Debunking the Myths: The Truths about F&A
Incentivizing Research Productivity and Innovation
Rethinking Effort Certification

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Back Cover
ON THE COVER: Sponsored programs administration and technology transfer offices have not always co-existed peacefully...even in those cases where they were the same office. We face the constant push to not only secure research funding but to make sure that the research we conduct makes its way outside our institutions and helps to spur economic development. We find ourselves in the position of looking more and more to private funders of all kinds to support our research efforts and those relationships do not look the same as ones with our federal or state funders when it comes to intellectual property and tech transfer issues. But research administrators love a good challenge so in this issue we’re focusing on the challenge of supporting innovation.

Larry Hope’s article describes the two offices at MD Anderson Cancer Center whose mission is to connect the dots between institutional resources and the outside commercial world. He also offers four suggestions for making the process, if not easier, at least less frustrating.

Sometimes even the notion of innovation can be perplexing. Although Anne Sebanc’s article focuses on research administrators at PUIs, her suggestion that innovation occurs in a variety of forms is valid at any of our institutions. Faculty working on all grants, she says, are innovating in one way or another.

The search for the “right” funding mechanism is a theme you’ll find in several of articles this issue. Heather Johnston makes a case for using a fairly recent innovation, “crowdfunding,” to support innovation. She describes HawksNest, a platform being used at Miami University to assist students, faculty and staff in raising funds for projects.

Steps being taken by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) described in Nilay Papila’s article sound similar to a variety of US efforts, showing again that research administration and the issues we face really are global.

Our “Cool Research” feature is a bit of a departure this month. Rather than look at a single project we offer you a small survey of interesting approaches that are supporting innovation at eight institutions.

I am rolling off the editorial staff of the magazine so this is my last years. You all are awesome!

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

If 60 is the New 30...

Barbara Gray, NCURA President and Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director

NCURA had humble beginnings when, in 1958, a handful of individuals who were filling the relatively new role of grants administrator at their institutions met to share information and learn from one another. As we prepare for our 60th Annual Meeting in August 2018, we wanted to look back at where we’ve been since that day in 1958, and also look forward to where we are going in 2018 and beyond. (Fun fact for those of you who spotted the mathematical inconsistency: one year, NCURA held two “annual” meetings, which is why our 60th meeting is occurring in 2018 rather than 2019).

NCURA’s first office was the kitchen table in the home of the newly elected secretary-treasurer, Julia Jacobsen (for whom our Distinguished Service awards are now named). In the early years, NCURA’s operational structure was simple: An Executive Committee acted as both management and staff. The organization sponsored an annual meeting and produced a membership listing for its almost 200 members, all covered by the $25 annual meeting registration fee. Before the end of the 1960s, we formalized with the adoption of a charter and bylaws and began charging dues—$5 per year. As we moved through the 1970s, we formed regions, along with numerous standing committees. NCURA held annual and regional meetings, published a membership directory and an occasional six-page newsletter, and co-produced the Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration workshop with our colleagues from the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). By the end of the decade, NCURA had its first office space, a budget of $112,000 and an executive secretary who assisted the Executive Committee in managing operations for our 1,200 members.

By the 1980s, our membership had grown to 1,500 members, and NCURA employed a staff of two who supported operations from a small office at Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. We continued our past activities and added a professional journal as our membership numbers continued to increase. In the late 1990s, with improved quality of our newsletter, an additional mid-year national conference, and a third staff member, NCURA leaders recognized the need to adopt best practices in association management. Subsequently, NCURA restructured its governance model.

The new model of knowledge-based governance—with members and staff leading together—gave a Board of Directors the responsibility for strategic planning and operations oversight, with staff by their side handling management. Three standing committees were established to carry out the routine work of the organization. The new structure also provided for the establishment of select committees for major initiatives, task forces for shorter-term assignments, and working groups to investigate issues and ideas identified by the Board. Concurrently, NCURA began building a professional staff of association management specialists to support the new governance structure and NCURA’s new way of doing business. As we began producing technical publications and adding more traveling workshops, we attracted more members. By the beginning of our fourth decade, our budget had grown to $900,000 and our membership to 3,000.

Today, with our 7,500 members, a staff of 18, and an annual budget of $6.5 million, NCURA is no longer a small operation. We are a mid-sized global association with members and programs around the world. We collaborate regularly with the European Research Council, the U.S. Department of State and other organizations throughout the world to support research and to keep you one step ahead of the curve. Our modest annual membership fees and publication and programming subscription fees support the development and delivery of a plethora of high-quality learning opportunities and modalities for our diverse membership. We produce three major conferences and two dozen traveling workshops every year, publish a professional quality magazine six times a year, produce live broadcast professional development opportunities, webinars and online courses, operate a well-respected Peer Review Service Program, grant global fellowship awards, and offer research grants to advance the profession. We will soon award our first scholarships to individuals pursuing a graduate degree in research administration, with funds contributed primarily by our members through regional fundraising efforts and individual contributions. Even while managing this wide range of activities, we are constantly brainstorming and evaluating ways to enhance the member experience.

The strategic governance structure and forward path we chose 20 years ago has served us well. NCURA has been acknowledged by the association world as a highly functioning organization. Although we are non-profit, that does not mean we are no profit. Associations that operate without profit soon close their doors. We operate much like a business, except that we reinvest modest excess revenues in the organization rather than sharing them with stockholders. We maintain an investment fund with advice of a professional investment firm,
we carry various types of insurance to cover our operational risks, we retain legal counsel with expertise in association management, and we undergo independent audit annually. No major decision is made by the Board of Directors or staff without full consideration of members’ needs, cost-benefit, resource allocation, legalities, and potential financial and reputational risk.

With direction from the Board, our standing committees and staff carry out the day-to-day business of NCURA. The Financial Management Committee prepares annual budgets for Board approval, oversees our investment funds, and analyzes the impact of proposed initiatives and activities on the organization. The Professional Development Committee assures that NCURA’s educational offerings remain fresh and cost-effective, while evaluating the need for and development of new programming. The Nominating & Leadership Development Committee supports our leadership development program and assures that members with appropriate credentials are identified for officer and Board nominations.

NCURA leadership strives to be transparent regarding operations and shares information with its members through various means. However, we must recognize that we operate in a competitive environment. Our lifeblood is our members. Without you, we would not exist. We are competing with other organizations for your continued membership in a resource-constrained environment and for your time for volunteer service to the organization. While we strongly believe in transparency, there are times, such as during new program development, when we may become opaque in order to protect your organization’s investment in top-level educational programming. Thus, to ensure our future, we must continue to think and act strategically. Our programs must be cutting-edge, of the highest quality, and sustainable. We must assure that we prepare volunteers to lead, support, and grow the organization in future years and that such well-prepared individuals are recruited to serve in the top leadership positions. We must continue to protect our intellectual property, often requiring us to hold new ideas, strategies, and initiatives close to the vest until they are ready for implementation. This is the reality of the world in which NCURA now operates. It is a far cry from our early years. As in any business or organization, we must place trust in the leadership—our Board of Directors—to set our course for the future and in our professional staff to help us pursue that course.

As we continue our continuous improvement efforts, we can’t help but note how much there is yet to be accomplished on our latest “strategic plate.” There is much to do and many new programs to develop for you in the coming years. We are moving forward as one, with members and staff working together, and chief elected officer and chief staff officer leading together. It takes a lot of energy and synergy to maintain this forward momentum. It’s a good thing that 60 is the new 30!

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Recent NCURA global workshops presented in Abu Dhabi and Vienna

LEFT: Abu Dhabi, UAE
Tolise Dailey (presenter), Kristy Evans, Steve Goode, Eileen Nielsen (presenter), Lama Choufani and Esraa Bani

RIGHT: Vienna, Austria
Eva Björndal (presenter), Siegfried Huemer (host), Leslie Schmidt (presenter)
Academic institutions, even those with an extraordinary history of research success and rankings that are the envy of others, are actively and aggressively looking for, taking actions, and making investments that will drive continued research growth, technology commercialization, and innovation. The tightening of federal funding for academic research and the growing competitiveness between universities for those and other research dollars, coupled with a growing competitiveness for successful faculty by universities (and the associated retention issues) has created an environment where even great research universities must focus more than they already do on retaining the competitive edge that they currently hold.

At the heart of the issue is the faculty; academic research excellence is built upon their intellect, creativity and drive, and is supported by investments of institutional dollars, both directly and indirectly, into their research programs. This “venture capital” of the university, if well used, can provide a significant return on investment in the form of faculty research success and particularly in making them more competitive for funding from a necessarily broad set of sources (e.g., federal, business, non-profit, philanthropic) to support their research activities, capacity for the commercialization of their intellectual property, and successful innovation.

Such institutional investments tend to fall into two broad categories (direct and indirect) of programs and practices (excluding hiring of new faculty); 1) Investments that directly support faculty research programs, either individually or collectively (e.g., seed grant programs, grant writers, summer salary, IDC return, faculty retention salary adjustments, bonuses, bridge funding, proof-of-concept funds, support for interdisciplinary/collaborative research activities and/or large centers/institutes, course load reductions, etc.); and 2) investments in research administration capacities (indirect, at least from a faculty perspective) that reduce the administrative burden on faculty and increase time available for their research (e.g., additional personnel in sponsored programs and/or research compliance; adoption of state-of-the-art electronic research administration software).

Overarching any kind of investment in institutional research growth is the need for ensuring that the deployment of fiscal resources for any goal fit within the new, complex, and still not entirely understood set of federal regulations know as Uniform Guidance.

An analysis into the FY15 National Science Foundation Higher Education Research and Development (NSF HERD) numbers suggests that the range of possible incentivizing actions and activities described above have the potential to increase faculty research productivity. In times when it is increasingly difficult to grow (or in some cases, even maintain) the net number of faculty, and when some of the most productive are being lost to other institutions, there is considerable benefit in programs and practices that help faculty grow their success “per capita”; e.g., helping faculty get more individual investigator grants and participate in more multi-investigator grants and centers; providing state-of-the-art equipment to maximize faculty competitiveness; and identifying and funding focused research initiatives that bring faculty together in new multidisciplinary areas of research.
Institutions seeking to initiate new programs or improve the effectiveness of current ones need to augment information gathering assessments of existing incentive programs, make comparisons against those of peer and aspirational institutions, and formulate a set of principles and practices for new programs and investments in response to specific questions:

- Who and/or what is the target of such investments?
- What are the expected outcomes for such investments?
- Where will the required resources come from?
- When would such programs be initiated?
- Who will run the program?
- Will competitive review be used?
- What metrics will be used to evaluate programmatic success?
- How will regulatory compliance be assessed?
- Resulting programmatic recommendations should primarily be focused beyond individual disciplines and designed to be of relevance to as much of the university as possible.

**These programs might include the following:**

- Support for transformative research projects
- Seed-funding for research that will attract new extramural funding
- Leveraging of incentive funding from schools and colleges
- Matching programs to support equipment acquisition, center grants, multi-investigator grants, etc.
- Indirect cost return
- Bridge funding
- Course reductions/buyouts
- Grant writing workshops
- Research development specialists/consultants
- Support of startup companies based on university developed intellectual property
- Technology incubators
- Proof-of-concept funding
- Targeted programs to support strategically determined university research goals
- Support for research cores
- Administrative support for centers
- Salary supplementation programs associated with distinguished fellowships
- Professorships providing salary support and/or research funding

Metrics to assess the efficacy of incentive programs should be based not only on cumulative or sustained funding awarded to an institution for individual faculty research but also funding for multidisciplinary, highly visible, multi-year, and highly impactful projects. Some institutions reward the attainment of prestigious distinctions such as election to the National Academies and external service seen as having significant value to the discipline (e.g., Journal editor). These monetary incentives can come in the form of supplemental salary, one-time bonus payments or as discretionary funds held by the university in restricted accounts.

A review of the literature suggests that extrinsic motivators alone will not necessarily provide the strongest incentive for research productivity. Ariely and Kemenica (2008) found that professionals in the fields of medicine, art and science that are regarded as “meaningful” occupations are much more likely to be motivated by intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards. These professions derived greater satisfaction from those activities that rendered meaning to their lives.

**Bright and Beasley (2004)** cited the delicate balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that must be considered in providing incentives for physicians. Woolley and Fishbach (2015) found that both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives are imperative and thus should both be fully explored. Their research found that intrinsic incentives (defined as those rewards that are endogenous to and evident during performance of the work) were stronger motivators than those extrinsic motivators (defined as exogenous or associated with the end result or reward). However, the most compelling argument for exploring how to maximize intrinsic rewards for academic faculty arises from their finding that intrinsic motivators are more strongly correlated with persistence than extrinsic motivators.

The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) found in two studies conducted in 2005 and 2012 that federally funded researchers spent approximately 42 percent of their research time on administrative duties (Schneider et al, 2014 and Decker et al, 2007). The 2012 study explored the exacerbating tasks in more depth and found that financial administration, effort reporting, and compliance requirements were the most burdensome tasks associated with managing federally funded projects. If the goal is to incent faculty to achieve greater research productivity, institutions must consider ways to decrease the administrative burdens on those high performing faculty through additional administrative support and a research administration environment that minimizes the administrative burdens on its researchers.

Institutions seeking to incentivize research productivity and innovation must understand the challenges and opportunities throughout the life-cycle of research administration at institutions of higher education, from the proposal development through closeout and technology commercialization, to provide appropriate incentives that go beyond monetary rewards. Providing exemplary support can contribute to the desired outcome of enabling an idea to be realized in the form of knowledge that may then lead to a product that can be commercialized and result in social benefit and a return on investment that imparts strategic value to the institution.

**References**


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A generous gift by a visionary NCURA member established the Education Scholarship Fund, which will support NCURA members who are enrolled in research administration graduate programs.

Since the fund’s inception, we have raised more than $100,000 and congratulations are in order for Region IV, who raised the most in this year’s regional fundraising challenge. That makes three different regions winning in each of the last three years! The generosity of NCURA members has been instrumental in making our initial goal a reality and we thank all of our donors for helping us reach this milestone.

Now that we’ve reached our first goal we can get to the fun part – awarding scholarships. The NCURA Board of Directors has approved the amount of $2,500 for scholarships and this fall, the Education Scholarship Fund Task Force is putting together the framework of the scholarship: how to apply, what the award criteria will be, and how often it will be awarded. Keep an eye out early next year for the first call for applications.

If you have not already donated this year, please consider making a tax-deductible gift before December 31. You can send in a check:

NCURA Education Scholarship Fund 1015 18th Street, NW, Ste 901 Washington, DC 20036

or donate on-line:

www.ncura.edu/Education/EducationScholarshipFund.aspx
The path from idea to invention is paved with challenges and barriers. Capitalizing on research to its fullest potential requires consistent support from start to finish. Universities that understand the substantial investment and resources required to turn concepts into innovations often implement internally funded seed grant programs to jumpstart projects or bridge established work to intellectual property (IP) realization. The returns benefit not only the organization, but also spread wealth beyond to the broader community.

Pre-award research administrators can foster idea origination by listening to researchers, drafting initial concept papers, and connecting faculty with suitable funding opportunities. Often pre-award offices are tasked with administrating seed grant programs that provide researchers with the monetary support needed to conduct preliminary studies or develop prototypes. Crafting a call for proposals, promoting internal funding opportunities to the research community, organizing review panels, and issuing seed grant awards are labors of love for the designated support staff. Seed grant programs can be specifically focused to address the funding gaps on the IP development pathway between proof of concept and marketable invention. These dollars are key to catalyzing early-stage innovations towards becoming licensed IP products with commercial potential.

Seed grants come in multiple forms and are unique to each institution. Variables such as institution size and type, student needs, faculty research interests, and the institution’s strategic plan all influence seed grant programs. What makes seed grant programs so worthwhile is their potential to boost scholarship and grow the research enterprise. Increasing research activity creates tech transfer opportunities across many different disciplines. Internal seed funding specifically designed for technology transfer enables faculty members to finalize their products and prepare them for market testing and commercialization. In most cases, internal grants are designed for faculty to start a new project, secure subsequent external funding, and continue their research, but why stop there? Providing additional resources for technology transfer can increase the return on internal seed program investments by supporting the research project through the testing phase.

For example, Next Exit History (www.nextexithistory.com) was trademarked in April of 2009 by the University of West Florida (Dr. Jay Clune and Dr. Patrick Moore). This suite of free web, iPhone, and Android tour guide applications boasts more than 50,000 historical and cultural sites in its database and more than 10,000 smartphone users. The University’s Foundation Office and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs provided initial seed funding, which then led to the acquisition of external grants for a combined total $270,000. The creation of this product brings intangible benefits to the University, such as features in Florida Trend Magazine and the Horizon Report, coverage on Florida Public Radio, and posters in welcome centers and rest areas across Florida as part of Viva Florida 500, the State’s official celebration of its 500th anniversary. The true success of this project, however, was its ability to leverage internal funding, including the cost of engaging an outside commercialization law firm, to establish a licensing agreement with the tech company Telsuspoint, which is the first commercial venture with technology licensed by the University.

The potential to commercialize inventions with life-changing, real-world application is unlimited. Faculty researchers, in collaboration with industry and their University’s technology transfer offices, are fueling the growth of products that improve quality of life and the productivity of society. In the field of healthcare, technology transfer offices work to facilitate the development, implementation, and use of medical and healthcare delivery advancements. In turn, the healthcare system stands to benefit from future licensing revenue and improved patient care. In other fields, such as science or engineering, patents play an important role not only by bringing the invention to market, but also by protecting its design from replication.

Institutions that successfully commercialize products stand to attract new and retain existing top faculty performers. Successful technology transfers inspire researchers to become more entrepreneurial and encourage other faculty to follow suit, thereby creating a culture of innovation. Benefits to the larger community also include the creation of jobs through the hiring of research and support staff, as well as new positions within the technology companies that commercialize the products. Such returns on investment grow from an internal seed grant that just keeps on giving.

By, Hagan Walker, Claire Stam, and Katy Hendry

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PRE-AWARD    POST-AWARD

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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RESEARCH
As a field, research administration has undergone dramatic changes in the last decade, shaped by the increasingly complex internal and external environment in which sponsored programs operate. Our current highly competitive and largely uncertain funding climate necessitates a focused strategic mission for research endeavors at all organizations pursuing sponsored funding.

Inherently, changes that affect research administration also affect the investigators whom we serve. Now more than ever before, improving research administration support to investigators allows them to navigate the increasingly rough terrain of sponsored funding, and is a key ingredient for institutional success. Such support involves the reduction of administrative burden on investigators to conduct sponsored activity via an increase in the quality of pre- and post-award services available at a given institution, and the strengthening of the service approach of offices and individuals tasked with these services. In order to accomplish this, research administration organizational structures should be designed thoughtfully, to work together to enhance the culture of support to investigators. In this article, we share several recent organizational design changes in the research administration enterprise at Tufts University, that when taken together form a model meant to support this approach.

Local Research Administration
Tufts University has implemented a somewhat unique research administration model, where clusters of trained research administrators are locally-positioned and are managed via matrix reporting to schools/centers, as well as to a centralized Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) (Davis-Hamilton, Marina & Souvaine, 2016). In the Tufts model, local research administrators provide hands-on pre- and post-award support to investigators at the departments, schools and centers where they are based. Involving a close partnership between the OVPR and individual schools and centers, the model focuses on creating effective and coordinated teams of local research administrators with clearly articulated goals and criteria for success, and has the overarching aim of improving the support to investigators.

From “Alphabet Soup” to the Award Lifecycle
We often hear feedback from investigators that from their perspective, there is an “alphabet soup” of offices supporting sponsored research activity at Tufts, making it difficult to know which office does what, and what services are available to them. There is some truth to this perspective, as our previous organizational structure housed pre- and post-award services in different divisions, with independent websites, policies—and yes—acronyms. This led to a reality where faculty and staff were often presented with two parallel operations with different approaches to the same
award action, such as a no cost extension or a budget change request.

Over the last two years, we’ve worked to lessen the confusion from a faculty and staff perspective by bringing these sponsored research support units together. Our post-award unit was transferred into the OVPR, and now, after two years, the offices have been rebranded as the pre-award and post-award offices, respectively. This has also involved moving our Office of Research Development—an office that facilitates individual and multi-investigator proposals and provides resources and training to develop grant-writing skills and to identify sources of funding—into a combined unit with pre- and post-award, under the supervision of the Associate Vice Provost for Research Administration and Development (Zoya Davis-Hamilton, one of the authors of this article.)

This integration of offices has allowed us to better match our services to the award lifecycle (see Figure 1) rather than to the scope of each office, in an effort to allow a more natural, transaction-based flow for investigators and staff. This alignment allows for better, more fluid support from the first part of the award lifecycle to award closeout. We have found that this more intuitive process allows investigators to more easily access the support found in Research Administration and Development, and enables better alignment with other available services across the OVPR.

[Figure 1: The Award Lifecycle]

Separating Compliance Functions from those Focusing on Support

As a research administrator, it’s not always easy maintaining the right balance between compliance and support of research. Indeed, a 2014 survey posted to the research administration listserv (RESADM-L) found that respondents’ individual positions are, on average, more conservative than that of their institutions, which points to a “disconnect between a majority of research administrators’ values (more compliant is better) versus their views of their institutions’ values (some risk is acceptable)” (Davis-Hamilton, Marina, 2014, para 7).

To assist our post-award team in prioritizing support to investigators without sacrificing our overall commitment to compliance, Tufts recently formed a new unit tasked with Research Administration Compliance and Risk Management. Working closely with pre- and post-award, this unit assumed the compliance functions that previously resided in those offices, such as coordination of financial audits and external grant reviews, subrecipient risk assessment and management, and effort reporting. In the future, the Compliance and Risk Management office will perform periodic quality control checks to continuously assess institutional risk and keep administrative burden at a minimum. These quality control checks will replace transactional reviews for low risk activities that originate at the departments and schools with strong local research administration.

In addition to reducing administrative burden, this organizational change allows post-award staff to more easily maintain a service and partnership-oriented approach, and shift their emphasis to facilitating post-award actions and building a relationship of trust with investigators and local research administrators.

Multitasking Does Not Work: Ownership of Tasks

While all tasks must eventually be completed, deadlines usually rule the day. For centrally completed pre- and post-award tasks, those that have external deadlines (proposal submission, financial reports) are usually prioritized above tasks with internally agreed upon soft deadlines (contract negotiation, issuing a subaward or an amendment, etc.). This often results in delayed processing of the self-paced deadlines that nonetheless must be accomplished.

While fully dedicating central pre- and post-award positions to specific tasks is a potential solution to these delays, such narrow specialization makes research administration jobs less attractive, and increases job dissatisfaction and turnover. Instead, while also maintaining departmental portfolio assignments for individual pre- and post-award staff members, support for specific non-deadline driven functions such as contract negotiation, issuing subawards, drawdowns, billing and invoicing, etc. now resides in teams. Each team has a lead, a senior staff member accountable for the coordination of a given process, and timely completion of the function by their team.

This structure allows for backstopping of these tasks, the development of specialized expertise across staff, and ensures timely processing. We will continue to refine our approach of ownership of designated tasks in addition to portfolio assignments over the course of the next 12 months after our pre- and post-award offices become co-located.

Conclusion

Change is never easy and we have had a lot of it in our research administration enterprise at Tufts in the last several years. Change, however, is necessary to help our institutions and our investigators meet the growing and ever-shifting challenges of our shared sponsored research landscape. The structure that we have built at Tufts, as presented above, builds a strong yet flexible framework that can withstand such changes while also providing our researchers excellent, clearer, more easily navigable support tied to the award lifecycle. It also creates stronger links both between our local and central research administrators and within our central Research Administration and Development unit. Finally, it provides a greater clarity of purpose for central pre- and post-award staff, ensuring all tasks are accomplished while still allowing for the varied, interesting, portfolio based work that draws many of us to research administration. Taken together, these changes build a model that is focused on creating a positive environment for everyone involved in sponsored research at Tufts through collaborative effort.

References


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In reality, the intersection between the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Export Administration Regulations (EAR) (15 Code of Federal Regulations Part 730-774) and faculty interests actually runs further back. The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), the federal agency that administers the EAR, continues to highlight a 2003 enforcement case around Dr. Thomas Butler in their “Don’t Let This Happen to You” brochure (www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/about-bis/newsroom/publications). Across these cases, we see how university-related research endeavors – handled the wrong way – can bring about unwanted consequences for the institution and individuals involved.

Is it Still Fundamental Research?
One of the most interesting aspects of the Roth case is rarely discussed. The unauthorized export activities in question were conducted through a start-up that was created out of licensing technology from his university of employment. The entrepreneurial spirit amongst faculty is one that is not only supported by universities but also promoted as many university-born technologies actively make their way into practical applications and patents. But what are the consequences from an export controls compliance standpoint?

The complexity with university-born start-ups is that the players are identical, but the rules of the game are different. While the faculty member continues to primarily be employed at the university, he or she also wears a new hat, perhaps as CEO or chairman of the board for a commercial, industrial legal entity. In addition, some of the research staff in his or her group may also play a role at the company. How are the rules different? The exclusions (i.e., the fundamental research exclusion or ”FRE”) in the export control regulations that once potentially benefited the research team in the university environment are not necessarily applicable in the new start-up environment.

Presumably, the start-up company will further develop the technology as the business grows. Innovative technologies in an industrial setting are often kept as trade secrets for competitive
advantage. The non-public nature of any new research results and new technology can easily bump the company into an environment where the FRE does not apply. This change in regulatory framework can be forgotten quite easily without proper education and training to faculty during the early stages of business development. What are the export compliance considerations for the start-up?

Consequences, Implications, and Liability

Professional reputation is key, especially in the academic world. And, even though the Roth case was rooted in the activities that occurred via a start-up company, it’s the university’s name that is most often cited. Thus, purely from the standpoint of reputation, universities have a vested interest in educating its entrepreneurial faculty on the potential implications of export compliance as they pursue start-ups.

Does the business development team of the start-up understand the basics behind U.S. export controls? Do they understand if their technology, products, or services are likely to be export-controlled? If the technology fell within the definition of the FRE in the university environment, it’s very likely that a formal export classification effort was not completed. This would make sense as the export control classification did not have a bearing on the technology compliance requirements for the university. But in the start-up company environment, an export classification analysis is likely a necessary component of the company’s export compliance program. A weak export compliance program can hinder new business contracts and future commercial sales. Unfortunately, the start-ups generally cannot comprehensively rely on the university’s export controls resources due to distinction in liability between legal entities.

Strategies to Drive Compliance

To summarize, as part of one larger common community, there is ultimately a strong connection between universities and the start-ups that originate from their research discoveries. Research administrators supporting export controls compliance want to see the start-ups succeed, and, whenever possible, help them get grounded with their compliance responsibilities. Partnering with the Office of Technology Transfer, Office of Commercialization, or comparable office is one avenue by which research compliance leaders can spread knowledge about the importance of export compliance to university start-ups. Strengthening the lines of communication between the technology transfer office and the export controls resources at an institution is a first step in supporting faculty in their entrepreneurial efforts. At a minimum, the technology transfer office can direct the faculty to external resources where they can begin to learn more about export compliance.

“university-related research endeavors – handled the wrong way – can bring about unwanted consequences for the institution and individuals involved”

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The North American wood frog, *Rana sylvatica*, freezes solid in the winter and somehow lives to hop another day after temperatures warm up in the spring.

It’s a compelling story with a lot of public appeal, as media coverage attests. Shows from PBS’s popular science program *NOVA* to UKTV’s *David Attenborough’s Natural Curiosities* have featured segments on the remarkable abilities of this amphibian.

That appeal is exactly what makes research related to the wood frog ripe for crowdfunding, something Andor Kiss, manager of Miami University’s Center for Bioinformatics and Functional Genomics, recognized when he needed about $3,000 to sequence the *Rana sylvatica* genome.

“I thought, ‘Well, because of the inherently attractive nature of this particular organism in capturing the public’s imagination, maybe I could crowdfund this and get a significant chunk of people who are interested in science to do this,’” recalls Kiss.

It turned out he was right. In the end, 41 backers donated a total of $3,031 to Kiss’s project through Experiment (https://experiment.com), a crowdfunding site focused on research.
**The advantages of crowdfunding**

“Many interesting and good ideas are hard to fund by the traditional funding agencies, like the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health,” says Kiss. “Projects may be deemed too risky, too expensive, or even too modest. That makes it difficult to get a new idea funded, especially if that idea—like mine—is relatively inexpensive and about open-ended discovery.”

These are among the reasons many research administrators anticipate crowdfunding will play an increasingly important role for scientists, innovators, and creators at universities.

“Crowdfunding has the potential to break down and work around hierarchies in funding research and creative activity at universities,” says Jim Oris, Miami University’s Associate Provost for Research. “It has the potential to remove gatekeepers and let many more voices through.”

For instance, a primary function of the gatekeepers at federal funding agencies is to cut risk so that taxpayer dollars are not ‘wasted’ on projects that might fail. However, in crowdfunding risk can actually be part of the appeal. For some donors, the prospect of helping fund a project that could lead to a major innovation is thrilling, and since the stakes are usually low (the average donation to Kiss’s project was $74), they figure not much is lost if the project hits a dead end.

**The genesis of HawksNest**

With the potential of crowdfunding already on his radar, Oris took note of Kiss’s success on Experiment and was inspired to initiate development of a homegrown crowdfunding platform. Tricia Callahan, Director of Miami’s Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship, managed the project with hands-on development by successive teams of students from Miami’s College of Engineering and Computing as part of their capstone experiences.

Now fully operational, the platform, known as HawksNest, allows Miami students, faculty, and staff to register a project and set a funding goal, much as they would if they used a site like Experiment.

But, to paraphrase marketing guru Seth Godin (2012), a crowdfunding platform doesn’t create a network; it activates a network. In other words, a platform like Experiment gives prospective donors a user-friendly mechanism for contributing to projects, but it doesn’t do much to facilitate the personal connection that converts prospects into contributors.

The advantage of HawksNest, on the other hand, is that it leverages an existing and robust network: Miami alumni, family, and friends from around the world.

HawksNest was developed in collaboration with University Advancement, and communications about the platform have been shared with alumni and other constituents through that group’s established channels. Going forward, sponsored research staff will continue to work with advancement staff to promote HawksNest and to incorporate it into planned campaigns as a way of engaging younger alumni, who tend to be the most familiar and comfortable with crowdfunding.

**Not a magic bullet for funding**

Despite developing the platform expressly for an established and thriving network, no one on the HawksNest team expects it to be a magic bullet. They all recognize that successful crowdfunding—even on HawksNest—depends on project owners promoting their campaigns.

That was certainly the case for Lauren Fussner, a graduate student in psychology and the owner of HawksNest’s first successfully funded project. Like Kiss, Fussner knew her small-budget project on adolescent depression and eating disorders was unlikely to attract federal funding. Plus, as a student, Fussner had an immediate need to establish herself as a researcher and viable grantee. She could ill afford the months-long wait for a decision that usually follows an application to a traditional funding agency.

Fortunately, Fussner recognized that crowdfunding turned her modest monetary requirements and need for a quick decision into assets. What’s more, crowdfunding had the added advantage of allowing her to appeal directly and personally to individual people with full spending authority.

“Instead of competing broadly, on a larger scale,” says Fussner, “I was able to network through my personal contacts, as well as reach out to individuals who may have a personal interest in helping teens with depression and eating disorders.”

While Fussner understands the value proposition of crowdfunding, not all researchers do. Some projects posted to HawksNest have failed to raise any money at all, not because they didn’t have merit, but because the project owners imagined crowdfunding to be an easy, passive source of funding. The reality is that it’s anything but.

Andor Kiss puts it bluntly: “You have to work at crowdfunding. You have to tweet about, it. You have to do an ‘Ask Me Anything’ [AMA] on Reddit. You have to really work the internet hard, because a lot of people are not going to find it on their own. You have to contact colleagues, go to meetings, talk to people who are interested.”

**Tips for success**

Crowdfunding is work, but success depends on just three key elements: narrative, images and video, and a strategy for targeting prospective donors. Below are tips for making the most of each of those elements.

**Narrative**

In crowdfunding, even more than in a proposal for traditional funding, a clear and compelling story is critical to engaging prospective donors. In specific terms, this means that:

- The title of the project should be engaging and non-technical.
- The language in the project narrative should be friendly and accessible.
- Descriptions in the project narrative should invite visualization.

Knowing who the target audience is and what’s relevant to them is always advisable when asking for funding, and crowdfunding is no exception. For that reason, if a project has cultural relevance to a particular geographic area (e.g., a project that seeks to document and preserve Gulah language is culturally relevant to the South Carolina and Georgia Lowcountry), that angle should be played up in the narrative.

**Images and video**

Visuals tend to enhance any grant proposal, but they are a must-have for crowdfunding. According to statistics compiled by Emilie Doolittle...
(2015) from the digital asset management company WebDAM, images produce 650% greater engagement than text, and people remember only 20% of text-only content. Make the most of visuals in a crowdfunding campaign by:

• Ensuring all images and videos advance the narrative.
• Including video when possible and remembering that thanks to the ubiquitous smartphone, video is always possible.
• Recognizing that in online communities, being authentic matters more than having high production values (good lighting + good sound = good enough).
• Limiting video to 2-3 minutes at most.

Strategy for targeting donors
Unlike traditional funding mechanisms, crowdfunding is intensely social. Running a crowdfunding campaign is a little bit like throwing a party in that success depends on following a certain set of social conventions before, during, and after the event:

• Prior to launch, the project owner should recruit active champions who will help spread the word about the campaign.
• At the very beginning of the campaign, the project owner should send emails or personal messages on social media to everyone they know, asking them to donate and to share the project page with their networks.
• The project owner should spend one to two hours each day of the campaign on promotion, doing thing such as working social media channels, posting updates to the project page, following up with active champions, preparing for and hosting an AMA on Reddit, writing and issuing press releases, or preparing for and hosting a live, face-to-face event that supports the project.
• After the campaign ends, the project owner should follow up with active champions and individual donors to thank them for their support.
• The project owner should keep posting updates to the project page so donors can track progress and learn about the results of the project.

In summary, running a crowdfunding campaign may not be less work than developing a traditional funding proposal of comparable scope, but it is different work. Knowing what is required for success allows us as research administrators to provide support to researchers who choose this funding mechanism, just as we do for those who opt to pursue more traditional routes to funding. ■

References

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As a member-staff driven organization, the success of NCURA is a result of the time and commitment provided by our member volunteers. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize those who have dedicated countless hours to support their colleagues and our professional staff by taking a leading role in furthering the goals and the values of the organization.

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NCURA would also like to thank ALL of our volunteers, who have dedicated time to plan, present, and assist in the execution of our conferences; contribute to the educational resources provided to our members; foster professional networking and knowledge exchange; and enhance the NCURA community.

We’ve worked hard to ensure this list represents all of our volunteers completing service terms, but if we missed you, please accept our apology and our sincere thanks for your contributions to the research community.

NCURA Magazine | December 2017
In my role as vice president for research, I see how some of our faculty are just better at leading others and building good relationships than others. It’s a challenge for me, as compliance problems end up on my desk. In many cases, I think the origins of these problems were more matters of poor communication and instances of disrespect than examples of poor judgment or purposeful rule violations. I don’t really have a question, just making an observation.

When people talk about leaders taking a "systems approach" to challenges like this, they mean that they engage other stakeholders in their community. They inspire interest and passion to motivate their community to 'do better,' to set higher standards that honor the name and reputation of their institution.

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.

Ask the Leadership Coach

Q: You may be just venting, but I would like to encourage you to explore and build upon your observation. Many opportunities for leadership occur through noticing what’s happening around you, and trying to make sense of seemingly disparate phenomena (e.g., instances of disrespect, poor communication and compliance problems). By the way, I happen to share your perception. I believe that our colleagues in the research compliance community may even have literature or studies to support the connection you perceive between poor leadership and communication skills and attenuated compliance problems.

I coach clients who casually identify something happening in their environments, then learn more about what they think they see, ask and listen to others, and develop communities and action plans to fix something that they (and likely others) know needs fixing.

As a leader, what do you believe you need to do? I don’t know about your biographical background, such as how long have you served in your role, what has been your personal experience in leading research teams, how long have you worked in academia, etc. I might also ask if there was some precipitating event that brought your observation to light and to these pages—e.g., a major non-compliance matter to adjudicate, comments from staff or other faculty, or an emotionally draining HR complaint. Or, is it an awakening of personal awareness on your campus and an emerging sense that something is "not right?"

And, this sounds like a matter that rests beyond your organizational scope and title alone.

Individuals who hold leadership roles have an opportunity to lead by example, and self-designate as “chief of culture.” My assumption from your observation is that you are already an institutional compliance official. Why not add an unofficial title of “chief culture officer” to your business card? We who work in academe already have some of the longest titles and academic credentials listed on cards. Just add one more!

What is a “chief of culture”? Well, if you and I were working in a coaching relationship, or having a dialogue about your observation over a cup of coffee, we would co-write the job description to fit your circumstances. I might ask you: What are the values and codes of personal conduct that your institution already promulgates? How effective are these? How are you living up to the values and codes, especially if you are planning to initiate broader actions on campus? How do you perceive others are abiding? Again, this is all broader than you and your role.

The core question: What are the changes of behavior, thinking, and action that you would like to see happen on your campus to be able to say (in 1-3 years) that faculty leadership and communication have improved? And, how will you measure these changes? (Note: Find something more motivating than simply the name and reputation of their institution. They lead by example, being honest and direct and apologizing when necessary, by being focused and respectful, and being accessible to staff, students, others.

It all must sound daunting, so let’s unpack it. I suggest you start with an article from Harvard Business Review, May 2011, “The Power of Small Wins,” by Teresa M. Mobile and Steven J. Kramer. The authors describe how leaders and managers can affect the interior work life of those they lead by taking actions that are catalysts and nourishers, rather than inhibitors and toxins.

From the article: “Catalysts are actions that support work. They include setting clear goals, allowing autonomy, providing sufficient resources and time, helping with the work, openly learning from problems and successes, and allowing a free exchange of ideas. Their opposites, inhibitors, include failing to provide support and actively interfering with the work.”

And: “Nourishers are acts of interpersonal support, such as respect and recognition, encouragement, emotional comfort, and opportunities for affiliation. Toxins, their opposites, include disrespect, discouragement, disregard for emotions, and interpersonal conflict. For good and for ill, nourishers and toxins affect inner work life directly and immediately.”

The article has a great checklist to measure progress in achieving “small wins” in organizational culture, and to understand setbacks. I think it presents a simply and actionable approach to understanding and changing culture… one day, and one transaction at a time. Wouldn’t it be great if your campus community (faculty and staff) conducted themselves in this manner? This could be a basis of a conversation with others on campus to instigate thinking on this topic.

It’s required reading for a “Chief of Culture.”
Rethinking Effort Certification by

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX:

Is a Certification of Effort by Principal Investigators the Best Internal Control Over Compensation Charges?

By Jason Guilbeault

Back in high school when I was an aspiring engineer, my Principles of Engineering teacher drew nine dots in the shape of a square, with one dot in the middle, and asked us to connect all the dots using the fewest number of straight lines. The fewest anyone in the class could come up with were four, and the lines basically formed the shape of an “E.” We were then asked if we could still connect all the dots using four lines if we added the following constraints: 1) you can’t lift up your pencil, and 2) you can’t back-trace over a line, but your lines can intersect. I’ll tell you that it can be done, but the answer will be posted at the end of this article. The main point of the problem was to see if we could figure out a way to maintain efficiency under a new set of rules, which requires creativity. I think about this problem a lot when I think about internal controls. Given that we all have limited resources; we are constantly trying to connect the dots between regulations and processes in the most efficient and least burdensome way possible.
Many universities are trying to reduce burden, particularly with effort reporting. The Uniform Guidance in general is heavily focused on internal controls, which gives us increased flexibility in how we all operate. No two organizations are the same, as we all have different compliance infrastructures, but we all have opportunities to take a more holistic view of our compliance operations, which can reduce overall burden. This article, however, will focus on internal controls over compensation costs, and we’ll look at the merits of a physical certification (paper or electronically signed). The Uniform Guidance allows for increased flexibility in how organizations control and document compensation costs.

The examples of acceptable methods for effort reporting (payroll distribution) from A-21 are long gone, giving us the opportunity to focus on internal controls, rather than prescribed methodologies. A national cohort (https://researchadmin.asu.edu/cohort) was formed late last year, thanks to a project funded by NCURA, to develop alternative methods to effort reporting that would be in compliance with 2 CFR §200.430(i) Standards for Documentation of Personnel Expenses. In talking with other universities and having recently joined the cohort, I’ve found that some universities still plan to have the principal investigator (PI) or other individual “certify” at some point in the process, though some that I’ve talked to will do it less frequently than before.

As many of us embark on this journey to move towards what I call “effortless reporting,” think about all of your current internal controls and how you can start to move towards a less burdensome process. For many universities (including my institution), one of the key internal controls is having the PI, or individual charging their effort to the project(s), certify his/her effort. This usually involves the person logging into an effort reporting system and clicking a button, or having the person sign a paper effort report, to show that they’ve reviewed their effort distributions after the fact and are confirming it’s reasonable over the given period of time. Many universities also add a timeframe in which this certification must be completed (e.g., the individual must certify within 90 days following the effort reporting period), but this is a key area in which universities open the door to higher risk and more audit findings. I believe this is an unnecessary risk, given that there is no regulation requiring institutions to complete such a process.

Augusta University is considering an alternative approach in which effort summaries are automatically emailed to PIs, other individuals working on awards, and department administrators to show payroll distributions for award personnel across all of each individual’s activities (the level of detail would vary depending on the person’s role, but there can be many variations to this concept). Unless a payroll adjustment is made, the assumption is that the payroll distribution shown on the emailed report is correct. The internal control framework developed by the cohort refers to this as a “negative confirmation.” Using this process as a key internal control is less risky to the university. Since it’s an automated process, the control is less likely to fail since you are not relying on people to “certify” as proof that they’ve reviewed their effort and confirm its reasonableness, and it’s a control that an auditor can test (they could verify emails including the reports were sent).

Now I know many might say that it’s possible the PI or individual never looks at the emailed reports, and therefore this is a poor control, but this is a residual risk in the process. A residual risk is the risk that remains after controls are put in place. I’d argue that the residual risk for this process is no different than the residual risk for the process that involves individuals certifying their effort. When people are certifying, are they really taking the time to analyze and think about their effort distributions over that period of time, or are they just blindly signing a piece of paper or clicking a button in order to get administrators to stop bothering them? This too is a residual risk.

The beauty of designing processes using internal controls is that you can build in compensating or supplemental controls around the key controls to mitigate or reduce these residual risks. For example, your post-award office may review reports that show effort charges after the period of performance of a project or reports that show awards with no payroll distributions from anyone (it’s not unheard of that a university gets a new award and nobody updates the payroll distribution for the employees working on it until a few months after the fact). Your university may have mandatory annual training on this topic for faculty members that work on sponsored awards, so they are aware of the process and their responsibilities. I still think effort reporting systems (though this terminology should probably be rebranded) can provide excellent reporting capabilities to give everyone the tools they need to monitor effort in a less burdensome way, while streamlining the process for making effort adjustments when they are needed. The bottom line is that you can create a series of reasonableness checks around individuals’ effort and have the reporting capabilities for everyone to monitor effort distribution in the most efficient way possible.

Whatever direction your university decides to take, I encourage all of you to avoid the “we’ve always done it this way and have never gotten an audit finding” excuse for not analyzing your current processes and finding improvements. While the prescribed methods of effort reporting from A-21 are considered to meet the compliance standards of the Uniform Guidance, there is no reason not to explore other options to achieve maximum efficiency while maintaining or improving compliance. We all agree that researchers are spending too much time on administrative work, so we must take a fresh look at our processes and really question the value or return on investment in our current controls, which involves thinking outside the box.

“Many universities are trying to reduce burden, particularly with effort reporting.”
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It's well known that researchers would rather spend their time doing research and view most administrative tasks as a burden. Policies, processes, or systems that make administrative tasks difficult to complete cause frustration at a minimum and result in circumvention of crucial steps at the worst. The goal of research administration policies, processes, and systems must be to make it as obvious and easy as possible to comply with research policies and regulations. Now more than ever, it is imperative that research administrators seek out innovative eRA systems to ensure compliance with the ever-increasing regulatory burdens placed on researchers. When looking to improve efficiency in research administration, technology is one of the most effective resources offices can invest in. Systems play a key role in helping researchers comply with policies and enabling research administrators to support researchers and ensure compliance.

Innovative eRA systems help users and administrators navigate the many policies and regulations with which they must comply and assist in coordinating between all parties involved. Through our experience we have identified that the key to a successful eRA system is usability. Usability ensures that users can execute their tasks accurately, efficiently, and with satisfaction. All too often, the eRA systems employed by research administration enterprises suffer from scope creep and fail to meet the true needs of end users. For the rest of this article, we will focus on how to evaluate eRA systems based on the Eight Principles of Usability, from the Usability Body of Knowledge, to illustrate what goes into a truly useful and innovative eRA system.

Eight Principles of Usability
When developing, assessing, or looking to purchase an eRA system, it’s imperative to assess the usability of such a product. Usability can be thought of as “the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use.” Be careful to not confuse usability with functionality, which is purely concerned with the functions and features of the system and has no bearing on whether users are able to use them or not. How do you assess whether or not an eRA system is useful or not? Follow these eight principles from the Usability Body of Knowledge:

1) Usefulness: The system should address the real needs of the users. Information and functions provided to the user should be relevant to the user’s task and context. Remember to focus on your target users, not necessarily everyone involved. Failure to focus on target users may result in a system that is useful to no one.

   Whether you’re working on a website, web application, or a standalone system, making your pages directly related to the task at hand is key. For example, the University of Wisconsin developed a web application to generate current and pending support (other support) quickly and accurately. That’s all the application does, and that’s perfectly fine.

2) Consistency: Use commonly understood concepts, terms, and metaphors, follow real-world conventions (when appropriate), and present information in a natural and logical order. For example, use patterns you see in everyday life to help users navigate: red stop sign, an envelope for messages, a computer disk for save.
The University of Wisconsin has developed a FAR clause look-up that illustrates this concept. If the clause is acceptable, a green check mark is displayed. If the clause is not acceptable, a red circle with a slash is displayed, and the clause needs some adjustments before it can be accepted, a yellow triangle with an exclamation point in the middle is displayed. This leverages symbols and color schemes used in everyday life for the contract negotiators to make a quick determination of whether a term needs further negotiation.

3 Simplicity: Reduce clutter and eliminate any unnecessary or irrelevant elements. Every button or line of text added is another chance for a user to get confused and leave. In short, keep it simple and intuitive. Simplicity is one area where research administrators tend to struggle; after all, everything we deal with is hardly simple and usually “it depends.” Pennsylvania State University has developed a process that can be followed to ensure a website, web application, or a standalone system is simplified:
   a. Reduce text: Keep text to a minimum. Focus on developing a layout that guides a user rather than having to dictate what is next.
   b. Expand the white space: Believe it or not, white space actually improves comprehension. While your inner process improvement voice tells you to cut the white space, in system design white space is your ally.
   c. Simplify actions: Use indicators that identify when actions are needed and provide a link to where the action can be completed.

4 Communication: Provide appropriate, clear, and timely feedback to users so that they see the results of their actions and it’s clear what is going on with the system. For example, if an action is taking longer than expected, notify the users. If not, they’ll assume it’s broken. Provide clear and straightforward instructions.

5 Error Prevention and Handling: Allow reasonable variations in input. When an error does occur, provide clear, plain-language messages to describe the problem and suggest a solution to help users recover from any errors.

6 Efficiency: Accommodate a user’s continuous advancement in knowledge and skill. Do not impede efficient use by a skilled, experienced user. Provide shortcuts when necessary.

7 Workload Reduction: Make the user’s work easier, simpler, faster, or more fun. Automate unwanted workload when possible. Ensure a user doesn’t have to input information more than once, perform calculations when possible, and integrate with other systems.

   The current and pending support application referenced earlier is a good example of this concept. The application doesn’t require the user to enter all of the relevant information. Rather it leverages data captured in other business process and systems. The user simply has to tell the application for whom a document is needed and in what sponsor format, making the user’s work easier, simpler, faster… and hopefully more fun too.

8 Usability Judgment: No list would be complete without invoking our favorite phrase in research administration: “it depends.” There are times when it makes sense to bend or violate some the principles or guidelines, but make sure that the violation is intentional and appropriate.

   Throughout the previous section, you may have noticed examples of where the Eight Principles were applied to all types of eRA platforms. It’s important to keep in mind that these principles apply not only to stand-alone systems, but also to web-based applications and web pages. Web pages are often our most used eRA resource, and are not always thought of as such. The Eight Principles should supply you with a foundation to assess all your eRA resources to ensure that they are truly innovative, functional, and most importantly, usable.

Conclusion
As alluded to at the beginning of this article, the administrative burden is a real issue facing researchers and research administrators alike. The last 20 years have seen a substantial expansion in the administrative obligations that come with managing Federal grant funding. The eRA resources we employ can either compound the issue or help resolve it. More than ever, institutions are looking for innovative electronic solutions to remain compliant while easing burdens on research faculty. One of the greatest challenges in bringing an innovative eRA solution to fruition is designing a platform that is truly useful, and that will actually be used by end users. The Eight Principles covered in this article should set the foundation, and provide you with a guide on how to do just that.

References

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What’s wrong with spicing up that basic research menu? Add a pinch of business ingredients, sprinkle some knowledge exchange and a dash of IP rights. Spin, incubate, and voila: A deliciously rounded proposal is served which improves chances for success. Implementing processes and structures to make this happen has to be put early on the shopping list for that funding menu. Eventually, those basic research ideas turn into proposals, which then can turn into successful bids and eventually funded sponsored research will make an impact on your institution’s intellectual property list, knowledge transfer office, patent income sheet statement or licensing and royalties fees’ A-List – one hopes! And that dies last.

In recent years, continuous changes can be seen in the layout and conception of new and innovative funding programmes, aiming towards creating an impact with the outcomes and results of those research efforts. This of course has to do with the fact of decreasing funding sources, the high-level of research proposals, increasing demand for sponsored programmes and lack of sufficient resources thereof. In order to create that critical mass menu of highly successful research bids, other factors have come into play.

From Uncertainty towards Innovative and Collaborative Efforts
Those were the days of sponsored research proposals simply stating, ‘possibly there might be a result at the end’ or better even, ‘this research has a high probability of failure due to unforeseen experiment results’, ‘… not be successful in the results expected’, etc. Long gone are the times when conclusions ended with ‘further research will be needed in order to explore…’ Having been in the proposal kitchen long enough to know what’s cooking by scanning Programme Calls from the past two decades, there is a clear trajectory to be seen that by only explaining the basic research idea is simply not cutting it any more; moreover, it hasn’t tasted right for quite some time. Palates change; hence, impact, implementation, exploitation and commercialization ideas have to be added to the menu. They need to be described in detail in order to showcase the possibility of a successful spin-off/out/commercialization path.

Nowadays, professional support structures in research administration offices, in an effort to involve other parties across the technology transfer/knowledge exchange field very early in the game of ideation and proposal development, are very often the success factors to secure that very competitive bid to be funded.

Creating that Tasting Menu for Sumptuous Proposal Dishes
In order to make that paradigm shift possible, research administrators’ tasks have evolved dramatically in parallel with changes in sponsored funding programmes foci. We research administration officers are playing a huge role that starts way before there is anything tangible with which to make that commercialization buck. Processes and structures in place to give advice, innovative approaches to connect with technology transfer/knowledge exchange offices, IP Councils, Incubator & Science Parks, and decisions on how to pursue those plans with the PI’s intentions in mind are the modern success factors for our tasks at hand.

Once, it was enough to simply state: ‘IP rights will be protected,’ ‘good licensing terms will be offered,’ and ‘exploitation results pursued.’ Now, a full-fledged, detailed impact plan must be presented at the proposal stage. So, getting an early head start during the mentoring and counselling of PIs to ensure their attention to detail and the importance of these new game-changing factors will give us the competitive advantage in providing professional advice and support.

Conclusions
As is with the ever-evolving sponsored funding programmes, research officers have to undergo constant changes and adaptations in order to stay ahead of the game, to match the demands of funding authorities, to secure the best value out of each research dollar, to make sure those innovative commercialization sparks are put early onto the shopping list of the PI’s IP menu. Hence, to make that proposal menu an alluring one, a good collaboration base with all the other actors on the funding table has to be maintained. Decisions we make, plans we develop, advise we give, and the collaborations we form with the likes of technology transfer offices, etc. very early in the life of a project proposal can have profound impacts on the success and efforts years later. May the proposal dishes be perfect.

Bon Appetit! ☺

By Bruno Woeran

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In a previous article, we provided the history of the partnership between the federal government and research institutions and an overview of testimony on examining the overhead cost of research. A key objective of the testimony was addressing the multitude of myths surrounding facilities and administrative cost reimbursement (F&A). In this article, we will address some of these myths, provide perspectives on F&A recovery, and the status of the federal budget with respect to F&A.

Truth 1: F&A Costs are Real Costs that are Highly Regulated by the Federal Government

In a House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee Hearing in March 2017, then Secretary Tom Price testified that “About 30 percent of the grant money that goes out is used for indirect expenses, which, as you know, means that that money goes for something other than the research that’s being done,” (Facher, 2017, para. 7). Price and other members of the Administration were suggesting that NIH could sustain a more than $7 billion budget cut with no impact on the volume or quality of scientific research by cutting indirect costs. While some members of Congress expressed skepticism and significant reservations with respect to proposed NIH funding cuts, a few members of Congress made similar statements. In a recent Washington Times article, Representative Lamar Smith, Chairman of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology, wrote that “taxpayers would be surprised to learn that approximately one-quarter of that [federal] funding — more than $10 billion — pays not for the cost of research but to cover universities’ and nonprofits’ overhead,” (Smith, 2017, para. 2). The myth that F&A costs are not real costs of research was addressed in Jim Luther’s testimony before the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology’s Subcommittees on Research and Technology and Oversight. Jim testified that Federal funding for research includes both the costs of personnel, supplies, equipment and travel as well as the necessary physical infrastructure where research is conducted. This includes construction and maintenance of specialized facilities and labs, key operations infrastructure such as utilities, high-speed data processing, human and animal research review boards, radiation and chemical safety, and other compliance activities required when accepting federal funds. As Jim noted in his testimony, “it is as basic as turning on the lights and as complex as supporting the disposal of biohazardous materials like anthrax.” These costs are real, but cannot easily be assigned to individual projects and are therefore estimated by formula.

A related myth is that universities hire people and construct buildings so that they can get higher F&A reimbursement. In his testimony at the same hearing, Dr. Richard Vetter, Professor of Economics Emeritus, Department of Economics, Ohio University, and Director, Center for College
Affordability and Productivity, indicated that “I think, in a sense, universities make a profit off these indirect costs, and indeed, the research grants incentivize universities to increase their overhead costs and utilize bureaucracies.” Further, Representative Smith (2017) suggested, “taxpayers need to know that their investments in science are not being wasted on low-priority projects, marble-floored buildings and college administrators’ salaries.” (para. 12).

In his testimony, Jim noted that F&A costs are tightly regulated and audited by the government to ensure that the government funds only that portion of F&A costs that are attributable to the performance of federally funded research, and that F&A costs on Federal awards have remained relatively constant for the past two decades. Research universities are already providing millions of dollars annually to subsidize administrative costs for federally funded research above the 26% cap, and may lose as much as 30 to 40 cents on every research dollar. As Jim testified at the hearing, “With respect to research space, Duke’s experience is that a modest size research building increases our institutional cost by approximately $10 million per year even after accounting for F&A recovery.”

Institutions’ F&A rates also account for the different types of research that occur on campuses, as well as associated needs for specialized space, technology, infrastructure, biocontainment, hazardous waste disposal, and other structures and services. A common myth is that there is no reason for F&A rates to differ between institutions and a flat rate could be imposed; however, a flat rate would not account for these variations in research performed and the infrastructure needed, nor would it account for cost variations associated with different geographic regions.

**Truth 2: Institutions Cannot Absorb a Significant Reduction in F&A Costs**

Another myth that has been propagated is that institutions don’t need F&A and can absorb a significant reduction in federal reimbursement of these costs. Representative Smith suggested the $1.3 billion budgeted to F&A costs by the National Science Foundation “could pay for 2,000 more scientific research projects” (Smith, 2017, para. 5). The idea that the federal government could get the same or more science for less certainly has its appeal, but as universities have attested, it is simply a myth.

To counter this myth, universities drafted letters to then HHS Secretary Tom Price and OMB Director Mick Mulvaney, with many copying their congressional delegations. The letters outlined the very real costs that their institutions incur in support of federally funded research, including institutions’ subsidies of that research through cost sharing and unreimbursed indirect costs, and the additional subsidy that would be required to maintain support for research as a result of reductions in F&A reimbursement. Some letters detailed the hiring freezes, layoffs and program and building closures that could occur. As outlined in our previous article, NSF data indicates that universities contributed 24% of funding for academic research in fiscal year 2015, including close to $5 billion in unreimbursed indirect costs. A 10% cap on F&A, as proposed in the President’s 2018 budget, could not be absorbed by institutions, as detailed in more than 100 letters distributed to members of Congress. And that message was heard.

At an NIH Senate appropriations hearing in June 2017, a number of Senators expressed their strong opposition to proposed cuts to NIH funding and to indirect cost reimbursement. Senator Lamar Alexander indicated that proposed cuts to indirect costs were “harebrained” ideas that would result in fewer jobs and less research, and asked Dr. Collins to assess and report on how much state universities would lose in funding, how much they already contribute to F&A, and whether there would be more or less research as a result of any reduction in indirect cost rates. Senator Patty Murray asked what similar costs were for the NIH intramural program and what would happen if costs were capped at 10%. Dr. Collins indicated that the rate would similarly be about 30% for the intramural program and that it would be difficult to support the program under a 10% cap (SD138: Review of the FY2018 budget, 2017).

**Truth 3: F&A Rates Cannot be Lowered Concurrent with Efforts to Reduce Regulatory Burden**

Another myth circulating this year is that F&A rates can be lowered if regulatory burden is reduced. The President’s proposed FY18 budget included a provision that NIH would streamline Federal research requirements, including burden reduction measures that would further reduce grant award recipient costs (Budget of the U.S. Government, 2017). In seeking to identify means to justifiably reduce F&A reimbursement to universities, OMB and HHS staff sought to identify, with the assistance of institutions, regulations that could be modified, harmonized or eliminated to reduce F&A costs, lower reimbursement and reduce the NIH budget.

As detailed in a one-page document developed by the Council on Governmental Relations with discussion points on F&A costs and research regulatory reform, reducing research regulatory
“THE IDEA THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COULD GET THE SAME OR MORE SCIENCE FOR LESS CERTAINLY HAS ITS APPEAL, BUT AS UNIVERSITIES HAVE ATTESTED, IT IS SIMPLY A MYTH.”

burden cannot be tied to short-term reductions in F&A costs on grants (2017). Per the document: First, it would take several years for reform efforts to make their way through the regulatory and implementation process and for associated reductions in workload and cost to be realized. Second, with few exceptions, research universities have exceeded the 26% cap on administrative costs … and a number of regulations and policies that have not yet reached their effective date are expected to introduce additional administrative burden and unreimbursed costs. Lastly, administrative burden on faculty, the focus of most reports, does not necessarily track with costs. A significant driver of costs is the need to track expenditures on individual federal awards to the penny. Absent major changes to grants management that largely eliminate financial tracking in favor of research outcomes, cost reduction is likely to be limited (para. 1).

What meaningful research regulatory reform could achieve is a reduction in the amount of time investigators, as well as agency and university staff, spend on administration, increasing efficiencies in the use of federal research dollars and focusing investigators’ time on the conduct of research. If a very aggressive regulatory reform effort were to take place that would dramatically alter how federal research awards are managed and monitored, negotiated F&A rates may have the potential to decline over a period of several years.

Fiscal Year 2018 Budget and Budget Outlook

Despite efforts by the incoming administration to reduce NIH funding for fiscal year 2017, congress increased the NIH budget by $2 billion (FY 2017 Omnibus Summary, 2017). With respect to a proposed cut of 22% to the NIH budget in the President’s 2018 budget proposal released on May 23, a Senate spending panel has approved a $2 billion increase to the NIH budget that would raise the agency’s budget to $36.1 billion; the House has approved a $1.1 billion increase (Kaiser, 2017). House and Senate bills are expected to be reconciled later this year. Agencies are operating under FY17 spending levels under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 until December 8 (2017).

With respect to the provision in the President’s 2018 budget that would limit NIH indirect cost reimbursement to 10% of the total award, current appropriations and the Senate and House bills expected to be reconciled later this year include language that blocks the administration from cutting F&A reimbursement on NIH awards. The language in the House spending bill requires NIH to continue to apply provisions relating to indirect costs to the same extent and manner as applied in the third quarter of FY17 and that funds appropriated in the act cannot be modified to deviate from negotiated rates “beyond the proportional effect of such approvals in such quarter” (House Spending Bill, 2017). Other congressional efforts to support appropriate F&A reimbursement include a September 22 letter to House leaders from a bipartisan group of 86 members of the House emphasizing the vital importance of maintaining federal support for F&A research costs.

In the final article of this series, we will summarize the important points from the first two articles in the series, review lessons learned over the past year, and look to the future and how our community can continue to advocate for the importance of fair F&A reimbursement and the critical role F&A costs play in supporting the research enterprise.

References


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David Kennedy
Challenges in building interdisciplinary research collaboration

Interdisciplinary research is important for scientific research because diverse expertise can be drawn on to deal with complex research problems (Katz & Martin, 1997). For example, the Science of Learning (SoL) is a research field with collaboration between neurological and education research to investigate the brain’s role in learning.

While twisting the reward system can incentivize interdisciplinary collaboration, there are other challenges worth considering. For researchers from diverse disciplines to collaborate, they may over- or underestimate what other disciplines could contribute. For example, in the SoL research, some education researchers believe that, with the tools like MRI and EEG headgear, the investigation on brain activities could lead to better understanding of cognition. Others, however, are more skeptical; if we already know how a learning activity enacts students’ cognitive processes and leads to learning, what’s the benefit of having evidence at the neurological level?

Researchers who step out of their comfort zone to collaborate may face identity crisis too. Researchers often identify themselves with areas of research, and they have strong disciplinary orthodoxy in their specific area. So, to work at the intersection of two disciplines, researchers may be perceived as being at the periphery of the disciplinary communities, and hence not being fully recognized by either community.

Crossing the boundaries of disciplinary-based communities

Boundary crossing (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011) is proposed as a lens to help bridge the discipline-based communities. Boundaries draw lines of discontinuity, for example, between the communities of neurological research and education research. The two communities have demarcations in practices, norms and cultures. Crossing the boundaries involves building connections and transiting across the two discipline-based research communities.

Boundary crossers

Boundary crossing usually refers to a person’s transitions across different communities. At the International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS) 2016, a prestigious education research conference, Professor Elsbeth Stern (ETH Zürich) delivered a keynote speech on Educational Neuroscience: A field between false hopes and realistic expectations. Professor Stern was initially trained as a neurological scholar. Subsequently, she crossed over and established herself as an education researcher. She maintains legitimacy in both disciplines and...
continues to participate in both actively. She acts as a link and translator between neuroscience and education. Because of her boundary crossing and establishment in both fields, her presentation gave the audience a balanced and authentic understanding of the challenges of interdisciplinary neurocognitive research between neurological and education researchers.

**Boundary objects**

Boundary objects are artifacts sitting at the nexus of different community boundaries. They facilitate boundary crossing by bridging and linking communities together. For example, a water cooler in an office is a boundary object. When random colleagues go to the water cooler, they bump into each other and start to chat casually, giving opportunities for knowledge exchange. In this case, the water cooler is a boundary object independent from the two colleagues. It functions as a social bridge where different communities overlap. In research collaboration, policy documents, program plans and objectives, research seminars and such can be perceived of as boundary objects.

Creating and legitimizing boundary objects facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration. For example, the Science of Learning Research Centre (SLRC) is a SoL research initiative in Australia. The SLRC brings together neuroscientists, psychologists and education researchers from nine leading universities across Australia. Creating and legitimizing the SLRC as a boundary object not only establishes the initial critical mass of interdisciplinary researchers but also builds bridges, for example through its events and projects, to facilitate boundary crossing.

**Brokers**

Brokers or boundary spanners (Tushman, 1977) refers to individuals or organizations who adopt the role of developing relationships and networks within a community and aligning the community’s internal networks with external networks for transference across boundaries. They actively and deliberately bring two disciplines together, through a variety of means, such as facilitating dialogues.

In Singapore’s SoL journey, the National Research Foundation (NRF) plays the role of a broker. It matchesmake Singaporean universities with top overseas counterparts to connect their capacities in both neurological and education research. By making use of boundary objects, such as planning grants and research seminars, NRF links researchers from diverse disciplines and different universities to deepen insights into the brain’s role in learning. In this way, the relevant researchers are identified and brought together.

**Implications for research managers**

If interdisciplinary research collaboration is interpreted as boundary crossing, what does it mean to us as university research administrators (URAs)?

Firstly, we need to recognize that we are, in fact, important boundary objects. Researchers come to us in the course of grant submission, project management, other professional work, and social networking. Therefore, we are central points around which individual researchers gather and interact, much like a water cooler in an office. A URA who displays professional and personal trustworthiness will attract more researchers to his or her network and support an effective boundary object role, which benefits from having a wide and sustainable network.

“A URA who displays professional and personal trustworthiness will attract more researchers to his or her network and support an effective boundary object role, which benefits from having a wide and sustainable network.”

Secondly, we can capitalize on our role as boundary objects to be effective brokers for interdisciplinary collaboration. Different from a water cooler which passively sits at the juncture of the boundaries, we can actively and deliberately bring disciplines together within and across our universities. For example, Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University has a Research Administration Network which connects URAs from different schools within the university. Professional bodies, such as NCURA and ARMS (the Australasian Research Management Society) bring together URAs across universities and countries. I do not mean to cross the boundaries to do the job of others (which is prohibited by Union). Hence, there is a need for legitimate boundary crossing.

Active participation in such networks allows us to build strong connections with fellow URAs within and across universities. Such connections allow us to actively broker researchers in our schools and universities with researchers in other schools and universities. Collaboration meetings organized by ARMS in its annual meetings encourage us to identify research collaborations across universities, promote dialogues, and therefore enhance our roles as brokers.

Thirdly, to be effective brokers, we can pursue boundary crossing ourselves between research and research management. As suggested above, crossing the boundaries of schools, universities and countries can be achieved through active participation in research management communities. I would like to highlight that, just like Professor Stern, who is a boundary crosser between neurological research and education research, some research managers can be inspired to be boundary crossers between research and research management.

By boundary crossers, I do not mean a person who used to be a researcher and has now become a research manager, or vice versa. I mean that the person remains an active researcher and active research manager, being fully recognized as a legitimate member of both communities.

Having experience as boundary crossers ourselves, we would better understand how boundary crossers such as Prof Stern may feel, for example, feeling stressed, being susceptible to criticism for being neither here nor there, and other personal and professional insecurities. Gaining an embodied experience on how a boundary crosser feels, we could guide researchers for boundary crossing, with assurance of social and emotional support, which will help them build self-confidence.

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To Carryover or Not to Carryover:
That is the Question

By Amanda Humphrey and Bob Sullivan

One of the issues being discussed between universities is how to handle the issue of automatic carryover on a subaward when the sponsor does not impose a carryover restriction. While the majority of universities do not restrict carryover as a default, there are enough universities that restrict carryover as a routine business practice to make it point of conversation. We have found ourselves asking, why or why not? What is the value added? What does it simplify and what does it complicate? We consider some of these thoughts from the perspective of a university that does not restrict it (Northeastern) and one that does (Drexel). While we use carryover as an example, we do think that these reflections may be beneficial to contemplating other business processes.

Historically, Drexel has restricted carryover for all subawards as a default. This position was based upon a concern that the sub could potentially hit Drexel with a large invoice at the end of the project. Leadership was concerned that an auditor would see such large expenses at the end of a project as a red flag: An attempt to spend down the project at the end. There were also concerns that such large, late invoices may indicate lax overall project management and raise questions as to why we were not monitoring things like our burn rate. We did not want to have to explain to a sponsor why the funds were not being spent in a timely manner or give the appearance that subrecipients were not being monitored. By restricting carryover, Drexel hoped to incentivize subrecipients to invoice in a timely manner so as not run the risk of the loss of funds from one year to the next.

However, with the recent changes to the FDP subaward templates, Drexel decided to reexamine its standard carryover practices. With the addition of the phrase “no less frequently than quarterly” in the invoicing requirements, we were much more comfortable with allowing automatic carryover. While the language does not require zero-dollar invoices to be sent, Drexel is comfortable that the risk is low that a project will progress very far without having incurred any billable expenses. We think this language mitigates our risk by requiring subrecipients to provide us with timely invoices for costs incurred. We also took this opportunity to reexamine the large administrative burden we were placing on ourselves and on our subrecipients. For funds that had carryover restricted we needed to create a new cost center for each year of the project to keep the expenses separate from year to year. This would then require salary reallocations to the new cost center as well as the establishment of the new cost center and permissions across the various systems across Drexel. After discussions within the Drexel research community, the decision was made to move towards allowing automatic carryover. There are still some potential risks involved in this new change, but we look forward to experiencing a decrease in the administrative burden both to our subrecipients and ourselves.

At Northeastern, we also experience the push and pull of robust oversight against administrative burden. As with many business processes related to research administration, we find ourselves asking over and over again: Is the balance between administrative burden and enhanced compliance proportionate, or does one seriously outweigh the other? How much time will it take to complete the action, including follow up and tracking? Is the time spent worth the time of staff, the PI and the subrecipient? Is there another part of the process that we could strengthen that might support the team’s ability to step away from another administrative restriction?
In looking at carryover, there is certainly a strong argument to be made for selective restriction, especially when working with subrecipients that may benefit from additional oversight. An example would be when working with foreign subrecipients less familiar with standard United States accounting, federal grant requirements and deadlines. Certainly, there are times a similar argument could be made when working with a small community health or service center that is unfamiliar with the complexities of working with federal dollars.

However, for most US-based research institutions, which are a vast majority of our subrecipients, automatic carryover is one of the areas that appear to be a win for both researchers and administrators. As discussed earlier, Drexel had a valid concern about the subrecipient failing to submit invoices on a timely basis. In our experience, the carrot and stick of a carryover restriction is often not a sufficient deterrent for those subrecipients that fail to invoice or invoice late. If a subrecipient is going to fail to submit invoices until the last quarter, they need a notice prior to the progress report to remind them to submit an invoice. Using carryover restriction seems to be a little late in the process to be an effective methodology to control a lack of spending, invoicing or progress. If a subrecipient is late invoicing in year 1, then late to ask for carryover in year 2, the knock-on effect will continue to grow, potentially exacerbating the late spending/invoicing.

While no system of checks and balances is perfect, we have found that it is more effective to look for other procedures that dovetail with other monitoring efforts, such as routine portfolio check-ins between post-award grant officers and PIs/departments. These meetings provide the opportunity to look at under and overspending for grants from a high level, often preventing issues such as journal issues, effort questions and other potential problems. As an added bonus, this method models proactive communication between the central office and departments. In some cases, this proactive approach trickles down, with department administrators and PIs taking a few minutes on a routine basis to check in with their subrecipients about invoices.

There are certainly circumstances in which institutions may need to consider imposing a restriction, such as a foreign subrecipient or another project specific consideration. We encourage all of you to look at the new FDP carryover guidance, which is on the subawards page of the FDP website.

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**Research Administration Staffing**

According to the NCURA Central-Level Standards for Effective Research Administration Operations, 2017, “Institutions should be invested in and committed to a sufficient number of staff to (1) support the core functions of the research administration operation, with emphasis on sponsored programs administration and (2) meet obligations to sponsors and governmental and locally-mandated regulations.” NCURA Peer Reviewers and have observed that many effective sponsored program offices have notable practices in this area. For example, among other things, effective offices often:

1. have a process to continually assess and examine research administration staffing needs to determine if there is sufficient staff for the demand of the research enterprise.
2. have a regular process to ensure the research administration job descriptions are aligned with the duties.
3. realign job descriptions to ensure they are accurate to today’s research administration environment.
4. consider succession planning, employee growth and development, and professional development opportunities for research administration staff.
5. explore opportunities for cross-training research administration staff or other methods of ensuring temporary vacancies do not stymie the research enterprise.
6. conduct salary studies or otherwise compare titles, functions, and salaries for research administration staff.
7. develop informal and formal training programs to meet research administration staff’s professional development needs.
8. use new models for recruiting entry-level staff in areas that are geographically isolated (such as training undergraduate students and graduate students to assume research administration positions).

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Supporting innovation requires a combined effort of the scientific community, companies, policy makers, research administrators and government. In 2010, the Supreme Council for Science and Technology of Turkey approved the National Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for 2023 with the following targets: (i) devoting at least 3% of its gross domestic product (GDP) to R&D activities, of which two-thirds should come from the private sector, and (ii) having 300,000 full-time equivalent researchers of which 180,000 are employed in private sector (Wedekind, 2013). Based on this strategy, disseminating the culture of multilateral and multidisciplinary research and innovation, encouraging small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to become stronger actors within the national innovation system, and enhancing the contributions of research infrastructure to the knowledge creation capacity of Turkey are defined as the main focus points within the national innovation system.

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) is the leading funders of national innovation. To achieve the goals of the National Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for 2023, TUBITAK has taken several major steps to promote innovation in Turkey by offering a variety of grant mechanisms, which are designed to cater to the different needs of researchers in the private and public sectors, entrepreneurs, and scholars (www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/rd_ecosystemofturkey.pdf).

1. R&D Support for Researchers and Industry Cooperation

To achieve the goals of the National Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for 2023, TUBITAK devotes a significant amount of grants to researchers, scholars and companies. In 2016, approximately $115 million was granted to companies for their research, development and innovation (RDI) activities, and $200 million was granted to researchers for their RDI activities at universities and research centers. Increasing funding for these support programs helped Turkey rise in the Global Innovation Index ranking from 68 in 2013 to 43 in 2017.

2. Support for Technology Transfer Offices

The innovation ecosystem in Turkey has changed significantly after TUBITAK initiated a new support program for Technology Transfer Offices (TTO) in 2012. Through this program, TUBITAK has been providing financial support for the selected universities over a period of 5+5 years in order to help them establish their TTOs and make their activities sustainable. However, the term “technology transfer” was used in an unconventional way. The TTOs in Turkey are expected to function as a combination of “Sponsored Research Office,” “Office of Technology Licensing,” and “Incubation Centers” in the US. The existence of such entities with financial support and human resources is a further giant step for Turkey (Papila, 2015).

The objectives set by TUBITAK for the TTOs in Turkey are:

- Increasing economic growth through innovation and technology transfer;
- Enhancing domestic creation, development, and economic exploitation of innovative products and services for social, economic and cultural development
- Establishing effective networking among the TTOs to foster IP collaboration and technology transfer among regional stakeholders, as well as with international partners.

Main activities of the TTOs in Turkey include: Facilitating access to national and international grants, increasing university-industry collaborations, intellectual property protection and commercialization, support and creation of start-ups or spin-offs. The TTOs are expected to act as an interface between various actors of the innovation ecosystem in Turkey to pave the way to more RDI projects, increased collaboration with industry, new patents/licenses, new firms, and higher awareness about technology transfer.

3. Ranking Universities via “Entrepreneurial and Innovative University Index”

New generation universities have three missions. Along with teaching and research, a successful university must also have innovation as its third mission. This means universities have an increasingly important role in achieving economic growth and social progress. In connection with this third mission, since 2012, TUBITAK has been announcing a ranking list of the most innovative and entrepreneurial universities by evaluating universities on five dimensions: (i) scientific and technological excellence, (ii) intellectual property portfolio, (iii) cooperation, (iv) innovation and entrepreneurship culture, and (v) economic impact. Such a ranking system has boosted the innovation-oriented competition among universities, and contributed to the development of entrepreneurship and innovation.

4. Incentive Mechanisms for Researchers

TUBITAK has various incentives and award mechanisms to encourage researchers to take part in and to be more active in national and international research projects and activities. On a national level, TUBITAK awards scientists who...
make significant contributions to the advancement of universal science, and to the development of science and technology in different categories. In addition to TUBITAK’s Science and Incentive Awards, TUBITAK also presents Project Performance Awards to researchers to improve the quantity and quality of the outputs, results, and effects of research projects. On an international level, to encourage and increase participation in EU’s Horizon 2020 Programs from Turkey, TUBITAK also offers a variety of supports and awards, such as travel grants, pre-evaluation and coordination support, and success and above threshold awards (https://h2020.org.tr/en/supports-and-awards).

5. Supporting Investors
TUBITAK established the Venture Capital Funding Program to provide grants to venture capital funds focusing on early (seed and startup) stage equity investments in innovative SMEs that have the potential to develop innovative products, services and/or production processes (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, 2013). In addition to this national support, investors in Turkey also have the opportunity to benefit from international funds. In addition, the European Commission started to support investors in Turkey in 2014 through the Technology Transfer Accelerator Turkey (TTA Turkey). TTA Turkey is an initiative designed by the European Investment Fund (EIF) in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology, TUBITAK, the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey, and the DG Regional Policy of the European Commission (European Investment Fund, 2017). In the first call of TTA Turkey, the Diffusion Capital Partners (DCP) became the first selected technology transfer and venture capital funds in Turkey and raised approximately $30 million in funding (Diffusion Capital Partners, n.d.). In 2015, another group, Accelerating the Commercialization of Technology Venture Capital (ACT), was selected by the EU, and nearly $28 million was raised by ACT.

6. New Intellectual and Industrial Property Law
In addition to all these, significant developments have taken place on a policy level in Turkey. The new Intellectual and Industrial Property Law entered into force on January 10, 2017. The law intends to comply with recent developments in the EU IP Law, and renders the current legislation clearer, more understandable and systematic (Aktekin & Erciyas, 2017). The new IPR Law will also have a crucial role in determining the ownership of rights for the inventions developed at higher education institutions. All of these efforts culminated into the increase in the intellectual property portfolio of universities in Turkey.

“Along with teaching and research, a successful university must also have innovation as its third mission.”

References

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Being new to Research Administration, I’ve quickly observed over the past six years that a lot of us are “type A” personalities and we work in a service-minded profession. Uh-oh! We know what that might mean: We research administrators like to take on a LOT.

It’s like the saying, “If you want something done, give it to a busy person.” The problem with this is that we often add on to an already overloaded schedule without always thinking twice about what we’re signing up to do. We respond with “of course” or “no problem” when we’re asked for our services. Too often, saying yes eventually leaves us overburdened and TIRED.

A respected NCURA colleague, Derick Jones, shared an idea with me that I’d love to share with you. However, first let’s ask ourselves a few questions:

1. Do you often feel like there aren’t enough hours in the day to get everything that you hope and need to get accomplished?
2. Do you feel like you take on too much personally and professionally?
3. Do you feel like you have failed in some area of your life due to being overcommitted?

Many of us build budgets, perform financial reconciliations, and run funding forecasting for our PIs every day. What if we applied these skills to develop a budget/reconciliation/forecast for managing our time? Let’s give it a try and get ourselves out of the red!

There are only 24 hours in a day. When we have more obligations than hours in a day, we are creating a time debt. We’re in the red. Setting unrealistic expectations for ourselves leads to guilt and stress, which takes a physical, mental and emotional toll on us, and those around us. Let’s try to figure out how to get out of time-debt and balance the budget and forecast to plan our time accordingly.

We start by breaking down our most basic daily wellness activities (Saunders, 2015). Ideally, these should be necessities:

- Sleeping: 8 hours
- Eating: 1.5 hours
- Personal Grooming: 2 hours
- Exercise: 1 Hour

Total: 12.5 hours a day dedicated to Wellness activities

One way to think about our daily activities is to visualize a pie chart that puts the 12.5 hours into a full 24-hour day with each activity taking up a slice. You could then keep slicing into the pie with commuting, meetings, school/studying, personal time, etc. You could end up visualizing your time as two pies: Reality vs. Commitment.

My daily time budget = 11.5 hours (24 hours in a day – 12.5 hours of wellness activities). This means I have 11.5 hours of time available in a day for my external and internal commitments. The weekly amount would be 11.5 x 7=80.5 hours a week. This is a fixed expense.

Now let’s look at what we expect ourselves to do in an average week:

**External Expectations** (commitments to others)
- Work: 45 hours
- School/Studying: 10 hours
- Personal Relationships: 5 hours
- Family Events: 8 hours

Total External Expectations = 68 hours weekly/9.7 hours daily
Internal Expectations (commitments to yourself)
- Exercise: 7 hours
- Travel: 4 hours
- Personal Development: 6 hours
- Finances: 3 hours

Total Internal = 20 hours weekly/2.8 hours daily

Using the time calculations of our wellness necessities and external/internal expectations of ourselves, we can plug this information into a formula for success.

Time Investment Success Formula:
External Expectations + Internal Expectations ≤ 24 hours – daily wellness activities.

Using my example from above, 9.7 hours + 2.8 are NOT ≤ 11.5

Time Debt Stress Formula:
External Expectations + Internal Expectations > 24 hours – daily wellness activities.

Here’s the moment of truth! How do your expectations align with the reality of your time budget?

External Expectations + Internal Expectations <⇒ Time Budget
Using this equation as the example: 68 hours per week (external expectations) + 20 hours per week of wellness activities (internal expectations) > 80.5 hours (weekly time budget). My expectations of myself are far greater than my time budget.

Seeing this made me realize that I need to reevaluate my priorities and come to terms with the fact that I can’t do it all. And really, who wants to?

Your personal time budget may be different, but going through the exercise will help you better understand where you are spending your time. It will also raise your awareness of when you are reallocating your time to other categories, is it a sacrifice you are willing to make? Are you willing to give up an hour of sleep (wellness activity) to stay late at a family party (external expectation)? Are you willing to reallocate 4 hours of personal relationship time to work? Sometimes the answers will be yes, sometimes the answers will be no; the key is being mindful of the reallocation of your time and recognizing that if you continue to reallocate your wellness activity time and internal time to external expectations, your forecast will quickly show a deficit!

How would you advise your PIs in situations of working with limited resources? You would probably advise them to scale their project back. You may advise them that they could reallocate resources to meet the most immediate need, but do a forecast to see how long that plan could be sustained. When thinking of your own time as a budget, you should take your own advice.

Acknowledgement
I would like to especially thank Lisa Mosley and Samantha Westcott for their thoughtful additions in preparing this article.

References

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As grant administrators, we can always support innovation as long as we recognize innovation in a variety of forms. Faculty at predominately undergraduate institutions (PUIs) may be less likely to have technology transfers, clinical trials, or patents compared to faculty at research intensive universities (R1s), because PUIs are generally more focused on teaching. Research administrators (RAs) at PUIs may also be less experienced with some forms of innovation described throughout this issue. Often what is difficult about being an RA at a PUI—at least at a small one like mine—is that some faculty have highly technical research grants and others have grants for curricular development or community service projects. In this article, I posit that faculty working on all grants are innovating in one way or another, and RAs at PUIs need broad training and vision to recognize and support their innovation.

One perspective that may help RAs at PUIs think broadly about innovation is to learn more about Boyer’s model of scholarship. In Scholarship Reconsidered, Boyer (1990) described additional areas of scholarship in which faculty engage beyond the traditional scholarship of discovery (publishing new research in articles and books) to include the scholarship of teaching, integration, and application. While this seminal work is over 27 years old, many PUIs have adopted alternative forms of scholarship for the tenure and promotion process in addition to traditional scholarship of discovery. Many universities, not just PUIs, recognize the need for academia to engage with the public and contribute to the common good beyond scholarship of discovery (Ford, 2016). Boyer’s work gives us a lexicon to explain alternative forms of scholarship and their outcomes, including grants.

Scholarship of teaching probably needs no further definition but includes developing textbooks, publishing articles about teaching and student learning, as well as writing grants to support these activities. RAs at PUIs may often assist faculty who write programmatic or institutional grants (rather than research grants). For example, Whittier College faculty received two federal grants to dramatically change freshman writing courses, in one case to incorporate global themes and in another to incorporate science and research. Many universities, not just PUIs, recognize the need for academia to engage with the public and contribute to the common good beyond scholarship of discovery (Ford, 2016). Boyer’s work gives us a lexicon to explain alternative forms of scholarship and their outcomes, including grants.

Scholarship of integration (interdisciplinary work that brings together more than one field) is a strength that many PUIs may exercise more than their R1 colleagues. Many faculty routinely collaborate across disciplinary lines at PUIs. One example of a recent submission to the National Science Foundation (NSF) brought a biologist and education faculty member together to train graduate students who want to be science teachers. In that case, my office assisted with pre-award submission, identifying appropriate roles for each Principal Investigator (PI) on the grant, and broader dissemination plans.

Scholarship of application (the integration of theory and practice) is often seen when faculty engage with the community or provide service-learning opportunities for students. One recent grant provided opportunities for conferences, networking, and collaboration with K-12 schools for teacher professional development. ORSP assisted cradle-to-grave on this grant, and the funded collaboration resulted in a book series geared to teachers and school administrators.

Assisting on a variety of scholarly grants does not mean that RAs at PUIs will not assist on more traditional research grants. In these cases, faculty may be more familiar with the type of proposal writing, sponsors, and innovation they are doing because it fits squarely in their field. New forms of scholarship, such as a community or interdisciplinary collaboration, on the other hand, can be risky, and products from them are often innovative and fall outside of traditional peer-reviewed publication (White et al., 2012). For example, professors may decide to write papers with community partners (e.g., school principals, teachers or students) and those periodicals may not be peer-reviewed, or a mathematician and an artist may present artwork as the final outcome of their collaborative grant. RAs should not mistake these different outcomes as lacking innovation or scholarship. What is interesting about grants for non-traditional scholarship is that they may require the RA to help the PI articulate innovation. In fact, RAs may be able to assist with scholarship of teaching and application in deeper ways than discovery and integration because these projects are often accessible to non-experts. Work with faculty
on non-traditional scholarship can be slightly different than administration on traditional research grants.

To make the most of grants supporting non-traditional scholarship, RAs at PUIs need to:

1. Know faculty’s interests more broadly than at an R1. In addition to asking them about research projects, ask faculty about any collaborations they have across disciplines, ideas to improve their teaching, and service to the community they currently are doing or would like to do.

2. Look for a diversity of opportunities and share them widely. You may be surprised when a mathematician is collaborating with an artist and his current project fits better with National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) than NSF.

3. Ask questions during proposal development to help faculty articulate innovation and impact. For example, you might ask: How does interdisciplinarity help solve the problem? Who else could benefit from knowing the outcomes of your project? Do these answers suggest different dissemination outlets?

4. Find collaborators for PIs outside the institution. Faculty working outside their research area may need consultants in someone else’s field. They often do not know where to start looking, but we can use the NCURA network to help. For example, one NSF grant proposal required an independent evaluator, and my office found consulting agencies with experience on that specific grant through our connections.

RAs may be surprised how much they are part of the innovation at PUIs. During proposal development, we can ask the right question at the right time or guide someone to include a collaborator that truly changes the nature of the project. During post award, RAs can remind PIs of other people who will be interested in their results. We can also encourage faculty to view these projects through a scholarly lens because they may view what they are doing as “just” teaching or service. RAs at PUIs need to remember that most faculty managing a grant have the same goal, to contribute to knowledge; what that knowledge is and who the audience is varies greatly depending on the project.

Most faculty want their scholarship to make a difference and to that effect, some non-traditional forms of scholarship may have the broadest impact on education, local communities, and the world. While RAs’ training so often takes us to narrow places, our work at PUIs requires an expansive and comprehensive view of scholarship, innovation, and indeed research administration.

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By now, the inherent value in obtaining certification in research administration should be well known, but it’s always useful to revisit the benefits, both for employers and for recipients.

For those who obtain certification, whether it’s the Certified Research Administrator (CRA), the Certified Pre-Award Research Administrator (CPRA), or the Certified Financial Research Administrator (CFRA), they have set themselves apart from the rest of the profession. This is particularly important for those who are seeking advancement at their current institution or who are changing institutions. It’s a credential, along with a Master’s Degree in Research Administration, which stands out on one’s resume.

For hiring managers, an employee with a professional certification is an employee who has demonstrated not only a mastery of the Body of Knowledge, but also (and possibly just as important) a commitment to staying in the field of research administration. People who take the time and effort to obtain certification are demonstrating dedication to their own professional development. Particularly when hiring from outside the institution, where the applicant may be otherwise unknown to the hiring manager, certification indicates a baseline level of professionalism.

But the world of research administration is changing. The world as whole is getting a lot smaller, and it’s doing so at an astonishing pace. As few as ten years ago, most research administrators in the US could only wonder with regard to research taking place overseas, but today NCURA has an International Region with representatives from 38 countries. Videoconferencing and cloud storage have made working with a foreign institution nearly as easy as collaborating with a foreign institution in a neighboring state. This is particularly important for those who are seeking advancement at their current institution or who are changing institutions. It’s a credential, along with a Master’s Degree in Research Administration, which stands out on one’s resume.

A belated welcome to the 21st century!

As these international collaborations have grown more commonplace, a question that I receive more and more frequently is, “Will the Research Administrator’s Certification Council ever offer an international version of the Certified Research Administrator exam?” The answer to that question is the same as the answer to every question in the world of research administration: *it depends.*

Before we can create an exam, there are some logistical issues that would need to be addressed and resolved.

“...certification indicates a baseline level of professionalism.”

The first issue is to determine the audience, the format, and the content of the exam. Should it be an exam for US-based personnel who are collaborating with non-US institutions? Or should it be for non-US personnel who are collaborating with US-based institutions? Those two exams would look vastly different. Or might the exam be a hybrid of sorts, one that covers both US and non-US statutes and regulations, with some areas of common international interest, such as intellectual property and human subjects?

Just to further complicate matters, it should go without saying that “non-US based institutions” is a term that covers an extraordinarily large area. Not to belabor the obvious, but it covers the entire planet with the exception of certain parts of North America. How does one accurately incorporate the research issues relevant to the European Union, the United Kingdom, the Pacific and Far East, Central and South America, the Middle East and Africa, and Eastern Europe all in a single test?

The answer might be that it won’t be a single test; there might be multiple exams that reflect the research issues in different global regions. That approach, however, might prove to be administratively daunting. At RACC we know very well how time-consuming it is to maintain the quality of just three credentialing exams. While adding one additional exam is not a serious issue, adding three or four new exams (and updating their ever-changing technical content) does give one pause.

Where do we go from here? In the near-term, we will gather information, review best practices, and seek guidance from the collective wisdom of the profession. I’d like to take this opportunity to invite your opinions and encourage you to share it with RACC. Any thoughts that you have regarding an international certification exam would be helpful.

If you have feedback you’d like to provide us, you can share it by e-mailing us at international@racc-cert.org. You can also post your thoughts on the NCURA’s Global Collaborate Community.

Given the international nature of sponsored research administration both now and in the future, it would seem that a Certified Research Administrator–International (CRA-I) exam would be inevitable. But I should also point out that, geologically speaking, the Grand Canyon was also inevitable – albeit 17 million years in the making!

I certainly hope that it won’t take quite that long to resolve these issues and create an international exam. That being said, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. I urge you to contact us at international@racc-cert.org to share your thoughts. When we have something to report, we’ll post it on our website and Facebook page to keep you all informed.

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love those who can smile in trouble, who can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but they whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves their conduct, will pursue their principles unto death. -Leonardo da Vinci

Every evening I usually take a moment to reflect upon the day. It’s not that I set time aside to reflect, but rather something that naturally occurs when I’m watching something mindless on the television or pretending to listen to my son talk about a YouTuber I’ve never heard of. I use the time to recall the meetings I attended, any important calls I may have had, recall what I may have said, or how I expressed an opinion. Often, I admit to myself that I could have done something different or better. Occasionally, I am left content with how I managed a particular situation, but those instances are rare. I like to think that this exercise has helped me to become a better research compliance professional and a better colleague and supervisor.

Reflection is not only an important personal exercise, but it is also something that we as research institutions can benefit from greatly. Naturally, our professions demand that we maintain focus on the looming deadlines and satisfy the promises made to our constituents. Such temporal pressure leaves little opportunity for research institutions to reflect on their paths or to appreciate the struggles overcome, small and large. Nonetheless, our field is no stranger to the challenges created by staff and leadership turnover, and often, compliance-related initiatives and processes sometimes come and leave with the individuals who were the greatest advocate. Other initiatives or models may fail due to lack of interest or resources, but it is helpful to understand the institutional history and to appreciate the reasons why a particular initiative failed to survive the test of time.

Such historical knowledge is critical when planning ahead and building for the future. For example, many research institutions have attempted to launch an internal research administration training or certification program as a means to invest in the development of their staff. After the initial enthusiasm wanes, interest may subsequently decline, the instructors may move on to other positions or different institutions, and the lack of resources and commitment to the endeavor spell doom for the once great idea. Yet, reflection upon such failure can later serve as a foundation for a better project-based succession planning, and securing financial and moral support from senior leadership early in the process in order to appreciate the struggles overcome, small and large.

Reflection upon the last 30 years of reported audit findings and federal settlements demonstrates that regardless of whether we work at a large, reputable research institution or an emerging research institution, the expectations remain high if your institution is a recipient of federal research funds. The old adage of “we do it this way because we’ve always done it this way” is simply not acceptable. Reflecting upon the Uniform Guidance, we may become more nimble, efficient, flexible and open-minded, fighting the tendency to become complacent or being satisfied with the status quo. Reflection upon the origins of each of these requirements empowers us with the knowledge to make critical decisions about what we deem as reasonable controls and processes at our respective institutions.

And as the forecast of the federal funding climate continues to be less than stable, we find ourselves at a critical juncture where the demands upon research administration and compliance professionals will only increase as competition for the limited funds reaches epic proportions. As a result, we must become more nimble, efficient, flexible and open-minded, fighting the tendency to become complacent or being satisfied with the status quo. Reflection upon the last 30 years of reported audit findings and federal settlements demonstrates that regardless of whether we work at a large, reputable research institution or an emerging research institution, the expectations remain high if your institution is a recipient of federal research funds. The old adage of “we do it this way because we’ve always done it this way” is simply not acceptable. Reflecting upon the Uniform Guidance, we must remind ourselves that one of its primary purposes was to reduce the risk of waste, fraud and abuse. Therefore, we should all anticipate a greater degree of scrutiny applied upon our internal controls around sponsored programs.

Reflect, then prepare because tough times lie ahead. Our winter is coming. Be like Jon Snow and get ready.

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Congratulations! You received word from the sponsor that the proposal you submitted for that interesting international project will be funded. All your hard work reviewing and preparing the proposal for submission has paid off. Now that you have the award, preparation to get this project off the ground is underway, and an export control review should be part of the process.

What are U.S. Export Controls?
The U.S. export control regulations are a group of federal regulations that restrict the export of certain controlled items, software, and technical information outside the U.S. and, in certain cases, to non-U.S. persons within the U.S. Two such regulations are the U.S. Department of State’s International Traffic in Arms Regulations (“ITAR”) and the U.S. Commerce Department’s Export Administration Regulations (“EAR”). An export control risk assessment should be conducted as early in the project cycle as possible. If export control issues are not identified and resolved early on, they can lead to unexpected project delays, changes in project scope, breach of contract claims, and most seriously, violations of law. The time spent up front reviewing an international project for export control risks is time well spent.

Where are export control issues likely to arise in international projects?
To properly assess the export control risks posed by an international project, it is useful to know where such risks are most likely to lurk. Below are questions to help you ferret out potential export control risks, otherwise known as export control red flags.

1. What is the nature of the international project? A threshold question for any U.S. university is whether the international project involves research. If so, the next question is whether the project’s research meets the definition of “fundamental research” as defined in the U.S. export control regulations. Both the ITAR and EAR contain “fundamental research” exclusions, exempting fundamental research from U.S. export controls. Exploring what is and is not fundamental research is beyond the scope of this article. However, the important point is this - determining whether the project’s research falls within the scope of the ITAR and/or EAR’s fundamental research exclusion is essential in order to accurately assess the project’s export control risks, and this determination should be done prior to the project’s start date. But beware! Even if the project’s research results fall within the fundamental research exclusion, export control issues can arise as a result of other project activities, as further discussed in this article. Finally, not all university projects are research projects. A university may engage in international service, education, or training projects. In such cases, the fundamental research exclusions may have limited application, if they apply at all.

2. Will the project involve shipments or transfers of physical items, technical information, or software outside the U.S.? International projects in which physical items and/or non-publicly available technical information or software will be shipped or otherwise transferred outside the U.S. should be flagged for export control review. In some cases, such shipments or transfers might require an export license. To determine whether an export license is required, you will need to know what will be sent abroad, where and to whom it will be sent, and for what purpose. Be aware that if an export license is required, the license application should be submitted at least several months in advance of the shipment date to avoid project delays.

3. Does the project involve transactions in sanctioned countries or with restricted parties? The economic sanctions regulations administered by the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”) may restrict the university’s ability to engage in a broad array of transactions involving countries subject to comprehensive sanctions programs as well as activities involving individuals or entities on its Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Parties (“SDN”) list. For this reason, projects involving comprehensively sanctioned countries or transactions with SDNs, whether compensated or not, require careful review to determine whether any proposed activities, including but not limited to exports, require a license from OFAC. However, it is not just OFAC’s sanctions that you need to consider. Other U.S. federal agencies have their own “restricted party” lists which may impose additional restrictions on certain activities with listed parties. For example, the Commerce Department’s Entity List, which includes certain non-U.S. universities, imposes broad license requirements on exports to listed
entities. For this reason, it is important to screen entities and individuals with whom the project will engage against U.S. restricted party lists.

4. Will project personnel receive any technical information or software that could present a “deemed” export risk? Under U.S. export control regulations, sharing or providing access to certain controlled technical information or software to a foreign national within the U.S. may be deemed an export to that person’s home country and, as a result, trigger a license requirement. Identifying deemed export risks are important, especially in situations where an international partner will be sending its personnel to your university to participate in research, training, workshops, etc. Although sharing fundamental research results or publicly available information does not create a deemed export risk, if the project personnel will be receiving proprietary, confidential, or otherwise sensitive technical information, sharing such information with the project’s international partners in the U.S. may present a deemed export risk and, therefore, deserves careful review.

"those who resolve export issues together minimize project delays together."

You’ve identified some export control red flags, now what?

In-depth export control reviews, license determinations, and development of compliance plans can be complex and time consuming. Unless export control compliance is one of your core responsibilities, it is important to escalate the project and its red flags to someone within or outside the university who can follow up and take appropriate actions. Once red flags are identified, it is important that they receive additional review and that the resulting conclusions are documented and maintained according to university and regulatory requirements. In addition, key project personnel should be made of aware potential export control risks and resulting compliance plans. Export controls are not intuitive. Clear communication about the project risks and personnel responsibilities with respect to compliance plans will go a long way to ensure that the international project is able to move forward with a minimum of delays.

Conclusion

Export control risks are manageable but require advanced planning. The key is to identify the red flags early and, when a risk is identified, take appropriate actions. Clear communication between administrators and project personnel is important. As the export saying goes, those who resolve export issues together minimize project delays together!

The author would like to thank Simon Kerridge for inviting her to lead a discussion group on export controls and international projects at NCURA’s 2017 annual meeting as well as those who participated in the discussion group, out of which this article grew.

Michelle Avallone, J.D., M.A., is the Director of Export Controls in the Office of Research Compliance and Training at Columbia University. She is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University. Michelle can be reached at mlav25@columbia.edu

Can you Kanban?

In the age of tracking systems, smart phones, and instantaneous status updates, how do you manage “work flow?” Workflow systems can range from applications that help visualize your office processes to full-blown tracking systems to notify you of completed tasks—and those annoying uncompleted tasks too! These systems are not a “one-size-fits-all” solution, but they can be simpler than you think.

Kanban boards have been around for a long time. Kanban describes a just-in-time manufacturing process that records the movements of materials or “logistics” on special cards. The beauty of the Kanban system is that each card is a unique entity. Nothing in our workspace ever tracks at the same pace or speed, so how do you individually track each entity and manage its related logistics? Kanban boards allow for elegant (e.g., a software application with all of the workflow notification bells and whistles) or simple (e.g., a dry erase board with sticky notes) solutions, and you can pick the version that fits you or your system best.

Kanban boards allow you place “cards” (tasks) into varying columns. The columns can represent a variety of task assignments:

- Personal to-do list: Open, in progress, under review, done
- Proposal-based workflow: Biosketch, aims/goals, science, budget, etc.
- Post-award workflow: Expense tracking, monthly reconciling, managing subs, etc.
- Software development: In development, in testing, in QA, in production

During a recent software implementation meeting, our team discovered a bottleneck in our office procedures that were not mapping well to our software system’s workflow processes. Thankfully, we were still in a pilot phase of the rollout, and we quickly found the bottleneck before it could affect the larger scale of our enterprise-wide implementation. We found a sleek (and free—very important) online tool. Within one day of creating the “cards” and assigning them to teams to mark their progress, it became visually obvious that we had an efficiency issue tied to a single process. With some quick white-boarding and rethinking why we had designed the office process that way, we were able to correct the logjam that we inflicted on ourselves.

Workflow tracking is important, but do not overthink it, and do not over-engineer it. Find the solution that most easily fits the situation you are trying to manage. Most importantly, do not look for a solution that costs more to manage then the benefit it provides you!

References


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University research has traditionally been funded through federal and non-profit grant and contract mechanisms, and in some cases for-profit contract mechanisms such as clinical trials. Within the last several years, however, a novel source of support for academic research projects has become available through internet-mediated social media campaigns: Scientific crowdfunding. In contrast to tradition funding sources, crowdfunding uses the online community to directly appeal to the public for small donations from a large number of people, the sum of which is made directly available to the investigator to spend on the project. This new funding paradigm bypasses much of the rigor associated with traditional proposal development, together with the need for peer review and lengthy review cycles, as well as university approval and oversight.

Crowdfunding offers researchers many advantages over established grant mechanisms. It provides funds quickly and it can be used to support investigators who have been previously turned down for funding.
or for research that isn’t traditionally funded. Faculty members, particularly early career researchers, can use crowdfunding to obtain preliminary data for major grant support, such as NIH and NSF. Although researchers don’t have to put together a rigorous proposal following traditional sponsor guidelines, crowdfunding campaigns still require a significant investment of time and effort in donor outreach.

Crowdfunding also provides benefits to the donor because it appeals directly to an audience with a personal interest in the project and it allows donors to develop an understanding of how research is involved in the creation of new knowledge. Campaign donors often disseminate information about the project and its results to their own social media communities, which can result in additional support.

Many commercial website platforms are available for assisting faculty with developing an appeal. Some of these platforms support specific areas of research and others provide for general support. All of them, however, have various rules about defining the financial success of an appeal, and therefore the amount of funding available to the investigator, and most take a commission of 5-10% of the funds received.

Crowdfunding can be an effective way of generating research funds for certain types of projects—generally those that don’t require the funding level of major sponsors—and it provides the investigator with independence from peer review and sponsor deliverables and sometimes, university oversight and compliance. However, the funding of research from support outside of the university umbrella raises a host of challenges that universities need to address with the investigator in order to protect both the investigator’s interests as well as the university’s research mission and non-profit status.

One of the major attractions of crowdfunded projects, i.e., a large number of contributors supporting the project, can actually work against the university’s mission if some of the backers, for example, expect to use the proposal or results for their own proprietary purposes or share in intellectual property or patents that may result from the project. For example, patents trolls may contribute to a campaign in order to take the best proposal ideas and file provisional patents before the researcher does. Yet developing a crowdfunding campaign with onerous legal language about the university’s non-profit research mission might make an otherwise attractive campaign appear less so. And, since the funding appeal is being developed outside of the university, the university may not wish the crowdfunding campaign to use its logo or to appear as if it has university endorsement.

In response to issues that have arisen from extra-university crowdfunding efforts, many schools have come to embrace the concept of crowdfunding for basic research as well as for conferences and campus events and many have developed their own platforms that allow investigators to prepare and present proposals to the public through the auspices of the university rather than outside of the university umbrella. With these platforms, the investigator receives the assistance of the university in developing a campaign and the donated funds are considered a tax-exempt gift to the university rather than a taxable source of income to the investigator. In addition, researchers are able to use all of the funds without payment of commissions associated with for-profit platforms because funds are placed in a university account that makes them readily available for project expenses. University platforms also provide assistance with publicizing the research results to the backers and larger community.

Because university crowdfunding platforms are also used to develop non-research campaigns, they usually run through the development office rather than the research office and the funds are considered philanthropic gifts rather than sponsored funding. For research campaigns, it is important that the investigator and the research office understand that the platform may not address the policies and compliance expectations of research projects. For these reasons, it is important to ensure that crowdfunded research proposals are reviewed and approved by the research office before they are presented to the public, in the same way that sponsored proposals are.

"Crowdfunding offers many advantages over established grant mechanisms."

The university’s research office, together with the development office, can assist faculty in this regard by developing policies and procedures for the review and approval of research proposals before they are submitted to the public. Here are some of the issues that are of interest to the research office that may not be covered in the university’s general crowdfunding procedures:

- The type of an account that will be used for the crowdfunds, e.g., gift account or sponsored account
- The office that will receive credit for the crowdfunds, e.g., development and/or research office
- The appropriate indirect cost rate to support research infrastructure and operational costs
- Whether residual funds can be used for other purposes without misrepresenting the project to donors
- Compliance requirements such as IACUC and IRB are in place
- The proposal does not unknowingly disclose property information of the faculty member or university
- Special consideration is given to proposal ideas since the project will be presented to the public, in contrast to confidential peer review
- Tempering the expectations of donors who may have strong personal feelings about the research that the proposal is dealing with experimental research and that the investigator cannot guarantee positive results or a timeline of results or that any results will be obtained at all
- Making clear in the crowdfunding appeal that the university owns all resulting intellectual property and patent rights that donors will not be able to share in any potential royalties
- The investigator will not be able to negotiate any terms of the project with a donor and will not be able to return their contribution if they are not satisfied with the results

The issues above are no different from the normal expectations of a sponsored research office but they can be easily overlooked if crowdfunding campaign platforms are maintained outside of the research office, e.g., with development. University crowdfunded projects can be a successful way of generating research funds but they should be reviewed in their entirety and approved by the sponsored research office before being presented to the public on the university’s platform.

Bruce Elliott, PhD, is retired from Northwestern University where he was Executive Director of the Office for Sponsored Research, Chicago Campus. He enjoys judging in science fairs and was recently chosen Volunteer of the Year in the Army’s eCybermission program. Bruce can be reached at bruce.elliott722@gmail.com
We live in exciting times and I’m exceedingly fortunate to be working at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Oncology-focused research, patient care and cancer prevention is an easy mission to support. We have two groups on campus (Strategic Industry Ventures and Technology Licensing Office) who are primarily responsible for commercialization/technology transfer (TT) and connecting-the-dots between institutional resources/expertise and the outside commercial world. Our office is also fortunate to have support (i.e. air cover) from senior administration. Leadership and the TT groups are now fully aligned that the only way we will truly turn the tide in oncology is to ensure ideas and inventions are actually developed and introduced into the healthcare market in a timely manner. This was not always the case at MD Anderson or other institutions where I’ve worked in the past.

I share the above not to brag on my employer but to set the stage. Some of the more “novel” ideals suggested below to push for better TT will not be well received at many institutions. Bureaucratic, risk-averse wheels turn very slowly on new ideas. While not an exhaustive list, significant barriers to ultimate commercial development of intellectual property (IP) often stem from (i) lack of true de-risking/development funding and (ii) early contractual obligations and constraints that destroy value. The examples and possible solutions below are healthcare-centric but the larger concepts will apply to most disciplines.

**Funding Alternatives**

Sources for early stage development funds to advance research include academic new hire/start-up funds, Federal and state grants, foundations, donors, etc. Most are competitive in nature and not guaranteed but they are viable sources. On the other end of the economic spectrum are corporate funds which can be applied to in-licensing, product development and sales and marketing efforts (usually accessed through license / development agreements). A bit earlier than these corporate sources are the venture capitalist and angel investors.

The chasm between the two extremes of funding sources is affectionately (or unaffectionately) referred to as the “Valley of Death”. This is where most university created ideas and inventions ultimately die. The details will be project-specific but the problem is very real and, in my world, best illustrated by the following example:

Dr. Smith writes a grant on a new, exciting area of biology. It is funded, her lab completes the work and ultimately discovers a very interesting biological artifact that is an interesting drug target.
The next grant funds the development of some early antibodies which show early proof of concept (POC) with the disease state. The idea is completely unappealing to most VCs who typically invest in platforms and pipelines with the potential for nose-bleed inducing returns, not single assets. Pharma companies will likely have little interest since the asset is still, in their eyes, exceedingly early and dripping with risk. It can and does happen but it is overall quite rare.

Dr. Smith finds herself and this promising project mired in the Valley of Death, unable to secure additional research funds from the traditional sources but still too early for a licensing transaction (and too simple for a start-up play). If she was lucky, she might be able to cobble together other funding or have a wealthy donor take an interest in her work to allow the program to move forward towards the clinic. Under the best of circumstances, this makes an already slow development process move at glacial speeds.

Versions of this story take place constantly across all disciplines. Occasionally we can secure a license or the scientists/clinicians secure additional de-risking developmental dollars but in many times, the project lingers and often dies. Below are a few avenues MD Anderson has pursued to tip the balance of success and pace of development in a positive direction.

Large, Focused Dedicated Fund

Many institutions have developed smaller seed or POC funds to help advance projects incrementally. There are exceptions but most of these smaller funds do not have significant resources available to meaningfully advance many or larger projects (e.g. drug development). Plus, they can become the “funding source of last resort” and need proper governance to prevent abuse and poor investments.

One solution being built at MD Anderson and other institutions are large (e.g. $100M+) funds, set up in partnership with outside drug development experts and financiers. A fund of this magnitude has the critical mass to (i) advance multiple pharmaceutical / therapeutic assets and takes advantage of a portfolio effect and (ii) de-risk assets while bypassing less friendly forms of financing. Ideally, these assets are developed and outsourced once they are in the clinic or adequately de-risked.

Smaller, Evergreen Fund

This is a smaller, more incremental, less ambitious approach. Through several conversation with forward-thinking development officers, we’ve created a new program. Donors are very comfortable with making donations to a specific lab or disease focus to support certain research. This variation relies on applying certain donor funds to specifically advance promising, later stage projects (again, with a portfolio view). As projects are advanced and ultimately commercialized, a portion of the licensing proceeds are returned to the program (not the donor) to grow the evergreen fund and advance additional programs. The beauty of this approach is it can be started small and expanded overtime.

Self-inflicted Contracting Wounds

TT folks are hard-wired to look for problems and hurdles to commercialization. Examples include competitive landscape issues, prior art / patenting issues, “manufacturability” and scale issues and previous contractual obligation issues. Sometimes these are surmountable. Other times, they literally kill a promising program.

On the contracts topic, technology transfer offices (TTOs) will dive into the details of all sponsored research agreements (SRAs), material transfer agreement (MTAs), non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), previous related licenses, etc., looking for problems related to intellectual property or the ability to proceed with commercialization. Often times, these seeds of destruction were planted years in advance, well before an invention was ever created.

Below are a few simple suggestions that can help mitigate these sorts of self-inflicted, long-ranging problems:

1. Stop perpetuating the problem – I fully realize (i) this is easier said than done, (ii) many scientists will complain rather loudly and (iii) that existing agreements and the unfortunate precedent set will be challenging to overcome. Still, as the saying goes, if you stuck in a hole, the first step is to stop digging.

2. Align with all internal stakeholders – Often times, contracting personnel do not appreciate the full impact of certain IP language or have the confidence or arguments to help overcome the push-back during language negotiations with industry. It is absolutely key to have a meeting of the minds with the TT office to strategize, develop relationships and most importantly understand “why” one avenue or position is problematic. As important, together you can craft an alternative philosophy and contact language which is acceptable to both the institution as well as the industry partners.

3. View outside relationships as partnerships – Obviously this is not always feasible but we often forget, industry needs our academic colleagues and relationships as much as our scientists need them. No one would stay in a self-centered, one-sided personal relationship for long. It make no sense to do so via a contract either. Certainly, there will be times the institution will need to “move on”.

4. Align with senior management on the Big Picture – This is the most important factor. Senior leadership at your institution must not only understand the issues and reasons but they must be fully aligned with the evolving party-line on historic problematic language and why it is the “dawn or a new era”. They too need the rationale and arguments to stem the inevitable calls from faculty who are upset with the new institutional position.

Larry Hope, MBA, RMK, is the Associate Director of the Strategic Industry Ventures Group at MD Anderson Cancer Center. His professional career has been intertwined with technology transfer, commercialization, start-ups and helping translate dreams into realities. He can be reached at lhope@mdanderson.org
As a fan of America’s “Wild West” settlement history, I was enthusiastic to have had a possibility of spending two weeks at Oregon State University in Corvallis. It has turned out that the place is not only in close distance from a historical Oregon Trail final stop (at Oregon City), but also the location of an outstanding university research enterprise and excellent research administration. I had some great experiences with research administration processes from my earlier short visits to American universities (Arizona State University in 2010 and Washington State University in 2014) and the visit to OSU has confirmed to me that the American and European (with some exceptions in UK) approach to research management is still very different than that of the Czech Republic because the importance of research management and its understanding is underestimated and undervalued not only in majority of research institutions, but also on a governmental level.

This reality very much follows from the understanding and acceptance of research funding. Until recently, researchers in Central Europe relied almost exclusively on state funds, and they spend a lot of time discussing and complaining about every tiny increase of amount going to non-institutional resources, his/her American colleagues are accustomed to fighting for every cent of research money in competitive calls, and research administrators are an important component in securing an award, spending money and closing up the project. If a researcher in Central Europe often participates in a competitive call only to increase their personal welfare, his/her colleagues in the US must participate to ensure salary for non-paid summer months and to be able to employ young researchers in his/her research team. If our young research students in the Czech Republic complain about insufficient support from institutional money, their American counterparts must rely only on money coming from competitive resources.

If I do not take into account people employed exclusively for management of some big projects financed from European Structural Funds, there are about three people at Mendel University in Brno (MENDELU, the university with about 10,000 students and 600 researchers) dealing with research management at the university level and about one more at every college (with the exception of the College of Economics, which has three employees). What a difference compared to 50 people in Office for Sponsored Research and Award Administration (OSRAA) at OSU, with additional support from administrators at the departmental level and others at colleges level. Are these numbers indicative of the importance and quality of research at the Czech and American universities?

The approaches to research management at Czech universities and OSU represent different conceptions and perceptions of research administration importance under both systems. While OSU researchers are happy not to be involved in any of the research administration burdens, including simple ones such as sending documents for signature, Czech Republic researchers are often striving to increase their employment tenure by participating in such managerial tasks, even if they do not have any training for them. Often, the result is an unclear delineation among both research administrators and PIs in research project teams, unclear responsibilities and plenty of storms about a big workload connected with project administration and who should do what.

At OSU, the workload of the research support office consists especially in controlling, auditing, negotiating, reporting and closing up functions in general for all the relevant big projects done at the university (proposal reviews, grant negotiation, financial management, expenses approval, financial reporting etc.). In the Czech Republic, the administrators are often striving to do some so-called coordinating or task-managing roles in individual big projects (usually funded by EU), which are more revered than the usual research paid from institutional resources. But this is done often to the detriment of day-to-day research administration, which is underdeveloped and not well understood. It is not a surprise that there are missing research guidelines and instructions (including F&A distribution) for researchers, and standard operating procedures...
are highly underdeveloped. Also, the division of roles between central units and colleges is very poor. Financial control is provided by the Economical Department, where there is little knowledge about individual projects, their purpose and importance. It is no surprise that words such as “we do not need so many projects” and “projects are only nuisance for us” are so often heard in the halls of Czech universities.

What a difference when compared to OSU, where all the expenses connected with a project must be first approved by Business Centre (there are 8 Business Centres at OSU – each one with responsibility for several colleges or institutes) and then reviewed and checked by a relevant manager within the Cash and Financial management Team at OSRAA. All the processes are done electronically through BANNER, OSU’s electronic financial system.

Complaints about the growing administrative burden in research activities are commonplace. Compared to the US, we may still be happy. At OSU, there is a group of administrators dealing only with so called research integrity, observing compliance with the ethical and legal responsibilities in research involving live vertebrates, biosafety, chemical safety, radiation safety, human subjects and financial conflicts of interest. What has been done in the Czech Republic up to now is done in a less formal way. There is a very serious research compliance agenda in US research. The work of the research administrator should consist in reducing the administrative burden for researchers. From this point of view, the overall research support environment in the Czech Republic and the US still exhibits big differences. Being at a US institution it makes me feel good that every time I asked a question about a certain situation or problem in research administration, the immediate answer is always, “Yes this problem is dealt with in this and that policy, procedure or regulation. We can find it here and there on these web pages…” Even if there is a big administrative burden put on research administrators, it is much easier to work under standardized and predictable conditions than in a system where the procedure or next step depends only on the discretion of an individual person. Moreover, there is a frequently asked question section on web pages related to most of the common issues dealt with by responsible departments at US universities. Try to find something like that at their Czech counterparts. If you are looking for anything at the Czech institutions, it is often easier to go through Google than through the relevant web pages.

There is one more big difference in the way these two countries manage growing administrative burden. In US universities, there are well-developed databases, which make the processes smoother and more easily manageable. Without databases enabling people to check and review all the steps during the project cycle of each award on a day-to-day basis, all the control mechanisms are only formal and useless. It is taken for granted that there is a connection between internal databases and sponsor’s databases (e.g. CAYUSE at OSU). In the Czech Republic, we can only dream about something like that.

The job of a research manager (administrator or perhaps portfolio manager) as a wider conception of an individual project manager, has not been fully recognized in the Czech Republic yet. Being at a US institution it makes me feel good that every time I asked a question about a certain situation or problem in research administration, the immediate answer is always, “Yes this problem is dealt with in this and that policy, procedure or regulation. We can find it here and there on these web pages…” Even if there is a big administrative burden put on research administrators, it is much easier to work under standardized and predictable conditions than in a system where the procedure or next step depends only on the discretion of an individual person. Moreover, there is a frequently asked question section on web pages related to most of the common issues dealt with by responsible departments at US universities. Try to find something like that at their Czech counterparts. If you are looking for anything at the Czech institutions, it is often easier to go through Google than through the relevant web pages.

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Dear New England Colleagues and Friends,

As I end my “reign” as Chair, it has been a great pleasure to work with our members, volunteers, and officers. Dating back to the Mayflower, the region has a long history of highly engaged research administrators getting involved in many capacities. Well...maybe not quite that long, but close.

Are you thinking about getting involved? Please consider presenting a session at the Spring 2018 meeting or volunteering. Submit your name for the next election which will be held in the summer of 2018. The work is rewarding and you can’t place a price tag on networking and meeting new people. You also get to plan fun events with lots of “New Englandy” themes with lobsters and boats.

Look out for the registration for the Spring 2018 meeting. You should see something by February or March. The meeting will be held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a great town with lots of great restaurants and shops.

Region I held a special networking event this year at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. The response to the event was fantastic. I want to thank those that participated and especially Attain for sponsoring the event. Other highlights of the year included a very successful Spring meeting in Newport, three workshops, two RADG meetings, and great turnout at the Region I Netzone at the annual meeting in DC. Not to sing our own praises, but Region I shined in the Netzone with clam chowder, Fenway Franks, lobster toss and photo booth. Our Treasures also notes that the event was a significant savings over the hospitality suite format. As I write this newsletter in early October, my thoughts are with our colleagues in Puerto Rico. Region I sends our best regards and wishes as the event comes to an end.

As I write this newsletter in early October, my thoughts are with our colleagues in Puerto Rico. Region I sends our best regards and wishes as the event comes to an end. If you are reading at this at the beginning of December, please look for the announcement of our December RADG and register today.

Thanks to our officers including Lorraine Kiley, Treasurer extraordinaire, Alice Ingham, the Secretary who has stepped in and will pull double duty over two years. Also, thanks to Susan Zipkin, our National Board Member. Thanks to the Board including Dalila Alves, Suzanne Araujo, David Barnett, Heather Dominey, Anastacia Feldman, Michael Glasgow, Louise Griffin, Jason Hagan, Vivian Holmes, Patricia McNulty, Mary Mitchell, Kris Monahan, Danforth Nicholas, Stacy Riseman, Denise Rouleau, Joseph Tomaras, Stephanie Wasserman, and Karen Woodward Massey.

Jill Mortali is the Chair of Region I and serves as the Director, Office of Sponsored Projects at Dartmouth College. She can be reached at Jill.M.Mortali@dartmouth.edu

Hi, Region II!

Given my year as Chair is coming close to its end, I want to express my sincere thanks to our membership for electing me to this role and allowing me to serve as an ambassador for our region. Due to your unwavering dedication and support of our region, we continued to thrive and experience growth (our membership increased approximately 10% as of the date of this article). Over the course of 2017, we:

• Held a successful spring meeting whose attendance was one of the highest in the last several years
• Benefited from the numerous professional development workshops that took place within some of our region’s elite institutions
• Graduated another class of colleagues who were part of the Mentor-Me program
• Participated in the inaugural offering of the Netzone at the national meeting this past August, which provided a platform for our members to mingle with others beyond the boundaries of our region.

In addition to recognizing the membership, I would also like to thank each of the Region II Officers, the individuals who served on the Steering Committee during my term, the Chairs of the various Region II committees (i.e., Professional Development, Communications, Leadership Development and Nomination, Spring Meeting Program, and Mentor-Me) and all other members who volunteered their time to contribute to our success. Best wishes to our 2018 officers Dennis Paffrath (Chair), Adriel Villegas-Estrada (Treasurer), Bryan Cacciotti (Secretary), and Charles Bartunek (Chair-elect).

Although our first fall meeting is still a year away, I hope you will consider attending our regional meeting which will take place in October 2018 at the Oglebay Resort and Conference Center in Wheeling, WV. After the first of the year, the Program Committee will begin their hard work to put together a meeting for our membership that is informative, comprehensive, and fun. If you would like to volunteer your time and serve on the program committee, I encourage you to contact Charnel Bohn (bohncm@rwjms.rutgers.edu), Chair of the 2018 Region II Program Committee.

Last, if you’d like to learn more about maximizing the benefits of your membership, exploring ideas for enhancing professional development and programming, or volunteering at regional and national activities, please contact me directly or through our website: http://ncuraregionii.org/contact. You can also follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii and Twitter: @NCURAREGIONII.

Happy holidays to you all, and best wishes for a wonderful 2018!

Timothy Schailey, MS, serves as the Chair of Region II and is the Director of Research Administration at Thomas Jefferson University. He can be reached at Timothy.Schailey@jefferson.edu
Happy Holidays from Region III! The days are getting shorter, signifying that the end of 2017 is nearing, and Region III is proud to share with you a review of a productive and prosperous year for research administration in the southeast. Our regional membership is continuing to remain at a number over 1,590 members!

The Executive Committee, regional standing committees, and other volunteers brought the benefits of NCURA membership to life by providing opportunities for members to learn, share, and network on both the regional and national level. We would be remiss not to thank the volunteers for their continuous efforts. Thank you all for being a part of our successful 2017! In anticipation of an even greater year to come, we want every Region III member to know that there are many ways to get involved. If you are interested in lending your time and talent to our region, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Bruxanne Hein, at bhein@georgia-southern.edu to find out how you can get involved.

We are busy planning the 2018 Regional Meeting and are expecting an amazing turn-out at the Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg, Virginia for which registration will open in January. The preliminary program will also be available in January. In the meantime, we’d like to thank those who responded to our Call for Proposals. Another thanks goes to the Program Committee for their tireless commitment to bringing us the best in workshops, concurrent sessions, and discussion groups. We hope to see you in Williamsburg, Virginia, May 5-9, 2018!

The 2017 Hurricane season has ended but not without affecting many areas in our region. Our thoughts are with all members that have been affected by this year’s unprecedented hurricane season.

Stay in touch with Region III and keep informed about what is happening in the region by visiting our website at www.ncuraregioniii.com, signing up for the monthly newsletters, and following us on social media (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter). We look forward to sharing all the wonderful things that will happen in 2018!

Steve Koogler, MBA, is Region III Chair and serves as Assistant Director, Office of Research and Commercialization, University of Central Florida. He can be reached at Steven.Koogler@ucf.edu

Happy Holidays from Region IV! This is the perfect time of the year to reflect on gifts – your personal gifts and the gifts your colleagues share so freely with others. It is also the perfect time to think about awards and board position nominations. Complete information is available at our website.

**Board Positions**

Region IV is soliciting nominations for the following board positions. You can nominate someone or self-nominate. Position descriptions are posted on the Region’s website. Current and past board members are happy to talk with you about their experiences. **Nominations are due January 4.**

- Chair-Elect
- Treasurer-Elect
- At-large Member (2)

**Awards – Deadline February 1**

Thinking about attending the Region IV Spring Meeting or the National Annual Meeting? Then consider applying for a travel award!

- **Regional/National Travel Award** — ($1,000/$1,500)
  
- **John Philipps Travel Award** — ($1,000)

**Mentoring Our Own (MOO)** mentees are encouraged to apply for travel support to the Region IV meeting.

In this season of giving, I encourage you to think about Region IV members who give tirelessly of themselves to help move the Region as well as the field of research administration forward. Specific awards are:

- **Distinguished Service Award** …for those who have shown continuing and long-term contributions to NCURA Region IV and research administration.
- **Kevin Reed Outstanding New Professional Award** …for those who have demonstrated willingness to offer their abilities, time, commitment, and enthusiasm to NCURA Region IV.
- **Meritorious Contributions Award** …for those who have developed and implemented an innovative program which significantly enhanced the research atmosphere on a campus and can include team or office efforts, as well as those of a single individual.
- **Special Merit and Distinction** …for contributions to NCURA Region IV that are above and beyond “business as usual,” inclusive of unique and invaluable contribution to the vitality and enduring legacy of the organization.

**Mark your calendars!**

The Region IV Spring Meeting will be held in Des Moines, Iowa on April 15-18. The theme of the meeting is “Research Administration: Nourishing Investigation, Fueling Discovery, Growing the Profession.” You won’t want to miss this meeting!!

Katherine Durben is the Chair of Region IV and serves the Executive Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Marquette University. She can be reached at Katherine.durben@marquette.edu

Steve Koogler, MBA, is Region III Chair and serves as Assistant Director, Office of Research and Commercialization, University of Central Florida. He can be reached at Steven.Koogler@ucf.edu

Katherine Durben is the Chair of Region IV and serves as the Executive Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Marquette University. She can be reached at Katherine.durben@marquette.edu
The end of the year is quickly approaching and we are focused on our Regional meeting for 2018. Michael R. Castilleja, our Chair-Elect, is looking for topics and presenters and we are keeping the website up to date as details are finalized. Take a look and let Michael micasti2@uiwtx.edu know if you have any questions.

http://ncuraregionv.com/calendar

We are always looking for volunteers, and John A. Valenta at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston is our Volunteer Coordinator. To learn more about what opportunities exist, please reach out to John. John.A.Valenta@uth.tmc.edu

We are still building our digital scrapbook for Region V and are happy with the pictures and memories that are that are coming in. If you have any photos or memories you want to add, please send them to: ncura.v.picures@gmail.com or add them to our Facebook Group. To see our progress, you can visit our regional website.

As we look toward 2018, Region V is excited about our opportunities. The best way to keep involved is to volunteer.

Thomas B. Spencer, PhD, MBA, is a Director for Operations for Academic and Administrative Information Resources at UT Southwestern Medical Center. He can be reached at Thomas.Spencer@UTSouthwestern.edu

Region VI continues to thrive. It was a busy year full of growth and opportunities.

Congratulations on a successful meeting in Portland, OR, November 5-8! I would like to thank the Co-Chair/Region VII Chair, Sandra Logue for her partnership, expertise and patience in planning the event. It was truly a pleasure to work with you! There are too many people to individually thank for all the time and energy planning this meeting, but thanks to all the attendees, speakers, volunteers, Program Committee, Regional Officers, Planning & Volunteer Committees, Tech Team, NCURA National Office and Sponsors (Cayuse, Bad Rabbit, and Kuali) for a fantastic meeting!

New Region VI Website - ncuraregionvi.org

We are in the process of updating our regional website and have a new domain name. A huge THANK YOU to Washington State University, particularly Dan Nordquist, Derek Brown, Darren Bystrom, & Shawn Clabough for hosting our regional website and providing technical support since ~1997. WSU and crew have always gone above and beyond to support our regional endeavors!

New Social Media Charter

The Region VI Advisory Counsel (RAC) approved a Social Media Charter (SMC) on September 27th. The SMC is part of our Administrative Policies and replaces the outdated 1996 Website Guidelines. As we have moved to relying on various types of social media (currently includes Region VI Website, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) to disseminate information, the SMC will provide guidance in helping us promote our NCURA Region VI brand as well as communicate information to all regional members.

Much appreciation to Mich Pane (Region VI Volunteer Coordinator) as well as Megan Dietrich & Laura Register (Communications/Social Media Coordinators) for researching and developing the SMC – fantastic job!

First Regional Workshop

We held our first stand-alone full-day regional workshop, “Managing Data Security” on 6/6/17 at UC-Irvine with over 20 participants. The idea of the workshop is to provide low-cost and timely options to the community to augment programming outside of the regional meeting. Special thanks to the Education & Professional Development Committee, Melissa Mullen (chair), Dave Lynch, Samantha Westcott, Amanda Snyder, Matthew Kirk, Csilla Csaplar and Nancy Lewis. Be on the lookout for another workshop in 2018!

The next Region VI/VII meeting will be in Billings, Montana, October 10-14, 2018. Mark your calendars for the first ever NCURA regional offering in Montana!

It was a pleasure serving Region VI. Thank you for the opportunity!

Sinnamon Tierney, MPA, CRA, is the 2017 Region VI Chair and serves as Associate Director of Departmental Research/Administration, Sponsored Projects Administration at Portland State University. She can be reached at tierney@pdx.edu
Hello Region VII!

As I write this we are actively preparing for our Region 6/7 Meeting to be held in Portland, OR, November 5-8 at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront. A final program is posted to review sessions and workshop offerings. The planning committee has been meeting regularly via conference call to finalize logistics of the meeting including on-site registration, receptions, entertainment, local restaurants, fun runs, etc., to make our meeting in Portland a wonderful experience. Many thanks to all of those volunteers! Not to worry, if you are itch’in to get involved in other regional activities, contact Natalie Buys, Volunteer Coordinator, at natalie.buys@ucdenver.edu to get your name on the list!

Our election period for new officers has begun and I want to thank all those who stepped up and put their names on the ballot this year! Our region relies on the volunteerism and dedication of its members and these individuals are much appreciated for giving of their time and experience to make our region a success.

The NCURA Region VII election committee is pleased to present the following slate of candidates for the elected positions of Chair-Elect, Member at Large, and Secretary/Treasurer.

**Chair-Elect:**
Diane Barrett, Colorado State University
Natalie Buys, University of Colorado Denver

**Member-at-Large:**
Elizabeth Kingsley, Denver Health and Hospital Authority
Joelina Peck, Arizona State University
Nicole Quartiero, University of Colorado, Denver

**Secretary/Treasurer:**
Teresa Cochran, University of Colorado Denver
Consuelo (Chello) Jorge, Colorado State University
Jennifer Lawrence, The University of Arizona

This will be my last regional article as your Regional Chair. I want to thank the current officers for their commitment to the region and for helping to launch some new programming along the way. A special thanks goes out to my friend, colleague and mentor, Vicki Krell, who has been my champion and role model. Finally, thank you Sinnamon Tierney, Chair of Region 6. It has been an adventure and I am so grateful to have had you as my partner for the past 2 years!

“For what is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.” — Aristotle

Sandra Logue serves as Regional VII Chair and is the Administrator for the Center for Neuroscience on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. She can be reached at sandra.logue@ucdenver.edu

For the past two years once a month the Region VIII Executive Committee holds a Skype call. I have been looking forward to these calls. Here is why. We know that the world is changing rapidly, both in terms of global trends that are driving research and innovation and the immediate space around our day-to-day lives. Our economy has moved from being based on fixed items to flows. We are accelerating into the age of ‘connected everything’. Our Region VIII calls – from Australia via Austria and Switzerland to Sweden – have been proof of this. But the calls also made us aware that there are few structures in our flow-based approach to using digital tools. We became aware that unless we chose to create limits, our attention would continue to be harvested to the point of exhaustion. We needed to establish a framework for our digitally enhanced conversations that supported a sustainable performance. Our framework has been simple but efficient: An intense 60 minutes working session with clearly defined goals. There was no time to switching between checking the phone and replying to emails. In addition, we needed to pay attention and make regularly sure that we were all on the same page. When not seeing the others, when in different time zones, and with no common native language, this is rather challenging but demands you to stay focused.

What I became aware of in these two years was that if our attention is applied optimally, it helps us focus on what is most important. I am convinced that many of us would benefit from creating distinct periods of focused attention, followed by effective rest and reflection.

I am grateful for having had the opportunity to learn lessons far beyond the realm of research support, beyond the sharing of best practices and enhancing grants management (all of which I’ve learned a lot). For me, NCURA has become a network for checking in, with myself and with others. Leaning in and climbing out. Jumping into the flow of ideas, people, and information to learn new strokes. It was an inspiring pleasure to serve as the Chair for the Region.

Congratulations to our newly elected Executive Committee: Make 2018 the best year ever - give what you have to extend Region VIII’s tradition of supporting research together... globally.

Annika Glauner is Chair of Region VIII and works as Senior Research Policy and Research Development Manager at the University of Zurich/ETH Zurich. She can be reached at annika.glauner@sl.ethz.ch
Cool Research Project Spotlight

“Cool Research” usually focuses on one of the thousands of whiz-bang research projects being conducted in academia but for this issue of the NCURA Magazine we will highlight several programs around the US that are helping move that research into the public sector.

Originally passed in 1980, the Bayh-Dole Act provided early incentive for institutions to move technologies and inventions from academia into the public sector by allowing universities to pursue ownership of intellectual property arising out of federal funding. Over the years, there has been a growing entrepreneurial spirit among academic researchers. While researchers (both faculty and students) are well-versed in conducting research they may not have the skills or specialized facilities necessary to successfully move research from the bench to the marketplace. Around the nation, institutions are developing a variety of resources to assist on-campus entrepreneurs and to foster economic development in their regions. Here’s a sampling of just a few of them:

Case Western Reserve University—The Sears think[box] (TBX) includes dedicated ideation, collaboration, prototyping and fabrication space. The seven-story, 50,000 square feet facility is one of the largest, most accessible, and most comprehensive university-based innovation centers in the world. In 2017, CWRU piloted a spring program that provided for regular, onsite, co-location of a multinational corporation focused on innovation skills training and product development in concert with paid CWRU student contributors and commissioned a corporate outreach effort intended to define conserved themes of corporation innovation needs and challenges.

Colorado State University—BioMARC is a unique full-scale Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) high containment biologics manufacturing facility supporting the translation of biologic innovations to products. In addition to manufacturing and testing services, BioMARC offers product and process development services including the creation of development programs focused on implementation of cGMP regulations and scalability issues. The facility has extensive expertise in developing and optimizing product manufacturing processes and related tests for therapeutic, vaccines, and diagnostic products.

Oklahoma State University—The Technology Business Development Program (TBDP), established in 2005, identifies projects with high commercial potential and supports the advancement of those projects to the point of licensing. TBDP offers a series of staged internal grants that fund feasibility demonstration and prototype development. To date, TBDP has awarded $3.5 million to OSU researchers for a variety of products with commercialization potential.

University of California Santa Barbara—A participant in both the NSF and NIH I-Corps programs, UCSB also partners with the Innovation Node-Los Angeles (IN-_LA) which is offering shorter I-Corps-style programs (“Boom” and “Zap”) so that teams can be ready to qualify for I-Corps funding. I-Corps helps university-led teams determine a technology’s readiness to transition to the commercial sector by receiving guidance from established entrepreneurs and through a targeted curriculum. The goal of the grants is to develop a clear “go” or “no go” decision and should the decision be to start a company, to develop a solid plan for doing so. There are currently more than 50 I-Corps Sites and eight I-Corps Nodes around the nation.

University of Michigan—Fast Forward Medical Innovation (FFMI) offers resources and support to biomedical researchers at the University of Michigan and around the state. FFMI’s mission is to make biomedical innovation and entrepreneurship a natural academic behavior. FFMI has developed integrative programs that span idea funding, mentorship, innovation-commercialization education and business development activities with industry. FFMI acts as a front-door to access and navigate the biomedical innovation ecosystem at UM for faculty, trainees, students and industry partners.

University of Texas-Dallas—Operating under the umbrella of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, a cross-disciplinary campus initiative that helps commercialize start-up companies, the Blackstone LaunchPad at UT Dallas is one of 20 LaunchPad programs in seven states and three in the state of Texas. Funded by the investment firm, Blackstone, the LaunchPad programs provide entrepreneurship mentoring, education, support and training programs to an estimated 630,000 participants.

University of Wisconsin-Madison—With assistance from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF), UW developed the “Third Way,” a renewed approach changing how it interacts with industrial partners on IP terms. Additionally, it launched a new team, Discover to Product (D2P) that connects innovators and entrepreneurs with early stage projects to on and off campus resources. The program offers mentoring, early stage validation of ideas, and education on how to be a lean start-up.

Washington State University—Recognizing that faculty and sponsors are often frustrated by the need to engage multiple offices, the WSU commercialization and sponsored projects teams have adopted a collaborative, “no wrong door” approach. For each collaboration, a single point of contact is designated to liaise with the company, but both teams work together to ensure consistent messaging and a single negotiation process. Flexibility and willingness to find creative solutions to issues with the common goal of advancing partnerships and concluding negotiations is making the difference. Co-location of the commercialization and sponsored teams allows teams to solve problems efficiently and quickly and simplifies the process of frequent check-ins and workload rebalancing. In addition to day-to-day functions of relationship management and contract negotiation, the teams also collaborate on process improvement projects, like creation of an alternative, up-front licensing model for sponsored project intellectual property. This model has created an opportunity to improve sponsors’ understanding on IP rights and licensing options and fees, which is proving to be a plus to building these relationships and moving technologies and opportunities out of the university.
It was an excellent process for us. It has served our needs and should lead to significant improvement of services at our institution. Well organized, very thought-provoking, and very informative. The open exchange of ideas and recommendations was exactly what we needed.

Benefit from outside perspective from experienced, engaged research administrators with a holistic review of your sponsored programs or research compliance operations

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NCURA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

Departmental Research Administration Workshop
February 12-14, 2018...............................................................Scottsdale, AZ
LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
February 12-14, 2018...............................................................Scottsdale, AZ
LEVEL II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
February 12-14, 2018...............................................................Scottsdale, AZ

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Financial Research Administration Conference
March 5-7, 2018....................................................................Orlando, FL
Pre-Award Research Administration Conference
March 7-9, 2018....................................................................Orlando, FL
60th Annual Meeting
August 5-8, 2018.................................................................Washington, DC

ONLINE TUTORIALS – 10 week programs
A Primer on Clinical Trials
A Primer on Federal Contracting
A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements
A Primer on Subawards

WEBINARS

• An Overview of the New Research Terms and Conditions – On Demand
• Outside the Box of Effort Reporting - Past, Present and Future – On Demand
• CUI, FISMA & NIST: Regulated Research Data – On Demand
• The New World of Single IRBs – On Demand
• The Revised Common Rule: New Opportunities and Challenges – On Demand
• Understanding the Administratively Complex and High-risk Business Objective of Cost Sharing – On Demand
• Developing Policies and Procedures – On Demand
• Data Transfer and Use Agreements – On Demand
• Managing Sponsored Research Risk in an International Environment – On Demand
• Public Access: Practical Ways to Assist Faculty to Comply with Public Access Policies – January 16, 2018, 2:00-3:30 pm ET
• Rigor and Reproducibility for the Research Administrator – January 30, 2018, 2:00-3:30 pm ET

DEADLINES FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors ....................November 20, 2017
Submission of Advertisements ...........................................November 27, 2017

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