New Year’s Resolutions!

1. Improve Efficiency
2. Expand Collaborations
3. Listen More
4. Network
5. Work-Life Balance
6. Declutter!

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Happy New Year from NCURA Magazine! Like everyone else, I have resolutions for the New Year. But, how do I ensure these resolutions are fulfilled and not forgotten by President’s Day? The key is having a plan that you can achieve and by understanding that what works for someone else might not necessarily work for you. Some of us need to ease into resolutions slowly and change something small just to get the ball rolling. Others may be able to dive in and make several, more dramatic changes from the very beginning. Both plans can achieve the results you are hoping for, but be sure to determine which plan you will actually be able to stick with for the long haul before you start.

In this issue of NCURA Magazine we will examine many resolutions to help make 2017 a great year. Brianna Murphy discusses changes we can make in our digital lives in her article, “Embrace Technology and Improve Efficiency in 2017.” Beyond improving 2017 with digital enhancements, Anne Pascucci tackles improving interpersonal relationships in her article entitled, “My New Year’s Resolution: Finding New Ways to Reach Faculty.” No issue on New Year’s resolutions would be complete without some discussion about change management. Martin Williams’ article, “Behavioral Economics of Research Administration” provides an interesting look at implementing and surviving change by better understanding people and how we make decisions.

As you begin achieving your own New Year’s resolutions remember the words of professional development and leadership expert Robin Sharma, “Change is hardest at the beginning, messiest in the middle, and best at the end.”

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Did you ever wish you had a crystal ball? Like the time a faculty member sent you an industry contract to negotiate but failed to explain the nature of the work and the roles of the parties? Or when your VP asks you in March if new awards this fiscal year will exceed last year’s number when it’s been neck-and-neck for the past nine months? Or when you have two highly qualified applicants for a single opening and wonder which one you should hire?

I wish I had a crystal ball, not only to answer these types of questions in my daily work, but to predict what the national research landscape will look like over the next few years. The new presidential administration will likely differ significantly from those we have experienced in the past, especially given the vow to “shake up Washington.” But exactly what will that mean for the nation’s research enterprise? Will we see massive restructuring of federal agencies? Will this administration and Congress invest more or less money in R&D? Will we see a shift in funding priorities from domestic programs to defense or vice versa? How will research findings about the country’s challenges be translated into policy…and funding? And, perhaps most important to us in our daily lives, will we see a lessening of or an increase in federal regulations related to research and federally funded programs?

We could spend the next couple of years fretting over these and other questions as the direction of the new administration and Congress begin to gel. But, because we have no crystal ball to advise us otherwise, let me suggest that we have better ways to spend our time and energy. As we all know, change comes slowly in government, partly because of the system of checks and balances our founding fathers put in place and partly because our country is a massive enterprise…and the laws of physics tell us that it takes more energy to move a greater mass. Thus, I think that rapid, sweeping change is unlikely, especially of the kind that will impact research administration. Yes, we will see some smaller, less profound changes, but that is status quo for us, and as always, these changes will be “absorbable.” We are a community of professionals who will weather whatever is to come.

So, as you think about your New Year resolutions for your office, focus on where you can have real impact. What you identified as a need last year is still a priority for the coming year, regardless of what is happening in Washington. And you may even identify some other needs that fit into your resolution package as you peruse the contents of this edition of the NCURA Magazine.

NCURA's resolution for the coming year is to continue to support you in your professional endeavors through educational programming guided by our strategic plan. I look forward to sharing updates with you about some of NCURA’s initiatives in future editions of the NCURA Magazine.

Best wishes for a productive and fun 2017!
With a new year upon us it is the perfect time to renew best practices for success in creating synergy for important workplace goals. One practical and achievable New Year’s resolution toward this goal is to follow a consistent and evidence-based approach to developing collaborations or partnerships. While their basic strategies and structures may differ, both are good ways to optimize your institution’s performance and field presence.

**Partnerships:** One definition of a partnership is an interaction in which partners have a shared and mutual goal, contribute essentially equivalent skills and resources toward that goal, and have shared ownership of the effort. Partnerships are most commonly between two or three parties interested in distributing the effort and resource burden collectively. Everyone benefits from the shared knowledge and expertise gained through a successful partnership. There are many ways to structure a good partnership, but each has basic responsibilities maintaining a productive and progressive effort. Keys to a good partnership include: 1) regular face-to-face meetings so that each of the parties has equal opportunity to provide its perspectives and preferences; 2) when an issue does arise, remember that each party has the same goal in mind — to help quickly and constructively resolve a solution; and 3) shared responsibility in setbacks as well as in successes. Regardless of whether short- or long-term, partnerships do more than just seek goals and products—they reflect on your institution in the larger landscape of the field.

**Collaborations:** In comparison, collaborations are often comprised of different groups of stakeholders, each having a specialized skillset or insight, and each standing to gain a different benefit from the interaction. Collaborations are most commonly undertaken by multiple parties, each of which contributes a distinct resource and expertise. As with partnerships, there are many ways to structure a good collaboration. Qualities of a good collaboration include: 1) mutual recognition of the special expertise each party brings to the table; 2) the ability to connect the progress dots as they
arise from each of the distinct facets of the effort; and 3) seizing value-added opportunities to go beyond the initial goals when mutually agreed, and as unforeseen synergies emerge. Similar to partnerships, collaborations can go a long way toward project success and institutional prowess.

Here are some milestones that all partnerships and collaborations should pursue to afford the best chance to harvest meaningful results over the course of the program or project. The first stage is the assessment of whether a partnership or collaboration is the best structure to achieve the goal. It is key to identify potential partner(s) or collaborators as early as possible in the assessment period for mutually beneficial relations and address objectives of each organization. Consider time, logistics, and resources, as well as any need for special expertise in this assessment phase. Next, develop the basic framework to help organize specific factors in moving together toward the goal. Then, put your concept to the test by modeling. This kind of reality-check simulation helps stakeholders think through the project or program together, and aids in identifying and avoiding pitfalls that are not foreseen by any single party. Perhaps most importantly, develop a decision-making and communication process to anticipate issues and help guide efficient resolutions. This can be done with regular meetings for review, conference calls, or online communication. Better to be prepared than to be surprised.

Any successful and effective interaction involves mutual decision-making and teamwork to identify or invent best approaches to address issues or concerns. Likewise, it is important to define any unique or special relationships that may be needed to promote efficient progress. Of course a strategic plan, vision, and timeline are integral components of any program or project. Once you have identified the nature of the relationship, it will be easier to approach groups that share an interest in your mission and project outcomes. In the same way, explicitly considering institutional priorities is a must. For example, define the benefits that will be gained by each interest in the interaction. Importantly, progress toward a goal must be specific and measurable. Establish metrics or benchmarks of progress, and monitor milestones frequently. Beyond any tangible fruits of the effort, never underestimate the potential for positive aspects of a successful program and the ways in which others may become excited to develop a working relationship with your organization. Partnerships and collaborations should not only reflect the goals of the respective parties, but should also highlight the importance of the goal.

Value-added benefits of collaborations and partnership are also important to consider, and include: Networking — increasing dialogue and common understanding amongst workers within a given party and between parties. Communication — be it informal or formal, regular and clear information sharing is key to successful communication. Coordination — naturally different people have different strengths, so identify and apply them in kind to maximize advances and minimize duplication of effort. Cooperation — share in efficiencies of resources to address common goals. Synergy occurs when parties merge ideas, expertise and resources as connected to common goals. Leadership — recognize the value of each individual and the greater collective effort, and address issues quickly and effectively.

While partnerships and collaborations have key differences, they share important features. Here are a few tips for success whether your aim is a partnership or collaboration:

1. Identify and agree on clear, unambiguous expectations up front——the fewer surprises the better.
2. Foster and maintain a positive outlook. Stay focused on collective priorities and team goals.
3. Assess outcomes and issues objectively to promote shared responsibility and progress to goals.
4. Structure regular communications to promote inclusivity and equitable opportunities for input.
5. Leadership should reinforce values shared by all partners and recognize collective successes.

Working together through collaborations and partnerships is not always simple or easy, and some may not yield their intended results in the end. However, when developed and managed through an inclusive and cooperative process, effective collaborations and partnerships can yield both great programmatic and institutional success, help mitigate issues or pitfalls, and raise morale for all. It may take time to develop optimal relationships, but it will be worth the effort.

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The Behavioral Economics of Research Administration:

Are you an Homo Economicus Research Administrator?

By Martin Williams

I am a big fan of public radio; a stalwart listener. If a radio is on that I can control, I turn the dial. If I have heard the segment before, I listen for something new. I find it entertaining, stimulating, useful. I have used what I’ve learned on the radio in meetings with scientists, and done well in trivia contests (except in the sports category). I have even applied what I learned to my day-to-day adventures with research administration.

Introducing a change into a sponsored programs office at a predominantly undergraduate institution can be a challenge. Who has time to implement a change to something we do regularly (study, design, test, refine and then embed)? To add something new (increase value through greater depth and breadth)? To let something go (confirm that it is no longer important)? But my OSP and I have survived new sign-off processes, conflict of interest certifications, and the closure of handing a boxed-up proposal to the FedEx courier.

I have found big changes to be easier to get used to because other people are involved. We help each other, we remind, we empathize. It is the small changes that are hard; the things that would probably be called habitual behaviors if we didn’t label them as standard procedures, the things that only we would notice. One example might be continuing to use a fixed set of steps to accomplish something in Excel when we know there must be an easier way. Another might be continuing to water plants on Monday because they are droopy when doing it on Friday would help them survive the weekend better.

Here are two of the things I have learned from public radio: (1) That the economic model of homo economicus - the hyper-rational, narrowly self-interested person who was the star of economic theory and forecasting for generations - is so unattainable that a new economic theory was developed to understand how people actually behave; (2) That it takes three weeks of intentional behavior to successfully create or remove a habit.

In behavioral economics, people do not respond to incentives in predictable ways, people misbehave. Creating a good habit may require removing a bad habit that happens to be enjoyable. Eating less chocolate might help me lose weight, but chocolate for breakfast gets my day off to a good start. Homo economicus wouldn’t eat chocolate because it is not the healthy choice.

At William Paterson University, we had a problem with consistently accomplishing the set of tasks needed to record, acknowledge, and file a newly submitted proposal. Usually two but sometimes three of us had to be involved. And when it was three, that meant all of us. We would do things out of order, forget steps, and take too long to get it done. The challenge wasn’t that we didn’t have a set process; it was that we weren’t in the habit of following it.

There were lots of rational and beneficial reasons for making the few steps work well, including short and long term reporting, timely acknowledgement of the applicant’s effort, and our own time management, but we were misbehaving. It was a collective success every time we fixed one that went wrong. Staff changes inspired us to modify our behavior.

We created a checklist that structured the file and information we had to manage, provided an order for it to be done in, and required us to initial and date when we did our part. Then we made ourselves do it and congratulated ourselves when we saw that we were doing it habitually. We found a new habit and it felt good. Now, even those proposals with post-submission issues are not much of a processing challenge.

Were the public radio lessons learned at the right time to make this change? Sadly, no. But looking back I can see the lesson in action. Going forward, we now have a model, a reason why the model worked, and the Uniform Guidance to inspire our resolve.

Martin Williams is the Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at William Paterson University. He is a former chair of Region II, a graduate of the NCURA Executive Leadership Program, recently completed a term on the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, and is a Region II travelling workshop faculty. He can be reached at WilliamsM@wpunj.edu
Here are some highlights of what the PRA Program Committee has put together in order for everyone to have a professionally rewarding experience:

- The newly offered Senior/Executive Level Track features Dr. Sally Rockey’s session, *Introduction to the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research*, which will provide an overview of the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR), established by the 2014 Farm Bill to build unique partnerships to fund innovative research in food and agriculture to complement and further the work of the USDA.

- The Departmental Track will offer a session, *Faculty Development: Navigating Early Career Programs*, focused on the specifics of early-career programs and strategies to help faculty develop stronger and more competitive applications. While early-career grant programs such as NSF CAREER, DOD Young Investigator Program, and the DOE Early Career Research Program are specifically designed to kick-start faculty research in the initial stages of their careers, these programs are highly competitive, and faculty often do not understand the nuances of a young investigator application or how to best position their proposals for success.

- The Career Development and Advancement Track will feature sessions both on developing and advancing oneself, as well as how to implement those lessons into an office or institution. As an individual, sessions such as *Life, Love, and Research Administration: A Guided Tour of “YOU” as a Research Administrator* as well as *You Too Could Run the Zoo! (Though Could You—Should You?)* will help you explore your inner self within the profession of research administration. For supervisors, sessions such as *Building Strong Teams in the Midst of Stress and Managing, Mentoring, and Coaching Across Generations* will develop and expand your leadership skills.

- The Medical/Clinical Track will engage research administrators and disseminate knowledge related to clinical trials. Numerous offerings such as *Clinical Trial Agreements; Building a Clinical Trial Budget the Smart Way; Revenue Versus Budget: How Much Detail, Planning and Residuals Are Needed; and Clinical Trial Agreements and Contracts* will help those who want to learn about clinical trials, building a budget, and/or navigating master agreements. There will also be sessions on developing a training program, multi-institutional collaborations, and the PCORI application process.

Be prepared to collaborate, connect, share information, and invest in yourself, which will begin with our wonderful, engaging keynote speaker, Dr. Carolin Rekar Munro, who promises to provide tools for collaboration which we can immediately implement throughout the conference. Just as the conference will offer something for everyone at every level, the spectacular open scenic spaces of San Diego will motivate as well. Here are some final, fun facts to get your conference plans started:

- San Diego is the home of the world’s oldest active sailing ship, the Star of India, which was built in 1863 and calls San Diego Bay its homeport. It circumnavigated the world twenty-one times.
- A deep harbor is home to a large active naval fleet, with the USS Midway, an aircraft-carrier-turned-museum, open to the public.
- Imperial Beach is home to 370 species of birds and considered one of the best birding areas in Southern California.

*Yours…Together Towards Tomorrow*

Rosemary Madnick and Denise Moody
Do you have your copy of our Uniform Guidance desk reference?

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Preamble to the Uniform Guidance (Published in Federal Register/ Vol. 78, No. 248/Thursday, December 26, 2013, 78590-78608)

Additional Resources
Frequently Asked Questions

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In the spirit of this edition of *NCURA Magazine*, our discussion piece is about New Year’s resolutions, particularly resolutions pertaining to life in the workplace. Even more specifically, the article focuses on the authors’ resolution to become better advocates for their staff. Observing limitations of space, we’re focusing on a rather specific set of circumstances and venues: The implementation of a major enterprise resource planning (ERP) system at a small research university and the impact and difference that mid-level managers can make for, and on, their staff in research administration offices.

**The Circumstance Defined**

At any university, an enterprise resource planning implementation is a major undertaking and requires evaluation of all current systems and processes related to administrative and financial functions (e.g., payroll, human resources, student enrollment, financial accounting), as well as new roles for services (e.g., system transition, user interface, help desk and training).

At small research universities, the term ERP is often not well understood. What is it? Why do we have to do it? Weren’t we doing a good job already? What does it mean for me? Why do we have to change things? If not socialized adequately, all that tends to come through to staff is “change,” and unmanaged change will often create resistance. Everyone wants an advocate in the change process and mid-level managers are that advocate for their staff.

Directors, associate directors, assistant directors, and other mid-level managers are closest to the staff and closest to the action. It is we who must implement change in our offices and advise staff of the personal and professional impact of the change; thus the need for effective advocacy on our part is critical during such transition periods. Increasingly, research shows that without the support of these managers, ERPs often become derailed or stalled during the implementation cycle as the result of political turf battles, advancement of personal agendas, and a pervasive fear among staff on how the change will affect them individually.

These implementations are certainly complex and costly and sometimes chaotic if not done with reasoned thoughtfulness. Study after study shows that middle managers are key to successful implementation, but a dismaying significant percentage of costly system transitions either fail or enjoy only partial or limited success. Why? Choosing one of many research studies on people and organizations involved in change, Hall and Hold (2011) have observed ten basic principles of change. Looking at each principle, it’s easy to see the role for and centrality of mid-level managers as it pertains to the implementation’s success:

- **Principle 1, “Change is Learning.”** In order for change to occur, individuals must be willing to learn new behaviors (e.g. managers must develop and engage process change that is relevant to research administration and its responsibilities).

- **Principle 2, “Change is a Process, not an Event.”** Change should be strategic in nature and take into account the office’s charge and responsibility (e.g., again, managers must take the lead as it regards their offices).
Principle 3, “The [Office] is the Primary Unit for Change.” The ultimate responsibility for change rests within each unit (e.g. the manager will lead the office through consideration of how the change affects their processes).

Principle 4, “Organizations Adopt Change. Individuals Implement Change.” While an organization is the force driving change, it is dependent on the individuals within that organization to ultimately achieve change (e.g. the managers are key to ideating the process changes that are needed).

Principle 5, “Interventions are Key to the Success of the Change Process.” This refers to actions and events that managers could take to influence the process of the change initiative.

Principle 6, “Key Interventions Reduce Resistance to Change.” Determine the reason behind the resistance and develop an intervention that can reduce or eliminate the resistance.

Principle 7, “Administrator Leadership is Essential to Long-Term Change.” Managers have a key role in supporting the implementation and helping staff understand its overall value and/or utility to the organization.

Principle 8, “Facilitating Change is a Team Event.” People tend to embrace change more readily if they’ve had a part in developing processes and managers have a central role in constructing that scenario.

Principle 9, “Mandates Can Work.” Mandates can provide clear priorities and communicate expectations. Managers have a critical role in creating and socializing those mandates in such a way that staff understand the organization’s need for the change.

Principle 10, “Context Influences the Process and Change.” Two main components of context are physical features (such as resources and policies) and people factors (such as attitudes, beliefs, and values).

Senior management may not grasp the value and the need for the end-user community’s buy-in. It is for this reason that user groups often come to the implementation unwillingly, without a sense of involvement in the system’s success and with no true incentive to overcome the difficulties. Mid-level managers have the ability to bridge this gap and are key to a university’s success (that said, at small research universities, communication may not be the honed and well-structured process seen at large universities). For this reason it is even more important for mid-level managers to be proactive in seeking to become part of development and implementation teams for ERP initiatives.

Fulfilling the Resolution
Staff advocacy can take many forms, from recognizing collective and individual accomplishments to sending employees to professional meetings. However, to fulfill the resolution to become better advocates, advocacy is less specific and more exacting to undertake.

• Keep in touch. Scheduling and holding regular staff meetings allows you to have your finger on the pulse of what’s happening with your staff. This is difficult if you’re a director at a small research university as emergencies seem to never stop. Mid-level managers at small universities often become locked in a sort of danse macabre with their emergency management and feel if they look away even for a moment (and they ultimately must) they’ll lose control. If, in your prioritization of crises, you lose sight of your staff and their emergencies, they will begin to feel they don’t have a voice.

• Work your opportunities and networks within the university. Make an effort to engage directors and managers in other central business offices, the equivalent of keeping your finger on the pulse of the university. If you hear that a major project such as an ERP or HR process enhancement is being contemplated or underway and sponsored programs hasn’t been included on the implementation team, reach out. Make your voice heard. Waiting until “roll-out” and thinking things can be fixed isn’t a good strategy since at small research universities, it’s generally too late to create any change at that point. Your staff may be the ones left with additional work but without additional resources.

• Engage your supervisory manager. Whether you report to a VPR, provost, or similarly titled individual, you owe it to your staff to make your own supervisor aware of the reality of any proposed (or implemented) ERP. Although ERPs are perceived to reduce workload (often because software and technology replace manual processes), very often workload increases because the very robustness of the systems requires a complete change in known business practices in order to take advantage of the product. More work without additional resources is a circumstance that will be hard to rectify post-implementation. In this regard it will be crucial to have data, because complaining about additional workload without it is a hard sell.

Remain optimistic but persistent.

Everyone wants an advocate in the change process and mid-level managers are that advocate for their staff.

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On October 26th 2016, the Ministry of Higher Education (MES) of the Republic of Cuba and NCURA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation for research among higher education institutions in the U.S. and Cuba. The purpose of this MoU is twofold: (1) to acknowledge the collaborations that currently exist between research institutions in Cuba and the U.S., and (2) to promote and strengthen additional cooperation in scientific research activities between the two countries.

The MoU signing ceremony was held in NCURA’s office in Washington, D.C., and was attended by representatives from Cuba and from NCURA.

The Cuban delegation included:
Aurora Fernández González, Vice Minister of MES
Alicia Alonso Becerra, Provost from the Technologic University of Havana (CUJAE)
Luis A. Montero Cabrera, President of the Cuban Chemistry Society (SQ)
Iliana Martínez González, International Collaboration Specialist at MES

Representing NCURA were the following:
Robert Andresen, President of NCURA
Barbara Gray, Vice President of NCURA
Kathleen Larmett, Executive Director of NCURA
Suzanne Rivera, Vice President for Research and Technology
Management of Case Western Reserve University
Tara Bishop, Deputy Chief Executive of NCURA
Jesse Szeto, Director of the NCURA Global Program
Claire Chen, Staff Associate of the NCURA Global Program

The meeting started with an overview of NCURA and its mission of advancing the field and profession of research administration in the U.S. and globally. NCURA representatives also discussed in greater detail the various roles that research administrators play in an institution’s research enterprise and the importance of research administrators in the pursuit of research and in advancing science and technology both in the United States and globally.

The Cuban Delegation indicated that the concept of research administration is relatively new in Cuba. In general, researchers in Cuba manage every aspect of the research themselves, which would reduce the amount of time and attention that researchers can devote to conducting research. The NCURA officers described the structure of research administration offices in U.S. universities and the varying sizes of these offices at different types of universities. Additional topics included specific discussions on the following:
• Pre-award
• Proposal development
• Award management
• International research collaborations

In addition, NCURA arranged for representatives of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) to meet with the Cuban delegation in order to facilitate greater understanding of the future prospects for potential collaboration between Cuban researchers and NSF-funded projects.

In the end and as a specific outcome of the MoU, the Cuban Delegation invited NCURA to return to Cuba in 2017 to lead a 1-week workshop on the role of research administration and best practices in setting up and organizing research administration offices.

Speaking about the MoU, Kathleen Larmett, Executive Director of NCURA, said, “This partnership will provide American and Cuban researchers and research administrators with more opportunities to communicate and collaborate.”

For more information about this partnership, please contact Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director at larmett@ncura.edu or Jesse Szeto, Global Program Director at szeto@ncura.edu
Paperwork are critical—but is all paperwork? Probably not, according to a report the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released in June 2016 on the administrative requirements for research grants and their workloads and costs.

The report—Federal Research Grants: Opportunities Remain for Agencies to Streamline Administrative Requirements (GAO-16-573)—presented over a year's worth of work examining nine areas of administrative requirements at the Department of Energy (DOE), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and National Science Foundation (NSF). In the course of our work, we had many conversations with university research administrators and heard common themes about the workload and costs of complying with these requirements. We summarized the issues we heard about how administrative requirements add to workload and costs, and we dug deeper into the efforts agencies had already made to streamline requirements.

Keeping in mind the need to maintain accountability over grant funds as an overriding consideration, we made a series of recommendations to agencies to expand on their streamlining efforts. Our hope is that, if implemented, these recommendations will lead to reductions in administrative workload and costs, including in areas that have been a high concern to universities.

**Where do the requirements come from?**

As university administrators know, the federal government is not the only source of administrative requirements for research grants. For example, public universities also must comply with state requirements, and all universities can establish their own requirements in addition to those of federal or state governments.

In examining the nine areas of requirements for our review, we wanted to first clearly separate out the federal requirements from other sources, and identify specifically where they originated and for what purpose. We found that the requirements fell into two broad categories: (1) administrative requirements in the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) government-wide Uniform Guidance, which generally focus on protecting against waste, fraud, and abuse of funds, and (2) requirements in agency-specific guidance, which generally focus on promoting the quality and effectiveness of federally funded research. An example of OMB requirements that we examined was the Uniform Guidance requirement to compete and document purchases. An example of agency-specific requirements we examined was identifying, reporting, and managing financial conflicts of interest.

**What are the common concerns among universities about the requirements?**

Again and again, we heard common concerns from university administrators and researchers about how certain factors add to the workload and costs of complying with administrative requirements for research grants.

First, implementation of the requirements varies too much from agency to agency. Agencies differ in the formatting and content they require for biographical sketches. Budget preparation and management requirements differ in several ways, such as the forms and level of detail required in proposed budgets. Potential financial conflicts of interest required to be reported by one agency, such as reimbursed or sponsored travel costs, are not required by another. These differences contribute to universities’ costs because they have to design and implement multiple processes and may need to invest in electronic systems to comply with differing requirements. Researchers and administrative staff must also spend time learning the different requirements, processes, and systems.

Second, agencies require applicants to develop and submit detailed documentation for grant proposals—documentation that agencies may not always need to determine what proposals they are likely to fund. Universities and researchers invest time and resources to prepare this documentation for each proposal, but odds are against any single proposal being funded. For example, in fiscal year 2015, NIH awarded funding to 18 percent of applicants and NSF awarded funding to 24 percent of applicants—similar to funding rates from other years. From the standpoint of applicants not funded, preparing documentation not used by agencies to make funding determinations is wasted effort.

Finally, according to university officials, certain requirements have actually become more prescriptive, putting further pressure on their administrative workload and costs and limiting their flexibility to allocate administrative resources toward oversight of the areas of highest risk. Specifically, revised OMB requirements for competing and documenting purchases—particularly the lower threshold at which price or rate quotations must be obtained from multiple vendors—will add workload and costs for universities for updating their electronic purchasing systems and obtaining quotations for more transactions than before.

Likewise, revised HHS regulations governing financial conflicts of interest for NIH-funded research include more prescriptive requirements for the types of financial interests researchers must disclose. The more prescriptive requirements have led to university administrators and researchers spending more time disclosing and reviewing financial interests, spending more money on software systems, and hiring additional staff to manage compliance processes.
What have agencies done to address these concerns?
OMB and the four agencies we spoke with that fund research—DOE, NASA, NIH, and NSF—are generally aware of universities’ concerns about the workload and costs of complying with administrative requirements. They have made a number of efforts over the years to address these concerns—for example, efforts to standardize financial and performance reporting forms—and have had some success. However, we found remaining opportunities for agencies to achieve additional reductions in administrative workload and costs while still protecting against waste, fraud, and abuse. In our June 2016 report, we recommended several areas where agencies could pursue such opportunities.

First, research funding agencies have coordinated to standardize some aspects of requirements, but there are additional, unnecessary variations in requirements that agencies could standardize. For example, agencies vary in how they implement aspects of budget preparation and management requirements. There is variation in the forms and level of detail required in proposed budgets, in the systems agencies use for financial reporting, and in the budget revisions they allow grantees to make without obtaining prior approval. With further coordination, agencies could implement these and other requirements in a more standardized way, as our June 2016 report recommended.

Second, the agencies in our review used several types of preliminary proposal processes to reduce administrative workload and costs associated with proposal preparation. These processes involve postponing certain requirements, such as those related to budget preparation, biographical sketches, and other requirements. The requirements do not kick in until after an agency’s preliminary decision about an applicant’s likelihood of funding, thereby reducing the documentation required for proposals that are unlikely to be funded.

One of the agencies in our review, NSF, worked to identify opportunities to streamline proposal preparation requirements agency-wide. Senior leadership directed staff throughout the agency to review their grant programs and identify opportunities for expanded use of preliminary proposals and other streamlining approaches. Unlike NSF, the other agencies we looked at had not conducted such agency-wide reviews to identify opportunities to streamline proposal requirements. Doing so, as we recommended in our June 2016 report, could achieve further reductions in universities’ administrative workload and costs.

Third, OMB and research funding agencies have made some efforts to reduce universities’ workload and costs by allowing them flexibility to assess and manage risks related to certain requirements, but they could do more. For example, in developing the Uniform Guidance, OMB based the micro-purchase threshold—above which grantees must generally obtain price or rate quotations from multiple vendors—on the threshold for competing purchases made under federal contracts. For small dollar purchases, the workload and costs of obtaining and documenting multiple price or rate quotations may be greater than the savings resulting from such competition. With a full consideration of the workload and costs of competing those purchases, and the savings such competition could provide, OMB could opt for a different threshold.

A similar situation exists with the types of financial interests researchers must disclose under HHS’s revised conflict of interest requirements. According to university representatives we spoke with, some financial interests that must be disclosed under the revised requirements—such as researchers’ reimbursed or sponsored travel costs—are relatively common, but relatively unlikely to constitute actual conflicts that could bias research. Fully assessing the risk that different financial interests posed to research integrity, and balancing that with universities’ administrative workload and costs for disclosing and reviewing those financial interests, could lead HHS to further revise its conflict of interest requirements.

In our June 2016 report, we recommended OMB and HHS evaluate options for targeting these requirements on areas of greatest risk by considering the requirements’ effects on universities’ workload and costs and balancing this against their added protections for accountability and research integrity.

What comes next?
DOE, HHS, and NASA generally agreed with our recommendations for further streamlining administrative requirements, and NSF and OMB did not comment on our recommendations. As GAO always does, we will follow up with these agencies going forward to determine what actions they have taken to implement our recommendations, and report on these actions to Congress. In recent years, agencies have implemented GAO’s recommendations about 80 percent of the time. Implementing the recommendations from our June 2016 report could result in less administrative workload and costs for universities, and better use of federal research funds.

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New Year’s resolutions. We make the same resolutions every year. Do we meet them? Maybe. The benefit of making the resolution is in setting the goal and taking concrete steps to achieve it. Resolutions range anywhere from improving physical health to repairing relationships to remembering to take the trash out before the garbage truck comes. The difficulty of a group resolution, such as in a pre-award sponsored project office, is that it depends on everyone working together to help move the resolution from an idea to a reality. A group resolution, similar to a personal resolution, is first born out of a perceived problem or need.

An element that most support units are continually trying to improve is efficiency. Benefits of improved efficiency can include higher output volume, less stress meeting deadlines, fewer late nights at the office, and an improved atmosphere of success.

This year, I recommend that you and your office resolve to embrace and invest in technology that improves operating efficiency. Technology that is tailored specifically to pre-award office review and approval processes, and also to your office and staff, can improve efficiencies in measurable (and immeasurable) ways.

Why technology? Of all of the possible resolutions—more team cohesion, team fitness challenges, more proposals processed, etc., why is improving technology my top goal to focus on this year? The answer is in the need to be met: improved efficiency. Recently, the pre-award office at Washington State University (WSU), the Office of Research Support and Operations, made enhancing technology a priority, and the return on investment is evident beyond the apparent dollar amounts.

An example is the WSU online “eREX”, the internal form for routing and approving proposals. Prior to an investment in technology, the eREX was a Microsoft Word® document that the PI (or their administrator) filled out, printed, and, depending on the timeline, walked across campus to several offices to collect the required approvals. This is probably familiar to many of you! Next came an Adobe® PDF version of the form, and while a vast improvement over a prior paper form, it was still cumbersome with versioning and Adobe restrictions. It was also somewhat time consuming. Each update that came from Adobe created an issue with older forms in progress and created roadblocks in the system.

The office collected proposal metrics and developed a strong vision for building an internal information technology team. Once the team was funded and in place, an “applications guru” built the new online form in WSU’s MyResearch grants portal. The greatest benefit has been the improved efficiency in simply routing the form itself. The research team fills out the form. The form cannot be submitted unless all information is present and accurate. Then the system sends a notification to each person who needs to approve the proposal. The PI can have the proposal approved with the click of a mouse.

Additional benefits to this form and system are that it was tailored to meet the specific office and
University needs, so it can be continually adapted in real time to meet changing needs or ideas for improvement (without those Adobe versioning issues!). The office staff is trained, problems are handled, and troubleshooting occurs without being relegated to a central university queue.

Another time-saving application developed in the WSU office is a new PI dashboard, where investigators can see compliance requirements and grant proposal progress and track grant expenditures with burn rate information. Additionally, we developed a Microsoft® Outlook® “drag and drop” application that makes tracking repetitive business correspondence simple and quick.

The improved efficiency is measured by: 1) the amount of time it takes to route the approval forms, 2) the morale of office staff as well as PIs (who have been positively receptive of the tools), and 3) the ability to stay on track in a deadline-driven environment. Investing in technology is clearly a worthy resolution.

Like many goals or resolutions, it is simple to say, “Sure, we’ll do it. We’ll focus on technology. Why not?” But also, like many resolutions, it is never that easy. Not only does the entire staff need to buy in to prepare for the stretching and growing—the hierarchy of budgeting, personnel, and approvals needs to be satisfied. So, let’s talk about how to get there.

**Make the resolution a reality**

Once the office has committed to a resolution to invest in technology, the first step is to brainstorm ideas on what sort of technology implementations the office needs. What are the personnel needs? Do you need an internal, full-time IT person to keep everything running smoothly, without waiting on the central help desk queue? Or do you need someone to create and manage applications? All of the above! Once the investment is made, everything can be tailored to your office, so think about specific details—quicker routing and approval, more efficient data storage methods, more visible compliance requirements. The list could go on, and the first step is to create that list.

Once the list is made and the team narrows it to specific measurable and achievable goals, transform those ideas into numbers by gathering metrics. The cost-benefit analysis is one of the most important metrics. This analysis is necessary to convince the purse-string holders to invest in the technology you are seeking. Take the time to gather the numbers—it will pay off.

Next, create the pitch. Again, this is an investment, so the vision must be cast to the right people in order to receive the support and resources. Use WSU or other offices that have successfully implemented this investment as examples. Use numbers. And use non-financial returns on investment such as the potential for increased output, morale, and compliance. This will be the most difficult part of fulfilling this resolution. Nobody said resolutions are easy. Once you cast the vision, balance patience with the bureaucracy and persistence to follow through and clinch the support.

Finally, embrace the growing pains and the change. Everyone will need to commit time to implementing the technology, give feedback for improvements, and develop technological skills. Once the benefits start rolling in, your team will see the value and appreciate the commitment to the resolution.

Make 2017 the year your pre-award office embraced technology and took leaps and bounds toward a more efficient life!

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In a Final Rule published in the Federal Register June 3, 2016 (Vol. 81, No.107, Pages 35586-35607), the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), revised the concept of “fundamental research” in the EAR to more thoroughly describe activities that constitute fundamental research. Most university activities are exempt from export controls through broad-based public domain or educational exclusions (15 CFR Parts 734.7 and 734.9); however, these exclusions do not apply universally to all research activities. For a research activity to not be subject to export controls it must first meet the criteria of “fundamental research” as defined in the EAR, 15 CFR Part 734.8.

It is important to first understand the changes to 15 CFR 734.8 including the definition of “fundamental research” (15 CFR 734.8 (c)) which now reads: “Fundamental research means research in science, engineering, or mathematics, the results of which ordinarily are published and shared broadly within the research community, and for which the researchers have not accepted restrictions for proprietary or national security reasons.” According to the Federal Register Notice, BIS dropped references to “basic” and “applied” in the definition because the core concept of fundamental research is the ability to publish without restriction and these words have no bearing on the core concept.

Another significant change includes a reference to “Technology or software that arises during, or results from, fundamental research.” The revision to 734.8 is specific to technology and software which is generally defined (15 CFR 772, Definition of Terms) to mean technical information “necessary to develop, produce, use, operate, install, maintain, repair, overhaul or refurbish an item” found within one of the 10 broad categories of the Commerce Control List (CCL). Technology or software may be pre-existing, discovered or resulting information that arises during the performance or process of conducting a research activity. The distinguishing characteristic about “fundamental research” is that the technical information presented in the results are intended to be published (or already in the public domain) and the researchers have not accepted restrictions for proprietary or national security reasons. Publicly releasable know-how, processes, methods, and other technical information not subject to proprietary or national security restrictions, whether self-imposed or contractually required meet the qualifier of technology or software resulting from fundamental research.

Technology or software not already in the public domain or not intended or allowed to be published, does not meet the criteria of fundamental research. The CCL must be reviewed to determine a potential export control classification, and if proprietary technology or software is identified within one of the ten categories of the CCL, it is subject to the requirements of the EAR. Note that financial and business information, although sensitive, is not technology or software and is not subject to the EAR.

The June 3rd Federal Register Notice includes explanatory comments and notes that provide clarity and assist in assessing if export controls apply to a research activity and if a more in-depth analysis is warranted. A research activity has three separate areas that require independent export control assessment:

- the inputs into research;
- activities associated with research conduct; and
- technical research results or technology outputs.
In a section titled “Note on Inputs” the Final Rule provides a concise explanation regarding inputs used to conduct fundamental research in stating, “information that is not intended to be published is not fundamental research.” The EAR Part 734.8(b)(4) also states “the initial transfer of information from an industry sponsor to university researchers is subject to the EAR where the parties have agreed that the sponsor may withhold from publication some or all of the information so provided.” Proprietary technology, software or technical information (inputs) the university agrees not to release or publish must be individually assessed for applicability to the export control regulations. This also includes technical information (technology) subject to a non-disclosure agreement. If the determination is made the technology falls within a technical parameter enumerated on the CCL, foreign national access will require compliance with the EAR.

Examples of inputs that constitute technology could include proprietary processes, knowledge, methods, trade secrets and other technical information that are not intended to be made completely publicly available. These inputs do not meet the qualification of “arising during, or resulting from fundamental research.” In addition, although not related to the revision of 734.8, the review of inputs should also include equipment provided by the sponsor. Although the results of the project may be considered fundamental research, certain export controlled equipment may require a license prior to use or operation by a non-U.S. person.

Note 2 to EAR Part 734.8(a) explains that there are “instances in the conduct of research where a researcher, institution or company may decide to restrict or protect the release or publication of ‘technology’ or ‘software’ contained in research results” (outputs). When a decision is made to maintain such information as proprietary or restricted, it becomes subject to the EAR. This may occur during research conduct if a researcher makes a novel discovery and the PI and/or sponsor decide the technology or software should not be published. Activities associated with research conduct include physically operating research equipment or instruments, instruction, technical assistance, technical analysis, or any activity related to research performance or “conduct.” Research conduct may be limited by contractual controls, particularly on federally funded agreements. Contractual controls include any type of access, dissemination, or publication restriction. Specific national security controls include pre-publication review with right to withhold permission for publication, dissemination of information to foreign person or non-U.S. person participation restrictions, or other national security controls.

Outputs are research results typically found in some type of publication (article, poster, presentation) or report, but may include data left on instruments or residing in research equipment, recipes, lab journals, invention disclosures, or unpublished patent applications. While most outputs in a university setting are published, under the revision, careful attention should be paid when using published technology to modify proprietary items. Published technical information that is used to create or modified a proprietary item may become subject to export controls. The Federal Register Final Rule includes a revision to the definition of “technology” with a special note. The note explains that using fundamental research technology to modify a proprietary item, creates a new item that is subject to the EAR to the extent that proprietary item is enumerated in the CCL.

In addition to distinguishing three distinct areas requiring separate export control assessment (inputs, conduct and outputs), it is important to understand the impact these revisions have on the contract terms and conditions of a research agreement. Negotiating out restrictive (e.g., access, dissemination, publication or participation) contract terms and conditions to ensure the results of fundamental research can be published does not necessarily mean that all associated research tasks to conduct the research are likewise exempt from export controls. In other words, although the results of the research may be considered fundamental research, inputs to and the conduct of research may be subject to the EAR based on proprietary technical information.

Universities with a blanket-approach to only accept terms that specify it is the intent to publish should modify their export control assessment methods in accordance with this new final rule. If the assessment indicates that proprietary inputs are subject to the EAR, then appropriate safeguards need to be implemented. Foreign national access to proprietary technology and software subject to the EAR that is necessary to perform the activity may require prior U.S. government approval to the extent specified in the EAR.

In summary, there are three important points to consider based on the revisions to 734.8:

1. A determination must be made if the researcher will be receiving proprietary technology or software related to an input, conduct or output of a research activity.
2. Proprietary technology or software present in a research activity, then it will be necessary to conduct an export classification review to see if it falls within a technical parameter enumerated on the CCL, and if found on the CCL, decide if prior government approval is required prior to allowing foreign national access and protect the technology and software accordingly.

It is advisable that practitioners review and evaluate revisions to the EAR’s 734.8 including explanations outlined in the final federal register notice. The revisions emphasize that fundamental research is not a “blank check” to conduct research activities — there still may be export control issues to evaluate.

**Note:** This discussion is specific to the EAR. A harmonized companion definition for the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) is anticipated sometime in 2017.

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**Kay Ellis** is the Director, Export Control Program, at the University of Arizona and has more than 14 years of export compliance experience at universities. She has been actively involved with NCURA at both the regional and national levels and can be reached at ellisk@email.arizona.edu
Run a web search of “Professional New Year’s Resolutions” and you will get countless lists, many with the same general theme: get organized, take control of your email accounts, clean up your LinkedIn page, make a list of people you want to know better and then do all of the above. Most of these lists that are aimed at taking control of your work life also include exonerations to get more sleep and take care of your health by losing weight, exercising or combatting stress. That same search will lead you to the conclusion that less than ten percent of all New Year’s resolutions are fulfilled.

It seems that each year after the frenzy of the holiday season, my first New Year’s resolution is to plan in advance more and procrastinate less. Contrary to what most of my casual acquaintances would think, I am not innately organized. I have faked it well for years. In fact, if it were not for copious list making, I would accomplish little on time. My first formal introduction to goal setting and personal planning was through Junior League (no, I didn’t have a goal of having a shoe closet, but the house of my dreams would have accommodated it). But that time spent setting personal goals and objectives for the near term (six month), short term (three years) and long term (lifetime) to help me achieve those goals were invaluable to me both personally and professionally. But at that time, I never dreamed I would be anything more than a supporting wife and attentive mother, and there was not even a basic understanding of who or what a research administrator was.

But I used those planning skills to forge forward and adapt when my well-planned fairy tale took unexpected turns. At each juncture, I have taken the time to celebrate my successes, consider whether the things I didn’t accomplish were even that relevant to my goals or important to me any longer, and recalibrate my direction given my current set of circumstances. Planning is never more important than when you think you don’t have time to plan. I can assure spending the last 15 minutes of your work week assessing what your tasks should be for the following week will make walking in on Monday much easier, especially when you are overwhelmed. In that same spirit, taking some time at the end of a year to reflect on what was meaningful and what you want to accomplish in the coming year will yield dividends.

My next resolution is to declutter, something that has become even more critical now that my office is in my home. Annually purging your computer folders and office space of clutter will do wonders to make your feel more energized and less disorganized. Those tasks don’t necessarily need to coincide with the new calendar year but might make more sense to coincide with your “workaversary”. I have used a five-drawer filing cabinet quite successfully to manage the reams of paper we collect through countless meetings. The top drawer is relegated for items I have touched in the current year. Annually, I moved everything down one drawer. If I pulled something out of those a lower drawer during the year, it goes back into the top drawer. During the yearly purge, the bottom drawer is shredded. Resist the urge to hold on for one more year because if you have not touched it in five years, you probably don’t even remember you have that item. Note: make sure you don’t destroy anything that will make you run afoot of your institution’s record retention policy. This same concept can be applied to your virtual filing system (and older files than five years can be relegated to an external hard drive or deleted forever).

Finally, I resolve to spend more time doing the things that matter and for and with people and causes that challenge and inspire me. This past year at three different meetings, three women approached me with questions and then had the moxie to ask me if I would serve as a long-distance mentor. Looking at each of these emerg-

“…spend more time doing the things that matter…”

By Susan Wyatt Sedwick and Kathryn Keeton

Professional Resolutions

Run a web search of “Professional New Year’s Resolutions” and you will get countless lists, many with the same general theme: get organized, take control of your email accounts, clean up your LinkedIn page, make a list of people you want to know better and then do all of the above. Most of these lists that are aimed at taking control of your work life also include exonerations to get more sleep and take care of your health by losing weight, exercising or combatting stress. That same search will lead you to the conclusion that less than ten percent of all New Year’s resolutions are fulfilled.

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But I used those planning skills to forge forward and adapt when my well-planned fairy tale took unexpected turns. At each juncture, I have taken the time to celebrate my successes, consider whether the things I didn’t accomplish were even that relevant to my goals or important to me any longer, and recalibrate my direction given my current set of circumstances. Planning is never more important than when you think you don’t have time to plan. I can assure spending the last 15 minutes of your work week assessing what your tasks should be for the following week will make walking in on Monday much easier, especially when you are overwhelmed. In that same spirit, taking some time at the end of a year to reflect on what was meaningful and what you want to accomplish in the coming year will yield dividends.

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Finally, I resolve to spend more time doing the things that matter and for and with people and causes that challenge and inspire me. This past year at three different meetings, three women approached me with questions and then had the moxie to ask me if I would serve as a long-distance mentor. Looking at each of these emerg-
So I love this new research by Berman and friends. They start by rehashing research that suggests humans aren’t great predictors of the future. And we aren’t good at this because they say we use our current surroundings and past experiences to predict what we will estimate the future will hold. So, these cues turn out not to be very good indicators when considering the rapid pace of change we find ourselves in today. And this makes sense—just think of smart phones as an example. You couldn’t have accounted for how the development of smart phones has singularly changed how you interact with people or how you get your work done every single day.

Okay—so we aren’t good at predicting how technology will increase our own future trajectory. What next?

Goal Setting Theory (all the organizational psychologists are now nodding in approval—we love straightforward and practical theory!). But for some, you may be asking what is it? Goal Setting Theory is a well validated theory from organizational psychologists Edwin Locke and Gary Latham that specifically says for goals to be achievable they need to be SMART:

- **Specific**—like “I want to lose 10 pounds” (not that I want to lose weight)
- **Measurable**—like “I’m going to weigh myself every Friday”
- **Achievable**—like “I actually have 10 pounds that I can actually lose without putting my health at risk”
- **Realistic**—like “I’m trying to lose 5% of my body weight, not 45%!”
- **Time-bound**—like “I project that I’ll lose 10 pounds in 3 months”

And multiple other researchers have published papers and meta-analyses backing up these concepts. Which means that setting goals in a specific way increases your chance of achieving them and increasing your performance. And of course this isn’t just work specific—it’s any goal in any situation (yes for generalizability!).

**So how do we connect these seemingly unrelated articles?**

So this is how I see these two pieces of research connecting. We may not be able to predict our own futures well because we can’t control for our surroundings and how they will change. But we can use goal-setting theory to create SMART goals to control our own behavior and what we set out to accomplish. So really… the point is to spend the time to have a point… an endpoint in mind, that is. To spend time contemplating your career or personal path, where you are headed and what it will take to get there; to spend the time setting goals toward progressing yourself for your career or otherwise. And maybe reaching the goal is not really that important (because you won’t be able to correctly guess what that will look like anyway). Maybe, as with most things, it’s the time invested going through the process of contemplating those big questions (what do I want from my career? what do I want to accomplish? what type of career will be fulfilling?), setting a direction to define that path forward, and taking those steps to achieve those goals that really counts.

**Spending time contemplating those big questions that help us define those goals (career or otherwise) is what’s most important.** So spend that time; figure out your point and start moving in that direction. That effort is what will make the most difference in your career and personal life.

**References**


Kathryn Keeton, Ph.D., is a coaching and innovation strategy expert with experience helping both individuals and organizations in many industries (including NASA, healthcare, and oil and gas) leverage existing resources to realize their greatest potentials. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Minerva Work Solutions. To reach her contact Inquiry@MWSWise.com
HOW TO MANAGE A FINANCIALLY FOCUSED UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AUDIT EFFECTIVELY

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KIMBERLY GINN, CIA, Partner, Baker Tilly
JEFFREY SILBER, Senior Director of Sponsored Finance, Cornell University

This new comprehensive publication covers all aspects of the audit process from the pre-award preparation, notification, roles and responsibilities, scope, entrance conference, field work, exit conference, final report, to audit resolution and follow-up. Includes references and resources and over 30 tips from seasoned experts. (30 pages, PDF).

A PRIMER ON EXPORT CONTROLS

AUTHORS:
JESSICA B. BUCHANAN, Ph.D., Associate Director of Export Compliance, University of Pennsylvania
ELIZABETH D. PELOSO, M.S.E., M.B.A., Associate Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Research Services, University of Pennsylvania

This new publication provides a thorough introduction to the complex topic of export control laws and regulations. It’s written in a straightforward manner. Topics include key definitions and concepts, which federal agencies oversee regulations, violations and penalties, fundamental research, licensing (and exceptions), international travel, and additional resources. (30 pages, PDF).

Download a copy today at NCURA’s Online Learning Center https://onlinelearning.ncura.edu/
1. **Work-Life Balance.** There’s no doubt that our work is important. But often we lose sight of the big picture because we are focused on the thousands of transactions and deadlines we must manage. Research administrators are under constant pressure to meet difficult deadlines, ensure compliance, manage expectations, and respond to urgent requests from leadership, in a climate of increasing complexity and tough competition for funding. Often we must do all of this with fewer resources than we have had in the past. It can be easy to fall into a pattern of long work hours, in which you lose all semblance of balance. This year, resolve to take your lunch break. Take your vacation time. Leave work at work, where it belongs. Read a book not related to your job just for the fun of it. Get enough sleep. There is nothing more important than your health and well-being. Not even the Uniform Guidance.

2. **Stress Management.** Of course, important work is stressful! We often fail at work-life balance because we are so stressed out. Take some time to learn about ways you can reduce stress: yoga, exercise, art, and journaling are just a few. Try to incorporate at least one or two stress-coping mechanisms into your daily routine. You’ll be glad you did, and so will your families and PIs!

3. **Organization.** Is your desk underneath a towering stack of paper files? Are you awash in a sea of sticky notes? Is your email inbox a digital disaster area? Take advantage of one of the many electronic tools available to tame the to-do list and bring order to your workspace. Organizing your work helps reduce stress and improve productivity.

4. **Productivity.** All of us would love to be able to get more done every day. The temptation to multitask, especially in this digital age, is strong! But don’t give in to the urge. Concentrate on one task at a time, and stay organized. Consider taking a time management class, or doing a daily time log for a few days to learn where you can make adjustments to become more productive during the workday! Also consider the overall productivity of your office. Could your office benefit from collaboration with other business units for planning and streamlining processes? Often there may be redundancies and services that could be shared. Meeting regularly with different groups within your institution to discuss projects and common issues can often lead to better solutions and efficiencies.

5. **Professional Development.** Attend as many professional development opportunities as you possibly can, be they online webinars, local sessions, or national conferences! Take advantage of all of the training opportunities available to you. Take the initiative to learn proactively about new systems, policies, and procedures at your institution. Become the go-to expert for your faculty and colleagues. If you’re in pre-award, attend... 

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**NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS FOR THE RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR**

By Nancy Spice, Angela Yost, and Brigette Pfister

In addition to the standard New Year’s resolutions of contributing to world peace, ending hunger, ending homelessness and, of course, losing weight, research administrators have their own list of New Year’s resolutions for 2017! The top 10 changes for research administrators are:

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some sessions on post-award topics. If you’re in compliance, try attending a session on clinical trials. Sign up for a CRA prep course, and sit for the test this year. If you’re already a CRA, take a refreshing stroll through the Body of Knowledge. A well-rounded research administrator is a successful one.

6. Workplace Culture. Consider your impact on the culture in your office. Are you a positive force, or a negative one? Conversely, it’s important to reflect in the opposite direction, too: how does the culture in your office impact you? If the impact in either direction is negative, what can you do to encourage positive change?

7. Invest in Others. Make a conscious choice to invest in your colleagues and faculty! Whether it’s the simple act of helping to answer a difficult question, or educating your PI on what the cost principles mean for her project plans, those relationships are critical to your success. An investment could be something as simple as a smile or a kind word, or as complicated as a last minute budget review for a first-time PI. Listening is becoming a lost art. Sometimes all you need to do is listen to a PI or a colleague. All of these investments will yield results in the long run!

8. Find (or Be!) a Mentor. Are you new to research administration, or are you a seasoned veteran? If you’re a newcomer, make this your year to find a research administration mentor who can help you chart the course of your career. The guidance of a good mentor is of inexpressible value. If you’re a research administration “old timer,” is this your year to mentor a newcomer and share the knowledge you have built over the years? Mentor-mentee relationships are valuable for everyone, and are definitely worth the time investment required. Many institutions have formal mentoring programs. See if your institution has one, and if not, see if one can be started.

9. Build Your Network. NCURA offers many opportunities to build your professional network, both in person and online! Volunteer at the next conference you attend. Become active on Collaborate and NCURA social media. Submit your presentation ideas for the next annual meeting, and become a conference presenter. You’ll meet lots of new friends and colleagues who can provide invaluable advice and assistance. It’s great to be able to pick up the phone and call an NCURA colleague when you’re struggling with a difficult negotiation, or dealing with a complex issue, especially if you don’t have help readily available at your home institution. You can also build your network within your own institution. Sometimes misunderstandings exist about the role of research administration. It can be very powerful to invite the faculty to come and ask questions. Workshops for new investigators are also a great idea, both to familiarize them with your institutional procedures and practices, and to help establish good working relationships between research administrators and faculty. The more you make an effort to have face-to-face time with faculty, the more positive perceptions about your office will become. Look for investigator feedback on what would be most helpful to them, and act on it. It is important to make your constituents feel like they matter, and their issues are being listened to and addressed. We often get so caught up in the activities of our daily tasks that we really don’t take as much opportunity to address perception—and perception is key.

10. Make a Change. Finally, consider whether it’s time for you to make a big change in your professional life. Are you ready to move to the next level? Is there a promotion or even a new job in your future? Are you able to learn and grow where you are? Are you happy? If the answer is yes, then your change may be as simple as starting a new habit (like a regular exercise schedule). But if the answer is no, make this your year to be bold. Set your goals and go for it!

Get started on your resolutions today so you don’t wake up tomorrow thinking you should have started yesterday. You have fantastic resources at your institutions and through NCURA. Look at all you have and use it to empower yourself and move forward. You hold the keys to unlock all the potential within—go for it! In closing we leave you with the following:

**THINK – POSITIVELY**
**NETWORK – WELL – GO NCURA**
**EAT – HEALTHY**
**WORK – HARD**
**STAY – STRONG**
**BUILD – FAITH – YOU CAN DO IT**
**WORRY – LESS**
**READ – MORE**
**VOLUNTEER – FREE**
**RELAX – OFTEN**
**LOVE – ALWAYS**
**LIVE – FOREVER**

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Brigette Pfister, MHRD, CRA, is the Director of Proposal and Award Management at the University of Virginia. She graduated from Clemson University’s Masters in Human Resource Development program in 2010, and holds dual certificates in Grants Management from Management Concepts, Inc. She can be reached at bsp2f@virginia.edu
2017 NCURA Awards

The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee is pleased to announce the Call for Nominations for the 2017 NCURA Awards.

Recognizing the contributions of our colleagues is one of the highest honors we can bestow. Additionally, nurturing diversity expands the energy and creativity of our membership and builds a stronger volunteer organization. Now is the time to acknowledge an extraordinary mentor, collaborator, or friend, and also identify a candidate for the minority travel award.

Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration This award is given annually to an individual who has made 1) noteworthy contributions to NCURA, and 2) significant contributions to the profession of Research Administration. [Note: Current National Officers and NCURA Standing Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs (FMC, NLDC, and PDC) are ineligible for nomination for this award.]

Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award This award is given to up to five individuals who have made significant contributions to NCURA. [Note: Current National Officers and NCURA Standing Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs (FMC, NLDC, and PDC) are ineligible for nomination for this award.]

Joseph F. Carrabino Award This award is given to a current, or former, federal employee who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either through a single project, activity, or innovation, or by a lifetime of service.

Catherine Core Minority Travel Award This program supports travel-related costs to attend the NCURA Annual Meeting for up to four individuals from under-represented groups who would not otherwise be able to attend this meeting.

Deadline for all award nominations: March 24, 2017. Please email award nominations and applications to: awards@ncura.edu

For more information on the awards, please visit www.ncura.edu/MembershipVolunteering/Awards.aspx
Why Knowing What Matters REALLY DOES MATTER

By Jo Ann Smith

“The man who knows how will always have a job. The man who knows why will always be his boss.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

The NCURA Magazine editors are introducing a new feature column this year with the theme “Why Does It Matter?” Each issue a different topic related to the administration and management of research will be the focus of the article and will be written by graduate students in research administration from three current masters programs. For example, monitoring conflict of interest and why does it matter. I thought it would be fitting to begin the series by describing why understanding the significance of the activities we conduct really does matter.

All of us began our careers as research administrators basically learning a plethora of regulations, restrictions, policies, and processes, those created by our own research institutions to those of federal agencies that sponsor research. In the beginning we are overwhelmed with a massive amount of specialized vocabulary, acronyms, facts, and other critical information, often without having the necessary time to gain a deeper understanding of why certain regulations, policies or processes matter. I am happy that the editors have created this new featured column because there are several benefits to knowing why what we engage in everyday truly matters to our researchers, institutions, and society.

First, knowing why a specific activity matters teaches us what matters most. For any research organization to perform at its highest level, it is critical for us as research administrators to decipher what matters most. If you don’t know why or what matters in regards to your role, responsibilities, tasks, and performance, you don’t know what you should be focusing on or achieving. David Apgar makes this same point clear in his book, Relevance: Hitting Your Goals by Knowing What Matters, saying we need to know what matters in order to determine the key issues and accelerate our learning by focusing on what is important for us to master. The benefit is not just having knowledge, but knowing how to use that knowledge to skillfully do what matters most for the best impact.

Second, by knowing what matters and why, we can respond more effectively and creatively as science continues to advance into unfamiliar territories. When we put together knowing what matters and a greater understanding of how each part works together. Having a greater understanding of these connections minimizes unintended negative consequences of decision making through the life cycle of an award. In addition, having a broader perspective and in-depth knowledge is the precondition of innovative thinking so we can respond to complex problems more quickly and creatively as science continues to advance into unfamiliar territories. When we put together knowing what matters and a greater understanding of the entire process, we are able to identify and solve problems more efficiently for researchers and our organizations.

Lastly, one of the greatest benefits of knowing why is it reminds us of the significance of what we do. I like the quote from Wisdom Chit-edze: “We often get so caught up in the nitty gritty of implementation that we forget why we are here in the first place …. ‘WHY’ is just as important (if not more important) than the ‘How’; they are not mutually exclusive.” Being reminded of why what we do matters is a powerful inspiration. Understanding our role and contributions in advancing research and maintaining the public trust in research is what brings me to work every day. It excites and energizes me. Over the past several years the journal Science highlights significant breakthroughs that have been made annually through the efforts of researchers. Several of these discoveries are making significant advances to improve our quality of life such as closing in on finding a cure for diabetes, innovative approaches to cancer therapy, the development of an antiretroviral drug that can reduce HIV transmission and progress, or the development of methods in genome editing known as clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats—or CRISPR. Research has the potential to improve our world and save lives—as research administrators we have the ability to make our own contribution to help facilitate research. So never forget that what you do and how you do really does matter.

Jo Ann Smith, PhD, is Director of the fully online Graduate Programs in Research Administration at the University of Central Florida. She has a PhD in Instructional Design and her research interests include online professional development and research administration. She provides RCR instruction, Grantsmanship Certificate training for UCF graduate students and teaches graduate courses in research administration. She can be reached at Jo.Smith@ucf.edu
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FDP Expanded Clearinghouse Project Aims to Reduce Administrative Burden

By Jennifer Barron

In 2011, the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) created a PHS Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) Clearinghouse as a mechanism for both FDP member and non-FDP member institutions to document that they had a PHS FCOI compliant policy in place. This repository allowed participants to forego the exchange of thousands of individual transaction-specific documents. As of 2016, more than 1000 institutions are registered in the FCOI Clearinghouse. The success of this initiative led to the concept of an expanded Clearinghouse that would contain audit, demographic, assurance, and fiscal information needed by pass-through entities (PTEs) when they issue subawards. The need for a national repository was exacerbated by release of the Uniform Guidance, which expands subaward risk assessment and monitoring obligations. Many institutions created “Subrecipient Commitment Forms” to collect such data, but the proliferation of many different forms collecting mostly similar information has underscored the need for national consistency and a more efficient process.

In 2015, the FDP collected 133 different subrecipient commitment forms from its members and analyzed the data elements to derive a single, common profile that can be broadly used for this purpose. Lead by Lynette Arias from The University of Washington, Pamela Webb from The University of Minnesota, and Jennifer Barron from Johns Hopkins University, the Expanded Clearinghouse, Phase I, a national repository of posted information, was created as a less burdensome alternative to achieve the stewardship obligations expected in the subaward issuance and oversight process. Cohort 1 launched in March, 2016 and Cohort 2 in August, 2016. There are currently 79 FDP members (representing 127 campuses/entities) involved in the pilot. See http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/PGA_171520 for a list of entity profiles and more information on this exciting project.

In order to participate in the pilot, participants from FDP member institutions create entity profiles based on a standard Excel template. Those profiles are certified by an authorized institutional official and posted to the FDP website. Each entity profile contains data about the participating institution including demographic data, audit or financial questionnaire results, F&A rates, fringe benefit rates, PHS conflict of interest policy status, debarment and suspension status, and other representations and certifications. FDP is in the process of replacing the current Excel template with an online, secure database system with a web-based front end that will facilitate high quality data entry and offer automated reminders for profile updates. We anticipate the web-based database to be online by Spring, 2017.

Subsequent phases of the Expanded Clearinghouse may include automated data entry into a database structure from federally available data sources, such as SAM records and the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, or alternatively influencing one of those national repositories to record and make publically available the data elements needed by institutions issuing subawards. As the FDP and other organizations work on obtaining regulatory relief from the need to share and monitor audit data among Single Audit recipients, the Expanded Clearinghouse serves as a stop-gap measure to ease the burden of collecting entity information on subrecipients. Information is easily accessible and reliably accurate without the need to send multiple forms back and forth between our peers.

While our intention is ultimately to have all FDP members participate in the pilot, you do not have to be a current pilot participant to take advantage of the efficiencies the Expanded Clearinghouse provides. We encourage everyone to use the Clearinghouse even if you are not a member of the pilot. All profiles are publicly available on the FDP website at: http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/PGA_171219. Non-FDP institutions should look there first before sending a multi-page Subrecipient Commitment form to a subrecipient. If your subrecipient is a pilot participant, their completed and certified entity profile can be printed and filed for reference. Similarly, the entity profile template can be downloaded and completed by any institution. Upon receipt of a request from a pass-through entity (PTE) to complete a subrecipient commitment form, send them your completed entity profile instead, or post it on your own website and send them a link. The completed entity profile is also an easy way to ensure everyone at your own institution has the most up to date and accurate data, and can be used as a training tool internally.

If you have questions about the existing Expanded Clearinghouse, or how your institution can maximize the efficiencies that the Clearinghouse can provide, please email flyechelp@gmail.com. Our objective remains the reduction of administrative burden for everyone — help us spread the word! ■

Jennifer Barron, MBA, is Executive Director of Johns Hopkins University Research Administration (JHURA) at The Johns Hopkins University. She serves as Co-Chair of the Research Administration Committee for the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) and Co-Chair of the FDP Expanded Clearinghouse Project along with Lynette Arias, The University of Washington, and Pamela Webb, The University of Minnesota. She can be reached at jlb@jhu.edu
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I dislike the terminology used by management consultants but I have to admit that some phrases are just too catchy not to be used and the term “starts, stops, and continuous” is actually quite useful. I hereby reclaim that phrase! It forces me to reflect on what I’ll begin to do, what I’ll stop doing, and what I should continue to do as a leader of a Grants and Innovation Office. It’s so easy to keep doing what I’ve always done (or not done....) and it’s quite comfortable as well — not breaking new ground and just following those paths I’ve walked so many times before. It is easy to avoid fumbling into uncharted territory and feeling insecure.

It won’t challenge my already tight schedule, I still have time to prepare and attend all those meetings, and fill in all the documents that have to be done (risk assessments, work plans, strategies, work environment plans, annual reports, sustainability, and gender equality plans...yes, I know that these have to be done and they all have a decent purpose but are more or less items to check off), as well as have coffee with my colleagues once in a while. But let’s be honest, these administrative issues should not hinder me from further developing the office (even though I will continue to attend the meetings and fill in the documents...) and there’s always room for improvements at the office - a lot of them, I guess. So here are my starts, stops, and continuous for 2017:

**Starts**

1. Increase the mobility for my employees within the University of Gothenburg and between universities (e.g. within www.aurora-network.global) with the aim to learn and establish a broader network of colleagues. Also, to find a way to develop mobility schemes between funding agencies, governments, and universities for administrators to improve trust and understanding between the different organisations.

2. Use the naivety and inherent power of students to find new pathways to relevance and social impact. The project www.bdimpact.se will suffice as the platform, run by and for students, without micromanagement. This platform will instead let the students find and discover new ways to learn, even from the (small) failures as well.

3. Develop a contract management system to have a better insight of the university’s knowledge assets (remember that we have the teachers’ exemptions/professors’ privilege in Sweden, i.e. the researchers own their rights to their own findings, even if they are done during office hours).
Stops

1. The office will focus on Research funding; Innovation/utilization and Legal counselling, and the group dealing with Analysis and Evaluations will move to another unit. This will better facilitate the integrated approach between our different expertises.

2. Minimize the times and occasions for various internal meetings in order for the employees to have as clear a schedule as possible (they should support researchers, not be occupied in different internal meetings). Instead, my information from various meetings will be recorded and sent to the employees as a pod to listen to before the unit meetings (instead of having a 15 minute monologue at the beginning of each meeting). The meeting (one hour every other week) may instead be more effective and focus on discussions regarding the information given in the pod and certain themes.

3. Stop using the common data file system as the only tool to manage all grants and cases for innovation and legal issues. We will instead find a relevant project management system (not develop one ourselves) that can be used by everyone at the office.

Continuous

1. The Research Leader Initiative, led by myself and a colleague in the HR-department, which includes leadership, grant writing, and utilization for twenty hand-picked young promising research leaders over the whole university, will be run for its second year (August-May). This is very much appreciated and is so fun to deliver that it will surely be done a third time.

2. Continue to have a mixed setting for the employees where different expertise in legal issues, research funding, and innovation/utilisation are sitting next to each other within Life Science, Natural Sciences and IT, and Humanities and Social Sciences, respectively. This has been shown to be a fruitful and efficient way for the excellent co-workers to build up a more complete support to the research groups within each scientific field.

3. Continue to embrace the possibility of distributiveness also in administration. We do this by using a hypothesis approach (as in research) to find new ways of supporting researchers for certain areas. Each group at the office (with various expertise) writes down three hypotheses to be tested for three months (these are then modified or replaced by other hypotheses). The aim should be that at least one of these three should fail. During the work focus is also given to new ways of visualising the progress of the work, how to give each other feedback, and how to celebrate the small wins.

Those are my starts, stops, and continuous for 2017. What are yours?

Ludde Edgren is the Head of Grants and Innovation Office at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. He can be reached at ludde.edgren@gu.se

Communications among and between the pre and post-award operations of the research enterprise are critical to ensuring camaraderie, trust, service, and compliance. Review teams often note real or perceived challenges among and between the pre and post-award operations. Reviewers have also seen a number of notable strategies and approaches to enhance communication among/between pre and post-award teams.

- Establishing formal, routine meetings among leadership teams and/or office staff.
- Developing an annual, shared strategic planning retreat.
- Establishing regular and systemized written monthly reports, newsletters, and updates.
- Developing and reviewing a roles and responsibilities matrix as a team.
- Celebration of Research Administrator Day together.
- Developing informal activities, meetings, and social events.
- Establishing shared goals and projects.

Kris Monahan, Ph.D. is a member of the Select Committee on Peer Review. She has participated in peer reviews and has more than 15 years of research administration experience, spanning pre-award, post-award, and research compliance at small institutions. She is the Director of Sponsored Research & Programs at Providence College.

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Whether you work at a research institution or a predominantly undergraduate institution, the importance of providing quality services to your faculty in support of their research and scholarship is undeniable. NCURA offers a number of programs to assist your research administration operations and to ensure a high-quality infrastructure that supports your faculty and protects the institution. Please contact Peggy Lowry, Director for NCURA Peer Programs: NCURA Peer Advisory Services and NCURA Peer Review Program at peerreview@ncura.edu or (503) 364-1847.
The NSF and other sources have reported that a good portion of the hours that faculty dedicate to federally-funded projects are spent on administrative tasks associated with meeting requirements, rather than conducting active research. More specifically, here are some highlights from the latest study:

- Fifteen percent of Investigators’ research time associated with a federal award is devoted to proposal preparation.
- Fifty-one percent of the responses in this category mentioned budget preparation and management as a major source of burden.
- Forty-eight percent of the responses in this category commented on proposal writing, which respondents described as time consuming and often the highest burden within their administrative activities.
- Twenty-six percent of responses in this category commented on the grant submission technology used by funding agencies, suggesting that the submission process is overly complex and time consuming due to inefficient systems and requirements that vary by agency.

Luckily, the Principal Investigator (PI) administrative burden can be reduced through implementation of a comprehensive SaaS-based research administration solution. Efficiency gains in the processes associated with pre-award and submission, post-award and reporting, and the range of compliance reviews can be realized.

A Quick Review of the Responsibilities of a Typical Principal Investigator
At the core of an institution’s research activities is the PI, who has ultimate responsibility for project success and compliance with regulations linked to the award. Typically, a specific set of responsibilities comprise the PI’s role, and many of them involve administrative tasks associated with management of funded research projects. Often, those tasks include the following:

- Developing and administering the project work plan
- Securing and managing project resources according to the project plan
- Maintaining accurate communication with all project stakeholders
- Providing accurate and timely reporting to the sponsor regarding project progress
- Ensuring that the project’s financial commitments are met, as outlined in the proposal

The role of the PI is broader than responsibility for project success. It begins even before the award and entails tasks such as investigation of funding announcements and opportunities, leveraging past proposal and award data, proposal and budget development, adherence to sponsor submission standards, approvals, proposal tracking, and compliance with IRB, IACUC, IBC, and COI regulations. For those PIs whose institutions do not enjoy the benefits of comprehensive cloud-based research administration software, one that is integrated with the institution’s other business systems, the administrative burden associated with finding, pursuing, securing, managing, and reporting on a research project can be a heavy one indeed.

Principal Investigator Administrative Challenges
Maneuvering through the maze of administrative requirements and processes is particularly challenging to PIs, who aspire to use their significant skillsets to produce benefits for research sponsors and institutions in particular and more broadly to the greater society. Nonetheless, they often find themselves consumed with administrative challenges much of the time, such as:

- Dealing with an increasing and often-changing level of regulatory requirements and processes, both from sponsors and institutions
- Having to submit multiple proposals to various funding sources due to decreases in available sponsored funding and increased competition for available funds. The proposals to different funding agencies must be aligned with the scope of the agency and specific program for the best results.
- Utilizing a conglomeration of systems associated with the research administration function, none of which is comprehensive and many of which are not integrated either technically or procedurally
- Re-keying of data into various institutional or sponsor systems,
resulting in data inconsistencies, validation overhead, and re-work.

- Managing the increased complexity associated with the trend toward collaborative projects involving multiple PIs, conflicting approval processes among multiple departments or institutions, and many data sources
- Generating meaningful and accurate reports that integrate all pertinent data required by PIs, institutions, and sponsors

This list could continue endlessly, with variations depending upon the type of PI involved, the profile of the research institute in question, or the sponsors funding the research.

**PI Administrative Benefits of Cloud-Based Research Administration Software**

Fortunately for PIs, as well as their institutions and funding sponsors, research administration software inherently addresses many of the challenges they face, resulting in more efficient administrative processes and a reduction in the percentage of PI research hours spent on tasks other than research. Research administration software is often cloud-based and referred to as a “cradle to grave” system, if its functionality spans the spectrum of activities and processes associated with the research function. This can include automated access to opportunities, proposal and budget development, approval routing and submission to sponsor, establishment of the award, project tracking and reporting, the range of compliance disciplines (IRB, IACUC, IBC, COI, etc.), and intelligent leveraging and sharing of research data.

When developing a proposal, the software enables multiple PIs, irrespective of location or institution, to work collaboratively on the proposal simultaneously. The quality of the proposal is significantly improved through pre-populated data fields and automatic uploading of data from various sources (e.g., salaries, bio sketches, standard rates, etc.), and the risk of proposal rejection can be reduced through automatic data validation that ensures compliance with formatting standards.

The burden associated with securing proposal approval is also reduced through the automatic workflow routing inherent in software that is in the cloud. Paper routing is eliminated, the speed of routing is accelerated, routing through multiple scenarios can occur simultaneously, ad hoc commenters/approvers can be inserted into the approval route at any time by anyone in the routing process, and routing transparency is greatly enhanced. As an added benefit, the software can present proposals and budgets, and check on approvals online. For example, two people can be working on the same file as long as they have designated roles – one can work on the budget and its justification. In that scenario, one can assume that the time savings would be up to 50%.

Undertaking any new technology initiative may bring challenges in the implementation, but NJIT is transitioning to a more productive and user-friendly research administration solution in the cloud. This will undoubtedly reduce administrative burden and will continue to do so over time.

**NJIT’s Journey**

Early 2015, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) decided to equip its research community with the necessary tools to enhance its research support infrastructure for proposal submission and administration. The Office of Research had a vision of an online management process to follow up through the information technology (IT) systems, program codes and associated documentation, data, and other related infrastructure. The goal is to align support services with research needs to maximize submission of successful proposals in an efficient manner, reducing incidents, disruptions and unnecessary revisions. Researchers at NJIT would be able to capture, manage and analyze proposal submissions and grant management data.

NJIT’s idea to transform the paper-based system to a system in the cloud is being implemented in three phases: proposal submission, compliance, and award management and reporting. The three phases combined will create the backbone for the research enterprise. Doing so with a complete database is important for developing strategies to enhance the research enterprise with sustainable grants management and administration.

NJIT’s Office of Research has many challenges, such as accommodating individual needs, meeting deadlines, and overcoming the constant changes of the agencies’ requirements. Fortunately, the new research administration system creates an electronic record that reduces the risk of files being lost or irreparable. Before adopting the new system, when NJIT was using paper, the average timing for approvals was about two weeks because the files would sometimes just sit on someone’s desk. Now with a system in the cloud, the average approval time is expected to be around 48 hours. The electronic records are visible to the researchers to prepare and revise budgets, and check on approvals online. For example, two people can be working on the same file as long as they have designated roles – one can revise the research plan while the other can work on the budget and its justification. In that scenario, one can assume that the time savings would be up to 50%.

Atam P. Dhawan, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Research and Distinguished Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at NJIT is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering, and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering. Atam serves as Chief Research Officer, responsible for academic research administration including pre-award and post-award services, research policies, grant management, research compliance, and intellectual property and patent filing. He can be reached at dhawan@njit.edu

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Norma Y. Rubio, Director, Research Information Systems at NJIT has more than two decades of experience in sponsored research administration working with faculty, funding agencies and stakeholders. A graduate in electrical and computer engineering, Norma has developed policies and protocols for successful proposal submission and pre-award activities. Norma is heading the Electronic Research Administration with a network of information systems providing a user-friendly interactive environment to optimize proposal submission, research compliance and grant management services at NJIT. She can be reached at rubio@njit.edu
Like any other start-up or central research administration office in a small institution, my office needs to handle every aspect of research-related work such as pre- and post-award, intellectual property, patent management and licensing, and export control. This may sound depressingly familiar even to some of our colleagues in large and well-established institutions, but when work comes in or a problem knocks at my door, instead of playing ping-pong to push it away, my reaction is to try to find a way to get the work done and solve the problem.

However, with the work on one side and having only two staff including me in my office on the other side, how to keep this balance while providing strong support to faculty and researchers is constantly the ultimate question. I think this dilemma could also be common to most office managers feeling they lack of time and staff to get the job done well. Taking a step higher to look down at these problems, I realize that they could be streamlined, simplified, and analyzed into two core factors: time management and team building.

Time management for a research administration office, and for most offices, can be achieved by two ways: 1) to allocate time on different tasks based on priorities and 2) to increase office efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, these two ways often do not work perfectly in practice: Since work in research administration offices is mostly deadline driven and results driven, we set our priority list based on how pressing deadlines are and how often our faculty nudge us. This fragments our time and concentration on a big project which requires a continuous chunk of effort.

One way of easing this time fragmentation is through setting up an internal deadline prior to the official deadline and encouraging a conversation or discussion from faculty with a university’s central office at an early stage of preparation of a proposal or negotiation of a contract. At Duke Kunshan University, the internal deadline is set five business days prior to the official deadline. It is set even much earlier when a big deadline is coming, such as submission deadline for National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), the Chinese counterpart of NSF in the U.S. Another way to better use time in our office is through increasing office efficiency and effectiveness. To optimize the office workload and to increase efficiency and effectiveness involves adapting and optimizing office structure; it also requires office leaders to design and execute a practical strategic plan of building a united and high-performing team.

The central office in a public university in China usually takes on the office-structure model defined by what I call “profession nature”, that is to say, the central office has several separate divisions devoting to the tasks exclusively: 1) programs sponsored by Chinese government agencies, 2) programs sponsored by corporate and non-government sponsors, 3) laboratories and research centers certified by the Chinese central and local governments, 4) research-result-related honors, prizes, and awards, 5) intellectual property, especially patents, and 6) general affairs. At times
a central office assigns two or three tasks into one division depending on the workload generated from those tasks or the connections/relevancy between the tasks. Each division manages the whole life cycle of the programs assigned.

Duke Kunshan University, co-founded by Duke University in the U.S. and Wuhan University in China, is one of nine joint-venture universities in China to date. Unlike the office structure of Chinese public institutions, the number of which now reaches over 2500, my office at Duke Kunshan is modeled after the office at Duke mostly by the chronological order or process stages, i.e., dividing the tasks into areas of pre-award, award set-up, post-award, close-out, IRB, IP, etc. However, some renowned public universities in China have begun to establish or have recently established a separate division under their central office devoted to process management for sponsored programs. Since Duke Kunshan and joint-venture universities are all at their early stages, it needs more time to tell which model better supports the need from the faculty and researchers with flexibility and sophistication.

While changing and optimizing the office structure model is always incremental, building a strong and high performing team has been constantly the top priority for all office managers, and to me it is the most difficult and delicate one. The goal to build and lead a strong team is to have every member of the team work together as a body to complete various types of jobs of quality on time while still having some space and flexibility to be able to handle new challenges and projects coming to the office. Since I started my career in the business of research administration as an entry-level staff, I understand that the team works best to have the staff’s best interests in line with the team’s best interests: as the team thrives and expands, the staff can see and are offered clear career development pathways; they are recognized by their diligence and positive work results with promotions and salary raises.

Within the office as a team, a staff as a team member is encouraged and ideally offered systematic training to become the “go-to” expert in his/her specialty while still possessing a general knowledge in other relevant areas. In this way, staff obtains a better chance of developing their own methodology transferrable to higher positions when they are ready for more responsibilities. On the other hand, the office manager needs to understand that it is human nature to hope to do less work and gain more rewards, so he/she is obliged to help his/her staff to first set a mindset that more work means more chances to learn. They should become too good to be ignored for promotion, guided and mentored to identify their will, their interests, potentials, and strengths to carry independently and reliably certain parts of the responsibilities the whole office takes on.

A new central office, especially one in a start-up joint venture university in China, is emerged into an ever-changing environment when faculty bring in needs requiring immediate and professional support in a wide spectrum of areas. By carefully managing time, keeping the office run in a result-driven way efficiently and effectively, and forming a strong team, this central office has a large chance of surviving and hopefully thriving along its way.

Jing Bai, M.A., is the Assistant Director of the Research Support Office at Duke Kunshan University, Kunshan, China. He leads the new central office in this newly established joint-venture university co-founded by Duke University in the U.S. and Wuhan University in China with great sponsorship from the Kunshan municipal government. His office is responsible for managing pre- and post-award for all sponsored programs, IRB, IP, patents licensing and venture, and anything else research related. He is also a photographer, traveler, calligrapher and cellist at the beginner’s level. He can be reached at jing.bai@dukekunshan.edu.cn
I lead a post-award office at a large public university campus. I got feedback on a recent performance review that I need to “show up” more like a leader. My boss didn’t tell me a lot more about his comment, that it was his perception that others don’t see me “taking command” of the team. He said it is not about the accuracy of my work or questions about my integrity. Do you have any advice?

To serve you, I would need to know more about you, and your experience in leadership, and what dynamics exist between you and your boss and you and those you lead. I am glad to hear that your boss shared with you that the comment was not based on your integrity or the quality of your work products. So, rest easy on those counts. I would suggest that you continue to ask your boss about the comment to help both of you understand better what the challenge is or may be. Try to do this in a way that is genuinely curious and not defensive. This is a great leadership test! Learning from feedback in a positive and constructive way helps build trusting relationships.

Let me assume that the comment on your performance review is about leadership presence. In other words, could it be about your physical self, how you hold yourself and how you connect with others in your leadership role? The core question is: What do you look like to those you lead? And does your physical self match your words? Is there congruence between the words you say and how you appear while you say the words? The messages we convey come more from our physical selves than the actual words. Does your physical self express conviction and belief in what you are saying? Congruence is the key word here. When people say that someone “walks the talk”, they mean that the person’s words match their deeds. That occurs when someone’s body language matches their message. Congruence.

One of the best resources I have seen about leadership presence is from Dr. Amy Cuddy of Harvard University. Dr. Cuddy describes her research and provides several thoughts for anyone interested in “showing up” with confidence and positive energy. Check out her TED talk on YouTube entitled “Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are”. Here is the link: www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en

Pay attention to your eye contact, to how you appear in meetings, and in one-on-one situations. Do you project calmness? Do you truly listen to others? Do you speak positively and encourage others to speak? Do you sit up straight in meetings or do you slouch? Do you smile readily or reluctantly? Do you speak and articulate so that people can hear and understand you? Ask someone else in your office to give you feedback on these and other aspects of presence. Consider joining Toastmasters International, an excellent organization devoted to the learning and practice of public speaking. It’s not about speaking loud or fast. It’s actually about speaking in a paced manner.

Consider engaging the services of a leadership coach to work with you on presence. A coach can help you identify the key areas that would enhance your performance in this area. It is not about achieving perfection, but about making the incremental improvements necessary to have those you lead see you as a leader. Why is this important? It is important because the decisions you make, the requests you make of staff, and the positions you take with stakeholders all depend on the congruency between your words and body. Are they saying the same thing? Or, are people confused about your messages?

What I like about your boss’s comment (vague as it is) is the commitment he or she is making to your professional development by sharing feedback that can be quite uncomfortable to give. I think that act speaks volumes about how you should develop yourself as a leader, and to work collaboratively with your boss so that he or she continues to see herself or himself as a stakeholder in your success. Ask your boss to let you know when he or she feels you have crossed the “presence” threshold: Leadership presence may be difficult to describe, but we all know it when we see it. Define leadership presence for yourself. Start today.

Do you have a leadership question? Send questions to me at the email below. Thank you to those who have sent questions and comments!
Reinventing Yourself as a Leader in 2017

Recognizing the Challenges and Embracing the Opportunities

By Timothy Schailey, Erin Bailey, and Michele Cordero Boligitz

What do you as a leader have in common with other leaders in the field of research administration? The answer is we all have to reinvent ourselves, look for changes that need to be implemented, and focus on how to continue to strive to do our best. According to Bacharach (2014), “reinventing oneself requires focusing on what’s around you and learning to capture the essence of an observation so it can be transferred to a new set of skills” (para 6). As we begin to excogitate goals we would like to accomplish in the coming year, Blanchard (2014) suggests that leaders need to reinvent themselves on personal and professional levels while maintaining a focus on reinventing structures that can accommodate future growth. For example, as leaders we must continually evaluate ways in which we can ensure our knowledge of research administration remains relevant so we can lead our teams to develop systems and processes that will provide a sound structure for the successes of tomorrow. Some questions to ponder might be: What challenges do I see ahead as the leader of my team? What changes will need to be implemented in partnership with my colleagues and team? Your growth as a leader starts now. Our careers as research administrators have led us down paths where the dynamics of the profession frequently change based on new regulations both internally and externally in response to an ever-changing environment. As a result, our profession demands fluidity, which requires leaders to embrace change and not be afraid to take risks. For most of us, leadership is a day-to-day matter of how we strive to do our best.
As organizational structures change, so does leadership, and this sometimes can be difficult for individuals to assimilate. As leaders, we have to do our best to mitigate any anxiety and consternation that may exist within the teams we lead. Hodges (2016) says that “to lead or manage people through change, leaders and managers must be able to connect with, control and leverage their own emotions and be able to do the same with the people they are responsible for and who will be affected by and involved in the change” (p. 49). Typically, changes are happening at a rapid pace and skills and observations that were recognized yesterday may not be accurate today. Therefore, leaders must pivot and take unexpected directions which may necessitate individuals to venture out of their comfort zone. In order to effectively lead your team through change, the authors suggest pondering the following:

1. **Observe.** What are people in your office working on? What are their ideas? To be a great leader, you must reinvent continuously on a *personal* level, which is supported by the work of Blanchard (2014). We can continue to attend seminars to obtain new information on rules and regulations; however, simply knowing how to do your job today does not secure your success tomorrow. Wador (2016) discusses the importance of ensuring employees are continually provided learning opportunities to ensure higher levels of productivity, and offering opportunities for staff to become “agile and to adapt quickly to changes in the market” in order to achieve institutional goals (para 4). Continue to read, watch YouTube Tuesday videos, talk to colleagues, or work with a mentor. All of these will allow you to keep up with this ever-changing world so you can be innovative and bring new ideas that will aid in responding to future challenges.

2. **Acknowledge.** As a leader what are your strongest and weakest characteristics? Every leader has shortcomings, so it is important to be able to spot yours and come up with a plan for improvement.

3. **Connect.** Network with your colleagues. A lonely leader is not a productive leader. Look at the processes in your office. Are there ways to improve current business practices? Look for ways to reduce costs and potential errors while remaining focused on overall productivity. Do not be afraid to gather input from people at all levels in the workplace.

4. **Fail.** As you reinvent yourself as a leader, be prepared for bumps in the road. Walter (n.d.) reminds us that “no great success was ever achieved without failure” (para 1).

5. **Anticipate.** While thinking about today, prepare for the future. Sometimes the way an organization is structured just does not make sense for future growth based upon personal/professional aspirations. The best leaders recognize this and are willing to be flexible when it comes to restructuring teams, departments, and sometimes entire functions. You are the only person who can define you as a leader. Think back to when you first started in research administration. What was it that you liked or did not like about your supervisor’s management style? Take that information and learn from it. You can reinvent yourself many times over if needed. In 2017, focus on your strengths in yourself and others around you. What are you really good at and what are the members of your team good at achieving within their own respective roles? You can become an outstanding leader by continuing to build upon those strengths.

When seeking to reinvent yourself as a leader, start with knowing yourself. This is where the foundation of self-awareness comes into play which “allows the best business-builders to walk the tightrope of leadership: projecting conviction while simultaneously remaining humble enough to be open to new ideas and opposing opinions” (Tjan, 2012, para 3). Reinventing yourself teaches leaders to grow; it allows individuals to take an idea and make it a solution. Additionally, it allows you to focus energy on growing others within your team while preparing them to be leaders of tomorrow. It also allows you to look at your office, the projects, timelines, and the decision-making processes focusing on costs, production, customer service, and employees.

Reinventing yourself will not be without challenges. Have a system in place to focus on the new. When you are implementing a new system or business practice that is different than something that has been in existence for some time, no one is quite sure what is going to happen. Systems and relationships can break down, and often leadership determines whether a new process will be successful or not. Along with focusing on the new, focus on the end. Anytime something is coming to an end and things are, by definition, about to change, times get difficult. That may be because of a big push to get finished, or the fear of the unknown. Will a team be splitting up, will there be downsizing? Whatever the reason, it often takes leadership skills to make sure a project ends successfully, and everyone moves on to the next phase, whatever that may be.

While leaders are expected to lead their teams to success in support of institutional and departmental goals, employees may sometimes find themselves managing up, which means “being the most effective employee you...leaders must pivot and take unexpected directions which may necessitate individuals to venture out of their comfort zone.
can be, creating value for your boss and your company” (Rousmaniere, 2015, para 8). In the field of research administration, managing relationships can be overwhelming since our performance can be measured by the faculty we serve as well as our immediate supervisors. Additionally, we need to ensure our individual professional and personal goals are met so we are fulfilled in our own careers. How we manage up can build successful relationships that are mutually beneficial to both employees and management by making us aware of individual strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes of those to whom we report. Self-awareness of these traits is equally important for the employee so an individual can learn to adjust their behaviors and balance relationships in any given situation. An employee is effectively managing up when he or she can understand and deliver at or above management expectations without losing sight of their own goals and relationships with their peers.

Effective communication helps us identify expectations. Communication is essential in all successful relationships but requires a balance (Meloni, 2012). Setting expectations early without making assumptions based on past experiences or from information obtained from colleagues will lead to more trusting relationships. You cannot be angry at your boss if you did not get something you needed but never asked for. In addition, your boss should not hear about a problem you are having from someone else within or outside your department. Take mental notes of the behavioral needs of your manager. If he or she is a stickler for timeliness then do your best to meet required deadlines early, make adjustments to your schedule to ensure you are not late, and most importantly know how to communicate in the event you cannot make a meeting or deadline. Sometimes as employees, we can be our own worst enemy by not recognizing our errors and behaviors patterns. Failing to modify our behavior or being too stubborn to adjust our style to suit the personality of our supervisor makes for a poor and unproductive relationship. Furthermore, be sensitive to deadlines and expectations and understand your manager is often reacting to demands at or above their level of management (Gabarro and Kotter, 2005).

Your actions define how you are perceived. If you are perceived as stubborn, unprofessional, or unreliable, then you may not get rewarded or acknowledged in the way you hope or in the same manner as your colleagues. Modifying your behaviors will strengthen positive perceptions and enable you to be more successful. A certain level of independence is required to successfully manage up. Being able to identify problems, provide solutions, and offer suggestions requires technical knowledge and demonstrates that the employee is a reliable individual who portrays the best interest of the overall department or organization (Meloni, 2012). In reality, each one of us has the ability to lead by taking ownership of our mistakes, identifying solutions, and making necessary adjustments to ensure successful improvements. These characteristics cultivate relationships of trust. These are all behaviors we can control, which can lessen personal conflicts that can hinder the progress of work performance. This does not minimize the importance of building relationships with colleagues beyond your department or organization. Creating a network of colleagues to have confidence in is equally important and provides unlimited resources personally and professionally. Managing up is not always easy because of the need to adjust our own style and temperament, but the end result can have remarkable value.

In conclusion, as we embrace opportunities to continue learning, performing self-assessments, and observing what is occurring within the internal and external environment, our persistent vigilance will allow us to serve as pioneers in our quest to position ourselves and our institutions for the challenges we will meet in pursuit of the success we seek to achieve on both a personal and professional level.

References


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A UNIVERSITY Perspective on TESTIMONY PREPARATION and RECOMMENDATIONS

Testifying Before Congress: Challenges and Opportunities

By James Luther
Preamble

Testifying to a Congressional Subcommittee is nerve-racking...don’t get me wrong, the opportunity to address an august group such as members of Congress who can, with one signature from their quills (they still use quills...right?), erase much of the regulatory burden that has so effectively eroded university faculty members’ time away from their core mission of instruction, service, and research. But knowing that every spoken word will be memorialized forever in the annals of the Congressional record and that the multiple video cameras will capture every word, every gesture, and every nod is a bit intimidating. And knowing that at some point, this video may possibly be played at 3:30 AM on a Tuesday morning on C-Span gave me pause. I certainly don’t want the camera to catch me nodding off, despite the previous late night prepping for this. So, this is the back-story to prepping days and weeks for 5 minutes of testimony and the follow-on Q&A. www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMw0xlToxo0.

Note: And to my friends and associates out there, I should clarify that I was “asked” to testify as opposed to the Wells Fargo CEO who was required to testify on the same day. And unlike the previously referred-to CEO, I still have my job.

Summary

As we all know, there is growing Congressional interest in addressing the federal regulatory burden that has grown exponentially over the past two decades. This interest is exemplified in three important pending pieces of legislation. A Congressional subcommittee hearing was convened in September to consider the issues involved in the reduction of administrative burden, not coincidentally attended by the key sponsors of these important pending bills. Some of the critical measures reflected in these stem from the recently released National Academies Report (www8.nationalacademies.org/op/nnews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=21824) and GAO Report entitled “Opportunities Remain for Agencies to Streamline Administrative Requirements” (www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-573) as well as much of the work done by national associations such as the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), the Association of American Universities (AAU), and the highly collaborative work of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP). On Sept 29th the Research and Technology Subcommittee held a formal hearing entitled “Academic Research Regulatory Relief: A Review of New Recommendations.” The subcommittee extended invitations to four witnesses including myself to present to the committee. The invitation provided the opportunity to provide direct feedback to members of Congress related to the increased administrative burden that universities are routinely experiencing.

In this first of two articles, I provide insights into the preparation required for this testimony as well as reinforce some of the critical points that I, and my fellow witnesses, conveyed to the subcommittee throughout the process. In the second article I will explore the specific details related to the testimony and efforts for ongoing advocacy. Testimony before a Congressional committee involves multiple steps and, because of the potential importance, not a small amount of thoughtful concern. Key elements of preparation included the advanced submission of significant materials and paperwork that had two purposes: they aided the subcommittee members and their staff to prepare for discussion of the key issues; and, they supported the development of questions for the Q&A portion of the testimony. Materials to be submitted 48 hours in advance included oral and written statements, a one-page summary, and various other supporting documents.

It was challenging to reduce multiple issues and concerns down to the key elements that I wanted to focus on and reinforce. As I was essentially representing both Duke University and COGR (as Chair of the Board), a good portion of my testimony included a number of similar conclusions that all parties (universities, national associations, and federal partners) have generally come to agree with regarding key observations of the current state of federal regulatory burden. These included:

• the regulation of research continues to steadily increase and it is not sustainable and directly and indirectly impacts faculty in the conduct of their research,
• there is a lack of standardization across agencies, and this is very costly both to agencies and universities, and
• federally-funded research could be regulated much more efficiently.

Along with the general discussion points, I specifically advocated for the Research Policy Board (RPB) which I described as the “enabler of everything else” and which I will discuss in much greater detail in the next article.

BACKGROUND

As a neophyte to this process, I found it to be very formal and very structured. Once engaged in the planning, however, it became much more of a thoughtful process for identifying core issues that could be quickly defined and highlighted in the initial five-minute presentation. Five minutes may sound like adequate time, but to select several key issues, tell the compelling story of their criticality, and do this in a way that provides opportunity for more discussion during the Q&A was very challenging. My first draft attempt clocked in at about 12 minutes - not even close to the five-minute limit. This was extremely difficult as I tried to “personalize” the testimony and do justice to both my COGR Board Chair role and still customize with the Duke perspective. And I would be remiss in not noting that Lisa Nichols,
the Director of Research & Regulatory Reform at COGR, was critical as I iterated through version after version after revision trying to hit the sweet spot of what should be in the written and oral testimony, how much detail to go into, and how to present the issues in a digestible manner for attendees less familiar on the topics than those of us that live it every day. Over a five-day period, we probably went through 20 versions or more.

**The Beginning:** For this type of hearing, the process to testify often begins with an email or phone call gauging an individual’s interest in testifying. In this case, Rep. Lipinski’s office contacted Duke’s Office of Government Relations (DOGR) regarding my interest. The subcommittee had evidently reached out regarding me for two reasons: my role at Duke in working to develop internal and external policies that benefit both research and compliance management and my role as the COGR Board Chair and the co-chair of the FDP Administrative Burden Subgroup along with Sara Bible from Stanford. Simultaneously, Lisa Nichols of COGR was having conversations with Lipinski’s staffers about my participation. As many know, COGR has been very outspoken about many of the burden issues the subcommittee planned to address, thus the dual representation was a logical conclusion. COGR’s work has continued to focus on cultivating the relationship with federal partners both for joint accountability as well as advocacy. Their oft-cited “Federal Regulatory Changes since 1991” (http://cogr.edu/COGR/files/ccLibraryFiles/Filename/000000000419/RegChangesSince1991_Updated%20September%202016.pdf) has been the cornerstone that documents the regulatory increase since the F&A administrative cap was implemented in 1991 and is further supported by their methodical and meticulous letters addressing critical issues as they arise (http://cogr.edu/News-Stories).

Although we knew the hearing was likely to be scheduled in late September, we were not clear as to the specific date. This was both a function of scheduling of the subcommittee member’s time but also the fact that we were in the midst of a contested election season, and as of yet an unapproved budget, and the members were eager to leave DC and head home to continue their campaigning as soon as necessary business was conducted.

After responding with a verbal “yes”, I received an email (and then via snail mail) letter from Chairwoman Comstock formally asking me to be a witness, specifying the date, and also identifying the required documents for submission. Materials to be submitted 48 hours in advance of the hearing included:

- An oral statement not to exceed 5 minutes in length (www.youtube.com/watch?v=umW0xTOoxo)
- A one-page summary of key points
- Curriculum Vitae

The paperwork stated that PowerPoints and LCD projectors were available as needed, but after internal discussion, we felt that this would not be necessary and might be distracting from achieving a concise 5-minute opening statement. Also included were the “rules governing appearance before the Committee.” Original signatures were needed on the key disclosure forms and 45 copies had to be delivered in advance of both the testimony and biographical information.

- A Quick Turnaround: As mentioned above, in late September, members of Congress were very focused on the ongoing campaigning in preparation for the November election. But members were delayed in returning to their district until they passed a budget or continuing resolution (CR). I took the opportunity to schedule other meetings in DC on the 28th to ensure that travel delays wouldn’t hamper my timely attendance for the following day. Throughout the day on the 28th, rumors were that a CR was about to happen and that members might immediately depart for home. At about 4:00 PM, the Senate passed a CR that adequately addressed concerns related to Zika virus funding, one of the key sticking points. An hour and a half later, although we heard rumors that the House was close to approving the CR, we received confirmation from Lisa Nichols’ contacts in DC that the hearing would happen as scheduled; although for a short email interchange, there was the possibility that the format would change from a formal hearing to a roundtable. This discussion was short-lived, however, and the hearing was on.

Having the opportunity to testify also allowed me to visit the Congressional Offices and subcommittee conference rooms which I hadn’t visited in 40 years since I was in middle school growing up in Maryland. Security for the building is generally the same as airport security and was very efficient. From there, Lisa Nichols and I made our way to the waiting room for the Subcommittee Hearing rooms. Arriving at 9:45, we spent several minutes in the waiting room and then were whisked into the Hearing room. Staffers were abuzz setting up the room with pads of paper, name tags, and...
Universities are committed to working with federal partners to ensure effective oversight and efficient use of taxpayer funds, and frequently unnecessary burden to the university and research communities.

Further, I emphasized that when universities and federal agencies do work together, we can achieve significant successes. There are examples where this mutual engagement has led to a number of successes, including

Handing off Your Work!

What if you could increase your efficiency and protect yourself from a common workplace injury at the same time?

By the age of 25, the strain of sitting at a computer for eight hours a day (and then spending several more hours playing on my computer at home) caused me to develop a repetitive strain injury. Constantly scrolling and clicking the mouse led to serious pain in the index finger of my dominant right hand. I left my doctor with strict instructions not to touch my computer for a week—a cruel directive for a millennial, and one that my employer wasn’t happy with, either.

I switched the mouse to my lazy, good-for-nothing left hand to take some of the pressure off my overworked right hand. At first it just felt wrong, like using a computer in the Twilight Zone. My precision and speed with the mouse were drastically reduced, and a casual observer would think this mouse was “broken.”

But the strain on my right hand began to rapidly decrease. By the third day, I felt comfortable with this new arrangement, and after a week, it felt natural. My brain formed some fancy new neural connections, my hands have been pain-free for ten years, and the switch also improved my efficiency at work. For example:

- I can use the mouse to highlight cells in a budget while modifying the cells with the number pad on the right side of my computer.
- I can use the mouse to navigate a document on my computer while taking notes with my right hand.

We spend a third of our lives working, so why not make that time more productive and less painful?

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a thoughtful development and rollout of the Uniform Guidance, as well as the ongoing work with OMB to overcome challenges related to procurement and subrecipient monitoring. In post-hearing conversations with Rep. Comstock and Lipinski and later with staffers in a separate meeting, I related that there are extremely productive examples of relationships. One that I specifically noted was with Michelle Bulls (Director, NIH OPERA) in response to concerns voiced through the FDP about the NIH SubAcct Transition and the 90-day final reporting timeline. This extremely productive interaction spanned 2+ years and was mutually beneficial for all parties and ultimately was a lifesaver from a burden and compliance perspective. This positive outcome was specifically a function of Ms. Bulls’ openness and willingness to understand burden from the university perspective and allowed universities to transition to a new business process and level of enforcement in a thoughtful and reasonable way.

The initial five-minute requirement limited full discussion of key issues, but fortunately we were able to open discussion on this and other related issues. The Q&A was extremely productive and allowed us to expand on our previous testimony as well as address other critical issues.

At 11:18 AM, Representative Lipinski initiated closing comments followed by Chairwoman Comstock who invited us to “continue the dialogue” to improve the process. Further, she stated that the record would remain open for two weeks for additional written comments and corrections as well as to allow additional questions from other committee members. And then, at 11:19 AM, the Hearing was adjourned.

Reps. Lipinski and Comstock then graciously came down to the witness table to meet with us and thank us for our participation. It was very casual and lighthearted and was an additional opportunity for photos and for final comments in an informal manner. The university witnesses extended invitations to the members to visit our campuses and we offered to come back to DC at any time to follow-up on our testimony.

**Post-Meeting:** On October 10th, I sent a letter to Representative Comstock thanking her for the invitation, emphasizing several key points (e.g. Research Policy Board), and offering to meet with her and/or her staffers in DC at any time. And on October 18th, I received an email from Representative Comstock’s staffer asking me to review the transcribed testimony, all 62 pages of it, and respond to three additional follow-up questions from members. This had a due date of November 1st, which I just made under the wire, via a scanned version of corrections, adjustments, and additional responses.

In my next article, I will spend some time addressing key elements of my testimony, including providing an update on the ongoing 21st Century Cures Act legislation that is being deliberated as of the writing of this article.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In summary, this appears to have been a beneficial discussion as it, along with the NAS and GAO reports, are hopefully continuing the momentum on these critical issues. Most notable in this process was that the preparation was significant, especially in proportion to the actual testimony, but the process was highly enlightening and we have already had one follow-up meeting with staffers and continue to strategize for more conversations.

Again, special thanks to COGR, especially Lisa Nichols, and Melissa Vetterkind from the Duke Office of Government Relations.
Why should you attend?

- Network with over 1,000 post-award Administrators!
- Over 130 Sessions spread throughout 8 tracks
- Option to take part in our NEW certificate program
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For more information visit: http://www.ncura.edu/fra/Home.aspx
The fund was established to support the professional development of members who seek graduate education in research administration. It was started with a generous gift by one visionary NCURA member. As of the end of 2016 we have raised over $87,000 in donations from individual NCURA members.

We cannot start making scholarship awards until we have raised at least $100K. You can help us to grow the fund in various ways:

1) You can make a tax-deductible contribution to the fund via the NCURA website at https://www.ncura.edu/Education/EducationScholarshipFund/DonateToday.aspx

2) The Best Job of All preschool children’s book is available for purchase from the NCURA online store with all proceeds going to the fund.

3) Regions are encouraged to get creative throughout the year with sales of T-shirts, blankets, and other NCURA swag to raise money for the fund—and compete for bragging rights. These fundraisers during the year count toward the Regional Bucket Challenge.

Thank you to all those who contributed previously during 2016! We also wanted to acknowledge those who gave during the annual meeting via their regions as well as those that donated since the annual meeting and through our end-of-year 2016 campaign:

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*Remember, even a little makes a difference!*

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The Case of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology

By Erwan Arzel

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) launched the Global Collaboration Research (GCR) program in 2007 which engaged a network of over 30 institutions worldwide as part of a strategic initiative to build the University research program and infrastructure and introduce KAUST to the world. In its groundbreaking capacity as both performer and funder of research, KAUST was able to build its research and innovation capabilities swiftly, generate an impact in world science, and accelerate the recruitment of outstanding faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and students.

In 2009, KAUST was officially established as a graduate University on the shore of the Red Sea, 90 km north of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, with the mission of advancing science and technology through distinctive and collaborative research integrated with graduate education and the vision of becoming a destination for scientific and technological education and research.

As of 2016, KAUST hosted 150 faculty, 940 students (2/3 PhDs, 1/3 Masters), 400 post-doctoral researchers, and over 300 research scientists and engineers.

Research Services at KAUST

The Research Services in the Office of Sponsored Research was created in mid-2010 to manage external research-related awards and contracts. During the first year, procedures and guidelines were instituted in order to have practical rules and workflow in place. The responsibilities of the office increased in 2013 when it was tasked to manage internal awards as well. The Research Services operates under the supervision of the Director of the Sponsored Research Office and the Vice President for Research. It has reached a headcount of 15 people from ten different nationalities split in three distinct teams: Pre-Award, Awards and Contracts, and Post-Award.

Currently, the Research Services acts as the centralized office, which manages all research-related applications from our investigators from submission to closeout. Those applications include:

- Proposal submission to sponsors such as the Competitive Research Fund (the KAUST internal sponsor), King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology (KACST, the National Agency), foreign agencies, industrial partners, not-for-profit private organization, and
- Agreements such as non-disclosure agreements, material transfer agreements, research collaboration agreements, and master research agreements.

Around 400 applications are received every year; 70% of them include one or more collaborators. The Research Services facilitates the collaboration with institutions from all over the world on all types of applications as mentioned above.

Fostering Academic Collaborations

Most existing international collaborations are supported through calls for proposals initiated by the KAUST Competitive Research Fund (CRF). Such calls are released on a yearly basis to support KAUST Principal Investigators and their collaborators. The most meritorious proposals are selected based on external reviews for funding between one and three years depending on the nature of the proposals. As an example, the 2014 solicitation from CRF saw 82 proposals being submitted via the Research Services. For this and other previous competitions, about 40% of proposals were selected for funding, most involving sub-award agreements that were negotiated with external collaborators following the announcement.

Other strategic initiatives such as a recent Sensors Initiative have created momentum for extra collaboration at the international level.

National programs such as the KACST Technology Innovation Center on Solid State Lighting at KAUST have also strengthened in-Kingdom collaborations.

External funding programs such as the National Priority Research Program from the Qatar National Research Funds have been an excellent way to foster collaborations between KAUST and Qatari Institutions.

A recent call for proposals from the British Council (UK Gulf Institutional link programme) has attracted a lot of attention. We are expecting participation of KAUST investigators in more than 20 proposals.

At present, the distribution of research collaboration agreements with worldwide institutions is as follow: 40% North America / 40% Europe / 11% Asia Pacific / 9% Gulf Countries.

Industrial Collaborations at KAUST

Economic development represents a very important aspect of KAUST mission. Collaborations with industrial partners, technology transfer, entrepreneurship, and start up creation are strongly encouraged and supported through the Innovation and Economic Development department (I&ED). The Research Services works closely with the I&ED department to support research collaboration with industrial partners. Some of those partners have developed research and development centers on campus, which also facilitates collaboration between KAUST researchers and the companies. Currently, the Research Services supports over 40 active industrial grants with 10 multinationals.

Conclusion

Collaboration remains an intrinsic part of KAUST DNA as stated in its mission, with over 250 collaborating institutions worldwide, 150 ongoing research collaboration agreements with academic institutions, and very strong ties with industrial partners which is outstanding considering the University was established only seven years ago.

Erwan Arzel, Ph.D., is Manager of Research Services at KAUST. After his post-doctoral fellowship at Lund University, Dr. Arzel joined AstraZeneca as senior research scientist and project leader. He later led the Chemistry Domain for the ‘European Cooperation in Science and Technology’ and joined KAUST in 2010. He can be reached at erwan.arzel@kaust.edu.sa
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Communication is evolving faster than I can keep up with and efforts to reach my faculty are a daily challenge. So, my New Year’s resolution is to find innovative and effective ways to inform faculty of opportunities, policies, networking events, and articles of interest. I’ve heard that emails are passé. Lord knows, faculty don’t utilize our website. This is not where my outreach ends.

Faculty Outreach at CNU Now
In an effort to keep up with these changes and stay on top of sharing information with faculty, we use some unique interventions such as an OSP LinkedIn Group. I act as the Institutional Representative of the Christopher Newport University (CNU) chapter of ACE’s Women in Higher Education and host events related to that group, integrating research related information into these sessions. I send funding opportunities every Monday in addition to articles of interest, potential collaborator profiles found on LinkedIn, and all other matter intended to boost faculty confidence in proposal writing. My office reaches out to new award recipients to contribute to a once a semester newsletter followed by a Snacks & Sips-4-Scholars for all faculty. We’ve brought sponsor representatives, the likes of NSF’s Jean Feldman, EPA Chesapeake Bay Commission’s Nicholas DiPasquale, NOAA, NASA, NPS, state agencies, and various non and for-profit potential collaborators together for the inaugural CNU Collaboration Summit to speak with faculty and students. Heck, I’ve hosted a faculty wedding in my yard!

Better Understanding Social Media and Faculty Needs
I use LinkedIn for professional purposes, finding potential collaborators, program officers, organizations to affiliate with etc., for my faculty. I am starting to get my toes wet with Twitter, but where are the faculty? I consider Facebook a personal and social tool, not a professional one. Is an “app” my answer? Should I Instagram pictures of funding opportunities? What in the world is Reddit? And how many more apps are out there and in the pipeline to be released?

Resolved to find where faculty get their information, I started an informal survey to ask them. Insights gained through this exercise indicate that limiting the number of electronic contacts is essential to success. Before this effort, I thought my campus emails were virtually invisible. Occasionally, I would get a response, but more often than not, I hear nothing of my efforts. Silence may be golden, but to a PUI trying to gain interest in externally funded activities, it is deafening!

My informal survey yielded some interesting results: To my great surprise, they do read my emails! Not always in time to respond, but they read them. Anecdotaly, a recent uptick in responses to funding opportunities sent out by my office supports this result. But then, why did we have such a dismal turn out for the Collaboration Summit? Even though the event spanned three-hours, attendance appeared to me to be very low. The truth is that the right folks showed up and took advantage of the opportunity and that’s what was needed.

The reality is that my institution is appropriately focused on students first, and faculty time is at a premium. Even though my communications are meant to benefit them, and they do, it is my faculty who don’t have the time to communicate this back to my office as often as they would like.

Take aways from my experience for you to consider:
Hosting weddings in your yard won’t bring more faculty to your brown bag session on proposal writing, but it will allow you to get to know the research interests of most attendees. Other new ways to reach faculty and build faculty relationships include:

• Consider surveying faculty to better understand their needs, desires, and preferences.
• Visiting candidate research presentations, department hosted colloquia, student poster presentations.
• Hosting and attending social events with and for colleagues after work.
• Taking advantage of every situation you interact with faculty. You don’t always have to talk shop. You can just listen.

Anne Pascucci has been involved in Research Administration and Development for nearly 30 years and a member of NCURA since 2001. She received a BS from Siena College in Business Administration and a MPA from the University of Rhode Island and a Certificate in Nonprofit Studies from Rhode Island College. She is a Certified Research Administrator, a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Group; and the Higher Education Resource Services Leadership Institute. She can be reached at anne.pascucci@cnu.edu
For many Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs), the idea of expanding the scope of your sponsored projects enterprise to the international level might sound daunting – if not impossible. I can still remember the day, in 2008, the then-recently appointed Dean of our Center for International Programs came into my office to discuss a potential sub-award proposal in Iraq, funded by the US Department of State via a DC-based prime awardee. That one successful project has grown into a large portfolio of projects in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, and exchange programs with Africa and Russia, among other projects and locales. The operation also grew into our Center for International Development (CID), which, in addition to its own host of programs, provides proposal development and logistical support to faculty across campus engaged in international projects.

For those institutions that have decided to expand their international presence via sponsored projects in 2017, I’d like to offer these suggestions:

#1: Who’s already active?
A great place to start is by looking on your campus to those faculty who are already engaged internationally, whether externally funded or not. At Ball State University (BSU), for example, we have had a long history of successful Fulbright awards. These faculty have already expressed an interest in seeing their research, programmatic, or creative agendas expand abroad, and can make a good starting point. Additionally, international faculty on your campus can prove helpful in making connections. Many of our internationally-funded sponsored projects are essentially partnerships with an individual institution in the country of interest, focusing on a specific theme, such as journalism, English language learning, or entrepreneurship.

#2: Look outside the norm!
Be creative in looking around your campus for potentially interested faculty, centers, and departments. Traditionally, our College of Business has not been very active in sponsored projects, however, they have been quite involved in these opportunities, serving as content specialists on our grants, helping our partner institutions with curriculum and professional development, team teaching, and strategic planning. In our experience, while there is opportunity in the hard sciences, we’ve been able to be quite successful in business, communication, and education. Those with active campuses in the health professions may also be in a good place to begin building proposals on an international scale.

#3: Build a team.
Internally, one of our biggest assets as a sponsored projects enterprise is teamwork across administrative units. At BSU, we created an International Grants Steering Committee (IGSC) to review all international opportunities prior to the proposal stage – and assist with programmatic and post-award concerns as they come up. The IGSC brings together sponsored projects, general counsel, risk management, international programs, CID staff, and tax management to provide a team effort in ensuring projects are appropriate to pursue and will be in compliance, if funded.

#4: Make connections.
Don’t feel like you have to go it alone. While we do have a number of sponsored projects where we are the prime awardee, that is not always the case. Funding for international development, in general, tends to be concentrated in a number of large, internationally-focused, non-profit organizations, who then turn, make sub-awards to eligible entities, and this is true in higher education projects as well. Making connections with those organizations, such as the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), FHI 360, or Chemonics, sharing your interests and your strengths, is a good first step toward eventual success. Additionally, multiple colleges and universities often form consortia around specific topics or opportunities to be more competitive. Find out who is being funded in areas related to your institution’s strengths and make connections. Don’t be afraid to start small – our awards have ranged from $50,000 to over $3M. You can utilize www.foreignassistance.gov to do additional research on specific countries, funding available, agencies involved, and organizations implementing projects on the ground.

Speaking of connections – Ball State is always looking to make them! Feel free to contact me directly to learn more about CID, our internal processes, or to start conversations on potential projects.

Justin M. Miller, EdD, MPA, is the Director of Ball State University’s Sponsored Projects Administration, a centralized pre-and-post-award unit. Dr. Miller joined Ball State in 2007 as a pre-award Proposal Manager, was appointed Director of the pre-award unit in 2012, and coordinated the merger of pre and post-award office in 2015. He holds a Doctorate in Education in Higher Education from Ball State, as well as a Masters of Public Administration from Arizona State University and a Bachelor’s of Science in Religious Studies from Ball State. Dr. Miller can be reached at jmmiller5@bsu.edu
If you have any favorite links from e-Xtra that you would like to see in a future issue of NCURA Magazine, please email suggestions to Matt Michener at matthew.michener@wsu.edu.
What type of training do young engineers need in order to master the management of projects, diverse teams, and businesses challenges, and, most importantly, adapt to a constantly changing world?

Preparing engineers for international engineering manager positions involves training in sciences and technology, but must also integrate a cultural dimension to prepare them for international challenges. Such training must enable students to thrive in different cultural environments and prepare them to work within an array of international frameworks.

The Network “n+i” does not simply provide for another academic exchange programme (leading to Master’s or PhD’s degrees), it instead offers a detailed cultural overview of the host country and the company where students are placed. Students are offered the opportunity of extending their skills outside the traditional scientific and technological dimensions of an engineering qualification to areas such as the economic, sociological, and management arenas that will be part of their future careers. This is achieved through cultural and linguistic adaptation programmes and qualifying work placements.

The Network “n+i” links together 50 top graduate engineering schools and other engineering training programmes (Arts et Métiers ParisTech, Centrale-Supélec, INSAs, ENSAE, Polytech’s, etc.) in all areas of engineering. The Network “n+i” is a unique system that represents more than 30,000 “élèves-ingénieurs (masters) of which 7,000 graduate each year and 250 research laboratories spread over 40 cities and 18 Regions of France.

“n+i” Engineering Institutes is a non-profit association. Over the last two years, the Network “n+i” has developed partnerships with some of the best universities in the world and also with international companies who wish to fund the education and training of international engineers (French or foreign).

Network “n+i” offers a complete range of services:
1. A wide choice of trainings: by topic, school, city, status (initial training or by apprenticeship)
2. On-the-spot selection of applicants (MCQ, Interviews)
3. Cultural, Linguistic, and Methodological Integration Packages
   • Package of Cultural integration (PIC): Welcome and guidance for Network “n+i” students throughout their studies, including transportation, insurances, transfers, and administrative formalities.
   • Package for linguistic integration (PIL): a summer intensive course (8 weeks between July and September, before the engineering training) of French language for non-French speaking students with accommodation in French families.
   • Package for methodological integration (PIM): to provide training on academic methods as well as language training to help students feel more confident about teaching methods in France and prepare students to join French students to get the same degree (Tutoring from one Professor and one French student).

NCURA had the opportunity to meet with a French delegation at the Embassy of France in Washington, DC in early October 2016. The delegation included several members and the Director of the Network “n+i” in France. The network is a consortium of over 50 French engineering schools; its name, “n+i” (National Plus International), refers to its mission to train international engineers. The network offers support to students who wish to access international exchange programs (taught in English or French), and a variety of graduate programs meant to enhance the technical, intercultural, and managerial competency of engineers. The range of “n+i” programming offers comprehensive support to its students and apprentices through tutoring, language education, and host-family placement. NCURA and “n+i” will be exploring opportunities for future collaboration, which will strengthen existing trans-Atlantic research collaboration networks.
1 INTERNATIONAL BACHELOR MOBILITY

This programme offers the possibility to students to spend 5 months of their Bachelor programme (after the second year) in partnership with French engineering institutions. The 5-month period in France, fully taught in English, is dedicated to:
- Courses (2-month seminar of courses/workshops to be trained to become a manager of engineering projects (patents, intellectual property, ethics, data protection, and cyber security, standardization, project management, how to communicate, social network, etc.) as well as cultural and technical visits.
- Projects works (3 months).
At the end of the International Bachelor programme, the student will have an exceptional intercultural experience and can thus be offered a wide range of possibilities:
- Returning home and obtaining a Bachelor thanks to 30 ECTS,
- Training with a Master’s degree, and then a Post-Master or a Doctorate (possibly fully paid by a company in an apprenticeship programmes).
The implementation of an International Bachelor requires the signature of an MOU agreement.

2 PRE-MASTER’S PROGRAMMES

The Network “n+i” offers a period of 10-12 months of courses in language (French and/or English), mathematics, and sciences to prepare them for their training of the Master’s degree in France (better chances of success).
This “matching session” between a Bachelor and a master (Pre-Master) consists of 2 semesters (one academic year), from September till June, at the end of which the students can be integrated into an engineering school. This unique program will offer the following:
- The first semester will focus on courses in order to improve students’ understandings in math, sciences (physics, chemistry, etc.), and learning intensively the French language.
- The second semester will be done in the school which has recruited the student for a master degree at the end of the premaster.

3 MASTER’S DEGREES

The Network “n+i” allows Bachelor degree holders to complete their training for Master’s degrees in science, technology, or engineering in France.
The Network “n+i” services and packages can be required by the engineering school in order to help the student to graduate.

4 WORK/STUDY TRAINING, ALTERNATE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION, AND WORK EXPERIENCE

The trainings of engineers are also offered by apprenticeship (50 % of time in a company for students under 26) or in continuous. Pre master is the best way to be hired on a full paid (by companies) alternate training.

5 THE DOUBLE DEGREES OF MASTER’S

To lead to double degrees, Master’s degrees must be recognized “compatible”, that is to say that programmes and contents must be significantly similar so that recognition of curricula (credits) is possible for the students of both countries.

6 POST-MASTER’S

This 12-month programme offers the possibility to the students to specialize in a specific field of studies (company oriented) after graduating from a Master degree.
- The post-master programmes are mainly taught in English.
- This period in France is dedicated to courses and internship in companies in order to be better prepared for the world of work.

7 RENDEZ-VOUS “n+i”

A 2-week programme, fully taught in English, to discover France with a unique cultural and linguistic experience associated with a new insight into scientific, technological and industrial know-how (High Tech, businesses, arts).
Rendez-vous “n+i” programmes includes:
- A module of language and culture: initiation to French language classes, cultural activities, and visits,
- A module of Science and Technology: visits of industrial sites and companies, thematic conferences, and debates,
- Accommodation in a host family or in a student residence,
- Half board during the week, full board on weekends,
- Airport personalized welcome,
- 2 nights in Paris + city tour, and
- Transportations, insurances, coaching.

8 PRE-DOC AND FRENCH INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCE IN RESEARCH (FIER)

This program is dedicated to PhD students, master graduates as well as students finishing their master degrees. This 5-month programme, fully taught in English, allows the candidate to:
- Have a “research” experience of 3 months in his or her field of competence in France (100 labs),
- Gain, through a 2-month seminar, the knowledge needed for governance of research (patents, intellectual property, ethics, data protection and cyber security, publication opportunities, reviews versus open access, funding of research, communications, social network, etc.),
- Visit of Research labs (private and public),
- Cultural program in France: Paris as well as region (depending on the laboratory localization).
Afterward, depending on his/her choice, the participant can:
- Continue on a 3-year doctoral programme in order to get a PhD in France,
- Stop just after a French Innovative Experience in Research (FIER).
Note: PhD in partnership with companies are possible (cofounding such as CIFRE Scheme (ANRT)).

For further information contact:
Professor Jean-Pierre Trotignon
79 Avenue Denfert Rochereau 75014, Paris, France
jp.trotignon@nplusi.com | www.nplusi.com
Happy New Year! We are so excited about the forthcoming 59th Annual Meeting and want to take this opportunity to introduce our AM59 Program Committee, led by Georgette Sakumoto, University of Hawaii, and Co-Chairs Twila Reighley, Michigan State University, and Denise Wallen, University of New Mexico. We have assembled a dynamic team that understands the nuances and demands of the job and is well informed to anticipate our future needs in this ever changing and complex global landscape of research administration. We are committed to building the best program ever!

Our theme “Exploring the Possibilities…Navigating into the Future” promises to deliver something for everyone and provide a venue for the sharing of critical information, best practices, and strategies for success regardless whether you are in a predominantly undergraduate institution, a research intensive university; a medical school; or working in pre-award, post-award, or compliance. This conference will offer a myriad of concurrent sessions, discussion groups, and workshops that will not only provide you with skills and tools but also provide access to subject matter experts from around the globe. We believe that research administration has no boundaries or borders and we as research administrators make up a powerful network of experts and allies. And, as always, an NCURA conference provides ample networking opportunities for you to reconnect with colleagues and expand your network by meeting and engaging with other research administrators across the eight regions of NCURA.

Your AM59 Program Committee has met and discussed and reviewed your evaluations and session proposals and we are confident that this conference will exceed all your expectations. We have listened and heard and integrated your comments and suggestions to be responsive to your wants and needs. There will be new venues including Poster Sessions, a Genius Bar, a track on research evaluation and data, an enhanced Global track, and, of course, a plethora of exciting workshops for you to attend.

Please mark your calendars for August 6-9, 2017, and join us in Washington, DC, for NCURA’s 59th Annual Meeting. You will spend three and a half days of intense, exciting, cutting-edge information-sharing in the capital city. We will continue to share information and program details as they unfold throughout the year. We look forward to seeing you in August!

Happy New Year! We are so excited about the forthcoming 59th Annual Meeting and want to take this opportunity to introduce our AM59 Program Committee, led by Georgette Sakumoto, University of Hawaii, and Co-Chairs Twila Reighley, Michigan State University, and Denise Wallen, University of New Mexico. We have assembled a dynamic team that understands the nuances and demands of the job and is well informed to anticipate our future needs in this ever changing and complex global landscape of research administration. We are committed to building the best program ever!
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As we start a new year, I am struck by the prescience of our Spring Meeting theme, Black, White & Shades of Grey: Finding Harmony in Research Administration. As we seek harmony in our work lives, NCURA is THE vehicle to support each other and share knowledge. Region I officers who will support you in 2017: myself, Jill Mortali (Chair), Kris Monahan (Immediate Past Chair), Denise Rouleau (Chair-elect 2018 and Co-Chair of the Spring 2017 Region I Meeting), Elizabeth Haney (Secretary), Rob Kirsh (Immediate Past Secretary), Lorraine Kiley (Treasurer), David Barnett (Immediate Past Treasurer), and Susan Zipkin (Board Representative). The Advisory Board will include our 2018 elected officers and leaders from committees charged with curriculum, governance, nominating, awards, sponsorship and volunteers, along with other at-large members.

Anastacia Feldman, Chair, Curriculum Committee, reports a busy 2016. RADG programs covered subaward negotiation, learning from audits, research policy, regulation and research administration best practices (presented in tandem with University of Southern Maine’s Research Integrity Symposium), and a federal update. Workshops rounded out the programming (Essentials of Research Administration, Current Challenges in Research Administration, and Budgeting and Projecting in Excel). Plans for 2017 include an RADG collaboration with the Research Integrity Workshop, two additional RADGs (to be announced), a new workshop on clinical trials management, and a case studies/current events workshop.

2017 NCURA Region I Spring Meeting, Newport Rhode Island May 1–3, 2017 with Workshops on April 30, 2017

Newport is one of the most charming cities, host to music festivals, historic houses, and gilded age mansions. The Hotel Viking is “within walking distance to shops, restaurants, historic attractions and the bustling waterfront for which Newport is well known.” Mark your calendars and register now. No budget for travel? Region I offers travel awards along with a variety of merit awards. Check the website for deadlines.

Thanks to Denise Rouleau and Suzanne Araujo, program committee co-chairs, for a high impact fantastic program. Drs. Leslie and Scott Gordon, researchers who lost their son to Progeria, a rare, fatal genetic condition characterized by an appearance of accelerated aging in children, will provide the keynote. Session topics will cover PUI, pre-award, post-award, compliance, hospital, and department research administration. Updates from federal agencies will be of particular interest this year.

A hearty welcome to new members! A newcomer’s reception is planned for the Spring meeting. We will continue our mentor, emerging leaders and executive shadow programs.

Have an idea or looking for ways to connect and get involved? Email me at chair@ncuraregioni.org

Here’s to a happy and harmonious New Year!

Jill Mortali is Region I Chair and serves as Director, Office of Sponsored Projects at Dartmouth College. She can be reached at chair@ncuraregioni.org

Happy New Year Region II

As I begin my term as Chair, I want to first take an opportunity to thank our past-Chair, Erin Bailey, for her leadership and steadfast commitment to move the regional agenda forward over the course of the last year. It became apparent to me early on how dedicated Erin was to NCURA and Region II. I also want to thank Jennifer Rosa (past Treasurer) and Brian Squilla (past Chair of Region II’s Professional Development Committee) for their hard work, dedication, and contributions to the region over the past year. I am excited and honored to partner with our 2017 regional officers who include: Dennis Paffrath (Chair-elect), Jennifer Harman (Secretary), Charles Bartunek (Treasurer), Ady Villegas-Estrada (Treasurer-elect) and Mary Louise Healy (Regionally Elected Member to the National Board). Through our partnership, I look forward to further capitalizing on the momentum the region has achieved in providing professional development, quality meetings, and determining ways we can give back to our members.

The 2017 Program Committee has been working hard over the course of the last several months to plan for our 2017 Region II spring meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY April 30 – May 3. If you have a session suggestion, please visit the following URL: www.empliant.com/survey/ F8C5C76F6-D360-9B9B-B291/ or contact the Program Chair, Katie McKeon at kpetrone@umd.edu

Region II continues to offer professional development workshops to institutions situated throughout the mid-Atlantic region. The Professional Development Committee continues to receive positive feedback regarding its educational offerings, and the overall quality/content of the programs has been well received based on attendee evaluations. If you are interested in hosting a workshop at your institution or would like additional information, please contact the 2017 Professional Development Committee Chair, Jill Frankenfield at jfranken@umd.edu

On behalf of myself and Region II’s past Chair, thank you to all of the officers who have completed their terms, individuals who have volunteered their time, and the overall membership for a wonderful 2016. I look forward to the continued success we will achieve together in 2017.

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

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

Timothy Schailey is Region II Chair and serves as Director of Research Administration at Thomas Jefferson University. He can be reached at timothy.schailey@jefferson.edu

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Now that the holidays have passed and we have rejuvenated spirits from time with our families and friends, Region III is ready to make 2017 another remarkable year. Region III would like to thank Alex Atkinson for his service as Treasurer as his term comes to an end. We look forward to seeing Alex’s continued involvement in NCURA!

We are looking forward to the 2017 Spring Meeting in Savannah, Georgia. The Hilton Savannah Desoto will be hosting NCURA’s largest region May 6-10, 2017. If you have not already made your plans to attend, please do. The Regional Meeting provides a great opportunity for professional development, to share ideas on how to handle issues that institutions currently face, and to relax a bit in a magnificent location. This year’s theme is “Today’s Candidates, Tomorrow’s Leaders: Get Set, Skill Set, Mind Set.” The program will offer workshops and sessions for the novice and experienced research administrator alike! Below are some ways that you can get prepared for the Spring Meeting:

- Register as soon as possible to take advantage of the Early Bird discount
- Apply for a Travel Award
- Volunteer

If you are interested in helping at the regional meeting, we will need room monitors, mentors, registration desk help, and folks who are tech savvy to help with AV set-up. Additionally, there are openings for Coordinators of Standing Committees coming in the next few months. Consider contributing to your region by volunteering! If you have an interest in volunteering, please contact Sandy Barber at sandy.barber@business.gatech.edu

Do not forget to check out the Region III website to get more information on the meeting location.

If you have never attended a Spring Meeting, please take a glance at the meeting archives on the website to see the valuable professional development and networking opportunities that are customary for these conferences. We look forward to seeing everyone in May but until then, stay connected with us on the newly updated website, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook!

Happy New Year to all and see you soon in Savannah, Georgia!

Kay Gilstrap is Region III Chair and serves as Grants & Contracts Officer, Center for Molecular and Translational Medicine at Georgia State University. She can be reached at kgilstrap@gsu.edu

Welcome 2017!! A new year brings thoughts of resolutions for something better. I look at it as taking the first step towards success. New Year’s resolutions often fail because we want instant success. Success is achieved in many ways and most often over time. There are two types of success: internal (happiness, self-improvement) success and externally visible (money, opportunity) success. I encourage you to rate your success, and celebrate the steps that get you moving toward your goals.

Success to me is how I see myself and the type of person I want to be. Our attitudes, actions, and choices define our success. Think about a powerful shift in attitude and how that shift can alter the whole course of communication. Our attitude can be seen before we are introduced to someone and the first impression made before a word is spoken. I love the quote about actions from Ralph Waldo Emerson, “What you do speaks so loudly, that I cannot hear what you say.” And finally we need to realize that life is all about choices. It is up to us if we are going to be happy, smile, and be kind. Steven Spielberg said, “Profound change can occur when even one person makes a positive choice.” Be that person – BE THE GOOD!

I would like to thank all of the volunteers that step forward to make our region a success! Region IV is in the process of rolling out our new Volunteer Recognition Program. If you have not heard about it, be sure to get in on the fun of earning your bronze, silver, and gold pins and become a Region IV athlete and sport your pin at our regional and national conferences. Hoping for a lot of Olympic bling at the meetings. Information is available on our website.

Region IV is continuing work on the opportunity to provide regional traveling workshops. The region will be able to potentially bring a workshop to your area. If you have any interest in hosting a workshop, please let me know and I will get your name and university to the sub-committee chair.

Save the date for the Region IV Spring Meeting in Madison, WI! The meeting will be held from April 23-26, 2017 at the Concourse Hotel. The theme is The Sport of Research Administration. Registration will open early spring 2017. Check out the NCURA Region IV website — www.ncuraregioniv.com/conferences.html or the NCURA Region IV Facebook page — www.facebook.com/Ncura-Region-IV-134667746605561 for more information.

Diane Hillebrand, CRA, is Region IV Chair and serves as the Grants Manager for the University of North Dakota, School of Medicine & Health Sciences. She can be reached at diane.hillebrand@med.UND.edu
Happy New Year! I am thrilled to be serving as the 2017 Region VI Chair. Just a little background—I am the Associate Director of Departmental Research Administration at Portland State University. I have been an active NCURA member since 2007 through volunteering, serving on committees, and presenting at conferences. I believe this organization and membership are phenomenal and I am humbled to serve and lead our region over the next year. The following is an outline of individuals who will also be leading and supporting our region, as well as some highlights of what we are working towards over the year.

**2017 Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Members**

- **Chair:** Sinnamon Tierney, Portland State University
- **Treasurer:** Caroline Jones, Stanford University
- **Secretary:** Heather Kubinec, University of California Irvine
- **RAC Members:** Kevin Stewart, University of California Santa Barbara; Sean Williams, California State University, East Bay

The focus this year will be on providing timely, affordable, and quality educational and professional development offerings for our membership, and ensuring good fiscal stewardship of our regional budget.

We are already planning our upcoming **Region VI/VII Regional Meeting in Portland, Oregon, November 5-8, 2017.** The Program Committee is being assembled and we are beginning to develop comprehensive and compelling topic areas.

It takes many volunteers to put on a conference. In addition to the RAC and the Program Committee, there are a few key individuals who are helping make our upcoming 2017 regional meeting a success:

- **Region VII Chair:** Sandra Logue, University of Colorado Denver
- **Logistics Chair:** Lisa Jordan, SRI International
- **Volunteer & Membership Committee Chair:** Michiko Pane, Stanford University

Please join me in congratulating and acknowledging the 2016 Officers, Committee Chairs, and numerous Volunteers on a successful year and regional meeting in Hawaii this past October. Our sincere thanks go out to Derick Jones, Derek Brown, Allison Ramos, Mich Pane, Nancy Lewis, Samantha Aleshire, Angi Karchmer, Stella Sung, Heather Kubinec, and Matthew Kirk for their tireless efforts towards Region VI's success in 2016. Region VI is grateful for your hard work and dedication!

**Award Recognition**

- **2016 Linda W. Patton Emeritus Award:** Chris Hansen
- **2016 Helen Carrier Distinguished Service Award:** Mich Pane, Stanford University

**Congratulations to the recipients!**

It is going to be a great year! See you in Portland!

**Sinnamon Tierney, MPA, CRA,** is 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

**Happy New Year from down South!** We hope that everyone enjoyed the holiday season and is ready to move ahead in 2017. The Region V Executive Committee has great plans for the New Year. We are looking to enhance the growth and development of the region and create a platform to encourage our members to become an active part of the organization.

As a priority, we are moving forward with our Leadership Development and Mentoring committees. At this time the Executive Committee is re-evaluating the charge of these committees, and we are committed to enhancing the professional development opportunities of our members. While it is important for our long-time members to continue to be involved in activities, it’s just as important that we mentor our new members and give them viable tools to allow them to grow within the organization.

Region V is excited to be returning to Tulsa. As some of you may know, Tulsa is curiously known as the “Center of The Universe.” To celebrate our excellent group of members visiting, we have decided that the theme for our Spring Meeting in Region V will be “Universe of Possibilities.” Help us explore the current and future trends of our profession and have a great time discussing research administration. Tulsa is a great city, and we have secured a great room rate for attendees. Registration is open now! If you have an idea for a session or workshop, please visit our website at [http://ncuraregionv.com/](http://ncuraregionv.com/) or email Thomas.Spencer@UT-Southwestern.edu

In addition to session ideas, we will be needing volunteers to ensure we have a successful meeting. If you are interested in a volunteer opportunity, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Becky Castillo, at bcastillo@mdanderson.org. There is no experience necessary, we will train you! Volunteering is a great way to learn more about what NCURA has to offer and allows you to network with your colleagues. There will be more details as we get closer to the meeting date, but it never hurts to be proactive.

Spring elections will be here before we know it. Being an officer in this organization has been an amazing experience for me. I have had the opportunity to interact with colleagues from all over the country. I hope that not only Region V members, but all NCURA members, seriously consider taking on leadership roles within the organization.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming meetings!

Be sure to follow us on Facebook at NCURA Region 5 and Twitter @NCURAR5.

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

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**Happy New Year!**
Greetings, my fellow Region VII members! I am Sandra Logue, your new Regional Chair for 2017 and I am excited for this new chapter of regional leadership. I have been privileged to serve as an officer for the past three years alongside Marj Townsend and Leslie Schmidt, and I wish to thank them both for their inspiration and dedication to the region. I believe 2017 will be a year of growth, not only in our membership, but also in our spirit of volunteerism, a subject close to my heart and the lifeblood of the NCURA organization.

Just a little about me: This career path began for me in 1995 and I have been fortunate to see the research spectrum from all aspects. In the last 12 years, I have held a variety of research administration positions including pre- and post-award management and am now a center administrator for the Center for Neuroscience on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. I am hopeful that my experience will allow me to serve the members of Region VII as well as learn from the other outstanding leadership within NCURA.

With a new year and new leadership come new resolutions for moving our region forward. The goals for 2017 are multi-faceted. Working together with Region VI, we plan to bring an outstanding professional program to the regional meeting in Portland, OR, November 5-8, 2017 (mark your calendars!). As Chair, my goals include: increasing outreach to underrepresented states and institutions in our region; establishing new/maintaining existing Ad Hoc Committees to spread the workload and volunteer opportunities across the breadth of our membership; creating new alliances and collaborations with other adjacent regions to promote future meeting/workshop opportunities; and developing an on-going mechanism for regional membership to provide suggestions, ideas, and feedback to the Regional Executive Committee.

Lofty goals? Perhaps. However, I am strong in my conviction that this region has more talent and knowledge in our membership waiting to be tapped and together, with all your help, we can grow into a strong, dedicated community of professional colleagues. I look forward to meeting many of you in the months to come! Onward!

Sandra Logue is Region 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

Some of us were lucky enough to attend the joint Regions VI/VII/VIII Meeting in stunning Maui at the beginning of October. The theme of the meeting was “Connecting the World through Research Administration.” The International Region was represented by 15 members from Australia, Canada, China, Finland, Japan, Norway, and Switzerland. It was a great meeting over five days. There were two days of pre-conference workshops and then three days of concurrent sessions offering 10 tracks, so lots of choice for content. The Keynote speaker, Phil Gwoke, gave a very inspiring and motivating address about communication styles across the different generations.

Jessica Brody from the University of Melbourne, Australia was the lucky recipient of the International Region Travel Award to attend the joint meeting in Maui. Jessica presented a case study about her office reaching out across campus to bring awareness to international funding opportunities in a concurrent session and also networked her way around her first NCURA meeting!

We have a few thanks that need to go out to some of our regional members:

Our social media queen, Bryony Wakefield, on whose initiative in 2014 this joint meeting was made possible and though unfortunately could not be present, tweeted about the conference all the way from Melbourne!

Our resident performer, Bruno Woeran, for representing us so well doing the hula during the luau!

A big thank you to Marj Townsend (Region VII) and Derick Jones (Region VI) for extending the NCURA collaborating spirit and including the international region in their fall meeting.

Maintaining this atmosphere and great spirit in our next regional event in 2017 is a big challenge, which we are willing to take on. Thus we are already excited about and are looking forward to our annual regional event 2017. It will be held on August 10, 2017 in Washington, DC: a study visit to the NIH specifically organised for the needs and questions of non-US grant holders. So check the International Region’s website and follow our mailing closely so you do not miss the up-to-date information and make sure that you secure a spot in time – seats are limited.

We look forward to seeing you in Washington, DC in 2017!

Julie Ward served as the 2016 Region VIII Meeting Chair and is International Research Manager, Division of Research at The University of New South Wales. She can be reached at julie.w@unsw.edu.au
The Centers for Disease Control estimate that each year approximately 1,500 babies in the United States are born with upper limb reductions, yet few receive prostheses because of the steep cost that’s normally involved. But a creation dubbed “the bionic glove” — the brainchild of two enterprising Florida Atlantic University graduate students — has already made life a little easier for a few people and it’s on the way to becoming an affordable next-generation prosthesis for children and adults.

Perry Weinthal, 51, and Chad Coarsey, 26, met in a graduate-level engineering class. Weinthal immediately noticed Coarsey’s diminutive left hand, which had knuckles but no fingers due to a birth defect. Coincidentally, a few weeks before registering for the class, Weinthal had been doing research on creating an electro mechanical hand gripper. Weinthal asked Coarsey if he’d like a hand, literally, and the idea for the bionic glove was born.

The students hit the lab, designing electronics and computer software to read electrical signals that could be turned into actions, such as opening and closing fingers. They downloaded and modified hand designs from the Internet and used a 3-D printer — which takes 10 to 14 hours to melt polylactic acetate in layers — to build the glove. After several hours of assembling cables and padding and painting the glove, it was ready.

“The first glove was green, my favorite color,” Coarsey recalled. “When I put it on it felt like a glove and that’s where the name bionic glove came from. After the first day, I was already picking things up. For a month, I used it twice a week for a couple hours. I noticed my arm was getting bigger and bigger. That’s when we noticed muscle atrophy in my arm was reversing.”

So the engineers returned to the lab to scale up the size and make another glove. Coarsey – an FAU Graduate Student Research Scholarship recipient for another project – is now on his fourth glove, which is 14 percent larger than the first one.

Around the same time, a local pediatric hand surgeon, Aaron Berger, M.D., learned about the project. He reached out to Weinthal and Coarsey on behalf of a 6-year-old patient who was born without fingers on his right hand. The bionic glove they made for the child was described by his mother as “a dream come true.”

So far the entrepreneurs have created some fifteen gloves, including one for a local woman who lost her hand at age five during the civil war in her native Sierra Leone. Their work is being funded by a grant of more than $21,000 from FAU, taken from the technology fee paid by all students, and the Quantum Foundation.

Weinthal and Coarsey recently launched a non-profit organization called The Bionic Glove Project to make their innovation available to as many people as possible. The cost of making one of their gloves is just a few hundred dollars, as compared with tens of thousands of dollars for a traditionally manufactured prosthetic hand. They’ll be refining their project with guidance from experienced business professionals through FAU Tech Runway.

“You have to see it to appreciate what a game changer this is for kids,” said Weinthal. “We can do a lot of good for a lot of people.”
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NCURA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
Departmental Research Administration Workshop
February 8-10, 2017.................................................................New Orleans, LA
LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
February 8-10, 2017.................................................................New Orleans, LA
LEVEL II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
February 8-10, 2017.................................................................New Orleans, LA

NATIONAL CONFERENCES
Pre-Award Research Administration Conference...............March 8-10, 2017
San Diego, CA
Financial Research Administration Conference..............March 11-13, 2017
San Diego, CA
59th Annual Meeting.........................................................August 6-9, 2017
Washington, DC

ONLINE TUTORIALS  Visit our website for enrollment periods:
A Primer on Clinical Trials – 8 week program
A Primer on Federal Contracting – 8 week program
A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements – 8 week program
A Primer on Subawards – 8 week program

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• Clear and Authentic Communication with Principal Investigators
• Conflicting Guidance and Competing Priorities: Achieving Sponsored Research Compliance in a World of Limited Resources
• Creating the Cohesive Team Your Office Needs to Thrive
• Crowd Funding: An Enormous Opportunity at your Fingertips
• Going Global: What Your Institution Needs to Know about Managing Research Without Borders
• Internal Controls for Research Administrators: What Does it Mean for Your Institution?
• Is it a Gift or a Grant and other Critical Funding Mechanism Clarifications Your Staff Need to Know
• Life Cycle of the Award Series
  – Proposal Development (3 Part Series)
  – Pre-Award/Budgeting (3 Part Series)
  – Award Negotiation/Monitoring (3 Part Series)
  – Award Monitoring/Award Management (2 Part Series)
  – Compliance (2 Part Series)
• Save Your Institution Millions: Mitigating Institutional Risk of Research Misconduct
• Staff Development, Performance Management and Succession Planning
• The Right Metrics: Choosing, Measuring and Evaluating Metrics to Drive Performance Success in Your Office

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