrators whose role is to certify that an individual, through experience and testing, and has the fundamental knowledge necessary to be a professional research sponsored administrator.

**Personal satisfaction and indicator of expertise and knowledge.** Taking the CRA Exam demands preparation – it is grueling: 250 multiple choice questions that takes four hours to complete. In a poll taken by Vicky Ratcliffe for her Virginia Teach CRA study group, she has found that most participants studied more than 40 hours, and some 60 or more. Qualifying and passing the examination shows that you have taken the time to learn and understand all of the underpinnings of research administration.
Increased credibility with faculty and other administrators. Faculty live and breathe for professional credentials. They are in perpetual pursuit of the next grant, academic award, or promotion. They are always keeping up on their professional development and in their fields. They understand the value of certification and what it takes to maintain it, and will respect those initials of accreditation.

Preferred candidate in employment opportunities. Many employers will include the CRA or additional education as a desired or even required qualification. By its very nature, higher education understands the value of seeking advanced education and credentials. They seek candidates who can demonstrate an understanding of federal compliance issues and show competence in managing research, which will subsequently have a significantly positive impact on the institution’s science and reputation.

A role model to other RAs. In order to qualify for CRA recertification, you are required to log and report a total of 80 contact hours over a period of five years. Contact hours are activities that must be related to research and show competence in managing research, which will subsequently have a significant impact on the research administration. There is a vast array of ways to earn contact hours who can demonstrate an understanding of federal compliance issues and show competence in managing research, which will subsequently have a significantly positive impact on the institution’s science and reputation.

Best practices for starting a study group

How to Study for the Exam

So your application is accepted, you’ve scheduled your exam, and now you need to get down to the nitty gritty and begin studying. It can be overwhelming.

The CRA exam is made up of the Body of Knowledge (BOK), http://cra-cert.org/bodyofknowledge.html, which is a very broad core of research administration principles. It has been described as “a mile long and a foot deep.” Most research administrators have a clear understanding of their particular area, as an example post-award, pre-award, or clinical trials. However, it is not always common that a research administrator has expertise in every area. The BOK is a reference tool that helps guide the individual in the studying process.

Because of the lengthy BOK requirements, you may want choose to join a study group rather than going it alone. The most critical benefit of a study group is that it serves as a way for individuals seeking to sit for the exam to share expertise. We can’t all be experts on every CRA topic listed in the BOK, so find out who is an expert and recruit them to present to your study group.

By sharing expertise, you can develop a subject matter database to tap into for future study sessions. The research administration community is very generous and willing to share resources. Why not join together toward a common goal and not reinvent the wheel?

Danielle Smith, CRA, at the University of Michigan, shares her experience of taking the exam and starting up a study group when she was at Northeastern University in Massachusetts. She was just finishing out her bachelor’s, considered enrolling into a masters in research administrator program, but wasn’t keen on taking on additional debt. Instead, she decided to pursue becoming a Certified Research Administrator.

After reviewing the credentials she discussed with her director that she wanted to take the exam and was thinking of starting a small study group to facilitate her studies. Her Director thought Danielle meant an official Northeastern study group and although Danielle had something less public in mind, she was convinced this was something that should be done. She submitted a proposal to her director and that was how Northeastern’s “STRIVE for CRA Success” was created.

After doing a bit of research into study groups, how they were organized, and how adults learned, STRIVE started with a small group of 7 and with the intent of 5 weeks to CRA success. Learning from the pilot group, the program changed the following spring and spread the curriculum across 8 sessions with participants co-presenting each session. The spring group nearly quadrupled in attendance and several took the exam and received their certifications.

More than just a study group, STRIVE served to create a bond within Northeastern’s research administration community, and it was easy to see how the group became engaged and emotionally invested in the program and each other. The study group continued to run in the spring and fall in the weeks prior to the exam period, and changes evolved as each group’s experience with the program was evaluated.

Best Practices for Starting a Study Group

Vicky Ratcliffe, CRA, from Virginia Tech University understands the effort and time investment involved in taking and passing the CRA exam. In order to give back and help others succeed she has developed an online webinar series to facilitate the CRA exam preparation. These webinars focus on several different areas of the BOK and are typically 1.5 — 2 hours weekly for 10 weeks, which can be viewed live and/or at a viewer’s leisure. Presenters are asked to speak on select topics, provide slides, and make time for questions at the end of the live session.

Here is Vicky’s advice for best practices on starting a study group:

• Managing Expectations — The most important lesson learned for any study group leader is to manage expectations of program participants. It is critical to state from the beginning that each individual enters the program with various levels of experience and knowledge and cannot expect to attend just the sessions alone and pass the exam. Each participant is encouraged to conduct a self-assessment based on the material in the BOK, and focus on the topics they determine they are least comfortable with.

• Focus of Core Topics — The CRA BOK is overwhelming to say the least, and covers more topics than any formed study group could possibly cover. Vicky recommends starting by identifying the core topics of research administration such as uniform guidance, human subject,
animal research, pre-award and post-award research administration and encourages participants to identify their weak areas and study on their own time or find a subject matter expert in the area and share knowledge.

- **Begin Several Months before the Exam Period** – Look at the first day of the next exam and back it up a minimum of ten weeks. This will allow plenty of time to hold sessions on each of the core topics and allow for scheduling conflicts that might arise with your presenters.
- **Consider Different Learning Styles** – Each learner is different and has their own preferred learning style. You will need to make live audio sessions as interesting as possible by using a mix of audio, visual, and hands-on materials. Be creative!

### HOW TO GET BUY IN FROM A UNIVERSITY

Organizing a CRA study group takes time and commitment. From the start you should seek buy-in from your institution’s leadership to create a CRA study group. In your proposal first outline the benefits a CRA brings to your office, college, and institution and share success stories from other study groups. Additionally, you should be prepared to answer the following questions:

- **What is the demand for this program?** Is there enough interest internally, at the university, or regionally?
- **Who would be involved in the program?** Experts from your own institution or a combination of institutions?
- **How many personnel hours will be devoted to the program and will this affect office operations?**
- **What type of study program do you wish to pursue; face-to-face vs. online or a combination of the two?**
- **What other resources do you need to be successful?**

Qualifying and passing the examination **shows that you have taken the time to learn and understand all of the underpinnings of research administration.**

You may wish to survey formally or informally your office or university so see who is interested in sitting for the exam and participating in a study group. If you have enough interest you may wish to consider an in-house study group. If you are at a small institution with inadequate resources to develop your own study group, check with your peer institutions to see if they have an online study group that you can join.

At the University of Michigan, Sue Kelch, CRA, and Danielle Smith, CRA, spearheaded a CRA study group called aiM Higher ([https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/aim-higher/](https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/aim-higher/)). In addition they recruited a few colleagues to join in the organizational planning.

The initial approach had been a casual exploration which ultimately evolved into a formal pitch of aiM Higher, a pilot CRA study group. aiM Higher is both guided and self-study and includes subject matter experts (courtesy of VA Tech webinars) and on-campus live study pods moderated by the participants with created study guides. In addition, participants receive CRA-A-DAY emails (daily one-page emails that summarize VA Tech webinars) and access to Quizlet, an online learning tool. The pilot was open to only a handful of applicants and was recently completed. The group is now accepting 30 applications for the fall and is open to the University.

Forming a study group at UoM took a bit more strategy as there was not a clear understanding of the CRA. Ultimately, the key to institutional buy-in is to partner with University leadership in the process, create the CRA study group program that works for your institution’s RA community, and to be open to leadership input. Start small and grow from small success.

And finally, if a study program participant received their CRA, ask them if they would be interested in presenting to the next CRA study group. This is a great way for CRAs to earn contact hours and give back to your program.

### SUMMARY

There are many benefits to a CRA study group. It’s not just about personal recognition; CRA groups foster mentoring and professional success. We’ve seen RAs bond together, grow, challenge themselves, support each other, take great initiative, and in every instance seek to find ways to give back to the group even after taking and passing the exam. It is an endless circle of giving and getting where everyone benefits.

And choosing to receive your CRA is not just about marking personal accomplishments in research administration. Your efforts help others achieve professional recognition, personal satisfaction, and success. It’s also about creating credibility for the field of research administration. That helps everyone.

For more information on joining or starting your own study group, contact:

**Virginia Tech:** [www.research.vt.edu/professional-development/programs/cra-study-team](http://www.research.vt.edu/professional-development/programs/cra-study-team)

**University of Michigan:** [https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/aim-higher/](https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/aim-higher/), email aimhigher@umich.edu

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**Sue Kelch, CRA,** is a Senior Research Financial Specialist in the Department of Otolaryngology’s Kresge Hearing Research Institute at the University of Michigan and recently earned her CRA. She provides financial oversight for departmental research and the Institute. She has been a member of NCURA since 2007 and just completed her service as Immediate Past Chair for Region IV. She also served on various task forces and committees, and is a recent ELP graduate. She can be reached at suekelch@umich.edu

**Vicky Ratcliffe, CRA,** serves as the Manager of Research Education and COI Administrator in the Office of the Vice President for Research at Virginia Tech. Vicky earned her Certified Research Administration designation in 2010 and has developed a CRA study group with over 700 participants from across the nation. She can be reached at vratcliffe@vt.edu

**Danielle Smith, B.S., CRA,** is Director of Research Administration and Finance at the Life Sciences Institute at the University of Michigan. She serves as an advisor to the aiM Higher CRA Study Group, and a mentor to several RAs. Danielle has been a member of NCURA since 2008, including Regions I and IV. She can be reached at damsmi@umich.edu
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SPONSORED PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT

SUBAWARDS
One of the main benefits of collaborating with others is achieving goals that otherwise could not be reached alone. Collaboration requires individuals and/or institutions to step out of their comfort zones and learn to work together in teams. Ultimately, those that collaborate could form relationships through the process that can be productive and long-lasting.

Collaborating can also stimulate motivation by providing an opportunity to share resources and reduce costs while heightening prestige or expanding one’s sphere of influence just by connecting with others. In the face of continuing budget constraints and limited resources, collaborating provides an opportunity to maximize these limited resources while maintaining a high level of output. The larger question is — what can research administrators do to facilitate this?

The goal of this article is to share two viewpoints — one from the central-level and one from the school-level, in the hopes of providing some novel ideas for research administrators to utilize to help provide our faculty with opportunities for collaborations.
Collaborations from the Central-Level Perspective: New Faculty Lunches (Auburn)

Since November of 2012 (first under the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and, as of May 2015, under the Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support (PSFS)), we have been hosting monthly new faculty lunches as a strategic initiative of the office(s). The purpose of the lunch is to introduce new faculty to the various resources available to assist them in securing extramural funding and to also provide access to PIVOT (a subscription database of more than 25,000 funding opportunities from numerous sponsors across all disciplines). We select monthly invitees from a list of new faculty, provided by the Provost’s office in early August. The lunches include PSFS staff, the appropriate Contract Administrator from OSP and 4-5 new faculty from various departments/colleges. Recently, we have added a representative from the Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations (Office of Development) in order to introduce faculty to additional opportunities for funding outside of the sponsored program arena (and also to more fully support our strong relationship with the Office of Development). The lunches have had the added benefit of providing a forum where faculty from various disciplines can interact and (in some cases) have led to collaborations for future project development. In one example, a lunch that included faculty from the School of Nursing and the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering initiated a discussion related to ergonomics and truck drivers and the possibility of a future collaboration.

The lunches, which are budgeted for in each fiscal year, are meant to be an informal opportunity for new faculty to share the areas of research and creative scholarship in which they are involved (so that we can better provide them with guidance and appropriate funding opportunities) and for them to learn about the resources available to them. An added benefit has been the ability for our offices to develop a rapport with faculty within a year of their arrival at Auburn. In many cases, this has opened a line of communication between the participants. It has been very interesting to watch the discussions evolve between biologists and sociologists; nurses and engineers; and linguists and physicists. Commonalities are not always found, however many leave the lunch with new colleagues and contacts across campus.

In the almost four years that we have been hosting these lunches, there has been a very positive response from the faculty who have attended (including an expression of appreciation for our offices taking the time to get to know them and their developing programs). The success of the lunches has been shared internally at Associate Deans for Research meetings, with the University Research Council, and has been reported as progress being made toward advancing the research enterprise under Auburn University’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan.

Collaboration Corner (Auburn)

The Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support (PSFS) assists faculty and staff in the broad aspects of proposal development for their research, scholarly, and creative programs. In order to further this work, PSFS, through support from the Office of the Vice President for Research, was granted access to space centrally located on campus that was renovated for the purposes of facilitating faculty collaborations (many thanks to both Martha Taylor, Auburn’s Assistant Vice President for Research, for the initial concept and Rachel Simpson, Proposal Services Administrator in PSFS, for facilitating both the furnishing and decorating of the space). In order to market the space, we hosted a naming contest (including a free lunch for the winner) and the winning name selected was, “Collaboration Corner.”

This name proved both descriptive and directional as it not only reflected the purpose of the space but also its location in the furthest corner of the building within which it is housed. An Open House, attended by over 50 faculty, staff and administrators was held on April 5, 2016.

The Corner serves as a welcoming environment that promotes synergy where faculty can exchange ideas, develop proposals, and engage in collaborative endeavors. The goal of Collaboration Corner is to provide a place where silos and barriers will be broken. It is a space where faculty from all departments are welcome to come together to connect with each other, share their research, and learn from each other. To help facilitate this process, PSFS will be hosting monthly workshops and opportunities for faculty to come together to continually learn from their peers and keep pace with the current standards of proposal development in an ever changing funding climate. In addition, there will be opportunities for the Corner to be utilized for brown bag lunches for research administrators across campus and for various offices to host afternoon coffee breaks open to faculty that have questions relevant to that office’s function. Since its Open House in April, a collaborative team of faculty (studying STEM Education Research) utilized the space for a working lunch; faculty (and representatives from OSP and PSFS) have utilized the space for proposal development and award...
management meetings; and a brown bag session (Resources of the Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support) was hosted in July. In addition, the Corner offers “Office Hours” every Tuesday in which a representative from PSFS is available all day for faculty (and staff) to drop-in to ask questions or seek assistance in proposal development.

Collaborations from a College-Level Perspective:
When I filled the position of Research Manager in the School of Public Health (SPH) at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth, I was tasked with using the first three months of my tenure for discovery and data gathering. Time was spent taking an inventory of the SPH resources available to assist faculty. Individually meeting with faculty proved to be the most valuable time spent during the discovery phase. Faculty shared specific research interests, desires, and recommendations regarding what they need to conduct successful research. The need for collaboration was a key theme. Although some faculty members supported each other’s research, many more indicated a desire for colleague assistance and mentorship.

In the School of Public Health we have developed an exciting program called Research Schmooze. Modeled after the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS at Yale University, that is located in the Yale School of Public Health, this program offers pre-arranged meetings between researchers. The SPH hosts research schmoozes as a method that facilitates new collaboration among faculty. Our first event was held off campus and offered pre-arranged meetings (much like speed networking) for researchers, gourmet pizza, ice cold beverages, and the opportunity to share research ideas.

The feedback on our efforts has been positive from the faculty; to date we have successfully hosted four Research Schmoozes. Our goal is to host at least one in the fall and one in the spring semester. We have also utilized the Research Schmooze to reach out to the community and network with researchers at a local children’s hospital.

Works in Progress (WIPS) offered monthly, is a one hour session that provides faculty members an opportunity to present their research proposal and receive candid feedback from their peers. Many take advantage of his opportunity and present their proposal for peer review before submitting in response to a funding announcement.

To take this idea a step further, we are putting together a Dean’s Research Workshop (a jazzy new name for this group is currently being voted on by the faculty) within the School of Public Health. The Dean will conduct bi-weekly sessions for non-tenured and tenure track faculty in SPH and mandatory participation is expected. The purpose is to provide support and guidance to faculty in regard to grantsmanship. At each meeting, one faculty member will make a 30-minute presentation on a current grant proposal they are developing. The group will then provide feedback. During the remainder of the meeting, each faculty member will provide a brief update on their current funded work and/or a proposal they are developing. As mentioned, this is a new idea that will be implemented in the next few weeks. I am excited about this new opportunity for the faculty and will be anxious to share the results with my NCURA colleagues.

SPH has been working with our University Marketing & Communications to produce video clips of faculty showcasing their research areas and projects. We help the faculty by providing a simple script that gives flexibility to the explanation of their research projects. These videos demonstrate how our research can attract future students, as well as raise awareness in the community. The videos have also promoted collaboration both within and outside the School of Public Health.

Collaboration can be supported through many innovative methods and forums. It is important to recognize that there are possibilities both centrally and at the college or department-level — and that these are not mutually exclusive. The most important goal is to ensure that our faculty are afforded the best opportunities and tools to advance their research and creative scholarship endeavors.

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Robyn Remotigue is Assistant Director, Office of Research Services, in the School of Public Health at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. She has been in the field of research administration for more than 20 years. She is a graduate of the 2012 NCURA Executive Leadership Program and 2010 NCURA Leadership Development Institute. She serves on the Membership and Hospitality Committee in Region V and represents the region on the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee. Robyn is also Chair of NCURA’s 2016 Presidential Task Force on Educational Programming Needs. She can be reached at Robyn.Remotigue@unthsc.edu

Tony Ventimiglia is the Director of the Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support at Auburn University where his responsibilities include assisting faculty and staff in the broad aspects of proposal development for their research, scholarly, and creative programs. He has been working in research administration since 1999 and has volunteered in various capacities within NCURA at both the regional and national level; including as Chair of Region III; co-chair of three national meetings (two annual meetings and PRA); and through various presentations and workshops. He is a graduate of the 2005 class of the NCURA Leadership Development Institute (LDI) and the 2015 Executive Leadership Program. He can be reached at ventiaf@auburn.edu
The ability for researchers to engage their work with a wider audience is critical in today’s academic ecosystem, whether to drive multi-disciplinary collaboration, demonstrate public impact, or to cultivate new funding partnerships with donors and industry. Many communication and networking platforms are available for the general public (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.), however nothing has been built specifically for the academic and research community to help research administrators drive their objectives around industry engagement, research collaboration, or public promotion. Thinkable is the world’s first technology platform that seeks to revolutionise research engagement and collaboration, through making it simple for research administrators to tailor specific challenges, grants or incentives around research objectives important to them.

“The greatest danger for any bright idea is the danger it will be ignored.”

— Dr. David Hull
As scientists and innovators we are constantly searching for the cutting edge research to allow the maximum number of people or organisations to potentially use, collaborate, or innovate with the research they have produced. As scientists and innovators we are constantly searching for the cutting edge of science – those tiny details that allow us to advance our work and our field for the betterment of all. But when we are staring at a fine edge – such tiny details – it is easy to lose sight of the critical importance of sharing and collaborating with those outside our discipline. We have been incentivised (through specialist publications and conferences) to focus on sharing/connecting our research with a very small, hyper-specialist audience of our peers. While technology and human connectivity accelerate around us, governments, universities, and researchers have not kept up to date with novel tools that could help drive engagement and collaboration for their research. At Thinkable we are bringing the forefront of communication technology to the cutting edge of science to solve this issue and create a new mode of outreach and coalition for the wider research community.

Taking inspiration in science communication from the likes of the BBC and David Attenborough, we know that to reach its full potential research needs to be more accessible, more relatable, and easier to understand for non-specialists than it is at present. While everyone can follow and learn from a good documentary, for most academics there is a time in one’s studies when we come across a publication that is too confusing or too far-removed from our own understanding for us to really comprehend what it is. Without comprehension we cannot establish a lasting connection, and without a lasting connection there is no basis for the collaboration of ideas. For many of us, we will have felt this about countless papers and articles. Those publications might contain developments and discoveries that are world-changing. It is just that it can be difficult to relate to research in the traditional specialist journal article form. And yet it is the primary way that research is shared. Whether it is researchers in different fields, industry partners, or the public, they might never know this research exists, even if the by-product of it is technology and commodities that they use every day.

So why is research engagement so important? Because the biggest breakthroughs often come about through multi-disciplinary research collaboration. Take the example of Nobel Laureate’s Osamu Shimomura, Martin Chalfie, and Roger Y. Tsien and their work on the Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP). Shimomura, a Japanese marine biochemist studying jellyfish, discovered the GFP and how it worked in 1962 while at Princeton University. However, it would not be until 1988 when American neurobiologist Chalfie was attending Paul Brehm’s seminar on bioluminescent organisms that he would be made aware of Shimomura’s discovery and its potential for his own work. Within four years Chalfie had made significant discoveries of his own into the applicability of the GFP for neurobiology and in 1996 published his results in one of the most influential molecular biology and genetics papers ever. Roger Tsien, a biochemist, was simultaneously making developments into increasing the strength of fluorescence in these proteins.

Eventually in 2008 the trio were awarded the Nobel Prize for their work even though all of them were from different disciplines, none of them had worked together, and despite the fact that the GFP had been discovered 46 years earlier. Now fluorescent proteins are used every day in laboratories around the world and are a powerful tool in genetics and other fields. Without collaboration it took almost half a century to achieve this. This is because the current methods of sharing research – publications, seminars, lectures and direct conversation – are extremely inefficient.

Wider engagement is clearly a powerful fuel for innovation such as that of the GFP. Our mission at Thinkable is to mobilise research more effectively, allowing non-specialists, industry and the wider public to engage with and cultivate new partnerships to accelerate innovation.

“What is Thinkable?”
We have built Thinkable to allow research administrators to drive research engagement and cultivate collaboration with their researchers around competitions, grants, and challenges. We have partnerships with some of the world’s top universities including MIT, Yale, Oxford, Princeton, the University of Melbourne, and UNSW, where we work with research administrators on programs that accomplish research engagement, outreach and collaboration objectives.

By creating a new way to engage research across broader audiences, it allows us to solve three endemic problems that have plagued universities and governments.
1) Multi-disciplinary collaboration
Within each university lies a vast array of brilliant minds and ideas, from undergraduate students all the way to professors, across hundreds of disciplines. It has traditionally been very difficult to effectively drive participation, ideation, and collaboration within a university in order to seed new partnerships. We work with universities to host open research showcases or internal innovation challenges that allow researchers to communicate their research ideas, find other alternative but relevant ideas, and to work towards multi-disciplinary projects.

2) Industry partnerships
Industry engagement with research is often inefficient and difficult to facilitate. Research administrators have to physically set up meetings with research groups and industries around potential R&D partnerships. We work with universities to manage and host industry-led R&D challenges to engage all university researchers to participate and help solve their R&D problems. From these challenges we have found that lasting partnerships are a natural outcome. Corporations like Hitachi or Boeing sponsor a research funding challenge and funding pool to source research partners. We work with research administrators to run the challenge through our platform and invite industry expert judges to review entries and select winners.

3) Public impact
Each year thousands of research articles are published by hundreds of researchers within each university. However, the audience for these articles is only a handful of specialist peers. The importance of driving public impact and knowledge sharing is critical, so we work with research administrators to host university publication or research showcases that allow the public to learn, engage, and even fund the research. While the Thinkable platform makes it easy to bring in a panel of experts to judge a competition, by employing a public voting system as well, your researchers have to find exciting ways to connect with everyday people by creating short video summaries of their work.

Beyond the public voting system we have also successfully run the world’s first open-peergjudged research competition (www.thinkable.org/vote_competitions/the-peer-prize-for-women-in-science). With the Sun Foundation’s Peer Prize for Women in Science we implemented a voting system exclusive to verified, published researchers. In doing so we mobilised a global community of almost 1500 researchers from 250 institutes around the world, including 100 researchers from Japan.

We are excited to partner with university research administrators to drive programs and engagement for them. We have 45,000 of the world’s top researchers and our goal is to build an even larger, un-paralleled community of researchers and innovators to remove the barriers and bridge the gaps that stand between potential research partnerships that could change the world. With such a community in place the possibilities are endless.

Ben McNeil, Ph.D., is a leading climate scientist and founder and CEO of Thinkable.org. He has published his research in leading journals (Nature, Science, and PNAS) and worked in leading research teams at Princeton University, University of Paris, and the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia for over 20 years. Since 2015, he has focused entirely on building and developing Thinkable.org to drive research engagement and collaboration for select partner universities across the world. He can be reached at ben@thinkable.org.

The panacea for many institutions is a fully integrated, enterprise-wide solution. The promise of such systems is quite compelling. What many institutions do not always fully appreciate are the time and resources necessary to deliver on this promise. The success of a system implementation will ultimately be judged by more than just a successful go-live. Success will be evaluated over time based on how delivered functionality did or did not meet expectations. Fully satisfying expectations often requires viewing system implementation as a process over time, rather than as a singular event. Reviewers have observed that success is much more likely when the following occur:

- ALL stakeholders are involved in the process, preferably as early as vendor selection, but certainly no later than the earliest planning stages — and then throughout the process. The very best institutional subject matter experts are engaged, over a long time, in design, testing, training, launch, and post-launch
- Professional project management principles are applied
- Backfill is provided for management and staff involved in the process
- Resources are provided for external implementation assistance as necessary to supplement internal technology staff gaps
- Go-live is not viewed as an end-point, but as the start of a process to continually refine the system and associated processes
- Internal resources are identified for ongoing system maintenance and continued development

Pete Koch is a recent Chair of the NCURA Select Committee on Peer Programs. He has participated in many peer reviews and has more than 25 years of research administration experience, spanning pre-award, post-award, and financial compliance. His day job is Associate Dean for Research Operations in the College of Medicine at the University of Cincinnati.
The US Department of Labor recently issued new regulations regarding the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The revised FLSA requirements go into effect on December 1, 2016. These regulations have the potential to significantly impact the research enterprises, including ongoing projects that involve post-doctoral fellows, other exempt professional staff and even research administration positions. While the goal of creating better work/life balance for employees is positive, this does create some difficult challenges for universities and especially sponsored projects. Responsibility for implementation of the FLSA revisions will vest with human resources offices, but it is critically important that the university research perspective and the impact on existing awards be taken into consideration when setting institutional policy.

As evidenced in Figure 1, in 2015 the FLSA exemption threshold fell below the poverty line as established for a family of four. The recent revision has more than doubled the previous threshold by raising the wage threshold for exemption from overtime from $455 to $913 per week or from $23,660 to $47,476 per year effective with disbursements paid on or after December 1, 2016. Past increases have been implemented sporadically but this revision also included provisions that require the threshold to be raised automatically every three years beginning January 1, 2020. The threshold was set at the 40th percentile of earnings of full-time salaried workers in the lowest-wage Census Region (currently the South) and in the future will be set using that same benchmark although the Census Region with the lowest wage level may change.

As in the past, the FLSA will continue to require compensation for overtime or compensatory time to be earned at a rate of at least 1.5 times the employee’s regular hourly rate. The regulations require that
employers keep records of how many hours overtime-eligible employees work. However, the law does not require that overtime-eligible workers be paid hourly. To meet the effective date of December 1, 2016, institutions that are moving employees from exempt categories to time accrual as hourly employees must implement these changes at an earlier date to ensure disbursements on or after the effective date are in compliance. The new threshold has no impact on the pay of workers paid hourly who must already be paid overtime since those salaried workers do not primarily perform executive, administrative, or professional duties and thus are not eligible for the white collar overtime exemption.

There are two points to keep in mind: Exempt means that an employee is exempt from the overtime standards but employees don’t qualify for the exemption from overtime solely on the amount they are paid. The Standard of Duties Test specifies the types of duties that are being performed. This is a really important distinction. If the duties for the individual meet the standards test, to be considered exempt, the employee must also be paid at the minimum rate or above. If that employee’s salary does not meet the salary threshold requirements, then the employee still qualifies for overtime.

On May 18, 2016, the Department of Labor has published useful Guidance for Higher Education Institutions on Paying Overtime under the FLSA (www.dol.gov/whd/overtime /final2016/highered-guidance.pdf). This document outlines the specific exceptions for, and impact on, higher education. The FLSA revisions did not change the prior standing that students engaged in research or serving as resident advisors are in an educational not employment relationship and therefore, overtime is not applicable. Employees whose primary duty is teaching fall under the FLSA’s teaching exemption. There are additional exceptions for administrative personnel who help run higher education institutions and interact with students outside the classroom, such as department heads, academic counselors and advisors, intervention specialists and others with similar responsibilities who are subject to a special salary threshold that does not apply to white-collar employees outside of higher education. These employees are not entitled to overtime compensation if they are paid at least as much as the entrance salary for teachers at their institution.

For the academic research enterprise, the biggest impact has been seen for post-doctoral fellows. To the extent that post-doctoral fellows have a primary duty of teaching, they will be subject to the teaching exemption and not entitled to overtime compensation. A post doc will be eligible for overtime if their primary duty is not teaching and they earn less than the new threshold. It is fairly standard practice and a long held expectation that post docs work more than 40 hours per week. It is an institutional decision on whether to require all post docs to be paid at a minimum level at or above $47,476. Some set minimum thresholds while others allow the employing unit that discretion.

Stipends that support subsistence, travel, supplies, etc. associated with a research project are normally not considered to be an employer/employee relationship and would not be subject to the FLSA provisions. However, in the case where a stipend is paid as compensation for an expectation that work will be performed, there would be an employer/employee relationship that would be subject to the FLSA. The sponsor may stipulate this in the award. Otherwise, institutional policy would prevail.

Not all federal agencies have issued guidance. NIH has announced it will increase postdoctoral NRSA stipends to levels at or above the new threshold. NSF has also issued guidance on the FLSA but the current salary levels funded through NSF post-doctoral fellowship programs are already above the FLSA threshold. NSF does not plan on adjusting award amounts for existing projects involving impacted post docs and other employees since NSF already allows for rebudgeting as needed to meet the requirements. However, if funds on existing

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**Fair Labor Standards Act**

As background, the US government began tracking work hours in 1890 when the average work week for manufacturing employees was 100 hours per week. This marked the emergence of labor unions and collective bargaining. Over the next 50 years, many industries were pressured to reduce the hours required for workers. In 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed and limited the work week to 44 hours. In 1940, Congress amended the FLSA to further limit the work week to 40 hours and standardizing the 8-hour work day. America’s overtime law was enacted to protect workers mandating that workers get paid extra when they work extra. The rules also discourage employers from working employees long hours by making it more expensive to do so through a time-and-a-half pay premium.

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**Figure 1: Historical FLSA Salary Threshold Increases**

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**Historical FLSA Salary Thresholds**
The FLSA also allows that employees of public higher education institutions who qualify as public sector (state) employees may be able to accrue compensatory (“comp”) time as an option to satisfy the institutional obligation to provide overtime compensation. Any comp time arrangement must be established pursuant to the applicable provisions of a collective bargaining agreement or state regulation or stipulated in a memorandum of agreement between the employer and employee before the performance of the work. As with cash overtime pay, compensatory time must be earned at a rate of one-and-one-half hours for each overtime hour worked. The regulations include the proviso that an employee must be permitted to use comp time on the date requested unless doing so would “unduly disrupt” the operations of the agency.

The FLSA regulations are not prescriptive and so it is critical that institutions look at the financial implications and impact of each option for compliance. For sponsored awards, that responsibility may fall on the PI but sponsored projects offices should consider providing guidance and assistance in this area. There are several options for addressing situations where exempt employees who are currently paid less than the overtime threshold and work overtime. As illustrated in Figure 2, there are three options for compliance:

1. Reclassify and pay overtime or offer compensatory time at a rate of 1.5 of the employee’s hourly rate
2. Raise the salary of an employee who would normally work overtime to at least the minimum threshold
3. Limit the employee’s hours to 40 hours per week

While the goal of creating better work/life balance for employees is positive, this does create some difficult challenges for universities and especially sponsored projects."

There are pros and cons to each option. Reclassifying employees to non-exempt allows base salaries to remain constant and provides for fiscal neutrality if the risk of overtime is slight or can be satisfied with compensatory time. However, if employees are working overtime, it is because there is work that needs to get accomplished. Moving from an exempt position to a non-exempt position may change retirement eligibility since there may be different options available to exempt and non-exempt. Consider the case where an employee has been contributing under one plan but is not vested and then is forced to move to a different plan. What happens to their status in the old plan?

For professional positions that meet the duties test, employers should consider the impact this might have on morale of not only those reclassified, but others with more experience doing the same type of work who would remain exempt and thus ineligible for overtime. If overtime/compensatory time is likely, how will employees who are exempt feel about their less experienced colleagues earning overtime/comp time or not being required to work overtime, thus increasing the demands on the exempt employee? Raising salaries to the minimum threshold avoids overtime and maintains certainty for monthly salary obligations. Beyond the issue of how these increases are funded is the potential for salary equity issues when less experienced employees received salary increases while those currently earning above the threshold do not.

This is an opportunity for research administration offices to provide assistance to principal investigators. It is imperative to engage PIs and departmental administrators in the conversation. This could easily impact lab coordinators and other research personnel beyond post docs. New proposals should take this into consideration when budgeting for anticipated overtime or seasonal fluctuations in workloads due to field work or during times where experiments are running around the clock.

This can be a highly emotional change management challenge. Communication is critical and should be ongoing and two-way. The biggest risk associated with the regulatory changes is the potential for employees to not report their overtime. It must be conveyed and stressed that asking employees not to report overtime or creating a culture where that happens will ultimately result in non-compliance. This is a risk area that is ripe for whistleblowing. Be cognizant that having the authority to make decisions won’t necessarily translate as a positive if units are required to absorb the costs (this includes PIs).
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Building Regional Research Collaborations

By Susan M. Morgan, Teri L. Gulledge, and Lisa Lawrence

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) was awarded an NIH Biomedical/ Biobehavioral Research Administration Development (BRAD) Award (G11) in part to build infrastructure for sustainable and successful research and research administration collaborations. Collaborations have been key to the initial success of the project and its sustainability beyond the grant period. The NIH BRAD Program has allowed SIUE the funds and opportunity to create lasting programs and collaborations, not just within the institution but regionally. It has strengthened existing collaborations and fostered new collaborations that are increasing the amount and impact of the region’s biomedical and biobehavioral research.

Introduction
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) is a master intensive university established in 1957 that is considered an emerging research institution. Located about 20 miles from St. Louis, the main campus is within close proximity to several regional research intensive universities, such as Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis University, University of Missouri-St. Louis, and the SIU School of Medicine in Springfield, IL. In Fall 2015, SIUE enrolled over 14,000 students. Of the 14,000, 2000 were graduate students and 500 were professional practice doctoral students.

SIUE has a central research administrative office located within the Graduate School. The office has 11 staff and two administrators who offer pre-award, compliance, and post-award services (Figure 1). The office serves nine academic units with approximately 2400 faculty and staff as well as units under the Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs and Administration (SIUE FactBook 2016). The academic units include Schools of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Dental Medicine.

Figure 1. SIUE Office of Research and Projects.
SIUE has a unique mix of healthcare and associated disciplines that are not similarly represented in universities in the metropolitan St. Louis and southern Illinois regions and offers nearly 20 graduate and professional degrees in the biomedical and biobehavioral fields. However, despite the large number of biomedical and biobehavioral units and the University’s overall activity in externally sponsored projects (Figures 2 and 3), biomedical and biobehavioral research (BBR) activity was low. In 2013 only three projects were funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and only seven other Public Health Service projects involved SIUE faculty. Therefore, it was decided to pursue funding from the NIH Biomedical/Biobehavioral Research Administrator Development (BRAD) Program.

**NIH BRAD Program**
The BRAD program in the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (www.nichd.nih.gov/about/org/od/ohe/brad/Pages/overview.aspx) was formerly known as the Extramural Associates Research Development Program. The program focuses on BBR and lists three main objectives:

- encourage professional development of all levels in research administration
- increase sponsored project offices’ “productivity and effectiveness” by promoting best practices in research administration
- promote sustainability by identifying barriers to research and supporting professional development of faculty/staff in the biomedical/biobehavioral disciplines.

The five year grant award requires the positions of an extramural associate (EA) and a senior administrator to lead the project. The program also requires a mentor for the EA and a program steering committee of internal and/or external members.

**SIUE’s BRAD Proposal**
In Spring 2013, the SIUE Office of Research and Projects (ORP) personnel met with a former SIUE Associate Dean who was now employed at Washington University in St. Louis (WUSTL). These meetings explored avenues of mentorship and collaborations for SIUE’s administrative personnel and faculty. WUSTL agreed to allow the Director of Grants in its Office of Sponsored Research to serve as the administrative mentor to the EA and agreed to open attendance to relevant WUSTL forums and trainings.

Three significant barriers for SIUE’s faculty were identified: limited support provided by the ORP, lack of interactions between faculty of different disciplines within SIUE and between faculty at different institutions, and the lack of visibility and coordination between internal programs that support faculty and students from underrepresented groups. Three specific aims to address these barriers and align with the BRAD Program objectives were developed. The aims are as follows.

1. Improve pre-award and compliance services in the areas of BBR by:
   1.1 adding a staff member specifically trained to support BBR to the ORP pre-award staff
   1.2 expanding the overall knowledge base of pre-award research administration staff in BBR projects
   1.3 developing expanded ORP support services and tools to increase the efficiency of grant administration

2. Increase the interaction of faculty with interest in BBR to increase research collaborations.

3. Increase involvement of URG in BBR activities by:
   3.1 leveraging current internal programs to
increase support to students and faculty of URG

3.2 leveraging current and instituting new mentoring opportunities for faculty and graduate students.

The proposal utilized existing programs whenever possible to implement the aims and ensure sustainability of new initiatives. In April 2014, SIUE’s proposal was awarded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development G11HD080220.

Literature Review

Key activities in the proposal, including institutional and regional collaborations and mentoring, are evidenced-based interventions and best practices mentioned in the literature as important to research administrators in enabling faculty to pursue research agendas, including seeking external funding opportunities. Conn et al. (2005) explored how encouraging peer support, promoting innovation through collaboration, building the research community connection, and acknowledging accomplishments of researchers are important in bolstering research involvement. Barron et al. (2015) noted that key variables for successful development of collaborative research relationships and regional interaction include effective and sustainable delivery of support services, institutional commitment to building collaboration skills through events, and dedication to increased interaction among researchers, the academic region and their surrounding communities. Birx et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of leveraging relationships, creating research clusters, and supporting institutional incentives to grow a university’s research capacity.

The literature also indicated that an important aspect of collaboration is building group cohesion through informal interactions. Conn et al. (2005) explored how encouraging peer support, promoting innovation through collaboration, building the research community connection, and acknowledging accomplishments of researchers are important in bolstering research involvement. Barron et al. (2015) noted that key variables for successful development of collaborative research relationships and regional interaction include effective and sustainable delivery of support services, institutional commitment to building collaboration skills through events, and dedication to increased interaction among researchers, the academic region and their surrounding communities. Birx et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of leveraging relationships, creating research clusters, and supporting institutional incentives to grow a university’s research capacity.

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Project Implementation

SIUE’s BRAD project, branded internally as BRIDGE (Building Research Initiatives to Develop Grant Excellence), is based on increasing collaborations (institutionally and regionally as well as among research administrators and researchers) and leveraging resources. The BRIDGE Steering Committee is a vital part of the project, particularly assisting with fostering regional collaborations. The Committee was proposed to include members from SIUE as well as two regional institutions – WUSTL and SIU School of Medicine. However, the actual committee represents six units at SIUE as well as four regional universities (WUSTL, SIU School of Medicine, St. Louis University, and University of Missouri at St. Louis). Members include faculty and research administrators. Two to four meetings are scheduled annually with attendance face-to-face as well as through computer and telephone connections. The committee has been instrumental in encouraging...
opportunities with each other to maximize impact, BRIDGE has increased the networking event per semester. Speed networking events allow each attendee three minutes to talk about their research—what they do, what they offer to collaborators, and what they are looking for in a collaborator. The spring speed networking event was timed to coincide with the existing annual Graduate School Symposium to further leverage resources and was opened to include regional researchers. The events have already resulted in proposals submitted for external funding.

To foster collaborations with potential new faculty and promote SIUE, the BRIDGE team offered to identify potential collaborators to add to campus interview itineraries. The 30 minutes are spent discussing interests and potential major ways to meet those needs was, of course, important. Equally important has been the flexibility to adjust and find alternatives when met with roadblocks and the flexibility to take advantage of additional opportunities. For example, when a participant unexpectedly met with an unwilling partner in offering research mentoring, an online resource and new partner were identified. Examples of taking advantage of opportunities have been the expansion of the Steering Committee and partnering with one of the regional universities to host the first-ever reception celebrating and expanding regional collaborations.

Collaborations have also been key in the long-term sustainability of BRIDGE initiatives. Sustainability has been an important consideration throughout the project. It is necessary to ensure the largest return on investment of the NIH funding as well as SIUE’s time and effort. Sustainability is being ensured by leveraging resources with collaborators, building strong collaborations between sponsored project offices rather than between individuals, and incorporating initiatives into ORP’s operations.

The NIH BRAD Program has allowed SIUE the funds and opportunity to create lasting programs and collaborations....

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Collaborations have been key to the success of BRIDGE. However, its success has not necessarily arisen as it was envisioned. The correct identification at the proposal stage of the needs and collaborations. While it seems already to be a fruitful endeavor for recruiting faculty and facilitating collaborations (even if the potential faculty does not end up at SIUE), it has proven as difficult to implement as anticipated due to the short turnaround time given to find potential collaborators who can fit into the itineraries.

In addition to fostering researcher collaborations, BRIDGE has increased the networking and strength of relationships among regional research administrators. They are more likely to share funding announcements, trainings and other opportunities with each other to maximize impact on the researchers in the region.

Conclusions
Collaborations have been key to the success of BRIDGE. However, its success has not necessarily arisen as it was envisioned. The correct identification at the proposal stage of the needs and

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Challenges
International funding opportunities can present uncertainties regarding cash management, accounting, and compliance and legal issues. Some specific issues that you may encounter include:

- First, to get an award you need to find an opportunity and apply for it successfully. A successful applicant will need to know more than just what is in the call for proposal. You need to know the sponsor’s funding track record. Do they give preference to multi-institutional applications or academic/industry partnerships? You need to have a thorough understanding of the sponsor’s rules and regulations. Knowing those details will make or break your application. Remember: you are competing with people who are already familiar with local processes.
- An international sponsor may require that contract disputes be resolved in a court in the sponsor’s country of incorporation. Is that acceptable to your legal department? Or will the sponsor accept a US Court venue that has vast experience in international law like New York City or Washington, DC?
- The sponsor may want to value the contract and make payments in their local currency. Can that be negotiated to be in US dollars since your work is being performed in the US and payments to employees and vendors will be made in US dollars? Exchange rates vary over time. In order for your institution to realize the true value of the grant/contract, the funding instrument will need to be valued in your local currency (US dollars). Can payment be made in advance of your institution incurring actual expenses?
- What will the sponsor’s tolerance be for a no-cost extension of the contract if the work is not completed within the proposed contract/grant period?
- Don’t forget audits: will the single audit required by US Federal regulations or your state is acceptable to the sponsor? If there is an international subcontractor, will their local audits be acceptable to your institution?
- Finally, a seemingly simple question that can cause all sorts of complications – do you have a qualified interpreter available? Do you have translation services on retainer? Will you accept the other party’s translation?

You must know your institution’s tolerance for level of risk in these areas. However, more importantly you must learn to identify potential areas of risk and minimize these areas in the pre-award stage and closely monitor and manage risk throughout the life of the research collaboration. It is imperative that research management departments within your institution work closely together to manage international grants and contracts.

As the post-award office identifies issues in the post-award stage, those issues need to be shared with the pre-award office and relevant offices at your institution. How can the research administration professionals at your institution learn to avoid these issues in the future? International research...
management can be an exercise in navigating treacherous waters, however, by planning the management of these collaborations in advance and carefully monitoring them throughout the life of the agreements those treacherous waters can be pacified.

Resources
NCURA assists its members in supporting international scientific collaborations through concurrent presentations and workshops at their national meetings and regional meetings. NCURA also has a Global Subcommittee which specifically targets the exchange of knowledge regarding international research management collaborations. The Global Subcommittee is an excellent forum for exchanging ideas and knowledge among national and international NCURA members. The Global Subcommittee has a monthly conference call and sponsors sessions regarding international funding opportunities and the management of these international programs.

NCURA provides its members the opportunity to forge professional relationships with research administrators all over the world. So when you need information regarding that small but generous foundation located across the globe, all you have to do is e-mail your NCURA colleague in that country. They will most likely say: “Ah, wait a minute, let me ask the colleague across the hall. They worked with that foundation for years.” A quick solution to a potential problem!

Opportunities
NCURA also has an International Fellowship Program to foster further understanding of international collaborations. This fellowship exchange program enhances US and international research management collaboration by creating a pool of individuals at US and international institutions who are able to interpret a multitude of various sponsor requirements in the international research arena. Host institutions provide each fellow with office space, computer and internet access, assistance in finding temporary housing, and an opportunity to be involved in research management at the host institution as well as opportunities for social activities. Fellows are recruited and scholarships are awarded by NCURA each year. This program has been very successful and fellows are encouraged to share their positive experiences at NCURA meetings and conferences.

You are not alone in the management of international research collaborations. You have us – your colleagues, your community. We are your support network of fellow research administrators that crosses borders and spans continents. You have NCURA and through it a connection to the related organizations across the globe (CARA, EARMA, ARMA, ARMS and SARIMA to name a few). 

As research administrators, we must have collaborative relationships with principal investigators, co-workers, and counterparts at other institutions—basically everyone involved in a project. Multiple tools are available to aid research administrators in their collaborative work.

Task Management: One way to keep a project on track is the task function in Microsoft Outlook. A task can be used as a to-do list where you can attach files, emails, and share the task with others. For historical purposes, tasks can be saved and referenced later if needed. Another task management tool is Trello which is free, web-based, and has a Pinterest-like appearance. Trello boards can be shared with others, and consist of “cards” for various tasks, which can contain deadlines, checklists, or attachments. (Trello would not be suitable to store sensitive or confidential data.)

File Sharing/Cloud Services: Do you have a project with numerous files coming from numerous people or institutions? Two popular examples of cloud-based file sharing and syncing and services are Dropbox and Google Drive. By giving access to partners through the cloud, each partner can save their files (biographical sketches, budgets, etc.) directly to the cloud drive instead of emailing numerous files. This can come in quite handy on large projects with multiple partners (and can help keep email volume under control). Another way to manage email volume for a collaborative project is by using Slack, a communication platform with a Twitter-like appearance that allows shared and saved conversations.

Submission Portals: Grants.gov has introduced Workspace to help proposal partners work together. We all know FastLane allows partners to upload their own documents, and it continues to be a great way to work on collaborative submissions. If you haven’t yet tried NIH ASSIST, it is also a wonderful collaborative way of preparing a proposal.

Collaboration is a part of our professional lives and we can use it to our advantage, to lessen our loads and get help from others. There are many other tools besides those listed above, but these should help you get started!

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Tom Wilson is the Emeritus Assistant Vice President, Rush University Medical Center. Tom has over 35 years of experience in research administration. Tom’s responsibilities have included all aspects of pre-award and post-award research administration and he has been a member of NCURA since 1987. He can be reached at wilso1945@gmail.com.

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Barbara Slattery, University of Melbourne, Australia
Position: Manager, Research Information, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

What type of area of research administration do you work in?
A significant part of my role focuses on utilising data (both internally collected and externally harvested) to analyse performance, for benchmarking and to inform strategic decision making. I work in different media to provide this information to different audiences: traditional reports, summary highlights for the web, in promotional brochures and through infographics. I am also involved in maximising and ensuring compliance in publications collection for reporting to the Australian Commonwealth Government. In recent years I have become increasingly involved in reviewing research systems and workflows at the University of Melbourne, as part of centrally coordinated programs to improve processes and assess and evaluate systems and tools for managing research.

What type of networks are you involved in, other than NCURA, which support your research administration position?
I have been a member of the Australasian Research Management Society.
(ARMS: http://researchmanagement.org.au/) since 2010. At the University of Melbourne I am part of the University’s Publications Coordinators Network (about 80 people across the University), and within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences I am involved in the Senior Managers Network (about 50 people across a range of service group functions).

**What level of involvement do you have in these networks?**
In 2013-2015 I was a member of the ARMS Marketing and Communications Committee, directly contributing to the promotion of the society through the creation of advertising materials for print and web. It was a great way to get involved in the society as well as an opportunity to gain some experience in volunteer committee work involving people from several institutions.

I have also been involved in creating poster presentations for ARMS conferences. These present some interesting challenges in terms of ensuring effective communication of your concept within the limitations of the poster format. It’s a good learning experience in being succinct and balancing story flow, word density, images and white space… and also they are lots of fun to do!

The University of Melbourne networks I am involved in are a great way to build relationships, share common issues and ensure effective processes within the organisation, including ensuring we all have clarity around roles and who to go to for what.

**What benefits do you obtain from these networks?**
Both ARMS and NCURA provide opportunities to learn from and network with colleagues from a wide range of research institutions doing a wide range of activities across the research administration spectrum. This year I applied for and was successful in receiving an inaugural ARMS-NCURA global fellowship. I have just spent two weeks at the University of California San Francisco, learning about some of their programs, with a specific focus on their “Open Proposals” tool, developed and coordinated by the team at the Clinical and Translational Science Institute. The opportunity to travel to explore how others do new and innovative work is invaluable not just for me personally, but hopefully will have real benefits to my organisation, and to other research managers in Australia. I hope it has also been an interesting experience for the teams at UCSF, many of whom gave so generously of their time and insights while I was there. Thank you UCSF and CTSI!!

Internal organisational networks like those I am involved in at my own institution are incredibly important as a means for sharing experiences, for learning together and for developing agreed processes to ensure consistent service delivery. We can all benefit from the insights and different perspectives of colleagues who work in similar or complementary roles.

**What advice do you have for new research administrators in terms of building collaborators?**
There is such a diversity of roles within research administration, and it can sometimes feel like you are the odd one out. If you feel this way, try to see it as an opportunity as well as a challenge. It’s challenging to find “your people” when you don’t feel like you are with the main crowd, but no matter what your job is, there are others who do what you do, it might just require a little extra persistence to find them. In my role I have found cross-over with business analysts, librarians, research analytics tool developers, research systems managers, data managers, data interest groups, policy writers, web developers, and marketing and communications professionals. This is quite a diverse range and gives me the opportunity to be a conduit between those groups and the people whose focus is primarily in one area, like grants administration. In my case, before I knew it, I had insinuated myself into an aspect of almost every research administration job there is.

If you have ever felt like me, my advice is to persist, explore beyond the walls of your office. Get to know colleagues in other areas of your organisation and try to learn about and understand what they do, and how your work aligns with theirs. You will be surprised how wide your world will become, and how soon people will come to you because you are the one who does that thing that no one else does!

Barbara is the recipient of the ARMS-NCURA fellowship and can be reached at slattery@unimelb.edu.au

Anna Massaneda, Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Spain
**Position:** Grants and Contracts Pre-award Coordinator

Anna works with pre-award international grants including grants to NIH, CDC (PEPFAR), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as USAID, Department of Defense and EU Horizon 2020 grants. She is a member of NCURA and the European Research Administrator organisation EARMA (www.earma.org). Anna benefits from her involvement in these networks by training and obtaining information that is tailored to the needs of her institute. Her advice to new research administrators is to go to the NCURA annual meeting and find colleagues with similar interests and doubts. Networks are key to staying on top of regulation and compliance issues.

Anna can be reached at anna.massaneda@isglobal.org

Kapten M. Muthoka, AMPATH, Kenya
**Position:** Project Manager

Kapten works with post-award health research administration at AMPATH (www.ampathkenya.org). AMPATH is a recipient of NIH funding. Kapten is a member of NCURA, SRA and the African Association of Research Administrators (ARAA-http://araafrica.org). He also attends NGO project management courses. Kapten makes the most of his networks by building new relationships and benefitting from professional growth.

Kapten can be reached at kaptenmuthoka@gmail.com

Anna-Karin Consoli, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden
**Position:** Post-Contract Grant Administrator

Anna-Karin is a post-award grant administrator working with grants from the European Union and US federal agencies, including NIH and CDMRP. She is a member of NCURA, as well as EARMA and the Swedish European Union Support network (EUFoU). Anna-Karin attends EARMA conferences and training opportunities and participates in the EUFoU network meetings, as well as makes use of the online support network. Anna-Karin says “First and foremost the personal connections I’ve made within these networks are priceless. It is important to know people at other universities that face the same problems and to be able to directly contact and discuss best practices with them is such a win!” Her advice for new research administrators to build their collaborations is to attend the NCURA AM, pin point their topics and go to sessions linked to these both to gain knowledge and to meet people with similar questions. Ask and discuss with people around you, change business cards and stay in touch! ☑
Research Administrators have to be familiar with a plethora of regulations...

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Which Hat Am I Wearing Now?
The Tale of a Research Administrator’s PI Journey

By Julie Guggino

It was a windy spring afternoon in 2001 and I was doing what most research administrators have done—wrestling with someone else’s spreadsheet containing a six-year budget totaling $10.6 million with a 1:1 match from numerous partners. I had just been handed the budget and match commitment details by our director, who had just received it from a community partner who wanted us to be the lead agency. The proposal was due the next day.

The sponsored programs director had been in discussions earlier with the community partner but I wasn’t brought into the loop until that afternoon. Thankfully, everything was ready to go except the cover sheet, the budget, and all the budget-related forms. So I did what most research administrators have done. I dropped everything else I was working on and dove in. Somehow, it all came together. I got the budget sorted out, filled out all the forms, and submitted the proposal on time. Alas, we learned several months later that it was not funded.

One hot summer day in late August 2002 my phone rang and a program officer from the U.S. Department of Education asked to talk to the sponsored programs director. When I told her he was no longer at our institution, she informed me they were funding down from last year’s GEAR UP competition and did we want it? I told her I’d call her back in ten minutes. Then I tracked down our Interim Associate Vice Provost (AVP), briefed him on the proposal, and the two of us decided it would be foolish to turn it down.

The grant started in less than a month. The program officer was quite adamant: the first year was not a planning year and she expected the program to be implemented before the calendar year’s end — just three months away. I mumbled “Yes, Ma’am” before hanging up then went next door to the AVP’s office and exclaimed, “What have we done?” and “What are we going to do?” A revised, updated budget, statement of work, and freshly signed match commitment forms from all of our partners were due in two weeks.

Perhaps I should explain that I work at a rural, comprehensive master’s only, state-supported university. At the time our sponsored programs averaged $3.5 million in awards per year. I was already wearing two large hats with sufficient work to employ me twice over as grants and contracts specialist and administrative manager of graduate studies and research.

I should also explain that GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grants are intended to infuse systemic change into school districts by improving and providing services to students, teachers, and parents so students are prepared academically and otherwise to apply, enroll, and succeed in postsecondary education. A tall order, for sure!

Our first task was to identify a PI since the sponsored programs director had relocated and his full-time position was being reduced to a .25 faculty appointment. After brainstorming several possibilities, perusing the university phone directory, and meeting with several potential PIs, the AVP and I decided we’d just have to do it ourselves given the size, potential risk, and complexity of the grant. Armed with my research administration knowledge and the AVP’s support, I donned my very first PI hat.

The next three months were a blur of activity, anxiety, accomplishment, and angst. I didn’t have the luxury of tackling my to-do list linearly; I had to quickly get all the plates up in the air and spinning at the same time and keep up with my regular job! Here’s what my plates looked like:

- Five of our partners were rural school districts, most more than an hour’s drive from campus. Neither the AVP nor I spoke public-school. One of the smartest moves I made was to hire a recently retired, well-respected education professor who knew many of the superintendents in those five school districts. He helped us navigate the public school bureaucracies and obtain buy-in from the superintendents, some were new that year and hadn’t been part of the original grant application. Their buy-in was critical to ensure smooth implementation of our program in their buildings and their commitment to the steep match obligation.
- I needed to hire program staff — quickly. A national search for a director, data analyst, and parent coordinator would take weeks or months. But I knew I could hire temporary staff without a formal search so I advertised regionally for a director and data analyst and had both positions filled within three weeks. I also initiated a formal search for a permanent secretary knowing that search could be completed in a month’s time.
- I needed to secure space and furnishings on campus for a minimum of three offices in close proximity to one another without triggering a space war.
- I needed to negotiate a subaward with our primary community partner whom I hadn’t talked with since the prior year. To my dismay, I learned they’d had some rocky things occur in their organization the prior year. Negotiations were very stressful. It was imperative to get them on board quickly with sufficient subrecipient safeguards in place as their role was critical: to hire and train site directors for each of our partner schools, implement after-school programs, train and place in-school tutors, and advertise regionally for a director and data analyst and had both positions filled within three weeks. I also initiated a formal search for a permanent secretary knowing that search could be completed in a month’s time.
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By mid-October I had some hard-earned accomplishments under my belt. The U.S. Department of Education approved the revised budget and statement of work. All of the school district partners provided updated match commitments and signed agreements detailing our mutual obligations under the grant. We reached consensus on a subaward agreement with our primary community partner. Things were on track to have site directors hired and
trained before Thanksgiving and after-school programs started as well. And I was assigned adequate space in one of the academic buildings for the temporary director, data analyst, and permanent secretary.

In January 2003 I started the process to hire the permanent director and data analyst. This caused me great angst as I had been working closely with the temporary director and data analyst for three months and really liked both of them. But my gut told me they weren’t the right fit for the challenges that lay ahead. The hardest and best decision I made was to hire different people for those positions.

The new director and data analyst started in March 2003, just in time to craft the Annual Performance Report that was due on April 15, 2003. Jointly, we spent hours cleaning and sorting data and writing a document demonstrating the effectiveness of our new program. Even in that short time, we saw children’s grades and engagement increase, teachers begin to believe the near-children’s grades and engagement increase, teachers begin to believe the near-school districts, one 75 miles north, another 40 miles east, and another 70 miles south of campus, for a total of nine school districts. We were granted $11.4 million in the 2011 GEAR UP competition for a seven-year program.

I hired the data analyst from the first grant to manage the new 2011 program. After the first grant’s end three years earlier, she had gone to work for a small school district as their business manager. I was elated she accepted the position. We decided to site the program on the main campus to be more centrally located and to strengthen ties to the main campus. I threw all the plates back up in the air and we were up and running in record time.

Convinced our program was truly making a difference in many of the children’s lives and in the schools’ college-going cultures in our districts, we decided to apply for a fourth grant in the 2014 competition. The nine schools from our 2011 cohort signed on, a large district 95 miles south begged to be included, and we picked up a very small district in our county for a total of eleven districts. Rather than hire all new staff for the fourth program, we opted to keep our administration lean and split their efforts between the two grants and added a full-time fiscal technician to manage the fiscal aspects of the two grants.

Today, the first two grants are closed out. The 2,115 students in our 2011 cohort will be juniors and seniors this fall; the 3,240 students in our 2014 cohort will be eighth- and ninth-graders this fall. We have made and are continuing to make a difference.

What have I learned as a PI/research administrator?

• As in most jobs, relationships with people make the biggest difference to a program’s success.
• Always hire the best people you can find and afford.
• Make hard personnel decisions as soon as you know the fit is not good.
• Always treat others in the workplace with respect and compassion. My years of good relationships with folks in human resources, contracting, purchasing, post-award, travel, facilities, IT and telecommunication, and others were rewarded many times over when I needed something quick or out of the ordinary to make our programs successful (think university hiring freezes and dozens of boxes of Jell-O for zombie program activities).
• Expect a lot from people and they will rise to the occasion if you give them the means and freedom to do so. To provide as many direct services to students, teachers, and parents as possible, I made a decision in the first grant to keep administration costs at the university and with the community partner to less than 25% of the grant total and continued that goal in the subsequent grants. That meant I expected my staff and community partners to shoulder lots of responsibility and find creative ways to meet goals. They continue to do so brilliantly.
• Wearing my PI hat helped me more fully understand how working through a university bureaucracy can be frustrating to PIs. We streamlined processes and developed new policies on occasion as a result of my experiences.
• Juggling the demands of being a PI and doing one’s regular job is challenging, whether it is as a research administrator or faculty member. Kudos to those faculty who work in small schools without much release time to do research and still go for it!
• Finding work that is meaningful enables you to do things you never imagined you could accomplish.

Will we apply for a fifth grant? Perhaps, but not today!
Effective Collaboration LEADs to Collective Impact  

By Dina A. Riad

Collaborations happen when a network of motivated institutions have a shared vision and goal and they partner together to share their expertise and resources to achieve a common goal.

Partners working on such projects need to step outside of their normal routines and entertain innovative ideas and thoughts, while abiding consistently with a clear vision. Each partner should have a stake in the project from the outset.

If properly exploited, collaborations offer individual institutions and beneficiaries a whole new spectrum of opportunities for growth. Nevertheless, they also present myriad difficulties. When institutions work individually it is simpler and easier than in partnerships. So one must be strategic in the coalitions they create. The challenge is to reach consensus and achieve cooperation and equality without uniformity.

The American University in Cairo (AUC) has hundreds of agreements with various organizations, whether as blanket agreements or for specific projects. With the aim of tailoring the collaborations to the programmatic needs and those of its students, the alliances are not only formed at AUC’s institutional level, but also at the school and department levels. Hence, AUC is concerned with forging lasting and critical partnerships that will benefit its students, whether directly or indirectly, and not just having them for the sake of boosting numbers. The university formalizes and enforces relationships with various private and public sector organizations.

One of AUC’s successful models of creative collaborations is partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Back in 2004, USAID and AUC established one of the most pioneering models for a creative collaboration through the launch of LEAD (Leaders for Educational Development). LEAD is a joint program between the USAID, the Egyptian Ministry of International Cooperation, and ACU.

The program’s vision was to prepare Egyptian students for the 21st century and qualify them to lead a positive vision of Egypt’s future. This took place through equipping the selected students with the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to lead change in society, permitting them to be employable and to actively participate in the development of the country. Through the program, students develop an affiliation with their home country and commitment to lifelong community service. They are equipped with leadership skills and ethics such as honesty, transparency, respect for others, tolerance of differences, and respect for work. Students are also able to compete and integrate internationally.

Since 2004, LEAD offered eight successful cohorts full scholarships for each of the 50+ underprivileged, economically disadvantaged males and females from the 27 governorates of Egypt for a total of 366 graduates to date.

Major accomplishments were achieved through this program. A total of 81% (of which females comprised 68%) of LEAD graduates have been successful in gaining employment in major national/multinational organizations and local/international NGOs. Almost half of those employed (49%) had either been promoted or received an award or both. In one case, an alumnus had been promoted four times in as many years. Many are also self-employed in social entrepreneurship and other ventures. Many alumni continue to contribute to their communities through active voluntary endeavors in their home governorates or wherever they currently reside.

Building on the success of this model, the AUC/LEAD brand attracted many sponsors and donors to collaborate with AUC to offer similar opportunities to students. Since then, AUC has entered into a dozen similar partnerships with the aim of replicating this successful model either partially or fully based on our partners and their objectives and strategies.

The benefits of collaborations range from sharing experiences, capitalizing on strengths, and guaranteeing a wider array of solutions to challenges faced. Nevertheless, if the collaboration is built on a weak foundation the outcome is a failure to the project or initiative. Some of the downsides of collaborations are complexity of decision making, different perceptions, conflict of interest, and loss of autonomy.

To conclude, and after weighing the pros and cons, it becomes evident that entering and building creative collaborations is inevitable as each party brings a different set of values, priorities, resources, and competencies to the partnership. The challenge will always remain on the efforts needed to sustain this partnership over time and build on it.

Dina A. Riad, MPA, Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Programs at The American University in Cairo (AUC). Dina’s responsibilities at AUC range from pre-award to post-award, financial and policy activities. She can be reached at dinaadly@aucegypt.edu
Fearless ideas BRAKE boundaries

By Beth Brittan-Powell and Denise Clark
So, what is BRAKE?
BRAKE is an administrative training program—a unique, proactive approach to overcoming barriers to enhancing international partnerships. This is more than just an idea; the UMD Division of Research provides the infrastructure support to make this a reality, with an investment of both people and funds.

The mission of BRAKE is to facilitate research collaborations by reducing administrative obstacles for researchers, in turn strengthening UMD’s position as a top-tier global research institution. BRAKE builds a culture at UMD and its partner institutions that not only encourages joint proposal endeavors but also joint research administration and researcher exchange programs.

How does BRAKE work?
BRAKE engages international institutions as strategic cohorts and focuses on building expertise in the management and oversight of U.S. federal funding. To do this, BRAKE faculty provide face-to-face training in the following areas: Uniform Guidance – What does it mean for Foreign Entities: Pre- and Post-award and Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) – the Foreign View.

Additionally, UMD BRAKE faculty meet with administrative colleagues at host institutions around the world to provide an in-depth assessment of the attending institutions’ administrative infrastructure to foster a culture of compliance with all federal regulations.

While onsite, UMD BRAKE faculty tour facilities and meet with faculty researchers to take the first steps to developing bilateral collaborations with the partner institution.

What does this do for researchers?
BRAKE builds a foundation: a solid groundwork for collaboration at every level of the research endeavor. By focusing on fortifying the framework required for successful research administration, we provide a valuable service to our researchers, in some cases even before they start working together.

Case study
In early 2015, Denise and I started working with research development partners at Lund University and introduced the BRAKE initiative workshops. We were able to tie a visit to Lund into an existing meeting in Europe in May of 2015. During our 3-day visit, we presented workshops on the Uniform Guidance and NIH for Foreign Investigators. Administrative discussions led to the completion of an onsite audit by Denise that in turn allowed for an in-depth risk assessment to be completed by our sponsored research office. The fact that Denise had spent time at Lund, met the research administration team, and provided in-person training allowed a lower risk designation for future research proposals between UMD and Lund and established a foundation of collaboration at the administrative level. In addition to the workshops, we met with numerous researchers and visited facilities in Lund, which allowed us to identify their areas of research strength. Once back in Maryland, we met with our researchers whose interests matched those in Lund. We set up a Skype date between eight researchers and administrators to discuss potential areas for collaboration. While many entered the room skeptical, all left enthusiastic for the next call. After several Skype dates, the Division of Research at UMD committed travel funds for four UMD researchers to go to Lund to meet face-to-face with their Skype colleagues, an essential part of the process. Additional Skype discussions and a trip to UMD in February 2016 from Lund administrators set into motion a call for research workshops that was sent out in July with a September deadline. It was amazing to see what a year can produce with BOTH sides working together all at levels of the research enterprise. We look forward to sharing the outcomes of the research workshops!

Tracking our progress
To date, UMD has engaged in onsite training with global research partners in locations across the world, including Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark, Israel, and the Netherlands. In FY17, we plan to extend BRAKE’s outreach to Mexico, South Africa, Dublin, and Hong Kong.

As a result of these exchanges, UMD is positioning itself as a leader in the field of research administration and building a solid global reputation for a culture of compliance with all federal regulations.

To learn more and participate in BRAKE, visit: research.umd.edu/international

Beth Brittan-Powell is Director of Joint Research Collaborations at the University of Maryland College Park (UMD), and is responsible for the management and promotion of key research collaborations. Beth has extensive experience with the grants development process through her work as the Grants Development Specialist for UMD’s Neuroscience and Cognitive Science Program. She also has over 20 years of experience as a researcher in UMD’s Laboratory of Comparative Psychonautics. Beth received her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. from the University of Maryland College Park. Beth can be reached at ebrittan@umd.edu

Denise Clark is the Associate Vice President for Research Administration in the Division of Research at the University of Maryland College Park and is responsible for providing support to the campus community’s research, creative activity, and outreach initiatives. Denise is active in NCURA as a past President and frequent presenter at national and regional conferences. Denise can be reached at djclark@umd.edu
In early April, as I was checking email between meetings, I opened an email from Jesse Szeto, Director of NCURA Global. The email contained a request to give a faculty development workshop in Moscow, Russia. The workshop would be sponsored by the Eurasia Foundation through the U.S.-Russia University Partnership Program (UPP). The UPP provides pilot grant funding for an investigator at a Russian University to partner with a counterpart in a U.S. university to work on a small project in order to foster collaboration and create pilot data and the potential for future collaborations and funding opportunities.

The attendees would be the fifteen Russian partner investigators and one U.S. partner. The aims for the NCURA Global Faculty member were to
1. provide a one hour session on how to find project funding;
2. provide a four hour workshop on proposal development;
3. facilitate a web-based conference with representatives from some of the partnering U.S. universities to discuss the advantages of a strong research administration infrastructure; and
4. represent NCURA in a follow-up meeting on the third day with the Eurasia Foundation, the National Training Foundation, the President of the Association of Non-Governmental Universities, and the U.S. Embassy.

The workshop was to be held in late May, so there was well over a month to prepare. NCURA provided examples of previous workshops that had been offered by Global Faculty in such places as Japan, Italy, Poland, and Portugal. I also reviewed weeklong research infrastructure workshops in which I had participated in the past on similar topics in Russia, Ghana, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Uganda. Using all of these resources, I developed PowerPoint presentations for the funding search session and proposal development workshop.

The PowerPoint presentations were sent for translation into Russian by the agency providing the venue for the conference, the National Training Foundation in Moscow. The presentation had the text in both Russian and English, since I could not speak or read Russian. During the conference, there were translators who translated from Russian to English for me and English to Russian for the Russian attendees. Those of us who were not bilingual, held earphones to our ears to receive the translations.

The conference opened with formal welcome speeches from Yelena Domashneva, Senior Specialist of the International Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation; James G. Land, Cultural Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow; Laurens Ayazian, Director of UPP, Eurasia Foundation; and Dr. Irina Arzhanova, Executive Director of the National Training Foundation. All expressed their support for the collaborative efforts of the research partnerships between Russia and the U.S. The welcome speeches were followed by presentations from each of the 15 investigative teams describing their collaborative projects. These projects were from wide ranging topical areas.

The faculty presentations were followed by the funding search presentation. The last activity for the first day was the teleconference with U.S. research administrators and a collaborating scientist. The theme of the teleconference was the relief of administrative burden for investigators in order to enable them to focus their efforts on their areas of academic expertise as a result of having the expert support of a research administrator/manager.
The second day of the conference was devoted to the four-hour proposal development workshop. In the workshop, there was a presentation giving tips for each generic section of a funding application followed by a hands-on activity. Participants were tasked with preparing an outline of a funding idea as they might pitch it to a funding agency. This outline is what would be needed to discuss an idea with a funding agency program officer to gauge their enthusiasm for a full proposal.

The group then morphed into a review panel with each participant taking turns giving a very brief 1-2 minute presentation of their concept, just as they would to a program officer. The group then voted to determine the top three projects. Faculty whose project had not been selected were invited to join one of the three winning projects to add a cross disciplinary perspective to the projects.

Over lunch and for a short period afterward, the projects were fine-tuned for final competition. The final projects were each presented through a 5-7 minute speech, using a marker board for any needed illustration. Each of the projects had benefitted from having collaboration from faculty outside their discipline.

When the attendees were asked what they had learned from the exercise, the most frequent comments were: 1) the discovery that a concept could be quickly developed with a skeletal project in less than a day and 2) input from colleagues outside your field can lend valuable perspective and creative ideas to improve upon the project in development.

We managed to find some time to walk to Red Square and tour St. Basil’s Cathedral. That was also my time to purchase some nesting dolls, a Russian porcelain bowl, and a beautiful scarf for souvenirs. The trip was certainly a positive professional experience that I wanted to remember.

Fast forward a few more weeks. Another email from Jesse Szeto brought an extension to that positive experience. NCURA had once again partnered with the Eurasia Foundation to sponsor five Global Fellows from Russia to attend the NCURA national meeting in Washington, DC, then follow up with visits to U.S. institutions that had signed on for the Global Fellows program. I was honored to learn that Dr. Andrei Tolstikov, Vice Rector for Research and International Partnerships from Tyumen State University, a participant in the UPP Conference, had requested to visit my institution, the University of Central Florida (UCF).

The College of Health and Public Administration (COHPA) served as co-hosts with the Office of Research and Commercialization (ORC). COHPA previously partnered with NCURA through an NCURA-sponsored grant for the development of the first successful online Master in Research Administration (MRA) degree and certificate program. The COHPA visit was coordinated through their Director of Budget and Research Administration, Kerry Gajewski.

Although typically NCURA Global Fellows have a two-week visit, this visit was only going to be for five days following the NCURA annual meeting. We wanted to do all we could to make the visit as resource rich as possible within the limited timeframe. During that short period of time we were able to schedule meetings with key research administration offices, the faculty center, investigators who might be potential collaborators, and attend the research administration orientation for new faculty. Dr. Tolstikov also had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Jo Smith, Director of the UCF Master in Research Administration program.

Why get involved with NCURA Global? It can widen your network to worldwide proportions, enable you to see more of the world, offer you the opportunity to learn about research administration and management in other countries, and provide the platform for you to make a valuable contribution to the global research infrastructure.

Finally, NCURA colleagues, I have one word of advice: If you see an email from Jesse Szeto in your inbox, open it right away. You never know what exotic adventure and opportunity may await through an NCURA Global experience!

Jennifer Shambrook, Ph.D., is the Director of Contracts & Grants at the Office of Research & Commercialization at the University of Central Florida. She is the author of the Research Administration Stress Perception Survey (RASPerS). She is a member of the teaching faculty of the UCF Masters in Research Administration program. Dr. Shambrook is a traveling faculty member for the NCURA DRA workshop and NCURA Global. She can be reached at Jennifer.Shambrook@ucf.edu
A good collaboration! The pleasure of partnering with likeminded people who add their expertise, creativity, and ideas with the intent on making a project better, a study stronger, the outcomes reach further.

There are few things as satisfying as transforming ideas into concrete results with colleagues and peers. Taking inspiration and turning it into a tangible project takes a lot of energy and focus. In a good collaboration the participants challenge each other and build upon one another’s expertise and successes. These are the easy collaborations; the participants go together like peas and carrots.

Unfortunately, not all collaborations are easy. However, sustaining the shared passion that brings people together on a project can be enhanced by some proactive planning and discussion. This will prevent little issues from snowballing into full-fledged problems that can shatter focus and derail a great collaboration.

For example, make sure everyone who needs to be in the communication loop on a project is in that loop from the beginning. This can be challenging within your own institution or unit; the confusion is exponentially increased when you consider collaborations that include different organizations with divergent missions, policies, and processes.

Research Administrators are experts at navigating processes and procedures. They have to have a working knowledge of everything from procurement and human resources, to facilities and student services. They often make sure there is a point of contact for each institution collaborating on the project. This frees up the researchers to work on the science or the technical aspects of the project while their administrative support handles the administrative details. When collaborating with another institution identify your counterpart at the partnering organization. This should be someone you can work with to move the administrative pieces of the project along smoothly.

Discuss Resources
It is important to hold a conversation comparing and contrasting available resources can help get you organized from the start. Note that the collaborating organization, research institute, or college may not have the same resources available that your institution has. Creative collaborations should be based on communication and relationship building because successful projects are not just built by a principal investigator but with all the collaborating partners.

Remember, project resources can include the stakeholders within and outside the university setting. Community members, representatives from local government agencies, and councils will have first-hand knowledge of whether a project will be accepted by a community and ultimately benefit that community. Including community members, especially in rural areas, will enhance the project as collaborators often listen to one another and share and give constructive feedback for proposal ideas. It is the community which will have first-hand knowledge of sustainability of a project and its goals.

In Alaska, for example, working with various tribal governments is essential for making a project a success. Letters of collaboration from the local chief and tribal government will demonstrate to the funding agency that the project meets with community approval and community values. Several funding agencies will not recommend a project for funding if the project lacks letters of collaboration from the local tribal government or area Alaska Native Corporation.

Resources also include the tools (often electronic) used to compile the proposal. Make sure all parties have the correct versions of the software being utilized so that you can easily share work during proposal development and, if the project is successful, in the post award period. Ensure that electronic authorizations and signatures are supported by trusted software.

By Sarah Browngoetz, Patti Carey, and Samantha Aleshire
Talk about Deadlines
If your collaboration includes the work of multiple teams be sure to review the deadlines for each team working on the project. Strong and enforced deadlines will allow the project to come together in a timely fashion and allow the institutions to apply their internal processes and procedures to the proposal. This applies to both pre-award and post-award. When determining deadlines, discuss how long certain processes will take at each organization and build those expectations into the deadlines.

Consider working backwards through the process. You’ll want to consider moving from the proposal due date, as listed on the Request for Funding Announcement (RFA) (allowing time for the institution’s final review and audit), through to any internal unit’s approval process and the actual development of the proposal components themselves. In practice, after establishing the due dates subtract five days to allow for your central office to review and approve. An additional five days should be allowed for the project’s research administrator to compile all components of the proposal, including all necessary uploads to agency software. We find that our best practice is to allocate 10 days of lead time in order to submit a strong, competitive proposal. It’s important that communication be maintained throughout the project development process.

Build a Communication Plan
Never underestimate the power of strong communication and associated resources. Have you considered how the participants will communicate with one another? Is everyone co-located or are they in vastly different time zones which may necessitate reliance on other means of communication such as email as a primary form of communication. Are the partners in remote locations with poor internet service? In such a case scheduled phone check-ins (with consideration given to time-zone differences) may be more realistic.

Is the proposed collaboration complex enough that you need a “mission control” point person to track communications? This is much easier to implement at the beginning of a collaboration and exchanging this type of information can assure that all players know who does what and when it needs to get done.

Own Your Expertise
As Research Administrators, sometimes we need to advocate for our role as a critical collaborating partner in the proposal development process. We have to establish a trusting relationship with the principal investigator. An initial meeting or conversation, between the research administrator and principal investigator can set the stage for a successful collaboration. Through a dialogue of sharing experiences and a clear articulation of what you can do for the PI, will put your PI at ease. As noted earlier this allows them to focus on their expertise and you on yours. This is especially important to junior faculty.

Consider a recent success where Dr. First Year Political Scientist was tasked with coordinating a major international conference and series of workshops. This included securing funding from multiple sources to convene hundreds of scholars and students in Fairbanks, Alaska and the Arctic regions across the globe. Collaborating partners for just the project development phase included junior and senior faculty, several college and program deans, international programs, support staff, and one research administrator. The project was ultimately funded, in part by the National Science Foundation, the University’s foundation and alumni donors. The results included multiple journal publications for the principal investigator, an invitation to hold a future conference, and the global recognition of this university and the principal investigator.

The proposal process can be a daunting task to the new researcher and in the example above demonstrated that mutual trust was key in this collaborative relationship. Once the project researchers understand that the RA is a collaborating partner in the proposal development process, the path becomes a smooth one. Consider that additional attention may be needed with new faculty members to share institutional processes. When the new researcher understands that you are a resource to their success, they will be more likely to seek support for future endeavors. The benefits of building these relationships extend beyond the initial collaboration. A trusted research administrator can even help build the curriculum vita of a junior faculty member by suggesting project outcome dissemination opportunities such as national presentations and peer reviewed journal articles. Your suggestions can help support their promotion and tenure.

Positive connections with others builds a strong collaborating relationship that confirm the foundation for future successful work together. In a collaborative relationship, when we respect each other’s ideas and concerns, a positive connection is formed.

When others feel affirmed and understood they are more likely to actively collaborate through the completion of the project. Fostering relationships with your counterpart at a participating institution allows you to share your expertise as well as your resources and creates a cohesive team which will produce a better project. Knowing the resources available at the various collaborating organizations allows you to build a clean plan with little duplication and expresses your team’s expertise to the funding agency. Intentionally keeping the lines of communication open allows collaboration to blossom and helps you avoid the panic and stress of last minute changes. Every project is an opportunity for the Research Administrator to demonstrate expertise in holding the reins of the administrative details of the project. Navigating a team through a difficult submission or project adds another level to your expertise and leadership.

Good collaboration starts with shared inspiration. Turning inspiration into successful research takes focus, intentioned communication, and organization. With a shared vision and mutual respect everyone can reach their professional goals and reap the rewards of stellar collaborations.

Sarah Browngoetz is a Grant & Contract Analyst at the 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 Collaborate Pre-Award Subcommittee. She can be reached at sbrowngoetz@alaska.edu

Patti Carey recently retired as the Grants Administration Manager for the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She currently serves as a part-time pre-award analyst for UAF’s Office of Grants and Contracts Administration. Her research administration experience spans 18 years in a university setting. She can be reached at pkcarey@alaska.edu

Samantha Aleshire is the Principal Grant & Contract Management Officer with the Office of Grants & Contracts Administration for the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In her role, she has a strong interest and experience in constructive problem solving and change management. Her experience in research administration includes financial management, negotiation, and reporting. Samantha is actively involved in NCURA. She has served as Region VI Treasurer and Volunteer and Membership committee and has presented at both National and Regional meetings. She can be reached at skaleshire@alaska.edu
There’s No Debate—
Teamwork Gets the Job Done!

The Situation
Since the advent of “Big Science” in the middle of the last century, team science projects involving multiple investigators have become the norm. In fact, scientific research and discovery have always been inherently collaborative. Not only does the scientist build on the results of past investigations, but they also engage with their contemporary colleagues in ongoing scientific dialogue through publication. Formalized teamwork arose when multiple investigators began to work together directly and in real time on specific problems, rather than conversing solely via journal articles. What’s more, scientific research is a collaborative activity on multiple levels, and teams can extend beyond groups of principal investigators and into the organizations that host them. To be sure, it remains the norm in some disciplines for the lone investigator to pursue their topic solo. However, in many (if not most) fields, investigators rely on collaborations, research teams, and/or staffed laboratories (and the sponsored funds that support them) to produce results. Beyond the lab walls are still more individuals who collaborate to provide research resources, aid in getting research funding, ensure research compliance, and disseminate research results. Among these are research administrators.

The Debate
Surprisingly, it is the intersection of scientific teamwork and research administration that is the source of an ongoing debate. Unlike many of the debates discussed in the recent August issue of NCURA Magazine, it is not often argued explicitly. Instead, one side laments “burden” and “bureaucracy,” while the other advocates “compliance” and touts “service.” At issue is really whether research administrators, in the view of researchers, are part of the team. By their very nature, research administrators straddle two organizational domains. On one side, their role is to ensure compliance with organizational and sponsor guidelines, and on the other to enable, facilitate, and support sponsored funding. As a result, investigators may view research administrators as interlopers, whom they (at best) grudgingly accept as a bureaucratic necessity rather than embrace as valued team mates. In this issue of NCURA Magazine, as in most, one will find articles on the reduction of administrative burden and the reorganization sponsored program offices to better serve faculty, so research administrators seem to get it. Further, these administrators would generally agree that they are indeed team players and perform a valuable (if not vital) role in the research funding process. However, their point of view does not appear to be commonly shared among investigators. One wonders how this divide might be bridged.

The NASA Example
For insight into this debate and a glimpse at potential resolutions, it is useful to examine similar situations in other types of organizations. In particular, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) offers an instructive example. NASA calls to mind astronauts and rockets and some of the most complex projects ever undertaken. From the beginning, its projects required large teams, but proliferation of televisions in 1950s homes cemented the perception of the “cast of thousands.” “Mission Control” was an iconic image of dozens of scientists and technicians arrayed at banks of monitors, each keeping an eye on their piece of the project. The “Launch Pad” was another such image with countless more workers, scrambling like ants around the towering rockets. A close inspection would reveal that virtually all of the individuals shown were white men, but this was unremarkable given the time period. However, out of the spotlight, women and African-Americans were quietly proving their worth in the technical arena. On the eve of NASA’s sixtieth anniversary, two recent publications introduce these previously overlooked team members and chronicle their journeys to acceptance.

In We Could Not Fail: The First African Americans in the Space Program, Richard Paul and Steven Moss tell the story of the first group of African Americans to join the professional ranks at NASA. In the Deep South of the late 1950s and early 1960s, few professional opportunities exist for African Americans. The best most can hope for is to become teachers. The rare few became doctors or lawyers, but technical jobs in engineering and science are almost entirely out reach. Nevertheless, the need for talented workers, driven by a fierce competition with the Soviet Union, creates unprecedented opportunities. In this context, the Kennedy Administration recognizes that America can maintain it competitiveness only by tapping the best and brightest among all its citizens. Thus, in an effort led by Vice President Lyndon Johnson, NASA, an ostensibly scientific and technological agency, becomes the test site for cold war competition as a social wedge. With its doors cracked open, the administration hopes that NASA will become a place where all qualified applicants, including African Americans, can shine.

Those first few chosen face a tough road at inhospitable facilities in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas, but they rise to the occasion. Colorful characters such as Clyde Foster, “The Country Spartacus,” who single-handedly establishes a mentorship pipeline that guides dozens of African American students into NASA jobs, help clear the way. Others, like Julius Montgomery, who integrates the Florida Institute of Technology, set an example by succeeding through quiet fortitude and personal sacrifice, rather
than protest. Those that follow the path and the example, like the first cohort of black engineering students hired from Southern University (an Historically Black University in Louisiana), work hard and put their faith in the equal opportunity experiment at NASA. Beyond revealing the stories of these and other courageous early professionals, the book also illuminates NASA's quiet but important role in the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s. As the authors note, NASA embodies the “future,” which Americans understand to mean the promise of technological miracles, but for African-Americans it means to the chance to step into a new world where they can prove themselves as equals in the technical workforce.

In *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us from Missiles to the Moon to Mars*, author Nathalia Holt presents a similar group history, principally set in the same post-War period, but featuring an entirely different cohort of pioneers. This time the protagonists are women working in sunny California at the newly formed Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). They are the “human computers,” individuals who perform mathematical calculations by hand with pencil and paper. In the days before computing machines, cadres of human computers perform the critical calculations, such as material strength, fuel burn rates, and missile trajectories that are at the heart of every JPL project.

Where Paul’s and Moss’s engineers and technicians face racism, Holt’s women face paternalism and sexism. Human computers are first employed in the Depression-era Works Progress Administration (WPA). Initially, both men and women with math training are put to work under the WPA, but by the end of World War II human computing becomes a largely female occupation. It is a step above secretarial work, but it is not considered a true scientific or engineering pursuit. In addition to the hierarchy, there is relatively little job security. In the mid-century, despite the existence of these positions, women working outside their homes and in technical jobs are rare. Reflecting the societal norms of the time, these women are generally expected to give up their jobs once they get married and certainly if they become pregnant. Those who do manage to keep their jobs find little institutional accommodation for them as working wives and mothers.

Despite the challenges, the women in Holt’s profiles bond over their shared loved of the work, and they manage to create a technical space for themselves in a time before engineering schools and jobs would be open to them. Scenes in their computer lab are lively, full of camaraderie and an intense dedication to the work (calling to mind the grants office one would find at any research university). Like their counterparts in Paul and Moss, the human computers develop their own mentoring and support mechanisms. In particular, Macie Roberts, Supervisor of Computing, makes it her mission to carve out a niche for technical women at JPL, and she personally recruits many human computers to JPL as it grows in the 1950s.

As Holt describes each successive rocket project, the value of the human computers becomes increasingly clear. While they are initially used only to look up values in tables and perform rudimentary calculations to double-check engineers’ figures, over time the human computers come to be relied upon to perform increasingly complex, mission-critical calculations. Later, they are among the first to develop programming for the early-generation mainframe computers produced in the 1950s. Eventually, their worth is recognized, and later generations of human computers at JPL are awarded the title and institutional stature of “Engineer.”

### The Takeaway

NASA has done more to excite the public imagination than virtually any other government organization, but Paul, Moss, and Holt reveal human-scale stories behind the larger-than-life race to the moon and beyond. Obviously, many players are required, playing in concert, to achieve success in a large complex project. More interestingly, each book informs readers that the most well-known and inspiring agency was also on the leading edge of racial and gender integration in the post-World War II workforce. Taken together, they provide a complimentary history that adds characters and nuance missing in the more conventional stories focused on astronauts and rockets. It is the reader’s good fortune that in addition to these books there are still untold histories of NASA that will be explored in forthcoming works, including *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly (William Morrow, 2016), and a 2017 motion picture based on the story starring Kevin Costner and Taraji Henson.

NASA today embodies the lessons of those pioneering groups. As Ellen Stofan, NASA’s Chief Scientist recently noted, “I am passionate about diversity and inclusion, not just at NASA, but in the workforce in general. If we’re not tapping into all of our populations, girls, African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, we’re not getting the full force of the power of our people to solve the tough problems we have, whether it’s getting humans to Mars or climate change.” (Stofan, 2016)

Clearly, the organization has come to appreciate the value of all potential team members.

Aside from presenting a more complete history of NASA, the stories recounted in these two books also demonstrate the value of teamwork and show a path to team membership. Complex endeavors like a rocket launch (or a multi-investigator research project) are certainly the result of coordinated teamwork of many participants. Though NASA initially resisted accepting African-Americans and women into its ranks, it later came to embrace them as they proved their worth as contributors to the team. Thus, a valued contribution is the key to membership. Research administrators today contribute in many ways that are perhaps unrecognized, or at least under-appreciated. As research funding becomes more difficult to attain and compliance requirements multiply, the value of research administrators as key team players who free investigators to focus on their science will surely become evident. Hopefully, it will be recognized.

Ellen Stofan, interview by Jacob Brogan, Slate, *Working*, podcast audio, May 16, 2016. [www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/working/2016/05/working_how_does_nasa_s_chief_scientist_work.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/working/2016/05/working_how_does_nasa_s_chief_scientist_work.html)
James Casey has been elected to the Executive Committee of the State Bar of Wisconsin. Jim is currently Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, at American University, and Past President of the State Bar of Wisconsin Nonresident Lawyers Division.

Robyn Remotigue has been promoted to Assistant Director, Office of Research Services in the School of Public Health at the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth. Robyn leads a team that provides pre-award, post-award and compliance services for 4 academic departments of more than 36 PI’s.

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

Grant and Financial Management.

Solutions for your world ➤

Grant and Financial Management solutions designed to perfectly fit the world you live in. Recognized industry wide for simplicity, power and affordability. The leading choice of the top educational, research and healthcare institutions. This is your world. Discover it now at itworks-inc.com.

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Have you ever felt like people were avoiding you? This was happening to MIT’s Sponsored Accounting team on a daily basis. We needed to close out sponsored awards which required assistance from department research administrators, but no one was returning our calls or emails.

Like central offices in other large research universities, we rely on others to help us meet our financial reporting deadlines and to comply with the terms and conditions of the awards we manage. It was clear to us that something was wrong. The communication channels between central and departmental offices were broken, and needed repairing.

So what did we do? In 2011, Sponsored Accounting hired a new manager, Pam Schickling Buckley (one of the authors of this paper), who had been at MIT for 22 years and had more than 16 years of experience as a departmental administrator in various research and academic units. The goal was to leverage Pam’s deep connection to the MIT community and her experience as an administrator to begin to bridge the gap between Sponsored Accounting and departmental offices.

With a new manager in place we were ready to take a hard look at the problem. We realized the only way to address it was to first hear from the community we were serving. Over the next year, we conducted a listening tour where Sponsored Accounting staff members heard feedback from community members through large and small focus group sessions. We learned a great deal about what was working well, what wasn’t, and where improvements could be made. The bottom line: we had a reputation problem and we had to take responsibility to address it.

As difficult as it was to hear that we did not have a good reputation with the community, we were ready to address the problem head on. We needed to show people we weren’t here to make their lives more difficult, and that we were actually all on the same side, that is, supporting cutting-edge, world-changing research at MIT. We decided to get out from behind our desks and visit the community in their offices in MIT’s far ranging departments, labs, and centers. We went on informal Sponsored Accounting roadshows visiting units to share what we do, how we do it, why we do it, and why collaboration was critical to everyone’s goals.

From there we started building productive relationships with unit administrators by sharing experiences and pain points. Both sides learned a lot about each other’s deadlines, pressures, and overall work volume. As a result, we developed deeper and more empathetic relationships.

Then we hired each other. We truly broke down barriers to the point where department administrators filled positions in Sponsored Accounting and vice versa. In the past five years, seven department administrators joined Sponsored Accounting and three Sponsored Accounting staff members moved to financial administration positions in departments. These connections have helped develop a camaraderie between departments and central offices along with a significant increase in understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Today, Sponsored Accounting is viewed as a resource to the broader research community, not an obstacle to getting work done. We no longer work at cross purposes in an “us against them” environment. Instead, we work together and help each other. Most departmental administrators reach out to us on a regular basis to ask questions and seek guidance during the life of the award. We have found this to be particularly beneficial, as issues that might have slowed down the process are being discovered, discussed, and resolved long before the end of the award. This allows us to better comply with sponsor deadlines surrounding final financial reports.

We have taken significant steps to better define and streamline our processes, which in turn helps departmental administrators to better manage their research portfolios. We have improved our reporting capabilities for both departmental and central administrators. This has led to better closeout tracking, internal metrics (which helps us monitor volume and overall trends), reduction in aged receivables, resolution of unallowable costs, and more timely submission of final financial reports. The bottom line: departments now better understand what services Sponsored Accounting provides, and we all have more clarity in our roles in supporting the research administration enterprise at MIT.

One important thing we learned through this process, beyond the value of open communication and relationship building, is that change is inevitable, but it is not something to fear. We now embrace change and see that improvements to our processes and procedures will be a constant work in progress, especially if we want to be able to provide the best service possible to our community. And while technology will always play an important role in our work, it can never take the place of people and the need to build collaborative relationships. We learned that regardless of job titles or which part of the process any individual contributes to or is responsible for, respect, mutual understanding, empathy, communication, and kindness go a long way. Everyone plays a valuable role when it comes to bridging the gap between departmental and central offices at our organizations.
Shedding Light on the EXECUTIVE SHADOW PROGRAM

By Heather Dominey and Kris Monahan

The Executive Shadow Program (ESP) was implemented in 2014 to recruit and inspire future leaders of Region I. Francois Lemire, formerly of Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a previous NCURA Region I Chair, crafted the idea of providing an insider’s look into operations for those interested in learning more about NCURA leadership.

It’s one thing to hear of other’s experiences and another to experience the action. This initiative provides an opportunity for select Region I members to witness the business and programmatic aspects of running the Region I activities by attending all NCURA advisory board meetings and leadership events in a shadow capacity. To date, three individuals have completed the program and two others are currently enrolled. All three who have completed the program have run for office and have taken on significant leadership roles in NCURA Region I. This article shares Heather Dominey’s story, a 2015 Executive Shadow Program alumnus and Brown university employee.

Heather’s Story

My research administration career spans twelve years: seven of those years in central administration in the post award area; and five years prior in a department handling both pre-award and post award activities. I had reached a point in my career where I was ready for more exposure to leadership opportunities and I was looking for ways to expand my professional leadership platform. I found out that Region I and the Executive Shadow Program offered an opportunity to hone in on these skills and was fortunate to be selected in 2015 to participate. After seven years of volunteering on committees and presenting at conferences this opportunity sounded like a great next step in my career path.

I was assigned a mentor, Kris Monahan of Providence College, who guided me throughout the year and I shadowed the Advisory Board meetings in a non-voting capacity. It was an eye-opening experience as I learned how the region ran its activities. I gained important knowledge of the business aspects of running the region and had the opportunity to network with the key regional leaders in the profession. Exposure to these leaders in the field has been a tremendous help to my professional development.

My experience in the Executive Shadow Program gave me the courage to apply for an officer position for the 2016 calendar year. Although I did not win the election, I was later approached by my mentor and current Region I Chair, Kris Monahan, who asked me to lead the ad-hoc Professional Development Committee this year. I am excited about this leadership experience and am so thankful to Kris for the opportunity. I now have a new perspective from my exposure to the Advisory Board and am well equipped to better serve my committee and to help recruit future leaders in the region.

Region I recognizes that identifying and recruiting future leaders is a priority. Regions cannot run without the hard work and dedication of volunteer professionals and I am so grateful to be a part of this region and to participate in the Executive Shadow Program.

Executive Shadow Program

While the program can only allow one or two individuals each year to participate, the experience seems to be an important opportunity to offer prospective leaders. It adds to the leadership pipeline and provides a “behind the scenes’ look into the region. It offers more transparency to regional operations and also allows people to see exactly how committees function and work together. The region plans to continue the ESP program and is piloting an Emerging Leader’s Institute to further build the leadership support and training in the region.

Heather went from shadowing the advisory board to chairing the committee which runs the Executive Shadow Program. Investing in future leaders and providing transparency into regional operations can only help build NCURA leadership.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Institution</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
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<td>David Barnett</td>
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<td>Karen Woodward Massey</td>
<td>Harvard University</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Haney</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Heather Dominey</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
<td>Kris Monahan</td>
<td>Providence College</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Gai Doran</td>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>Denise Moody</td>
<td>Harvard University</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jason Hagan</td>
<td>Brigham &amp; Women’s Hospital</td>
<td>Donna Smith</td>
<td>Massachusetts General Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
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Heather Dominey, MBA, is the Senior Grant/Contract Accountant in the Office of Sponsored Projects at Brown University. She assists with the day to day operations of post-award account management at the University. She has served on Region I committees: Awards Committee, Curriculum Committee, and Program Committee; as well as delivered presentations on various post-award tracks for Region I. She is currently the Chair of the Professional Development Committee. She can be reached at Heather_Dominey@brown.edu

Kris Monahan, Ph.D. is the Director of Sponsored Research & Programs at Providence College. She is currently Chair of NCURA Region I. She has served on numerous committees and roles for NCURA including the NCURA Board of Directors and the Select Committee for Peer Review. She is also co-chair of AM58. She can be reached at kmonahan6@providence.edu
POLICY/REGULATION/COMPLIANCE NEWS:

IRB: Release of the final NIH policy on the use of a single institutional review board for multi-site research.

Reduce Research Red Tape: Report calls for new national commission to consider ethical issues.

AGENCY NEWS:

Tip for Administrators: Keep track of commons user IDs at your institution using this tool.
https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2016/07/21/tip-for-administrators-keep-track-of-commons-user-ids-at-your-institution-using-this-tool

NIH Contact Information: NIH now has a “Contacting Staff at the NIH Institutes and Centers” page explains the roles of NIH staff, and, most importantly, where you can find the name and contact information for NIH staff member who should be best able to help you.

I’m Submitting My Application in Response to a Parent Announcement: Can any NIH Institute or Center fund it?

GLOBAL:

Canada: Outraged health researchers demand end to peer-review changes.

Turkish Academics: Recall of those studying abroad is latest step after forced resignations and firings.

FUNDING NEWS:

White House Launches Data-Driven Justice Initiative: The White House has announced the launch of a public-private initiative aimed at encouraging the use of data to reduce mass incarceration in the United States.

How Many Researchers are Seeking SBIR/STTR Funding?: See data on unique NIH awardees and applicants for all SBIR and STTR research project grants over the fiscal years (FY) 2001-2015.
https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2016/06/14/how-many-researchers-sbir-sttr/?utm_source=nexus&utm_medium=email&utm_content=nihupdate&utm_campaign=jun16

INDUSTRY/TECH. TRANSFER:

Interested in Small Business Research Funding?: Need funding for your health or medical technology idea? Considering Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs as a source of support? Join us for the 18th annual Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) SBIR/STTR conference!

FUN, CHUCKLES, AND COOL RESEARCH INFO:

Trekkies/Star Trek: TOS bluetooth communicator, cool engineering.

DNA Storing Data?: Researchers stored an OK Go music video on strands of DNA. Executives today report on industrial hemp news as it continues to sweep the nation.
http://mashable.com/2016/07/07/dna-data-storage-200mh/?utm_campaign=Feed%3A+mashable%2Ftech+%28Mashable+%28Mashable%29%29&utmc_id=Mash-Prod-RSS-Feedburner-Tech-Partial&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter#F0gQb8HPOOq9

E-XTRA NOTABLE AND INTERESTING:

Writing a Competitive Grant Application: Insights from peer reviewers and NIH staff on putting together your application.
https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2016/06/30/insights-from-peer-reviewers-and-nih-staff-on-putting-together-your-application

AAU on Appropriations Process: AAU urges congress to complete FY17 appropriations process, place high priority on research, higher education.
www.aau.edu/news/article.aspx?id=17855
Congratulations to your newly elected Region I officers! And, thank you to the Governance Committee, chaired by Denise Moody of Harvard University for putting together an outstanding slate of candidates.

2016 Election Results

Chair-Elect: Denise Rouleau, Tufts University
Treasurer Elect: Jason Hagan, Brigham & Women’s Hospital
Secretary Elect: Alice Ingham, Broad Institute

The Curriculum Committee, chaired by Anastacia Feldman, held several successful events in September. A Research Administrator Discussion Group Case Studies: Learning from Audits was held at the Holiday Inn Brookline with presenters Hernan Santana, Boston Children’s Hospital, and Lucy Kolessin, Harvard Medical School. Two workshops were held at Emmanuel College. Essentials in Research Administration was taught by Karen Woodward Massey of Harvard University and Susan Zipkin of the University of New Hampshire. Challenges in Research Administration was taught by Patrick Fitzgerald, Harvard University; Denise Moody, Harvard University; Barbara Richard, Baystate Medical Center; and Harriet Samuelson, Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

On the horizon is a budgeting with excel workshop later this fall and a holiday party/federal update at the Broad Institute in December. The holiday party is the not-to-miss event of the year, so be on the look-out!

Mark your calendar for a FREE NCURA Region I networking event to be held at Providence College in Providence, RI on October 27th 5:00 pm-7:00pm. Registration is required. Please see the Region I website.

Don’t forget to hold the date for the 2017 spring meeting to be held at Hotel Viking in Newport, RI April 30, 2017 - May 3, 2017. The co-chairs of the meeting, Denise Rouleau, Tufts University, and Suzanne Araujo, Lifespan, have already ordered up good weather for you in gorgeous Newport, RI!

If you would like to get more involved in NCURA Region I, we encourage you to contact us at vnc@ncuraregioni.org

Region I Raffle Prize Winners at the NCURA National Meeting: L-R Kallie Firestone, MIT; Tom Neely, Yale University; Jaclyn Lucas, Harvard University; May Corrigan, Harvard Medical School.

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

It is hard to believe the fall season is upon us and my year as Chair is coming to an end. As I look back on what we as a Region have accomplished over the past 10 months, I have to say things have gone very well. Region II members have had the opportunity to connect with old and new members at our Spring Meeting and AM58, worked together to raise money for the NCURA Scholarship Program, provide mentorship through the Cheryl Lee Howard Mentor Me program, host professional development workshops, and are rolling out a new website. All of these successes would not have been possible without each of you.

Officer Elections:

Chair-Elect: Dennis Paffrath (University of Maryland, Baltimore); Treasurer Elect: Ady Villegas-Estrada (Weill Cornell Medicine); and Regionally Elected Member to the National Board: Mary Louise Healy (The Johns Hopkins University). Working alongside the Regional Chair for 2017, Tim Schailey (Thomas Jefferson University), I foresee the Region continuing its momentum in providing professional development, quality meetings, and finding ways to give back to the Region. I also want to take the time to thank those who are finishing their terms: Treasurer: Jennifer Rosa (The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia); Regionally Elected Member of the National Board of Directors: Cheryl Williams (University of Rochester); and Past Chair: Jill Frankenfield (University of Maryland College Park).

Cheryl Lee Howard Mentor Me Program

Please join me in congratulating and introducing the 2016/2017 Cheryl Lee Howard Mentor Me Class and their mentors.

Mentee, Laura Salvati, Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences - Mentor, Mary Louise Healy, Johns Hopkins University
Mentee, Anthony Maranto, Johns Hopkins University – Mentor, Magui Cardona, University of Baltimore
Mentee, Michal Woodbridge, Barnard College, Columbia University - Mentor, Jared Littman, St. John’s University
Mentee, Bryan Caccioiti, SUNY Buffalo – Mentor, Brenda Kavaugh, University of Rochester
Mentee, Heidi Moldenauer, SUNY Fredonia – Mentor, Jennifer Harman, Nazareth College

Region II AM 58 travel award winners:

Congratulations to Kaitlyn Ingraham, The Pennsylvania State University, and Holly Johnson, Syracuse University. I hope you both enjoyed the meeting and returned to your institutions with both questions and answers.

Finally, I would like to offer a special “thank you” to our many volunteers in Region II.

Be it through serving on committees, working registration tables, overseeing the networking in the hospitality suite, session presentations or discussion group facilitation, raising money for the NCURA scholarship fund, or just offering a helping hand when needed, your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

Erin Bailey, MSM, CRA, serves as the Chair of Region II and is the Chief Financial Officer; Clinical Translational Science Award, University at Buffalo. She can be reached at cedh@buffalo.edu
Exceptional Participation: After a magnificent spring meeting in Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, executive committee members and volunteers prepared for AM58. As expected, Region III’s participation was exceptional with 382 attendees at the annual meeting including 132 new members and first-time attendees.

Education Scholarship Fund: Through donations and selling shirts, goodie bags, and raffle tickets, Region III raised over $3,000 for the education scholarship fund. Thank you to everyone for your hard work and contributions! This demonstrates NCURAs core values of integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, and collegiality!

Networking Opportunities: Region III led the annual Flamingo Fun Walk and provided exciting networking opportunities at AM58 including a Dark Side of Dupont & Embassy Row Walking Tour co-sponsored with Region V. Be thinking of suggestions for ways to top this phenomenal event next year!

Spring Meeting 2017: The Region III spring meeting will be held at the Hilton Savannah Desoto in historic downtown Savannah, Georgia May 7 – 10, 2017. Start making plans now to attend so you won’t miss this spectacular opportunity!

Continuing Education and Professional Development: We want to thank everyone for all of the submissions in response to the “Request for Session Proposals.” The 2017 Program Committee will select from these submissions and put together a program to meet everyone’s continuing education and professional development needs. Please be on the lookout for more details, registration information, and volunteer opportunities. As a reminder, we encourage you to volunteer. The contribution of your time and talents will make this a successful spring meeting!

Results Are In!: Please join us in congratulating Steve Koogler (University of Central Florida) on his election as Chair-Elect for 2017-2018 and to Laura Lethbetter (Georgia Institute of Technology) as the Regionally-Elected Board Member for 2016-2018. We are also happy to announce Justo Torres’ appointment as the Chair-Appointed Executive Committee Member for 2016-2017.

#ResearchAdministratorDay: #ResearchAdministratorDay was September 25 and celebrated on September 26. We are delighted that several institutions in Region III shared how they celebrated the second annual Research Administrator Day to show appreciation for the expertise and values provided by these professionals. Look for pictures on the Region III website at www.ncuraregioniii.com Check out the Region III website and social media sites for photos. Keep up the great work!

Keep Current with What’s Going On: Continue to visit our web page and social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter) pages to stay up-to-date on regional information and news. Please remember to read your third Thursday e-Blasts and send any questions or suggestions to chair@ncuraregioniii.com

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

Great job to Region IV for winning the contest for the most submissions of cards for Research Administrator Day. Send your pictures to me of what you did to celebrate Research Administrators Day and we will get them posted on the web.

Save the date for the Region IV Spring Meeting in Madison, WI! The meeting will be held from April 23-26, 2017 at the Concourse Hotel. The theme is The Sport of Research Administration.

The Region IV Mentoring Our Own (MOO) program is in its fourth year. Welcome to all of this year’s participants!

Mentor/Mentee (April 2016–March 2017):

Connie Motoki, Washington University in St. Louis/Martina Gross, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Justine Karungi, University of Kansas Medical Center/Julie Osburn, Wayne State University
Melinda Muenich, Huron Consulting Group/Sandra DelToro, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology
Kathryn Wrench, Wayne State University/E. Suzanne Reinke, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
William Sharp, University of Kansas/Lucille Morgan, National Louis University
Sonia Singh, Huron Consulting Group/Melinda Brakenberry, Central Michigan University
Diane Hillebrand, University of North Dakota/Kathryn Wrench, Wayne State University
Kristin Harmon, University of Wisconsin-Madison/Mindy Williams, Marquette University
Jim Engel, Indiana University/Pamela Suan, University of Toledo
Sara Crangle, University of Kansas/Deborah Turnbow, University of Central Missouri
Susan Morgan, Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville/ Jenifer Jost, Carroll University
Gavyn Clasemann-Ryan, Indiana University School of Medicine/Matthew Renaud, St. Louis University
Nicole Nichols, Washington University – St. Louis/Tameika Morris, Southeast Missouri State University
Sarah Lee, Ball State University/Lisa Lawrence, Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville
Sue Grimes, Purdue University/Tara Gregg, Washburn University
Patience Graybill, Washington University at St. Louis/
Veronica Kozelichki, University of Notre Dame
Katie Schortgen, Eastern Michigan University/Samantha Roberts, Spectrum Health

Region IV is interested in highlighting our website careers, milestones, promotions, retirements, successes, moves to new institutions, and job postings. Our communication team is ready to get the word out so be sure to let us know so we can celebrate you on our website.

Diane Hillebrand, CRA is Chair of Region IV and serves as the Grants Manager for the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She can be reached at Diane.Hillebrand@med.UND.edu
Region V was delighted to unveil our Regional mascot at AM 58. Membership chose the Mustang to lead our pack. We look forward to incorporating this beautiful creature into upcoming events and promotions.

The region is heading to the “Center of the Universe” (better known as Tulsa, Oklahoma) for our 2017 Regional Meeting. The meeting is set for April 30 – May 3 at the Hyatt Regency Tulsa. Thomas Spencer will be soon forming his program committee to prepare the agenda for what is sure to be an awesome meeting.

We had 178 members attend the Annual Meeting in D.C. Of the 178, we welcomed 50 new members to our region’s roster. It was a fun-filled learning experience for us all. I look forward to moving forward and getting the new members involved with our regional activities.

We would like to congratulate our Joan Howeth National Travel Award recipients: Billy Pritchett, UT Southwestern Medical School; Raina Smith, UT Southwestern Medical School; and John Valenta, UT Health Science Center at Houston. A special thanks goes to Katherine Kissmann, Texas A&M University; Tribbie Sandner, Texas A&M Agrilife Research; Connie Barton, UTMB-Galveston; Beverly Endicott, University of Central Oklahoma; and Lizette Gonzales, Texas A&M University Kingsville, for serving on this year’s awards committee.

As announced in our business meeting, we will be sending out various surveys this year to seek input from our members on moving forward with regional activities and committees. Be on the lookout for the eBlasts that will identify those opportunities. The eBlasts will also provide information and updates from our current committees.

You may have recently seen the first survey as we have sent out a call for proposals for the 2017 Regional Meeting. Please be sure to submit your ideas for workshops, concurrent sessions, or discussion groups. We anticipate a robust program for the attendees.

Should you be interested in lending your time and talents to the region, please feel free to contact Thomas Spencer, Chair-Elect, (thomas.spencer@utsouthwestern.edu), Beth Milam, Volunteer Coordinator, (bmilam@tamu.edu), or Shelly Berry-Hebb, Chair, (sberry@tamu.edu).

Our Publications Committee is in the process of updating the Region V webpage. Please visit our site at www.ncuraregionv.com to see the updates. Also, don’t forget to follow us on Twitter @NCURA5 and Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/ncura5

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

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**Mahalo to all of our volunteers who helped make RMHawaii2016 a success.** It took a lot of hard work and dedication to pull off the first Meeting with Regions 6, 7 & 8. I can’t begin to tell you the amount of hours put into this meeting to make it successful. It took an amazing team to pull it together. I want to take the time to thank our officers, Derek Brown and Allison Ramos, for putting up with my OCDness when it comes to logistics. I’m the type of leader that will jump over the cliff and take a chance on landing and they were along for the ride. We landed safely team. LOL!

Thank you RAC for being great support. You all are amazing and I thank you truly for your work this year. Thank you Nancy Lewis for being my rock and allowing me to vent and for giving sage advice. You are simply amazing. You are a major asset for our region and I honor you for your dedication.

Thanks to our program committee who put an amazing program together. Marj and I couldn’t have done it without you. You all were on top of things. You made our jobs easier. I look forward to working with each of you in other capacities in the future. Thank you to all of the attendees who added a magical flare to the meeting. You made this meeting what it was and I greatly appreciate each and every one of you for your sacrifice of time to travel around the world to attend. I am more pleased knowing you were the recipient of an amazing educational opportunity coupled with a good time in paradise.

Thank you also to the officers of Region VII and VIII. You all were a joy to work with. Thank you for listening to new ideas and working to bring something innovative to the conference. Thank you Nancy Lewis and Kevin Stewart, who made the connection for us with ICON. I look forward to future collaborations with them. Thank you to what I have labeled the Fabulous 4. Thank you Marianne Woods, Denise Clark, Pam Whillock, and Dennis Paffrath for coming across the world to teach our first Saturday Senior Leadership workshop. I grew up believing that a closed mouth never gets fed. I asked and you all said ‘yes’ and I am eternally grateful. Thank you to all of our speakers. You rocked! See you all in Portland in 2017.

**Derick Jones** is Chair of Region VI and serves as program manager for the Institute for Translational Genomics and Population Science at LA BioMed. He can be reached at derickjones@labiomed.org
“The key to success is not through achievement, but through enthusiasm” – Malcolm Forbes

AM58 was a huge success, and I enjoyed networking with all of our Region VII attendees. What a great time to network in our nation’s capital. The weather was perfect, the sessions were engaging, and it was just all around fun hanging out with Research Administrators from all over the world. Our Region table was a hot spot of excitement. I especially loved our Rocky bags! Hats off to Lee Petit for ordering them and to Sandra Logue for all of her efforts with our giveaways!

It’s time for elections and an e-blast will be sent out shortly. The NCURA Region VII election committee welcomes nominations for the following Officer Positions:

• Chair-Elect (2017)
• Member-At-Large (2017-2018)
• Regional Representative for the National Board of Directors (2017-2018)

What a great way to volunteer your time in such a rewarding experience. We encourage everyone to consider running. Thank you all so much for your continued support and volunteerism in our Region!

Early bird registration has closed, but it is not too late to register for our upcoming Regional meeting in October. We invite you to join us - Connecting the World Through Research Administration. We are partnering with Regions VI and VIII. Maui sunsets, awesome networking, and having a meeting at the Grand Wailea will be fantastic between our three regions.

It’s still not too late to sign up for our workshops. We are offering some fantastic topics and speakers. I am pleased to announce we have opened an additional overflow room block. Please check our web page for further information.

When you make your flight arrangements, remember we have partnered with Hawaiian Airlines for discounted flights. Our goal is to make this meeting as affordable as possible, and we have designed this meeting specifically with families in mind. Tuesday night’s Luau will be one for the books! Don’t forget to purchase your Luau tickets for any family members attending. You can purchase early or at the door.

Volunteers are needed also for October’s meeting. Tolise Miles has graciously volunteered to be our new volunteer coordinator for the region. If you are interested, please let her know.

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

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

October/November 2016
A dog’s remarkable nose has helped mankind for ages, from the hunting of game animals to more recently sniffing out explosives and contraband.

However, the field of neuroscience knows very little about how the canine brain works, particularly when it is using the sense of smell. Auburn University researchers are shedding light on this aspect through functional MRI brain scans of awake, non-anesthetized dogs.

“We are the first group in the world to use functional MRI of awake dogs to study how their brains process odorant information,” said Assistant Professor Gopikrishna “Gopi” Deshpande of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

“This lets us see their brains in action when they are smelling odors. Best of all, the dogs don’t have to be anesthetized.”

Auburn’s College of Veterinary Medicine developed the unique awake-dog training system that Deshpande is using in his research to establish an MRI baseline test, which would determine a dog’s ability to become a good detector before it goes through training.

“The dogs are not restrained in any way,” said Paul Waggoner, co-director of Canine Performance Sciences in the veterinary college. “We trained them to get up on the scanner; place their head in the correct position; and then remain still while the scanning occurs. We’re really the first ones to have dogs scanned in this awake fashion. Previously dogs had to be scanned while anesthetized.”

Deshpande’s project, “Functional Imaging for Developing Outstanding Service Dogs,” is being conducted in collaboration with the iK9 company, the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Department of Psychology in the College of Liberal Arts.

Auburn and iK9 are using a $1 million grant from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, to do the study. iK9, which has an office in the Auburn Research Park, is providing the dogs and training while Auburn researchers conduct the MRI scans at Auburn’s Magnetic Resonance Imaging Research Center.

“The dogs are undergoing the awake-dog MRI brain scans before and after they are trained so we can look for baseline neural features that would predict the dogs’ future detection performance,” Deshpande said. “This would enable us to scan a prospective dog’s brain and determine the likelihood of its success.”

Forty dogs are undergoing the scans and training during the two-year project.

“After a dog gets its initial scan, we train that dog to be a detection dog,” iK9 President Roland Beason said. “After four to six weeks, we scan it again. At two other time points we will again scan the dog.”

During the MRI scanning, various odors are presented to the dog’s nose, with the idea that researchers can determine a specific neural marker in the brain image—to determine if a dog has the makings of a detector dog.

Current methods of finding and training suitable dogs are time consuming and costly for agencies around the globe.

“If we can pinpoint a specific neural marker on the scan, this could result in tremendous financial savings for the government and private companies since they would not use training resources on unsuitable dogs,” said Deshpande, who adds that cost of training a highly specialized detector dog can cost up to $30,000.

The researchers hope their findings will result in a test that can be used by agencies nationwide. “Auburn is known around the world for its canine programs,” Deshpande said. “We have an excellent team working on this project.”

By Charles Martin
NCURA’s TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

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✓ Financial Research Administration
✓ Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop – Critical Issues in Research Administration
✓ Departmental Research Administration

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December 5-7, 2016 .........................................................Austin, TX
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December 5-7, 2016 .........................................................Austin, TX

NCURA TV WEBCAST
Subawards: A Story ....................................................October 10, 2016, 1:00-3:30 pm EST
(available on-demand through November 11)

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Pre-Award Research Administration Conference..................March 8-10, 2017
San Diego, CA
Financial Research Administration Conference..................March 11-13, 2017
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• A Primer on Subawards – 8 week program

DEADLINES FOR DECEMBER 2016

Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .....................October 7, 2016
Submission of Articles to Co-editors .................................October 12, 2016
Submission of Advertisements ........................................October 12, 2016

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

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