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Every function of research administration involves an ethical decision, whether you are in proposal development, award management, audit, or compliance. We are always encouraging faculty, researchers, and staff to “do the right thing” because it’s the “right thing to do”. There is a reason why many research administrators are now involved with oversight areas such as research integrity, ethics committees, and responsible conduct of research. Poor ethical judgments can often result in media backlash and reputational damage, consequences all institutions and researchers try to avoid.

In this issue of NCURA Magazine, we will examine ethical principles and decisions in all aspects of research administration and compliance, encouraging all of us to “do the right thing” every day. “Turning lemons into lemonade – how a research misconduct scandal affects research administration” by Cecilia Martinsson Björkdahl et al. discusses the recently publicized Karolinska Institutet incident. Katie Plum’s article “Building a Stronger Ethics Ethos at PUs” discusses a three-tiered approach to improve knowledge and understanding of ethical principles in research and research administration with limited resources to which many of our institutions can relate. Juliane Blyth and Keri Godin’s “In Defense of Ethics: Navigating Our New Reality” dives into the question “why are we not focusing on personal accountability and integrity, while partnering with our researchers in acknowledging and appreciating that budgets are tight, resources are limited, stress is high, and ethical decision-making is rarely black and white?” They challenge senior leadership to adopt an “institutional commitment to ethical conduct”.

I encourage everyone to remind ourselves of NCURA’s core values of “integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, and collegiality” as we make ethical decisions throughout our day.

Denise Moody is Co-Editor of NCURA Magazine and serves on the NCURA Board of Directors. She serves as the Senior Director of Research Compliance, Faculty Arts & Sciences, at Harvard University and can be reached at denisemoody@fas.harvard.edu
Have you ever had a co-worker who did something that you thought was dishonest or just plain wrong and wondered, “How can she face herself in the mirror?” I never studied philosophy, so I was well into mid-career when I had the eureka moment. That person can face herself in the mirror because her values are different from mine—and she does not perceive that she is doing anything wrong!

Organizational and human behavior experts assert that values influence attitudes and beliefs, and attitudes and beliefs influence behavior. Charles D. Kerns, in “Creating and Sustaining an Ethical Workplace Culture” (Graziadio Business Review, 6:3, 2003), discusses “virtuous values” that underpin ethical behavior. Three of these personal values are particularly germane in our everyday work:

**Self-Control:** The ability to avoid unethical temptations by effectively managing reactions to challenging situations. Ethical people will put personal motivations aside and will act objectively in the workplace, saying “no” to individual gain if it is inconsistent with institutional benefit and goodwill.

**Transcendence:** The recognition of a greater good. Without this value, an individual may be motivated primarily by self-interest and the exercise of personal power, leading to self-serving actions. In the workplace, ethical people identify a personal purpose that is aligned with the organization’s mission.

**Courage and Integrity:** Discerning right from wrong and acting accordingly. An individual with courage and integrity is impelled to consistently do what is right without concern for personal consequences, even when it is not easy. In the workplace, this can mean making unpopular decisions based on fair consideration of the facts.

Promoting ethical behavior is a best practice for business and educational institutions. However, an organizational culture of ethical behavior must begin with the ethical behavior of individuals. Personal ethics translate to professional ethics that become organizational ethics. We may think that our ethical compass works pretty well, thanks to lessons learned from parents, educators, and spiritual leaders, but there are times when we will be put to the test. When that occurs, we must carefully examine our motivations, and we must find the courage to act in an ethical manner, even if we may suffer negative repercussions.

Consider this possible situation: Your supervisor asks you to confidentially investigate questionable financial practices in a program that enjoys a positive public face. Coincidentally, a co-worker and good friend informs you that he is about to accept a position to manage that program. You know from your supervisor’s comments that the program may be significantly restructured or even discontinued based on the results of your findings. You are faced with the dilemma of remaining silent and letting your friend walk into a situation that may be devastating to his career or breaching confidentiality. What will you do? How do your personal values influence the decision you will make? Will your decision model ethical behavior for your co-workers? Will it contribute to, or possibly undermine, an organizational culture of ethical behavior?

Thanks to our magazine contributors for their insights on ethics in this issue and for encouraging us to think about how we can facilitate a culture of ethical behavior in our workplace.

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Research administrators’ pathways to the profession are rarely a straight line. As Ralph Waldo Emerson espoused, “[t]he voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks,” and we find ourselves in this career as former scientists, recovering attorneys, wayward financial analysts, and dedicated educators. Few among us consciously pursued this line of work, and even fewer embarked on the journey with training as an ethicist. In parallel, academic researchers likely never anticipated pursuing their research in a funding climate so dismal and an environment so cut-throat, at a time when administrative workloads have never been greater. Many of us are familiar with the Federal Demonstration Partnership’s 2012 Faculty Workload Survey and the finding that faculty reportedly spend an average of 42 percent of their time on administrative tasks for federally sponsored research projects. If one digs deeper, you’ll find that the cohort of survey respondents conducting research involving human and animal subjects were among the most frustrated (Schneider, SL et al., 2014); requirements that, in principle, one should view less as a burden and more as an integral component of conducting research with integrity.

Yet, consider the external stressors as researchers battle uphill against a steady decline of federal funding for university research. The National Science Foundation’s National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics’ (NCSES) November 2016 report indicates that federal funding for higher education research and development (R&D) has declined by nearly 13 percent since fiscal year 2011, representing the “longest multi-year decline in federal funding for academic R&D” since the NCSES launched its Higher Education Research and Development survey in fiscal year 1972 (Britt, R. 2016). Add to this a notable shift toward funding translational research (Hand et al. 2013) and an emphasis on near-term results via commercializing products and services (Caulfield, T. 2015), and you have a results-hungry, pressure-laden environment for researchers, in which ethical principles may take a back seat to productivity.

Declining federal funding for research has a trickle-down effect; with fewer sponsored research dollars and associated overhead comes budgetary cuts in research support offices. These declines in financial resources come at a time when research administrators are increasingly tasked with navigating the uncharted territory of championing ethical research, most frequently in the context of promoting and maintaining regulatory compliance, while concurrently shouldering the responsibility of increased “customer” (researcher) satisfaction and shorter turnaround times for requisite approvals. Not knowing a better way, nor having the resources of time and money to design a more optimal approach, we pepper our slide decks with case studies of non-compliance and payback amounts in the millions, as much to demonstrate practical application of regulations as to induce fear. Which begs the question — why are we not focusing on personal accountability and integrity, while partnering with our researchers in acknowledging and appreciating that budgets are tight, resources are limited, stress is high, and ethical decision-making is rarely black and white?

In December 2015, the University of Maryland (UMD) received public criticism for issuing the second of two press releases in which a faculty researcher, Dr. Jae Shim, endorsed a particular brand of chocolate milk, Fifth Quarter Fresh (FQF). The press release touted preliminary findings indicating that the drink helped improve verbal and visual memory and motor functions of concussed (as well as non-concussed) high school football players. The study was funded through the Maryland Industrial Partnerships Program (MIPS), to which Fluid Motion LLC, which produces FQF, had contributed 10 percent of the funding ($10,000) to cover the...
University’s costs, consistent with MIPS requirements (UMD Right Now, 2016). In addition to Fluid Motion’s financial contribution, Allied Milk Producers, of which Fluid Motion is a member, made multiple financial donations totaling $200,000 to the UMD College Park Foundation, in direct support of Dr. Shim’s Neuromechanics Laboratory (UMD Right Now, 2016).

While given multiple opportunities to report a financial conflict of interest (COI) through the Phase I and Phase II funding application processes and as part of his Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol submissions, Dr. Shim did not self-disclose any conflicts related to the research (UMD Right Now, 2016). While his failure to disclose drew harsh criticism, so too did the fact that the investigator and the institution publicized preliminary research results that had not undergone peer review. Moreover, Dr. Shim included a misleading statement in his IRB protocol regarding his involvement in certain testing of subjects and also collaborated with the company sponsor on research design, an act that a UMD internal investigative committee characterized as a “significant deviation from accepted practices in the conduct of research” (UMD Right Now, 2016, p. 14). The ad hoc investigative committee concluded that Dr. Shim’s conduct called for “appropriate training in the Responsible Conduct of Research,” and further advised that “COI training should stress that the university’s objectivity and integrity in generating new knowledge is its most precious asset and must be protected at all costs,” an admirable philosophy with which all universities likely agree. Given research protocols for human and animal subject research, biosafety, and COI reports rely on self-disclosure, we need to teach our research community to adopt this philosophy and adhere to it in practice.

It is no coincidence that preventing ethical missteps like those highlighted in the UMD case are being delegated to research support and compliance offices. It seems cost-effective to assign this noble charge — upholding objectivity and integrity in research — to the offices and individuals who already possess research-related regulatory knowledge and have the existing infrastructure, policies and committees in place to review ethical issues related to the conduct of research. While this seemingly practical approach appears to reduce issues of burden through increased efficiency, its simplistic design may undermine perceived cost savings. Michalek et al. (2010) approximated that the average cost borne by a university for handling a single case of research misconduct is $525,000, which lends itself to an argument that institutional investment in effective prevention of unethical behavior is financially sound. In the UMD case, the IRB office prioritized efficiency and conducted an expedited review of the research protocol on the basis of the information provided, yet in the end the institution repaid $228,910 of the funding received due in large part to an investigator’s poor ethical decision-making. Research administrators are infrequently trained in the complex area of research ethics, which is typically concerned with behavioral norms; that is, how one should or should not behave in particular situations, known as “normative ethics” (Comstock, G. 2012). Normative ethics are not necessarily intrinsic because they allow for different standards to be applied, or for situation-specific application. Rather than educate from this framework, which one hopes would encourage self-reporting and independent, ethical decision-making, research administrators often default to what they know best — citing federal and institutional policy requirements, advocating for transparency, and, when all else fails, pointing to headline stories of when things go horribly wrong.

In a previous economic climate in which university funding was on the upswing, purse strings loosened and absent pressure to increase efficiency at all costs, we were an industrious cohort that would bolster this weakness through intensive training, professional conferences, self-study and mentorship. In contrast, while resources are scarce, recognition and acknowledgement must be paid by institutional leaders to the expanded roles research administrators are playing in promoting, advising, and advocating for integrity in the course of daily interactions with investigators. The financial and reputational risks associated with not investing in educating research administrators on how to engage investigators in making ethical choices are too great to ignore. An institutional commitment to ethical conduct starts at the very top and should be inextricably intertwined in the research mission, and we as the soldiers on the front lines must be properly equipped to fight these battles knowing that our leadership has our backs. 

The financial and reputational risks associated with not investing in educating research administrators on how to engage investigators in making ethical choices are too great to ignore.

References


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academic research is a major enterprise: nearly 150 US universities reported R&D expenditures of more than $100 million each in 2015 (National Science Foundation, n.d.). Further, extramural funds at Carnegie R1 institutions are typically one of the top two or three sources of revenue, comparable to net tuition income at private universities such as Princeton (“A Princeton Profile: Finances,” 2016) or public institutions such as the University of Florida. Research supports every university’s mission, brings it prestige, and enhances regional economic development.

In recent decades, research administration resourcing has followed a similar trajectory to research funding itself, with growth driven by the increasing complexity of regulations affecting the research enterprise. As regulations ranging from financial accountability to human subjects research have expanded by statute and policy, universities added staff to manage grant funds, coordinate IRBs, and comply with export controls. Unfunded mandates, reduced state support for public universities, and a flattened federal funding curve have combined to strain budgets.

Which brings us to the question—why does it matter if institutions invest in research administration? If research administration is merely seen as the “cost of doing business,” then any manager knows what to do with costs: minimize them! But another way to look at research administration is as an investment in growth. It’s widely acknowledged that competition for funds is getting fiercer—the pay lines at NIH and NSF are closely watched barometers of pain to principal investigators and their research administration colleagues. Given the trend lines, it behooves any institution to up its competitive game. Practices known collectively as Research Development (National Organization of Research Development Professionals, n.d.) offer a systematic approach to enhancing grantsmanship skills and improving proposal ideation and preparation. Today’s complex medical, social and environmental challenges need multidisciplinary approaches, a requirement acknowledged by federal sponsors through centers of excellence whose budgets can reach well into eight figures. An institution failing to invest in administrative talent that can make its proposals fully competitive is going to fall behind its peers. Adding “proposal development” duties to the workload of already busy award specialists doesn’t work. Institutions must find creative ways to work further upstream to build teams, fund preliminary research, and rigorously brainstorm, write, and rewrite. Interdisciplinary team-building can extend across institutions, giving experts at non-R1 universities the opportunity to participate in team science.

Research administration leaders should see current uncertainties about research funding as an opportunity to invest in the future. Performance metrics and accountability need to be part of the plan, and a generation of administrators emerging from graduate programs in research administration can help meet this need.

References

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How important is presentation to a proposal? Research Administrators know it is very important. Other elements matter, of course: responsiveness to a sponsor’s funding goals, adherence to stipulated format, conformance to required (and prohibited) content; all of these elements are essential in a successful proposal. However, presentation can be that something extra that makes a proposal shine, makes it stand out to reviewers, makes it, in a word, fundable. I have read, and you probably have also, proposals that were awkward or not very engaging. Sometimes (but not often) the essential idea of the proposal is so compelling it transcends a clunky narrative. I’ve also read, and you probably have also, proposals that were beautifully composed but left you searching for the substance, wondering, where is the central idea? Buzzwords and sound bites can be handy shortcuts but are really useful only when grounded in more than a circular reference.
Skilled editing can help smooth out a rough draft of a good concept. A Research Administrator with strong institutional knowledge can help a proposer connect a good stand-alone idea into existing infrastructure and strategic framework. An engaging and coherent narrative can present a concept in a way that will convince a potential sponsor the idea can blossom in a particular setting, that funding will be well-spent, the missions of both the sponsor and the proposal will be advanced, and glory will shower down on everyone involved.

But when does editing slip over the border of goodness and light into a shadier, gray area? When does it become ‘spin’?

‘Spin journalism’ is defined by Dictionary.com as ‘news and information that is manipulated or slanted to affect its interpretation and influence public opinion’ (Dictionary.com). Spin is embraced as a tool in advertising and public relations, and certainly both professions do seek to influence public opinion by affecting our interpretation of events, actions, or options. Media examples range from the easily spotted ‘putting lipstick on a pig’ploy (an obvious overstatement of worth) to more subtle tactics. A public figure’s character can be attacked indirectly with a statement such as ‘Senator Wellworth has never publicly commented on the possibility of kickbacks resulting from federal contracting legislation s/he sponsored.’ In this example, the statement is true, but its suggestion of wrongdoing introduces a distraction from whatever Senator Wellworth may have actually said or done. The readers/listeners may or may not have suspected any fiscal misconduct before, but the seed has been planted and, most likely, they will now consider it.

Open source Wikipedia goes further by naming spin as a form of propaganda, imbued with various degrees of deception, manipulation, and disingenuousness, deliberately attempting to reframe, reposition, or otherwise modify the perception… to reduce any negative impact…. ‘

It’s not much of a stretch to suggest that spin is not a tactic appropriate for use in proposal preparation. Yes, enrollments are dropping, institutional budgets are falling, and external funding is ever more competitive, but Research Administrators are on the frontlines of responsible conduct of research. Rarely is a proposal submitted without some level of review from one of us, and we have committed to high standards. Integrity and excellence are two of NCURA’s core values (the other two are inclusiveness and collegiality). In Number 2 of NCURA’s Statement of Principles, we recognize our responsibilities to our institutions to represent them fairly and accurately….’ How, then, can we model integrity and excellence as we facilitate high-quality, successful proposals? Here are three suggestions.

Stick to the truth. It doesn’t have to be plain or even necessarily unvarnished, but it has to be real and recognizable. For instance, if you are describing some demographic of enrollment that equals 52% of a whole, you could describe it as ‘more than half’, ‘slightly more than half’, ‘most’, or ‘a majority’. If you need, strategically, to describe the demographic as ‘nearly all’, or ‘a vast majority’, then it’s a better idea to re-define the demographic or approach it from a different perspective.

Acknowledgment imperfections in the concept or methodology. Can a limitation be re-cast as a variable? Possibly. If the methodology requires human subjects, and you doubt you will be able to recruit the exact type of participant you hope for, a good strategy might be to describe various intervention/output possibilities so you can move forward with your actual pool of participants. Don’t build the entire proposal on an ideal input that would produce the best possible outcomes (and be most enticing to the sponsor) but is unlikely to be obtainable.

Leave room for (unexpected) success. A proposal has a statement of need or hypothesis; there may be goals and objectives and usually a section addressing expected results. Sometimes, the sponsor requires minimum quantitative results (perhaps a per capita achievement of some benchmark). If this is a proposal for a new idea or process, resist the urge to predict, in very specific terms, the highest possible achievement by the greatest possible number of whatever it is. It could be that you discover, along the way, something better. While deliverables must be met, or at least vigorously pursued, one of the rewards of research is that the exact level of success is unpredictable. If the proposal promises nothing less (or more) than a shining metal castle, an emerging crystal garden may not be appreciated or even recognized.

Research Administrators are true professionals who take justifiable pride in presenting proposal concepts in their best possible light. We tend to be, with apologies to ‘Killer Queen’, meticulous and precise. Research administration seeks clarity, while ‘spin’ is used to distract and/or misdirect. Another definition of ‘spin’, also from dictionary.com, but this time as a verb, is ‘… to produce… by extruding from the body a long, slender filament of a natural viscous matter that hardens in the air’ (dictionary.com). Let’s leave ‘spinning’ to the silkworms and out of research administration.

References

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Several months ago I created a series of case studies, some actual and some fictitious, for a discussion group at a meeting of university research administrators. One of the case studies centered on a possible allegation of fabrication by a graduate student under a federally funded research study. When the group reviewing the case presented their response to my question, “what would you do,” they mentioned a variety of actions, such as investigating the situation themselves, discussing the situation with the principal investigator, and confronting the student in question. Not getting the response I was hoping to hear, I asked everyone in the session what else they might do or what other individual(s) they might involve. To my dismay, not a single individual suggested going to the institution’s research integrity officer (RIO).

Though the work of the RIO also involves legal and regulatory issues, which often accompany ethical concerns, this situation drove home to me the fact that we, as research administrators, need a stronger foundation in the broad principles that govern our work and connect us to our researchers.

Numerous sources (Garner, 2014; Resnik, 2015) provide detailed definitions for ethics, but when reduced to their simplest form, they all say the same thing: ethics/ethical behavior is doing what’s right. But how do we know what is right in the realm of research and research administration? Some things are obvious (at least to most folks), such as putting forth an honest and complete effort in our work, avoiding scientific misconduct, and spending funds appropriately. Other issues, however, such as whether the Common Rule applies to research in the humanities, may not be so clear. Or, as was the case for the individuals involved in my discussion group, we may be able to identify unethical behavior but not know the best method of addressing it.

How can those of us at PUIs, with our limited resources, improve our knowledge and understanding of ethical principles in research and research administration? I suggest a three-tiered approach to enhancing our practice in this area.

First, review, understand, and practice the ethical codes for research administrators. NCURA’s Statement of Principles (2017) and the Research Administrators’ Certification Council Code of Ethics (2011) provide us with a basic ethical framework for how we conduct ourselves as research administrators.

Second, familiarize ourselves with the basic ethical principles associated with major research activities, such as those identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Research Integrity. Ethical issues surrounding conflicts of interest and data management may be easily understood by research administrators, but the finer details of what constitutes ethical authorship, publication practices, and mentorship may fall outside our usual range of activities.

Third, understand how our own institutions apply these ethical principles. Many ethical principles are based on disciplinary codes of ethics and legal/regulatory requirements, but those codes and regulations typically provide institutions with latitude in how to manage and apply them. In investigating our own institutions’ requirements, we may even learn that we lack the written policies, procedures, or practices we need to ensure adherence to specific ethical codes.

Of course, the greatest challenge to engaging in any of these activities is finding the time and resources to make it happen, especially when you find yourself in a 1-, 2-, or 3-person office. At my institution, we tried the following approach and found it worked well:

- Using the National Academies Press’s short monograph, On being a scientist: A guide to the responsible conduct of research, as a template, we created and scheduled a seven-week lesson plan to review and discuss the ethical principles covered.
- We also incorporated additional materials, such as our institutional operating policies, ethical guidelines from professional organizations, and journal articles on each of the topics.
- Each of us (3) had responsibility for leading the discussion for 2 or 3 sessions, which helped create lively discussions and allowed us to divvy up some of the workload.

Do you know who your RIO is?

References


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MISCONDUCT— it is probably the dirtiest word in the field of research. If a scientist is caught doing it, their career is over. If they are not caught, then they can contribute false findings that could impact the world of science for years or decades, until the lies are uncovered. The impact of research misconduct is probably most evident with the false findings published by Andrew Wakefield linking the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine to autism, which has led to a huge anti-vaccination movement that has put the citizens of the world in danger of infectious diseases that scientists were controlling, or in some cases, close to eradicating. Since 2014, Karolinska Institutet (KI) has been embroiled in a misconduct scandal that has led to turmoil in our leadership, investigations of our internal procedures and allegations of mishandling of information. In this article, we reveal how we have been impacted by the scandal on a research administration level.
A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Being the target of a media hunt is never something positive for an organization. From my perspective as middle management with need for decision-making ability, it became clear that much was put on hold. The decision agony led to a halt in operations and with that, important ongoing work was set aside. The incredible power and hard pressure on the leadership, combined with the feeling of uncontrollable force from the media, general public and politicians led to a sense of powerlessness. Now, when I look back. I can see everything in perspective and am very glad and proud that we now have turned much of the negative feelings into constructive work. We have reviewed our processes and procedures and set a plan in motion, but the driving force must never be to avoid errors—that may lead to anxiety and caution—so it is important to maintain the momentum, to act with creativity and a sense for what is essential. This has been the focus of the Grants Office, to always work with support and guidance to help researchers to do right, instead of preventing them from doing wrong.

In the wake of a serious misconduct scandal (more information here: http://ki.se/en/news/the-macchiarini-case-the-story-so-far), KI has been under the proverbial magnifying glass from all aspects of society, including government, the general public and most of all the Swedish and international press. As research administrators, we are responsible for providing our scientists with the support they need to conduct their research according to the rules and regulations of the university, the country they work in, and the agencies funding the research. The KI Grants Office administers a diverse range of activities and responsibilities, including external research funding applications, financial reporting, compliance and research documentation.

The pre-award section of the KI Grants Office works with applications to external agencies, with a major focus on applications that require a central signature or central submission. For the most part, these applications include limited submissions and financing from the EU (European Union) and US agencies. At the application stage, we ensure all parts of the application are in place to maximize the chance of funding. While our procedures have not changed significantly in the wake of the scandal, we have encouraged our researchers to be extra diligent about adding the appropriate and necessary ethics information to their applications and ensure appropriate compliance issues are discussed in order to alleviate concerns from potential reviewers. EU applications already have a strong ethical component, requiring completion of an ethical issues table and submission of an Ethical Self-Assessment, which reveals that the applicant is aware of all the ethical aspects associated with the proposed project. When awarded, EU applications must even pass a strict Ethical Review before signing of the Grant Agreement. The most difficult effect of the misconduct situation on our work has not been a change in our own procedures, but that the university has had to focus most of its resources on conducting investigations and responding to the press, which in turn makes it difficult to progress with many other aspects of our work that require a decision from the university leadership.

When working with financial post-award, you are always—in a way—under scrutiny. Many projects require frequent audits and sometimes funders conduct surprise audits. Being under constant scrutiny forces a function to create a framework and a fundament of risk-avoidance. Compliance checks and quality assurance should be part of established processes and routines, as grant spending simply must be able to withstand public scrutiny. The scrutiny that KI has been under lately has not affected the way the post-award service conducts its work. Risk-avoidance and compliance have been leading us even before the current events. The current events, however, will impact post-award services in other ways. The difference between being under scrutiny as a component of the regular work compared to being under scrutiny as a result of an extraordinary incident is that when an extraordinary incident has taken place, everyone wants to prevent it from happening again. Should a situation arise within post-award that signals risk, everybody from team members to hierarchy will be on much higher alert.

When compliance works you do not notice it—it is just there, in the background, doing its thing. The problems start when compliance is lacking, and in its extreme this may have fatal consequences. We have unfortunately had to experience the latter during the last few years. Although most incidences have been outside our control, we now deal with the consequences of non-compliance on a weekly basis. The number of questions

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from researchers has increased, especially since 2016 when the decision of research misconduct was announced, as it has made researchers more aware that compliance rules and regulations exist. Luckily, in most cases when we investigate an issue we can assure our researchers they are compliant. However, when compliance actions are needed, we are more than happy to help, especially when we can take action and avoid issues in the future.

Within the area of research documentation, the events of the last year have increased the awareness of the need and importance of good research documentation. Being under constant scrutiny, more researchers than ever before have requested workshops and demonstrations of our electronic notebook system at KI (KI ELN). They want to document their research correctly, safely and securely. If they also get the added benefit of being able to more easily share data within their group and improve traceability, it is all the better. With the help of the ELN, even research documentation that is already good is improved. The work with research documentation in its current form started in 2009 at KI, but the events of the last year have again shown the importance of documenting the research process in a way that allows for scrutiny – and what happens when this is not done correctly. The majority of researchers at KI are already doing a good job documenting their research. The administration can help those that unintentionally document in an insufficient way.

The big question for the entire research community is whether it is even possible to identify the few researchers that intentionally produce false data and untruthful documentation? Being under scrutiny caused by a specific event can drive change. A change can take many faces; policies and procedures will most naturally be reevaluated, and improvements will follow as a natural step. In the end, the real change, however, is made by the people implementing the changes. Being under scrutiny not only gives incentives to revisit policies and procedures, but also the values of a team, unit, department or university. Use the opportunity of being under scrutiny well and you will come out as a better and stronger organization!

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Additional Resources
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Order your copies today!
http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/Store.aspx
The research administration offices experience this, yet never look at the root cause of why it happens. Whether you know it or not, the “revolving door syndrome” has a detrimental impact on others nearby, costs the institution money, and might just be the “beginning of the end” for many divisions and departments. Too often, administrators link high turnover to people who are not dedicated, lack talent, or are just too incompetent to do the job. However, I have learned through my experiences—and it is also proven through academic research (Alvensson & Sveningsson, 2003)—that a significant part of the problem is not with the people, it is with the system in which they work. So, what could be wrong with the system or the process? There could be many things causing the system to operate at a less-than-optimal level.

One issue that could be throwing the system in a tilt is the chosen management style of senior administrators and/or departmental managers—specifically micromangement. There seems to be a very fine line between macro-managing and micro-managing. Most of us would say we are macro-managers and we allow our employees some space in order to carry out the responsibilities of their job. But sadly, there are too many managers who think they are doing a bang-up job and supporting their employees, when actually they are doing just the opposite and handcuffing the very people who are there to help.

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, then you may be headed into the vast land of micromanagement. But, you may be asking, “What’s wrong with micromanaging if it delivers the results I want?” Good question. Micro-managers tend to take certain attributes to the extreme. When this occurs, they develop an obsession to control everything, even to the point of rendering their colleagues powerless. Micromangers run the risk of ruining their employees’ self-confidence, causing them to quit, and/or damaging their performance itself. You may achieve the original goal you intended, but at what cost? So take a strong inventory of your management style and find a healthy balance that helps to empower others around you to develop, grow, and make the necessary decisions to move your research department forward.

In addition, taking advantage of the resources offered through NCURA is a great way to quickly connect with your colleagues around the globe and find ways that existing management systems or processes can be utilized to their greatest potential. Make a commitment to try a different approach or to change an existing policy—but do your homework first and gain the insights of other experienced research administrators. Doing so will help your department or division run much more efficiently with a greater sense of pride and appreciation in the multiple tasks completed each and every day in the world of research administration.

References

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Automation Strategies for Reducing Your Research Administrative Burden

Recent studies have shown that researchers are spending only about half their time conducting research—the remaining hours are spent searching for funding and navigating federally mandated compliance reviews, among other things.

To increase productivity dramatically across the research enterprise, we must develop strategies to reduce research burden.

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In my January/February 2017 article *House Subcommittee Hearing on Research Regulatory Relief – A University Perspective on Testimony Preparation and Recommendations*, my focus was on the experience related to the preparation and presentation to the Subcommittee. I tried to personalize it with my reactions throughout the process of having the opportunity to participate in a more formal advocacy process. This second article is about the facts and just the facts... of what was presented, what we were advocating for and why, and where these issues are now. This will include highlights from my oral and written testimony, as well as content from responses to U.S. Representative Barbara Comstock’s (R) office after the testimony.

**Summary**

On September 19, 2016, at the invitation of Representative Dan Lipinski’s (D) office, I participated in the House Subcommittee Hearing on Research Regulatory Relief. The objective was to provide feedback to members of the House on the increasing regulatory burden that universities are experiencing and the impact on faculty. I had the opportunity to present along with Dr. Larry R. Faulkner (President Emeritus, The University of Texas at Austin and chair of the National Academies Report committee), John Neumann (Director, Natural Resources and Environment Team, Government Accountability Office (GAO)) and Dr. Ángel Cabrera (President, George Mason University).

As I mentioned, 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 that:

- The regulation of research continues to steadily increase and it is not sustainable;
- There is a lack of standardization across agencies, and this is very costly, and;
- Federally funded research could be regulated much more efficiently.
Background
As discussed in the first article, there was a lot of time strategically focused to determine what should be submitted as part of the written testimony, submitted as a summary of the highlights, or presented in my statement. Critical to our testimony was that all presenters mutually reinforced one another with similar messages that were highlighted with each of our unique perspectives. Further, our messages also reinforced the pending legislation of Reps. Lipinski, Comstock, and Lamar Smith (R) as it is focused on reducing regulatory burden.

In my five-minute oral presentation, I was focused on two areas: One was general in nature and the second was a list of supporting specific topics. My general message was one of recognition of the status quo. We are in a complex, highly regulated environment and there is growing recognition of burden’s detrimental impact on faculty and research productivity. The supporting topics addressed specific issues, all of which were focused on how we can continue to acknowledge the problem and proactively address it in a manner that supports the objectives of compliance, reduced fraud, waste and abuse, while simultaneously avoiding unnecessary, costly burden.

Testimony Highlights
After John Neumann from the GAO, I presented and addressed the following key elements:

• The National Academies and GAO reports join several previous reports on this topic and find that the regulation of research continues to steadily increase, that there is a lack of standardization across agencies, and that research could be regulated much more efficiently. There has been a significant increase in federal research regulations over the last two decades, with an average of 5.8 new or substantially changed regulations annually. In just the last four months, three regulations, two significant policies and a training requirement were issued. These new regulations and policies will cost each university anywhere from several hundred thousand to several million dollars and result in a significant increase in administrative and faculty workload.

• Successful engagement with federal sponsors has historically been heavily dependent on relationships with individual employees and trust established over time. However, when the critical staff member departs, the productivity of the relationship often follows.

• Both the Council on Government Relations (COGR) and the Association of American Universities (AAU) have also strongly endorsed H.R. 5583, the University Regulatory Streamlining and Harmonization Act of 2016 and S. 2742, the Promoting Biomedical Research and Public Health For Patients Act. The legislation would create the Research Policy Board (RPB) that is a centerpiece of the Academies recommendations, as well as the position of Associate Administrator for the Academic Research Enterprise. H.R. 5583 proposes that the RPB be composed of federal and university officials charged with reviewing existing and proposed regulations with the goal of reducing regulatory burden.

• As the Academies report indicates, research institutions are partners with the federal government in research and oversight. According to federal statistics, university funding for R&D rose 5.3% to $15.8 billion in FY 2014 and now constitutes 23.5% of total academic R&D.

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Research Administrator Day Greeting Card Contest

NCURA will be holding a contest again this year for greeting card designs.

The selected designs will be available for purchase at the Annual Meeting and online with all proceeds going to the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund.

Details coming later this spring!

Research Administrator Day is September 25th.
Throughout all of the presentations, there was a recurring theme emphasizing the importance of the RPB. The RPB was included in various pending legislative bills with slight differences, most notably the size and membership of the Board. Most critical from our perspective was the inclusion of university representatives. My specific comments focused on the point that with the right partners, with the correct accountability mechanisms, and with university and association representation, the RPB would be the “enabler of everything else.” Having a highly functioning RPB creates joint accountability in policy review, development and implementation.

Post-Meeting

As previously mentioned in the first article, Rep. Comstock’s office asked me to review the transcribed testimony and respond to three additional follow-up questions from members.

Note: the following questions and responses are paraphrased from my response.

**QUESTION:** Did the 2011 Executive Order (EO) to streamline regulations and the 2013 Uniform Guidance have any positive or negative impact on Duke?

**RESPONSE:** Generally, the 2011 EO has not had the intended level of positive impact on federal research regulations and burden reduction. The principles of this EO with respect to limiting burden, maximizing net benefits and identifying alternatives to regulation, as well as the suggestion of outreach prior to issuing proposed rulemaking and coordination among agencies are often not applied in the rulemaking process to the extent envisioned.

Were agencies to adhere to these principles in a more accountable manner, both with respect to regulations and to policies that carry the force of regulation, regulatory burden could have been significantly reduced. However, agencies have not been expected to demonstrate their adherence to the principles.

With the Uniform Guidance, we believe that OMB and several key policy leaders from funding agencies did seek to apply these principles, to reduce burden and to enhance flexibility. They did regularly engage stakeholders during the regulatory process. However, in this case, the impact was somewhat limited because the act of combining the eight disparate circulars was not, in itself, going to reduce regulatory burden on universities in a meaningful way. In summary, the engagement throughout the UG development process was very collaborative, but the true value to the university research community has yet to be determined.

**QUESTION:** With regard to the RPB, is there an existing board that this new entity could leverage? With so many stakeholders, how can it function and not get bogged down?

**RESPONSE:** To my knowledge, there is not necessarily an existing board that advises across diverse agency missions. However, I would suggest that the focus should not be the “agency” and the agency’s mission, but instead the focus should be “research” and how university research is regulated, as the regulation of research across agencies has many commonalities. It should be noted that very substantial gains can be made by streamlining and harmonizing these similar, yet different, requirements, processes and systems. Universities’ input via an RPB, coupled with appropriate and accountable oversight, could lead to more streamlined and harmonized requirements and significant burden reduction.

**QUESTION:** Did the committees, out of concerns of being audited by the OIG, go beyond the requirements and develop internal policies that are overly conservative and overly expensive? How can Congress provide assurances to universities that they will be held harmless if they follow federal regulations?

**RESPONSE:** COGR has identified over 100 actions that have the potential to reduce the administrative work associated with sponsored awards and many of our members are currently working through this checklist. COGR has not explicitly looked at the role of OIGs. However, I can say that as a result of recent NSF OIG audits, where more than a dozen universities followed agency policy and guidance only to have costs disallowed by the OIG, some institutions are likely hesitant to use the flexibility made available through the Uniform Guidance. As an example, many institutions are likely hesitant to replace existing effort reporting systems, many of which were implemented at great cost to the institution, with payroll verification or other, less labor-intensive options because of the uncertain OIG environment.

A potentially effective opportunity for Congress to “provide assurances to universities that they will be held harmless” is referenced in Section 8 of H.R.5583, the University Regulation Streamlining and Harmonization Act of 2016, which addresses the OIG’s role in audits. Developing a mutually beneficial and accountable relationship between universities, the OIGs and policy offices in this area are critical to the effective and compliant use of the taxpayer DOLLAR.

**Conclusions**

In summary, this was a unique opportunity to clarify that members of Congress, the NAS report, the GAO and universities were all on the same page about the potentially devastating impact of increasing regulatory environment on faculty burden. These themes are continuing concepts in the 21st Century Cures Act, American Innovation and Competitiveness Act, and the National Defense Authorization Act 2017 and have very promising elements focused on addressing various areas of burden.

Again, special thanks to COGR, especially Lisa Nichols, and Melissa Vetker from the Duke Office of Government Relations for their assistance during the preparation process, as well as to Reps. Lipinski, Comstock, and Smith for their support of these important issues.

James Luther, MA, is Associate Vice President of Finance at Duke University. His responsibilities include oversight of the post-award areas for the University and School of Medicine. Jim is the Chair of the COGR Board of Directors, and the Co-Chair of the FDPA Administrative Burden Subgroup. He can be reached at james.luther@duke.edu
POLICY/REGULATION/COMPLIANCE NEWS:

**Oral History No Longer Subject to IRB Approval:** Life will soon be a little easier for oral historians and a number of other kinds of scholars who have had to gain approval from institutional review boards. [Link](https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2017/01/20/oral-history-no-longer-subject-irb-approval#utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=eba28da512-DNU20170120&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcb04421-eba28da512-197420681&mc_cid=eba28da512&mc_eid=0442c99b21)

**New ‘Common Rule’ for Research:** University leaders praise regulation for leaving out provisions on biospecimens opposed by many as too burdensome. Social scientists see some gains for their studies. [Link](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/01/01/irss-issues-final-version-common-rule-research-involving-humans#utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=efc433a523-DNU20170119&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcb04421-efc433a523-197420681&mc_cid=efc433a523&mc_eid=0442c99b21)

**Policy on Good Clinical Practice Training for NIH Awardees Involved in NIH-funded Clinical Trials:** How Often Must Clinical Trial Investigators and Clinical Trial Staff Update Their Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Training? [Link](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-148.html)

INTERNATIONAL/GLOBAL:

**We must urgently clarify data-sharing rules:** Scientists have worked hard to ensure that Europe’s new data laws do not harm science, but one last push is needed. [Link](http://www.nature.com/news/we-must-urgently-clarify-data-sharing-rules-1.21350)

AGENCY NEWS:

**Francis Collins Will Stay at NIH, at Least for Now:** Director of the NIH throughout the Obama administration, has been asked to stay on the job. [Link](https://www.insidehighered.com//quicktakes/2017/01/20/francis-collins-will-stay-nih-least-now#utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=eba28da512-DNU20170120&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcb04421-eba28da512-197420681&mc_cid=eba28da512&mc_eid=0442c99b21)

**White House honors 19 NSF-supported early-career researchers:** President Obama has named 102 scientists and engineers, including 19 nominated by the NSF, as recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). [Link](https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=190794&org=NSF&from=news)

FUNDING NEWS:


**Lilly Endowment Awards $100 Million to Human Services Agencies.** [Link](http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/lilly-endowment-awards-100-million-to-human-services-agencies)

**The 21st Century Cures Act, and Perspectives from NIH:** The Act establishes a multitude of important changes to our nation’s approach to supporting and funding health care, medical interventions, and research. [Link](https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2016/12/14/21st-century-cures-perspectives-from-nih)

**Federal budget authority for research and development continues upward trend:** Adjusted for inflation, R&D budget authority remains below FY 2010 levels. [Link](https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=190757&WT.mc_id=USNSF_51&WT.mc_ev=click)

FUN, CHUCKLES, AND COOL RESEARCH INFO:

**New species of moth named for Trump, thanks to 'yellowish' mop:** 6The new moths are native to both California and, somewhat ironically, Mexico. [Link](http://www.foxnews.com/science/2017/01/18/new-species-moth-named-for-trump-thanks-to-yellowish-mop.html)

**Smartwatches know you’re getting a cold days before you feel ill:** Wearable tech can now detect when you’re about to fall ill, simply by tracking your vital signs. [Link](https://www.newscientist.com/article/2117854-smartwatches-know-youre-getting-a-cold-days-before-you-feel-ill/)

**Underwater volcano’s fiery eruption captured in detail by seafloor observatory:** Results offer insights into volcanic eruptions on land, which pose greatest threat to people. [Link](https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=190564&org=NSF&from=news)

E-XTRA NOTABLE AND INTERESTING:

**By age 6, gender stereotypes can affect girls’ choices:** Stereotypes about intellectual ability influence activity choices, study finds. [Link](https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=190924&org=NSF&from=news)

**Academics aren’t lobbyists – so our research changes nothing:** I want my work to influence policy and change lives, but there’s little hope that politicians will even read it. [Link](https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2016/nov/18/academics-aren't-lobbyists-so-our-research-changes-nothing?CMP=shre_biu_link)

**New personality model sets up how we see ourselves, and how others see us:** The model is unique in that it contrasts personality as seen by an individual versus how their personality is seen by others. [Link](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/01/170106163007.htm)

**Is Collaboration Worth It?** Historians push for more teamwork even as many feel it won’t help them earn tenure. [Link](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/01/06/historians-push-more-collaboration-field-traditionally-has-snubbed-group-efforts)
When thinking of activities connecting ethics, integrity, and how they can influence discussions and initiatives around international research, I first think back to the four World Conferences on Research Integrity. Indeed, as I have often said, “if one theme has consistently emerged from these World Conferences on Research Integrity (Lisbon, 2007; Singapore, 2010; Montreal, 2013; and Rio De Janeiro, 2015), it has been communicated as follows: There needs to be greater and more substantive effort put into the teaching and incentivizing of research integrity, the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), and the ethical conduct of scholarly activity in general, at the highest levels of education.” With this in mind, at the 2015 Rio De Janeiro Conference I spoke on “Meaningful ways to incorporate scholarly ethics, research integrity – and the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) – into undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral and faculty education and training programs.” At the Conference I was approached by Zoe Hammatt and Dr. Susan Garfinkel, both at the Office of Research Integrity (ORI), and asked to help plan and co-sponsor a conference on Promoting the Responsible Conduct of Research for College and University Leaders. More about this later. For now, you can access the conference summary report at [http://wcri2015.org/iWCRIRio2015_FinalSummaryReport.pdf](http://wcri2015.org/iWCRIRio2015_FinalSummaryReport.pdf).

ORI also published a report on the 4th World Conference at [https://ori.hhs.gov/blog/ori-global-scene-update-4th-world-conference-research-integrity](https://ori.hhs.gov/blog/ori-global-scene-update-4th-world-conference-research-integrity).

The second event of importance was the founding of the Asia Pacific Research Integrity Network (APRI) in February, 2015, and the Network’s second (inaugural) meeting which took place at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), in February, 2016. This second meeting was titled Research Integrity in Asia and the Pacific Rim, and again it was co-convened and co-facilitated by ORI, the University of Hong Kong, and UCSD. It was at this gathering that I stated:

The many themes and topics covered during this inaugural international meeting – indeed, far too many to fully describe in this brief narrative – are truly cutting-edge and outstanding, as are the many excellent speakers and participants from 13 countries. The most notable high point of this meeting is the founding of the Asia Pacific Research Integrity Network (“APRI”), with representation from Australia, Canada, China and Hong Kong, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States. This meeting sets a meaningful standard for collaboration around ethics and research integrity in Asia, the Pacific and beyond.


The next meeting of Asia Pacific Research Integrity Network (APRI) formally convenes in Hong Kong in February, 2017. For those of us who have been invited and are speaking, this gathering will, according to the planners serve two important roles: 1) to further multi-national awareness, understanding and opportunities for collaboration, and 2) to create a sustainable, robust international partnership that will promote research integrity among the Asian and Pacific Rim countries in the long run.

Returning to the proposed meeting on Promoting the Responsible Conduct of Research for College and University Leaders, according to a soon-to-be published report on the meeting and proceedings:

Nearly 80 research integrity officers (RIOs), senior college and university leaders, government officials, attorneys, and research fellows from 18 U.S. states and five countries convened in Los Angeles, April 14-15,
2016, to address ways to foster a culture of research integrity — along with the handling of research misconduct investigations — at institutions of higher learning in the USA and globally.

Co-sponsored by the U.S. Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and Loyola Marymount University (LMU), this inaugural meeting — titled Promoting the Responsible Conduct of Research for College and University Leaders — was the first time ever that representatives from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, the Office for Human Research Protections, and the Office of Research Integrity along with senior university and institutional officials and Research Integrity Officers formally gathered to engage in discussions around promoting research integrity at the highest institutional level. Meeting participants included a diverse range of officials from both small and large institutions of higher learning who held positions from post-doctoral fellows to Vice Presidents and Associate Provosts of research advancement and compliance, and teaching RIO teams.

I am working with ORI to ensure follow-up from the meeting that will facilitate future collaborative projects around promoting a culture of ethics and integrity at all levels within the research community in the USA and globally. ORI published two informational pieces on this meeting, which you can access VIA ORI Newsletters at both [https://ori.hhs.gov/images/ddblock/march_vol23_no1.pdf](https://ori.hhs.gov/images/ddblock/march_vol23_no1.pdf) and [https://ori.hhs.gov/images/ddblock/june_vol23_no2.pdf](https://ori.hhs.gov/images/ddblock/june_vol23_no2.pdf).

Last but not least, we are all looking forward to the 5th World Conference on Research Integrity, which will convene in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, May 28-31, 2017.

According to the Conference’s website ([http://wcri2017.org](http://wcri2017.org)):

The 5th World Conference on Research Integrity will be organized around the interlinked themes of transparency and accountability, building on the premise that the honesty and reliability of research are best served by openly sharing all aspects of research and by taking personal responsibility for it. The conference program will explore the challenges of promoting transparency and accountability and the consequences of the failure to do so, with the overall goal of developing an evidence-based agenda for addressing the various lapses of integrity that seem to have become an endemic problem in research today. We are looking forward to welcoming researchers, institutional leaders, research administrators, funders, publishers and others to Amsterdam in May 2017 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the World Conferences on Research Integrity.

In sum, there has been a lot of activity — in the USA and globally — around ethics, integrity and international cooperation and collaboration over the past few years; indeed, I urge you to join the conversation and bring it home to your institution.

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**Notable Practices**

**Internal Seed Funding Programs**

Internal seed grants/funding programs are often designed to stimulate faculty interest in research and serve as an incentive for faculty members to build a larger externally funded project/program. Review teams often note that internal funding programs can be an excellent tool to increase or enhance the research enterprise. Peer Reviewers from NCURA Peer Programs highlight some considerations for developing, examining, and implementing such programs:

- Leaders must determine the type of seed funding needed (i.e. course release or grants to conduct pilot work, travel grants, grants to spur faculty-student research, pre-tenure prep programs, grants to assist those moving in new directions).
- Institutions should inventory and have complementary seed programs at the central level as well as college/school/department level. Institutions must understand faculty needs and which resources already exist in departments, units, centers and/or colleges.
- Institutions should ensure the number of programs and size of awards make sense for the institutional context.
- Institutions should review and track success to ensure the investments are achieving anticipated results.
- Be cautious: Too much internal funding without an emphasis or expectation of securing external funds may not achieve the desired outcome of growing external funding.

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Ethics are clear when there are clearly defined and enforceable rules to follow. Quality assurance directors are charged with implementing clearly outlined sets of rules. The rules we enforce come from the Food and Drug Administration, grant agencies, our own academic institutions, or other state and federal regulations, depending on our area of administrative specialty. Is there a code of conduct that administrators should follow in the administration of these rules? The American Society for Public Administration has adopted a Code of Ethics that its members should commit themselves to. This is a great place to start and I highly recommend reviewing this code.

For the purposes of this article, I chose to frame a code of conduct for university research administrators using rules that many of us work with daily. The Belmont Report, written in 1979, is the basis for human subject research protection regulations. The report has three primary principles: autonomy and respect for persons, protection of others (beneficence), and equality (justice/fairness). To outline an ethical code for administrators within a Belmont framework, I will briefly explain its principles followed by examples of how daily situations arise and how our actions can violate or validate basic ethical principles.

The first Belmont Principle is Autonomy and Respect for Persons. In clinical research, autonomy and respect for people means that individuals should have the ability to be self-directing and make their own decision as to whether or not to participate in clinical trial research. For an individual to make their own decisions, they must have accurate and complete information as well the ability to understand that information and how it may or may not affect them. Special rules are applied to those who may not be able to understand the information to ensure that their rights are not violated. In a nutshell, this principle holds that individuals should be informed, comprehend the information provided, and volunteer of their own free will and knowledge without coercion.

What are some common situations examples that touch on this principle? As administrators, much of what we deal with daily is information. Information is needed for decision-making and planning work, and is often the reason for action and change to procedure. Information moves to and from those we work with, those we work for, and those who work for us. That information transfer can be in the form of standard operating procedures, deadlines, updates, changes, and the like. Problems can arise when we do not have all the information or we fail to communicate with others (or vice versa) to make a fully informed and sound decision. Some examples of common problems include when individuals hog or hoard information, fail to say something (e.g., inform others of a potential problem, deadline, or issue), fail to obtain complete information, fail to provide training and education (for ourselves and others), or fail to have clearly documented processes to follow. Any of these issues can result in scenarios that inhibit the decision-making process and workflow resulting in untimely and inaccurate work.

Changes can and do happen. Information continuously evolves and changes — we cannot take a one and done approach once a decision has been made or a procedure has been written. Our work is dynamic in nature and if we do not have all of the information we cannot provide adequate guidance to those who rely on us. Making changes or updates to procedures and failing to communicate those changes via training can and will cause problems. We should remember that
those we work with and for are all part of the same team with the same mission. We create our own risk when our environment is such that our direct reports and other stakeholders may fear speaking with us. Staff or faculty in this state may be unwilling to ask questions or say they do not understand the information provided. This is why it is so important for us to have clearly written policies and frequent documented training, and to ensure accessible and timely two-way communication that allows individuals to ask questions, address concerns, and bring suggestions for improvement to the processes we create.

The second principle of the Belmont Report is the **Principle of Beneficence**. Beneficence is the moral obligation to protect others, harming no one in the process. In clinical research this principle ensures that the welfare and safety of those participating in clinical research is protected and that benefits have been weighed against (and found to outweigh) risks. In research administration, people are protected by following the rules, and consequences for violation are clear. Participants benefit from standard operating procedures that are up to date, auditable, and enforceable.

The challenge of working in administration is that much of our time is focused on the work of others, making it difficult to implement change to existing processes. To protect others (and ourselves at times) we must be both proactive and reactive when it comes to standard operating procedures. This means that we look for ways to improve and improve the ways that exist, particularly when issues arise, but not in a knee-jerk way. Making decisions in a vacuum or failing to step back and looking at the trickle-down and long-term effects of a policy change can unexpectedly impact others. Does the new process take more time? Is the change measurable, beneficial, and efficient? Is there a return on investment for the change that can be demonstrated to others? If you do decide to change a policy, it is important to document the change and the reason for it, educate others about the change, and find a way to measure and evaluate the change to determine if the update had its intended effect. Without continuous review and analysis, reinforced by audit, report, and action, standard operating procedures remain inefficient or suggested guidance. Auditing also reinforces autonomy of those following the procedures by ensuring understanding.

Sometimes, regardless of the perfect set of rules, situations arise that cause us to have trouble finding the balance between addressing acute problems timely (reactive) and prioritizing chronic problems for improvement (proactive). Failure to prioritize, promising more than you can deliver, or failure to be timely in changes (or other situations) can cause risk and possible harm to others (and you!). Weighing the possible risks often helps guide the priority list, but working in constant crisis mode may indicate that an overhaul to more than just one procedure may be necessary.

The last principle of the Belmont Report is the **Principle of Justice**. In human subject protections, the idea of justice means that those who participate in research (either as individuals or groups) are not unfairly or unequally selected (or not selected). Justice is about being fair and treating people equally or having a level playing field.

**“Our work is dynamic in nature and if we do not have all of the information we cannot provide adequate guidance to those who rely on us.”**

In research administration, applying this principle could mean not making exceptions to rules or procedures for the investigator who is kind, or doing the opposite for investigators who provide us with opportunities to practice not taking their behavior personally. Rules, procedures, and deadlines should be applied and enforced to everyone in an equitable manner. Other examples of ways injustice can occur are not giving credit where credit is due (taking credit for others’ good work) and failure to admit or take responsibility for our own mistakes. Lastly, individuals we hire should be neither over- nor under-qualified for their jobs, be hired at an equitable pay rate, and have clear performance plans, roles, and responsibilities. New hires should be provided training and have clear timelines for learning their job. When we hire those under-qualified, their learning curve may be too steep to overcome or to perform the job at quality levels we expect within a reasonable amount of time.

This article is not an exhaustive list of ethical do’s and don’ts and has much room to be expanded upon. Ethical qualities not listed here should also be inherent, such as the importance of honesty, treating others as you would wish to be treated (or better!), having personal integrity, and avoiding waste, fraud, conflicts of interest, and negligence, etc. The general litmus test for ethical behavior should always be to ponder the question of how a situation or scenario would play out in publication, such as on the front page of a newspaper.

The regulatory policies and procedures that we interpret, administer, write, manage, and enforce are performed in service to our institutions, our investigators, and ultimately society, which benefits from advances to clinical practice made by our investigators via clinical research. While investigators bear the responsibility for clinical research, at most universities, it is the administrators who ensure their grants are spent properly, protocols are followed, and reports are submitted accurately. Application of Belmont Principles to our everyday work can not only guide us how to act, but also how to act in a professional manner ensuring information, risks, benefits, and equity have all been considered.

**References**


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These are difficult questions to answer but as an effective leader, you must be able to address your employees’ needs. Especially in this type of situation, you want to manage your employees’ expectations and ensure your high-performers don’t feel frustrated by their treatment and recognition in relation to the lower-performers. Oftentimes organizations make the mistake of equalizing recognition (i.e., everyone is a winner), which is a disservice to the underperforming employees as this serves as a source of inaccurate feedback suggesting their current level of performance is adequate. It can also be a great source of frustration to your high-performers (i.e., they may start to feel that their efforts aren’t really valued or that in the end, it doesn’t matter). On the other hand, you also want both groups equally motivated to improve their performance and contribute to the organization in a meaningful way though, obviously, the possible range of improvement varies.

Performance Appraisal
To address these needs, consider designing an effective performance appraisal. A performance appraisal is a systematic method for evaluating the performance of your employees. If you already have an existing method of employee evaluation, now would also be the time to consider how to make improvements to their use and utility.

First to consider is the purpose of the performance appraisal. How often do you conduct performance appraisals? Many organizations provide employee evaluations only once a year, and they are tied to pay and salary increases. This may be similar to your institution as well. Also consider a few other questions: How are your performance appraisals used? Do you evaluate both performance and identify training and development needs for improvement? Do you follow-up throughout the year to evaluate progress towards the training and development needs that were identified?

Here’s what we know from the research on this topic that should guide changes you make to your employee evaluation process:

1. Managers/employers should separate performance appraisals for making decisions about pay from performance appraisals used to make decisions about development and training needs.

If your performance appraisal is done only once a year and it’s being used to make decisions about pay and development needs, consider separating them. Most commonly these distinctions are made by separating the two by time by conducting the assessments several months apart or by using different means of gathering and assessing the required performance data (e.g., different assessment forms, different metrics).

2. Managers/employers should increase the number of evaluations they complete each year

By increasing the number of evaluations per year, you are providing more opportunities 1) to provide needed feedback to your employees about their performance; 2) for your employees to communicate with you about concerns they have, training needs, etc.; and 3) to meet face-to-face to discuss their performance. Without these set formalities, these conversations would likely never happen, which means missed opportunities for you as an effective manager to support and motivate your employees. If you are already considering taking the advice above, you are already doubling your evaluations by separating out appraisals for pay from appraisals for development and training needs; so this recommendation is an easy win!

By Kathryn Keeton

Likely you have been in a similar situation: you manage a group of people who range in their performance level with some at the high end of the performance spectrum always giving 110% and providing consistent high quality work, while those at the other end of the spectrum seem to always struggle to deliver their work on time, never in its final form, and requiring a high level of your time to manage. How can you treat all of these individuals fairly? How can you create a system that is fair to both of these employees while also providing them the needed motivation and support to continue to improve their performance?
Managers/employers should do something about the feedback they get from these evaluations. This may be the most important change you make to your employee evaluation process. By doing something about the feedback that you get from your employees, you are able to build trust. This trust will serve as an internal motivator for your employees to be committed to you and the organization and will serve as a motivator to perform.

But how will these changes address fairness issues with my employees?
The answer lies in transparency. By separating out your performance appraisals, your employees will be able to clearly see what process is determining how they are being compensated (their salary increase or bonus pay, etc.) from the process that is designed to address their training and development needs. By increasing the number of appraisals done each year, employees will feel more supported and equally more motivated to do better. And they will be even more motivated if they observe their manager taking their feedback seriously and making changes based on their input.

A few cautionary words and a consideration

Even when efforts are made to separate the two appraisal processes, it is easy to slip into dual purpose mode. It is tempting to think that since we have the data, we should use it. This is exacerbated when an institution has a reputation of making the most of data resources since employees are more likely to believe management won’t be able to resist commingling performance appraisal data instead of keeping it separate. The culture of the organization is one reason employees might believe management is likely to co-mingle data. But this belief is also due to fact that it is difficult to keep the two systems absolutely distinct in our own minds. It is natural to think of the same events and behaviors when reviewing performance for purposes of pay decisions as well as for development purposes…even if the two appraisals are separated by a period of months.

A new trend that avoids this inclination involves choosing to focus on employee development assessment over traditional pay assessment systems. Under such a system, employee pay and promotion is not tied to a performance appraisal system at all. Instead, the performance appraisal system is focused only on development needs of the employee being assessed. Under this approach, pay raises are typically tied to outside indicators such as cost of living increases and industry pay scales. Real life example: Gallery Furniture in Houston Texas is one such company that has eschewed basing pay decisions on performance appraisals. At Gallery Furniture, pay is based on an equal share of profits paid to each employee. Pay increases are tied to longevity with adjustments to pay ranges being made to reflect market changes.

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I am new to university culture after working in industry R&D for many years. It seems to me that it is difficult to make decisions in this environment, and that our university is constantly seeking consensus for almost every action. What advice would you have for someone like me who has been asked to lead change in this environment?

A recent Ask the Leadership Coach column (December 2016) discussed some general principles around organizational change. I know that your role is at the vice presidential level at your university, so let me ask some questions and offer suggestions that I hope are appropriate to your responsibilities.

First, I assume from your question that you believe there is some time sensitivity or urgency to make change or to make decisions that lead to change. I could be wrong, but my own bias is that many who aspire and attain the most senior operational roles feel compelled to make changes (in organizational process, policy, and people) within a short period of time. Sometimes, making quick changes is necessary when significant compliance, reputation, or financial issues are at stake. Other times, we may feel that we need to act so that others see action occurring, with too little attention paid to scope or impact of change. I am very mindful of an admittedly maudlin quote from playwright Edward Abbey: “Change for the sake of change is the ideology of the cancer cell.”

My first suggestion to you is to spend some time learning about the institution and its people. Yes, you heard a lot during your search process and meetings with search committees and search consultants, perhaps. However, now take a step back and learn from a navigational and personal perspective: Where was the institution? Where is it now? Where does it aspire to go? Who are the citizens of the university? What say they about the institution, its future and value? I will wager that if you ask 20 people, you will get some similar themes and expressions of values. Do any of these views coincide with your own vision and sense of where the institution needs to be? Might these be places to begin to consider change? (You seem to have a reaction to the word “consensus,” though this paragraph has really been about that word.) Leaders that quickly burn out often find that they were leading so far ahead of where the institution was prepared and willing to go. Take time to gauge the pulse of the institution respectfully. Note that I didn’t say “slowly.”

Another suggestion is to be careful of the feedback and ideas that you hear from members of your university community. Be respectful of the feedback and suggestions you receive, but careful in the commitments and promises that you make. The leadership expert, and former senior university leader Dr. Warren Bennis wrote, “Find the appropriate balance of competing claims by various groups of stakeholders. All claims deserve consideration but some claims are more important than others.” Ask yourself what Bennis mean by this, and what values do you sense as most important to move the university forward? Be explicit in expressing these values to your stakeholders. They should not have to guess where you stand. Just ask yourself if you are accurately reflecting the values of the institution that you are serving.

Frankly, your success will depend on how well you see yourself as serving the institution rather than the reverse.
Research Administrators have to be familiar with a plethora of regulations...

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Facilitation by Building a Flexible Network for Research Optimization: Challenge of Strengthening Life Science Research Compliance

By Takanori Hioki

Progress in research and technological developments in the life sciences has led to introduction and frequent updates of many laws and regulations related to ethics and safety. In April 2016, Kyoto University established the Research Ethics and Safety Promotion Office (RESPO), with the aim to support safe and ethical conduct of research by students and faculty in the field of life sciences. At present, RESPO is working to strengthen legal compliance in life sciences through development and improvement of its support system, the details of which are described below.

Missions and Logo
RESPO aims to promote research by serving as a bridge between organizations both inside and outside the University, promoting plans and disseminating information regarding life sciences laws and regulations. A further goal of RESPO is to contribute to the development of industry and society through its activities. Reflecting on these missions, we created a new logo under the slogan: “Facilitation by building a flexible network for research optimization.” The first letter of RESPO, designed as the Japanese-style red-and-white string used for gift wrapping, represents our mission to connect the University with external organizations in a flexible manner, like bamboo—a common feature of the landscape of Kyoto. The logo is colored in yellow-green and deep green that bamboo and life science are imagined.

Major Functions
RESPO has the following four main functions in support of research in life sciences:

1. Collecting life science-related information, including relevant laws and regulations, disseminating such information across the University, and engaging in planning and coordination to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
2. Serving as a consulting body to provide advice, guidance, and other types of support concerning applications and procedures to responsible persons from departments/divisions;
3. Engaging in educational activities to promote better understanding of the discipline of life science research among faculty members and students, and;
4. Management of relevant committees within the University, monitoring the state of research management, and developing support systems.

Major Activities
Few universities and research institutes have a single office devoted to strengthening compliance management in life sciences. This may also be true for private enterprises. With few models to refer to, we are currently working on the following three activities:

1. Consultation: Providing advice and assistance regarding laws and regulations related to ethics and safety in life science research.
2. Education: Holding educational seminars and e-learning workshops that cover all laws and regulations, compliance with which is important for research in life sciences.
3. Information dissemination via the RESPO website (respo.rp.kyoto-u.ac.jp, in Japanese): Establishing a website (around April 2017) to provide researchers useful information, such as a checklist of applicable laws and regulations and a newsletter.

Based on the results of these activities, we will improve and enhance our role in the University.
Kyoto University has established the Research Council on Life Science Compliance (ReCoLiC), with the aim of strengthening the compliance system for research in life sciences, thus ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Its major activities include collection of information and research on all laws and regulations, compliance with which is required for research in life sciences, and promoting information exchange among Research Council members.

Recent years have seen rapid progress in life sciences research and technology. As a result, many laws and regulations regarding ethics and safety in life sciences research are being introduced or updated. The focus of many academic societies and research councils with regard to laws and regulations for research in life sciences is limited; however, few groups cover a broad range of these laws and regulations. Given this background, we have established ReCoLiC. Its aim is to strengthen ethics and safety compliance by gathering and evaluating information on all laws and regulations relevant to life sciences research, and based on this information, promoting information exchange among Research Council members, and discussing appropriate management of life science research.

ReCoLiC has begun conducting regular meetings with the participation of persons in charge of life sciences departments from about 20 universities and business organizations. We are planning to expand the scope of our activities, as indicated below. For details, refer to the website RESPO-HP (respo.rp.kyoto-u.ac.jp, in Japanese), which is to be launched in April 2017:

- Holding regular meetings: lectures by experts and information exchange among members.
- Issuing an e-mail newsletter: dissemination of information on regular meetings, act amendments, and other important topics.
- Developing ethics and safety compliance manual for life science research: creation of an easy-to-understand life science compliance manual for researchers.
- Disseminating information beyond the Research Council by holding seminars and workshops and publishing books.
- Promoting cooperation and collaboration with relevant academic societies, government, and other organizations.

Comparison of Laws and Regulations for Life Sciences with those for Management of Chemical Substances

Management of chemical substances has a longer history and greater accumulation of information compared to that in life sciences. Sophisticated management approaches are in place and are collectively managed under the CAS-No (Number for identifying chemical substances) system. However, life sciences covers a wide range of topics, including DNA, viruses, bacteria, animals, and humans. The figure shows the diversity of sizes of organisms and the laws and regulations that cover each category. Laws and regulations for life sciences have four major purposes:

1. Research/life ethics: e.g. The Ethical Guidelines for Medical and Health Research Involving Human Subjects, and The Ethical Guidelines for Human Genome/Gene Analysis Research;
2. Animal ethics (The Three Rs - Declaration of Bologna: Replacement, Reduction and Refinement): e.g. The Law on Welfare and Management of Animals;
3. Environmental conservation (Conservation of Biological Diversity): e.g. Cartagena Law (or Law concerning the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity through Regulations on the Use of Living Modified Organisms), and;
4. Prevention of health impairment: e.g., management rules for specific pathogens and other hazardous agents in accordance with the Infectious Disease Law.

Diversity of sizes of organisms and the laws and regulations that cover each category
Most regulations on manufacturing and handling chemical substances are designed for environmental conservation (number 3 above) and prevention of health impairment (number 4 above). Following the 1992 United Nations (UN) Earth Summit (Rio Declaration on Environment and Development) and the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, the international community has set the goal of minimizing the adverse effects of manufacturing and use of chemical substances on human health and the environment by 2020. Given this situation, it is not surprising that there are many related laws and regulations.

In the field of life sciences, laws have also been introduced for the purposes of environmental conservation and the prevention of health impairment, such as the Cartagena Law and the Infectious Disease Law. However, there is a need for more laws and regulations for research/life ethics. In the fields of life sciences and medicine, laws and guidelines have been established based on the Declaration of Helsinki (1964), a statement of ethical principles for medical research made by the World Medical Association. Progress in life science technology is rapid, and news related to ES (embryonic stem) cells, iPS (induced pluripotent stem) cells, and regenerative medicine is frequently reported by media. These technologies involve human subjects, and it is important that both the technological aspects and ethical issues newly raised by these advances are widely understood. This requires broad expertise, including history, social sciences and law, and natural sciences. Therefore, an ethics review committee requires experts in ethics, law, humanities, and social sciences, as well as medical and healthcare professionals and experts in natural sciences.

Given the involvement of many legal targets and purposes and the need for an interdisciplinary approach ranging from medicine to natural and social sciences, it is not easy to manage life sciences in an integrated fashion.

Towards More Sophisticated Life Science Research Management
To realize the goal of “facilitation,” which is reflected in the logo of RESPO, we seek a more sophisticated approach to life sciences research management. Of course, it is important to continue to collect and disseminate relevant information, as well as develop and consolidate educational and management systems. However, an unconventional approach may be required to respond to life sciences-related laws and regulations more effectively, as these are expected to increase in number and diversity. A solution to this issue might involve using artificial intelligence, which we hope may ultimately enable development of a support system that covers relevant laws and regulations in all fields.

Finally, we will consider a more sophisticated approach to life sciences research management through activities in the University and the ReCoLiC. We hope that these efforts will help to promote research activities in the field of life sciences in Japan and will eventually contribute to further development of industry and society. ⚡

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Helping the community make better research decisions with unprecedented insights into global awards

By Simon Porter

So much work goes into writing a grant application—from idea, to budgeting, to internal review—instututions invest significant effort into each submission. When a funding body receives the research proposal, significant work is also invested in assessing the proposal not only on its internal merits, but also in terms of its strategic fit. All throughout this process, decisions are being made, from the researcher identifying novel areas in which to position their research, to deciding how best to communicate these ideas in ways that best appeal to different funding bodies, through to the decisions that funders need to make. How are reviewers chosen? What processes are in place to ensure the novelty of work to be funded? How does this work complement other research underway, funded from both within the granting body and external to it? Until recently, these questions relied on the expertise of individuals alone. However, since 2014, funders and institutions can get access to a single global source of standardised and searchable awards information to help make evidenced-based decisions that augment their own local expertise. Just as data analytics is transforming other aspects of our lives, the release and development of Dimensions—in close cooperation with the community—also changes the grants proposal and assessment enterprise by making the right information available to help both funders and institutions make limited research resources go further.

With data sourced from top funders globally (https://dimensions.uberresearch.com/data-sources), Dimensions is designed to help the community improve the grants assessment process and provide institutions with valuable insights to help them craft more relevant applications. In this short article, we cover the main use cases for Dimensions, along with recommendations on how institutions can use Dimensions to improve the relevancy of their grant applications.

First, we begin where this community initiative started and with how funders use Dimensions to help inform decision making, improve funding workflows, and in turn make research resources go further.
THE FUNDER PERSPECTIVE

How can a funder make sure that they are funding the right proposals?

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Who would be a suitable reviewer without conflicts of interest?

Finding the most qualified reviewers, identifying conflicts of interest and ensuring the right expertise can be time consuming for funders. However, it is also critical to ensure the optimal use of limited funds and the best overall scientific results from sponsored research. With Dimensions, scientific reviewers are suggested automatically, highlighting potential conflicts of interest based on co-author relationship and institutional overlap.

How can a funder analyse its portfolio to respond to requests on funding activities?

Decisions on what to fund are often made within the context of research portfolios, particularly for public sector funders. In these cases, funders need to frame their decision against an articulated research funding landscape. To create these landscape reports, Dimensions is used to answer questions such as “provide a report on the funding in the area of XYZ – showing current funding levels together with an overview on the last 10 years.” The challenge for funders is to translate such a request into precise research definitions that cover all relevant grants, while at the same time eliminating irrelevant grants (the false positives) that might mention some related terms. Dimensions specifically supports generating precise and consistent reports for funders, and it allows the funder to compare their categories dynamically to other funder portfolios.

Join us for a webinar on May 22, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm EDT

A practical guide to using Dimensions to answer your key strategic questions about research funding and expertise identification

Description
Simón Porter, VP for Academic Relationships & Knowledge Architecture, Digital Science, will deliver a hands-on guide to how institutions can perform analyses within a global funding award database to better inform their research planning, collaboration and grant application strategies.

Learning objectives and outcomes
At the end of this webinar, a research executive will be equipped with new approaches and techniques to better understand:

- Where is the expertise in their institution and who would make the best collaborators to work with?
- Where is their institution’s research funding coming from?
- How does this compare to peer institutions locally, nationally and globally?
- Is their institution’s funding level in our identified strength areas stable, increasing or decreasing?
- Is it secure for the next 3-5 years?

A research executive will also be able to provide their researchers and research groups with novel and improved ways to answer the following critical questions:

- Who are the main funders in a researcher’s topic area?
- Which funders have been increasing their spending on the researcher’s topic?
- Which funders are dedicated to the researcher’s domain?
- What have they funded recently?
- See the percentage of a funder’s portfolio that is being spent on a researcher’s area, and how this is changing over time.
- See which projects have been successful recently, and use this to learn what they are looking for in an application.
- How can a researcher understand the unique value of their expertise in a global context?
- How can a researcher pinpoint potential collaborations based on the value of that unique expertise?
Networking, Not Working?

While sitting in a professional development workshop at a 2016 NCURA regional meeting, presenter Dr. Marianne Woods (Faculty and Program Director, Masters in Science Degree in Research Administration at Johns Hopkins University) said, “Networking, not working if you don’t. One should be making connections at every NCURA event.”

What does that mean? Every NCURA workshop, conference, or meeting you attend should not just be focused on obtaining information that will assist you with your job, it should also be about meeting new people. For those of you who say I just do not have the time to network, I could not disagree more. You can do both, and here’s how:

• **Step One**: When you attend a training session where you gained value information, walk up to the speaker and let them know that you enjoyed their session. Ask for their business card and if you may contact them if you have questions.
  
  *Connection*: You now have a subject matter expert contact, and you made a new friend.

• **Step Two**: You noticed your new friend standing with a group of people. Walk over to the group and reiterate to your new friend that you enjoyed their session. Consider also asking them if they are teaching another session. Most likely your new friend is going to introduce you to the people in the group (NCURA presenters are known for their politeness). Ask for their business cards and give them yours.
  
  *Connection*: You just grew your network by capitalizing off of your new friend.

• **Step Three**: As soon as you get back to work send a friendly email to your new friends and stay in contact.
  
  *Connection*: You build relationships by taking the time to maintain them.

As Dr. Woods challenged us, if you are not networking, you are not working. Your networking goal is to grow and nurture mutually beneficial relationships. Who are you going to connect with today?

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How can a funder report automatically and consistently on its funding and outcome?

Most funders are required to do some type of proactive reporting on the areas where they concentrate their grants. For example, a Cancer Research Funder might report on the funds they invested towards Prostate Cancer research grants versus Lung Cancer Research grants. In many cases, it can be tough for funders to do this reporting on a consistent basis, and to do so without significant staff and resource time being absorbed into a manual review process. Dimensions establishes dynamic routines that use natural language processing to identify relevant projects for reporting. Large funding organizations like the National Institutes of Health now use such approaches as a best practice to demonstrate current funding and to analyse historical funding. Whether for formalized reporting, or for a “quick” analysis of the funding landscape, Dimensions enables this analysis. It also makes use of standardized integrated research classification systems available from funders worldwide.

How can a funder compare its portfolio against other funders’ portfolios?

With the aggregated shared global grant database, funders can analyse their portfolio at every step of the analysis and compare it to other funder portfolios, making use of powerful analytical tools and visualizations.

How can a funder analyse its internal data like past applications to identify trends?

Dimensions also allows funders to interrogate their local data in a private application instance, which is physically separated from other users’ data. This allows Dimensions users to include grant applications, rejected proposals, and even progress reports in every analysis, allowing the detection of deeper trends and patterns.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Universities and research institutes want to use award information to understand precisely what funders are looking for. They are also highly motivated to reduce the amount of time they spend on unsuccessful grant applications. Having access to a single source of global funding awards that have been sourced directly from the funders can help them better understand where funding is being directed and what the funders are looking to support in terms of new research areas.

By being able to track and understand active research globally, institutions can better understand the relevance and strength of their research activities and then reinforce and better position their grant applications to be more successful. As of December 2016, there was over $208 million in awarded funding with active years from 2016 to 2026 also covered in the database. This provides a view on the type of research that could be done over the next 10 years.

Institutions and their researchers require a real-time and forward-looking view of who has received funding awards to inform and improve their strategies for research production, research collaboration and research grant applications.

On a more local level, Dimensions can be used to identify:

• Where is the expertise in my institution and who would make the best collaborators to work with?
• Where is my institution’s research funding coming from?
• How does this compare to peer institutions locally, nationally and globally?
• Is my institution’s funding level in our identified strength areas stable, increasing or decreasing?
• Is it secure for the next 3-5 years?
For Researchers, Dimensions can also be indispensable, allowing them to identify:

- Who are the main funders in a researcher’s topic area?
- Which funders have been increasing their spending on the researcher’s topic?
- Which funders are dedicated to the researcher’s domain?
- What have they funded recently?
- See the percentage of a funder’s portfolio that is being spent on a researcher’s area, and how this is changing over time.
- See which projects have been successful recently, and use this to learn what they are looking for in an application.

Dimensions under the hood:

- Customised research categories can also be created by the user to interrogate the database based on specific areas of interest.
- Natural language processing enables a search to be defined by simply entering an abstract or other piece of technical text. The collection of identified terms is then used to define the search of the database. This is a very accurate way of finding similar work to that found in the abstract.
- Data visualizations for instant viewing of trends in funding, and for comparisons with other institutions.
- Data is sourced directly from the funders to ensure quality and reliability. As of January 2017, there were over 3.4 million research projects indexed in the Dimensions database and this continues to grow.
- Over 26 million publications from PubMed are also indexed, with impact and attention metrics such as the Relative Citation Ratio (RCR) and Altmetric badges integrated. The RCR indicates the influence of a publication calculated using citation data normalized to time and research area.
- The metric was developed by the Office for Portfolio Analysis (OPA) at the National Institutes of Health in the USA.

Simon Porter is Vice President, Academic Relationships and Knowledge Architecture at Digital Science. Simon came to Digital Science from the University of Melbourne. There he worked in Library, Research Administration, and Information Technology. He has forged a career transforming university practices in how data about research is used, from administrative and e-research perspectives. He can be reached at s.porter@digital-science.com
Changes are coming to the Grants.gov Application Process

As of December 31, 2017 Grants.gov PDF single-file PDF Application Packages will no longer be available. PDF applications downloaded prior to that date must be submitted before March 31, 2018 or by the agency deadline, whichever comes first.

What does this mean for our community?
For any application now submitted using PDF applications, we must transition to Grants.gov Workspace (or use System-to-System where available). At first blush, we might ask “Isn’t this just a matter of completing the application using our current business process, then asking our Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) to submit from the Workspace environment?” Unless we’ve introduced and trained our research faculty and staff to Workspace, the answer is “No!”

Previous NCURA articles on Workspace make this clear.
NCURA Magazine has featured a number of articles on the Grants.gov Workspace. Effective use of will require us to set up a separate Workspace for each application and grant access to anyone collaborating in completing the application. For most, this is much different than the current process of completing a single-file application, uploading it and asking the AOR to submit the package.

How many of us are using Workspace?
During the January Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) meeting in Washington, D.C., the Joint Application Design team met with the Grants.gov staff and was provided the following information for applications submitted the calendar quarter ending December 2016:

Number of Workflow Applications Submitted by Higher-Ed Institutions October – December 2016
- 7—Bowling Green State University
- 7—University of Kentucky
- 6—University of Colorado
- 6—University of Cincinnati

Number of Grants.gov Applications Submitted October – December 2016
- 26,375 Using Single File PDF
- 26,480 Using System-to-System
- 2,522 Using Workspace
- 55,377 Total Submitted

By Ron Splittgerber
Although the number of Workspace submissions increased from 414 in October to 1,347 in December, this represents only a little over 2% of the total. The evidence is that many of us will need to focus on a transition plan and quickly prepare our research offices, faculty and staff to use Workspace.

**Are there advantages to making a transition?**

There are indeed many advantages for us to move to a Workspace submission environment. One of the statistics that caught my attention focused on the error or rejection rate for various submission methods. As we all know, assembling and approving the package isn’t the last step. A package can be rejected by Grants.gov or the sponsoring agency system no matter how carefully we follow the proposal guidelines. The Grants.gov staff offered the following analysis on rejection rates by the various methods:

**Grants.gov Applications Rejected October – December 2016**

- 8.52% Using Single File PDF
- 0.42% Using System-to-System
- 0.43% Using Workspace
- 2,483 Applications rejected of 55,377 submitted

For me, the message is clear. Moving the current single-file PDF application process to either Workspace or System-to-System will reduce the time spent troubleshooting and re-submitting applications rejected, and most certainly decrease the stress during agency deadlines.

The single-file PDF process allows only one person to edit at the same time and often we have problems determining the most recent revision before the package is submitted. Workspace allows many collaborators to work on the various parts of an application keeping all of the various forms in one location. A soon-to-be-released version of Workspace will allow collaborators from other institutions to be given permission to access and contribute to the application in Workspace. Other advantages include:

- Ability to re-use and resubmit a package in the future
- Ability to match and re-use individual forms
- Ability to import data from past Workspace forms
- Increased use of auto-fill data items where filling in a field on one form will be replicated to other forms with the same field
- Improved validation to decrease submission errors

**Workspace Roles**

To start, anyone wanting a role must register as a “Workspace Participant”. All of the participants for a specific Workspace are listed on a tab in the “Manage My Workspace” page. An individual participant may be assigned more than one role. Here are the roles:

- **Expanded AOR** – can create a Workspace and assign any role, including another AOR assigned only to that Workspace; only the EBiz POC can assign this role
- **AOR** – allows user to submit application. The Expanded AOR can assign this role
- **Manage Workspace** – allows user to create other new Workspace – also inherits the Workspace Owner role
- **Workspace Owner** – allows user to manage other users’ access to Workspace
- **Workspace Participant** – allows access to the Workspace to collaborate on filling in forms and completing the application

**Tips for Adopting Workspace**

Be sure to closely examine the various roles used in Workspace. Yes, we must manage and grant access to the various users; however, delegating roles will greatly reduce the burden in maintaining those roles. On the other hand, we will need to consider how our current business process can fit the workflow by carefully assigning the roles. We must become familiar with the Workspace workflow (see Workspace Process chart above). Remember that unlike the single PDF application, Workspace breaks the package down into individual forms or files. This allows a team of participants to work on each form separately and at the same time.

A single user with AOR role can still complete and submit an application if we want to initially replicate the same business process in Workspace as we currently have for the single-PDF application. Yet the strength of Workspace is allowing collaborators to help in the process. As for tracking what others are doing, remember that any action by any role in Workspace is tracked in the Activity tab.

We can also use the fact that Workspace breaks the application into separate pages or forms to our advantage; we can send these individual forms to others as an email attachment, ask that they fill it in and return it. We can then upload these forms back into the package. This could be used to ask sub-recipients or collaborators from another institution to complete forms without giving them access to the entire application.

All participants assigned a role will be able to read other forms (even if they are locked). This may impact an institutions business rules regarding salaries and intellectual property.

Keep in mind that forms can be re-used in the future for compatible Workspace applications. This works especially well if we are submitting nearly the same application to more than one sponsor.

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early anybody who’s lived through one can tell you that group projects are horrible. One person often does most of the work and there’s usually a free-loader who does nothing. Complaints, excuses, annoying opinions, and accusing stares consume most of the group’s meetings and the final product is usually not cohesive or an indicator of individual ability. This is true in school and unfortunately in work.

Whether it is on a formal work team or an informal group tasked to get a proposal out the door, being able to work together with one or more people is a huge part of our work as research administrators. Working in groups is also something that we continuously struggle with, usually because we lack the fundamental ability of being able to work well with others who also lack these skills.

We spend a lot of time talking about and teaching about the work of research administration, including reading guidelines, charging effort, checking boxes, creating good budgets, and using the million and one systems necessary to do our jobs; however, we oftentimes miss the most essential and basic lesson of how to be effective and efficient in delivering our work.

Efforts to incorporate interprofessional education and collaborative practice into higher education began more than 40 years ago, but we’ve only recently begun to see them filter into the research enterprise, and we have yet to see them fully enter the profession of research administration, despite evidence suggesting that such efforts reduce errors, improve quality, and help to control costs.

Simply put, interprofessional education puts people from different professions together “to learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration” and collaborative practice is actually implementing interprofessional educational concepts in the real world (Interprofessional Education Collaborative, 2011).

In the research enterprise and for especially us, this would suggest that we should be embedded into research teams, to provide ongoing administrative expertise with other professionals as part of a coordinated, cooperative, and collaborative group effort. Can you imagine the time this robust team could save everyone? Less duplicative work and fewer instances of working at cross-purposes. We’d also likely reduce errors while improving outcomes—all because we’re part of the team from the inception of the idea.

Following this logic, we should be a part of a lot of different teams and groups because we’re such an integral part of the research enterprise and because we support many different efforts and areas within the research enterprise. Note: this is the point in the article when you should stand up and cheer. This would likely take the form of countless little group projects throughout a career, commonly known as death by a thousand paper cuts to most people, but if we were truly skilled in the delivery of research administration, in addition to our content knowledge, this wouldn’t be such a challenge.

Becoming skilled in delivery requires that we get to know the other group members: their skills, their abilities, their needs. Add to this an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. It necessitates that we ensure that everyone who should be in the group is in the group. It will also require a good bit of self-knowledge, including some understanding of our own motives, ethics, and values and the ability to apply them objectively. It requires an understanding of authentic leadership, as contrasted with simple management. Lastly, and more importantly, it will require that most important ingredient, the ability to communicate assertively and effectively.

So now is the time to take that walk down the hall or across campus to the research lab or clinic. Introduce yourself to your new team members and get to know them. Let them get to know you, too. Find out what makes them tick and what they need. Identify the areas where you could provide input and assistance. Once you demonstrate your value, you’ll be on the group invite for life. □
Using Process Mapping and the PDSA Improvement Cycle

to Anticipate and Alleviate Deviations in Medical Protocols

By Wanda A. Quezada

The function of the protocol in human subjects research is to map out the procedures that must be followed to ensure the health and safety of study participants and to ensure the overall success of the research by providing reliable and reproducible data. Reliable data are necessary because they inform a researcher’s ability to formulate fact-based reasoning, discussion, and decision making. Deviations from the prescribed protocol procedures can therefore influence the data derived from the research, and their subsequent analysis. Furthermore, deviations also have the added consequence of jeopardizing patient safety. Process mapping is a tool that can be used to eliminate known or anticipated deviations to procedures because it allows researchers to understand how individuals outside of the primary research team may approach and comply with processes outlined in the protocol.

Deviations occur when procedures, or methods, described in the research protocol are not followed. Deviations can be committed by members of the research team, individuals outside the research team, patients, and unforeseen natural events. Generally, deviations do not affect the health, safety, or rights of research participants. Additionally, deviations do not influence the reliability of the data. These types of deviations are considered minor and are often the result of protocols that are not clearly written; training issues with staff (stakeholders and non-stakeholders); patient inability, or unwillingness, to follow the prescribed treatment plan; and, natural events (i.e. inclement weather) that are beyond the control of the research team, staff, and patient.

Institutions employing an Institutional Review Board (IRB) will have a plan for identifying and addressing the need to eliminate deviations. For instance, the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center (UTMDACC) stipulates that “the Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that clear documentation is available in the study’s Essential Documents that describes all protocol deviations and corrective action taken”. Deviations that recur regularly “may warrant a change to the protocol or the Informed Consent Authorization (ICA)”... IRBs may find that process mapping can be an effective tool for identifying and eliminating deviations to the research protocol.

Process mapping describes the methods by which tasks are completed. For example, the research protocol may require that blood must be drawn at specific time intervals. The patient is at the facility but due to issues with personnel management (i.e. end of shift or break times) the patient’s blood is not drawn at a time that coincides with requirements of the research protocol. This can be described as an unanticipated, and unintentional, deviation. Using a process map the researcher may develop a keener sense of what occurs in the institution’s daily operations and develop a procedure for alleviating the problem. In this case the process map might identify a need for training that emphasizes the importance of adhering to the protocol. The researcher gains valuable insight and can institute changes to the protocol and/or changes to operational procedures to alleviate future deviations.

Figure 1: Sample Flow Chart
A process map is a flow chart that describes: 1) who implements the process; 2) what the process is; 3) when the process is to be implemented; 4) why the process is being implemented, and 5) how the process is to be implemented. There are several methods for evaluating a process, but this article will examine Deming’s Total Quality Management model as a means for identifying and evaluating process methods in research protocols. Dr. W. Edwards Deming theorized that “the System of Profound Knowledge (SoPK) ties together seminal theories and teachings on quality, management, and leadership into four interrelated areas: appreciation for a system, knowledge of variation, theory of knowledge, and psychology”. This article will further explore the theory of knowledge as a means of understanding the operational processes within a healthcare organization and how those processes might impact the ability of staff to comply with requirements in a research protocol.

Integral to understanding the theory of knowledge is “the importance of understanding how people think, and act, based on what they believe they know to be true. That is core to a theory of knowledge”. Process mapping
can be a useful guide to understanding how and why people perform processes. Researchers may not always be aware of constraints that exist within operational processes. In the case described above, the blood was not drawn due to rules that were implemented to adhere to workplace safety standards. These standards are considered by human resource management, but a researcher may not understand the constraints that are uncovered because of adherence to these rules. Therefore, requiring a blood draw at the 4:00 PM shift change, or during employee break times, may result in a deviation that is committed consistently. In this case, the researcher might attempt to resolve this conflict in the beginning stages while writing the protocol. The researcher could also consult with nurse managers to develop a method for eliminating the deviation that includes training and/or a change to operational procedures to comply with the research protocol.

An important caveat to consider is the idea of confirmation bias, which holds that “...we tend to latch onto evidence that supports our beliefs and ignore evidence that undermines our beliefs”. The researcher may not be able to understand why a nurse is unable to complete a blood draw within a specific time frame because he/she is unaware of constraints that exist within clinic operations. Process mapping could enable a researcher to anticipate deviations and develop a plan for dealing with such deviations. Of course, process mapping only works when the people completing the process are consulted and listened to. Confirmation bias could prevent the researcher from consulting with members of the operations team or considering the constraints that exist within the operations framework. It is increasingly necessary that members of the research team identify and correct instances of confirmation bias.

Deming’s theory uses the “Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle [which]... is a process to improve based on an understanding of the theory of knowledge”. Figure 2 illustrates the PDSA cycle that begins with planning, which requires: “1) ... identifying a goal or purpose, formulating a theory, defining success metrics and putting a plan into action; 2) ... followed by the Do step, in which the components of the plan are implemented...; 3) next comes the Study step, where outcomes are monitored to test the validity of the plan for signs of progress and success, or problems and areas for improvement; (4) the Act step closes the cycle, integrating the learning generated by the entire process, which can be used to adjust the goal, change methods or even reformulate a theory altogether”.

Figure 2: The PDSA Cycle: Continual Improvement Process

The PDSA Improvement Cycle is a process that is meant to be implemented continuously so that continual improvement is attained. Deming’s model advances the idea that individuals acquire knowledge through prediction: “Making a prediction forces us to think ahead about the outcomes. Making a prediction also causes us to examine more deeply the system, question or theory we have in mind. Also, we learn about our understanding of the management beliefs we hold as we examine the results of our predictions”.

The PDSA Improvement Cycle can be a useful tool for healthcare organizations that want to gain more insight or evaluate how the various entities within the operation workflows. The idea that learning can occur as a continual process will help in the initial stages of formulating procedures that are required in the research protocol. An additional benefit to implementing the PDSA Improvement Cycle is the ability to identify normal variations in operations. Returning to our previous example of the patient receiving a required blood draw, requiring a blood draw be performed at the 4:00 PM shift change is a variation to the process. The variation is not abnormal to operations but may be deemed as such by the researcher. Therefore, the researcher would benefit from understanding what deviations occur, along with when and why they occur.

UTMDACC’s IRB has instituted process mapping and the PDSA Improvement Cycle for identifying and alleviating recurring deviations. Process mapping is integral to alleviating future deviations because it permits the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the processes that other entities within the organization must follow. The PDSA Improvement Cycle then encourages the researcher to plan and anticipate deviations that might occur because of operational constraints. The researcher is then able to develop a plan of action for addressing deviations to research protocols. The researcher will find that the PDSA Improvement Cycle, partnered with process mapping, can be used to identify constraints within operations that lead to deviations to the research protocol.

References


Wanda Quezada is an Associate Director for Human Subjects Research at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, where she has worked for more than 18 years. She has served on national committees representing institutional review boards, and is currently an administrative member of the MD Anderson IRBs. Her current responsibilities include human subjects protection policy development and implementation and regulatory compliance. She can be reached at wquezada@mdanderson.org
Public access is now required for both the data collected under a federally funded grant project and any scientific articles that result from the project. As research administrators, we know that these requirements are making their way into grant terms and conditions, and we want our investigators to fulfill them.

But as research administrators, it is beyond the scope of even our far-reaching duties to provide the resources necessary for compliance with these requirements, such as computer space for storing data and archiving capabilities for journal articles. However, we have colleagues on campus who can help: Our librarians.

Public access took a prominent role on the federal grants scene in 2013 when the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy issued a memorandum requiring federal agencies to devise plans for the sharing of both data and scientific publications generated by publicly funded research. Those plans have been put in place and will affect virtually all federal awards by the end of 2016.

We have not yet reached the point where agencies have had to deal with investigators who fail to place data in an appropriate repository or provide access to published journal articles. But we know it will happen in some cases, and that the complications of non-compliance will fall squarely on our desks. Agencies are leaving their options open when it comes to enforcement.

For example, in its public access plan, the National Science Foundation (NSF) requires investigators to document in their annual and final reports that resulting journal articles were placed in public access repositories. Regarding data sets, NSF said, “in instances of non-compliance, the Foundation can exercise a range of administrative options depending on the specific circumstances, including withholding future funding, if warranted.”

Similarly, in discussing data management plans, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) noted that “failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement could lead to enforcement actions, including the withholding of funding.”

None of us wants to see funding withheld over lack of compliance with public access requirements, so it behooves us to help our investigators meet them. Librarians, with their knowledge of data collection management and scholarly communication systems, can be our allies. Collaborations between research administrators and librarians are already springing up, and it makes sense for us to foster more of these relationships.

When agencies first began to require data management plans, I got calls from faculty seeking help with this new component of their increasingly complicated grant submissions. As the director of research development at the University of Rhode Island, I assist faculty members in putting together

Librarians, with their knowledge of data collection management and scholarly communication systems, can be our allies.
the scholarly components of the proposal, so I needed to learn how to satisfy this requirement—fast.

I discovered that some libraries were in the vanguard of institutional responses to the requirement. The University of California Curation Center of the California Digital Library developed the “DMPTool,” which allows investigators to prepare an agency-appropriate data management plan online by answering a series of questions.

After that, I reached out to the digital initiatives library at the University of Rhode Island’s Robert L. Carothers Library. Together, we prepared a webpage with a link to the DMPTool, as well as information about open access data repositories around the world. We also listed campus resources for data storage.

Since then, agencies have begun releasing their data management plans, and we link to those as well. For public access to scientific articles, agencies such as NSF and the Department of Energy are collaborating to create a repository for the collection of these publications. For access to data, agencies such as NIH will urge researchers to place their data in established public repositories. Our website links to those plans.

Be aware that your librarians may already be discussing data management in their own professional meetings. In a recent book on data management published by the Association of College and Research Libraries, the authors said it “takes a village” to establish and operate a good data management program. These teams may include research administrators, information technology professionals, research deans, and legal counsel (Hofelich Mohr, Johnston, & Lindsay, 2016). A study by librarians of how research libraries are handling data management showed that libraries, research offices and information technology units are grappling with the issue (Antel, Bales Foot, Turner & Shults, 2014).

If your library has lost staff positions in recent years, it may be particularly advantageous to partner with other departments on campus to tackle the data management mandate. Together, you may make data management planning easier for investigators and avoid having to learn just how harsh the consequences may be for failure to comply.

References

NCURA is seeking a Co-editor for its scholarly journal *Research Management Review* (RMR). The peer-reviewed journal was established in 1987 and in 1999, transitioned from print to exclusively online with open access. The journal provides a forum for the dissemination of knowledge about the study and practice of research administration. The RMR has helped establish NCURA as a definitive and authoritative voice in the field of research administration.

The Co-Editor works closely with two fellow Co-Editors. Together, the team is responsible for the overall production, including recruiting authors, recruiting the editorial board, assigning submitted papers to reviewers, overseeing editing and online publication. The volunteer position is a three-year term. If you are interested or have questions please contact Marc Schiffman at schiffman@ncura.edu

For more information visit www.ncura.edu/Publications-Store/ResearchManagementReview.aspx

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Federal Demonstration Partnership

Upcoming issues of the magazine will feature articles on various aspects of the FDP and its current activities. To set the stage, the purpose of this article is to present an overview of the FDP organization.

It was in 1986, thirty-one years ago, when the Federal Demonstration Partnership or FDP first came on the national scene. In those days, it was known as the Federal Demonstration Project. In the early 1990s, it was Dr. Fred Saalfeld, chief scientist at the Office of Naval Research, who suggested that the FDP was no longer just a “project”, but had become a partnership. Fortunately, this did not require a change in the initials. While most research administrators are aware of the FDP and most are impacted by it in one way or another, many do not know the full story of how it came to be what it is today, how it is organized, and about the breadth of its current objectives and activities. This article will shed some light on the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the FDP.

Who? The FDP is an association that includes ten federal research agencies as well as more than 150 academic and non-profit research institutions. In this regard, the FDP is unique among the Washington-based organizations that are concerned with research. It is the only organization that includes representatives from both the federal grantor and grantee communities where these two groups function as one organization. To add to the richness or the organization, the mix of people who currently make up the FDP include, on the Federal side, senior grants management and policy officials, senior agency program officials, and officials who deal with the electronic research administration programs of their agencies. On the grantee side, we have research administrators, faculty representatives, and “technical” representatives, i.e., people who are involved in electronic research administration at their institution. The FDP also includes a wide range of member institutions from some of the most highly funded to an equally important group of 26 Emerging Research Institutions. In all, it is a very diverse group of people within the area of research.

What? The FDP has as its primary mission the reduction of administrative burdens associated with federally-funded research grants so that investigators can devote more effort to doing research and less effort to administering their projects. Viewed in a larger context, the FDP is devoted to increasing research productivity by creating and testing mechanisms to make it easier for researchers to do their work. The mission has remained constant through its history and is the primary driver behind the decisions about which efforts to pursue.

When? Since its inception, the FDP has been carried out in multi-year “phases”. Membership is established at the start of the phase and remains unchanged until the next phase when membership is opened to additional institu-
tions. The FDP is currently in Phase VI, which runs through the end of 2020.

Where? The FDP meets three times each year in Washington, DC: January, May, and September. On several occasions in the past, the meetings have taken place at other locations. However, the decision was made a number of years ago to hold the meetings in Washington, primarily to facilitate the participation of the Federal partners. In between the Washington meetings, the FDP conducts business through conference calls, email, and web based technology. FDP meetings are open to all members. Representatives of organizations not currently members of the FDP can attend meetings as “Friends of the FDP”.

Why? The federal research enterprise has grown tremendously, particularly since the 1950s. Along with the growth has come complexity. The rules and regulations associated with the conduct of research grants have grown even more rapidly than the funding. Left unchecked, the rules and regulations risk the strangulation of the conduct of research in our universities and nonprofit research organizations. As an organization, the FDP is dedicated to reducing administrative burdens, including those imposed by the policies of federal sponsors as well as those imposed by the grantee institutions themselves. Constant vigilance and an effort to control “bureaucratic accretion” are definitely in the interest of both the sponsors and the recipients.

How? The FDP is organized into a series of operational and programmatic committees to carry out its functions. The operational committees provide ongoing direction of FDP operations and report to the Executive Committee. Each operational committee has a federal co-chair and an institutional co-chair. The operational committees include finance, membership, and communication. The programmatic committees provide direction for FDP focus areas and report to the Executive Committee. As is the case with the operational committees, the programmatic committees also have co-chairs, federal and institutional. The programmatic committees include Research Compliance, Finance/Costing/Audit, Research Administration, eRA (Electronic Research Administration), and the Faculty Committee. Each of the programmatic committees includes working groups. These groups focus on specific tasks that have been approved by the parent committee co-chairs. Among the current activities of the FDP are the Faculty Workload Survey, Emerging Research Institutions, the DATA Act, Streamlining Proposal Submission, Subawards, the Expanded Clearinghouse, Open Government, Research Terms and Conditions, UG Procurement Standards, Conflict of Interest, Data Stewardship, Data Transfer and Use, Export Controls, IACUC, IRB, and Laboratory Safety.

Concluding comment. Keeping administrative burdens associated with the conduct of research in check is a never-ending task. It seems as though no sooner has a particular administrative burden been reduced or eliminated than a new one emerges to take its place. Ceaseless vigilance and hard work are required to move the needle in the right direction! The FDP strives to perform that function and, though not successful in each of its endeavors, there is no question that its overall efforts have been successful and are contributing to a better environment for the conduct of research. Put in a less formal fashion, if you think things are tough now, you should see what they would have been like had we not been here!

Richard Seligman is Associate Vice President for Research Administration at the California Institute of Technology, a member of the FDP Executive Committee, and a past president of NCURA. He can be reached at richard.seligman@caltech.edu

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HOW TO MANAGE A FINANCIALLY FOCUSED UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AUDIT EFFECTIVELY

AUTHORS:
ASHLEY DEIHR, CPA, CIA, CFE, Senior Manager, Baker Tilly
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/
The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) University Administrator Support Program (UASP) Fellows from African and Eurasian public universities deliberated on 21st century research collaboration at a September 2016 opening workshop in Washington, D.C. The international research funding environment has shifted from institutional core funding to competitive project funding increasingly consolidated around global themes. For universities in developing countries, this requires gaining access to large funding schemes like European Union Horizon 2020 and national research institutes. According to Ken Bridbord, Acting Director in the Division of International Relations, Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health (NIH) the advantage for such universities is that emerging economies are central to solving the problems of global applied research.

For example, out of 57 worldwide poor health systems, 36 of them are located in sub-Saharan Africa (Africa News Agency, 2015). Yet, African countries comprised only 1.5% of scientific publications in 2014, even though they doubled their research outputs between 2003 and 2012 (Wachira, 2014). African institutions struggle to access large funding structures as prime applicants. As an example, among 69 NIH awards involving institutions in Ghana between 2014-2016, 54 were awarded through partnerships with U.S. and European institutions, seven were granted to other African universities in partnership with Ghanaian universities and eight went to Ghanaian institutions directly. According to UASP Fellows, the trend in consolidation makes it more difficult to find funding to address local problems. New, innovative sources like crowdfunding—the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people often conducted through Internet-mediated registries—may provide future opportunities.

In a workshop panel discussion on Research Enhancement for a Competitive Research Landscape, Bridbord said that it takes 10 to 15 years to prepare scientists to become competitive project investigators for typical NIH grants and that it usually requires collaboration with established NIH grant recipients. The panel, which also included Jesse Szeto, Director Global Operations, National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) and Shandra White, Director, Office of Sponsored Projects, George Washington University, suggested a variety of strategies:

(a) meeting with global funding agencies to demystify funding schemes
(b) linking up with researchers who have previously won large agency awards
(c) building capacity of early career researchers
(d) lessening administrative burdens on faculty
(e) investing in peer review for both science and administrative components of proposals before submission.

In this context, an African Research University Alliance (ARUA) is seeking to build a set of globally competitive African research universities to become a platform for funders pursuing collaboration across Africa. According to Dr. Max Price, vice-chancellor of University of Cape Town:

Researchers within the 16 ARUA member institutions will work in partnership on specific multinational projects. This plan will allow the research teams to share the resources that are available in their respective universities. We believe such an alliance will benefit not only the member institutions but also, over time, the continent in general, by laying a foundation for research projects to be initiated and developed in Africa, to address African needs and growth through innovation. (Price, 2016, para. 3-4).

ARUA universities will also serve as hubs for sister institutions seeking to benefit from ARUA resources and knowledge sharing.

With the aim of developing research administrators within ARUA, IREX UASP is providing opportunities for month-long placements at North American institutions.
research universities and two weeks of Washington D.C.-based training. By the closing workshop, fellows will have recorded comparative practices among American, African and Eurasian universities and developed draft implementation plans for reform in their own institutions. During their final week, they will use design thinking to finalize their plans and ensure that they are fit for purpose in the context of their own institutions. Back at home, Fellows will compete for UASP small grants to implement aspects of their plans. Several ARUA universities have set up centralized research units, technology transfer offices, and intellectual property policies. According to UASP Fellow Beatrice Sakyibe Biney, Research Development Officer, University of Ghana, “When faculty learn that they can access data on the university’s other funders and projects, they are more willing to share their own projects and funding sources.” As interdisciplinary, theme-based projects become more prevalent, centralized offices facilitate coordination across disciplines.

In order to participate effectively in the knowledge economy and regional development, countries must have national research systems (Castells, 2009). African countries contribute less than 1% of gross domestic product (GDP) to national research. Recently, lower middle-income countries like Kenya and Ghana have linked knowledge production with economic development in an effort to grow new sectors and expand existing industries. Kenya committed 2% of its GDP, approximately $US1 billion to its National Research Fund this year. UASP Fellow Dr. John Ayisi, Deputy Director, Kenyan Ministry of Education, Science and Technology aims to build capacity of the Fund’s trustees and staff.

Ernest Ayeetey, first secretary-general of ARUA and former vice chancellor of University of Ghana advised that the new Research Fund in Ghana will be rendered useless if those appointed to manage it have no background in research themselves (Kwakofi, 2016). Academics in Ghana worry that the Fund will replace their book and research allowances, which government funding provides as a supplement to academic salaries. In addition to government support, engagement with the private sector has been largely missing in the research enterprise in Africa. As African firms grow, university-industry linkages provide opportunities for collaborative research, staff exchanges, equipment and facilities, joint ventures and spin-offs, extension services, student internships, co-curriculum development, and fee-for-targeted training. UASP Fellows questioned whether universities, governments or industries drive industry linkages in developing countries.

At a time when African universities are investing in research units, publication output, and intellectual property policies to alleviate government funding decreases, large funders like the European Union, Canada and United Kingdom are increasingly requiring open and accessible datasets and research outputs. According to UASP seminar sources, two-thirds of world journals offer immediate open access options, which accounted for 17% of global articles in 2014. Further 27% of world articles are available within 24 months after publication, and over 9,000 peer-reviewed open access journals exist globally. Many African scholars perceive open access online journals to be inferior and need the skills to navigate this trend. When funders insist on open access publishing, it can penalize young scholars’ professional advancement and promotion within their institutions if they are not publishing with recognized academic presses. UASP Fellows also pointed out the lack of accuracy of local open data sets, which are frequently used for public policymaking. In a world of competitive project funding, research universities are required to collaborate, align with strategic themes, and demonstrate the socioeconomic impact of their research. They are increasingly expected to provide open data sets and outputs, and demonstrate knowledge transfer to the wider economy, all of which requires a strategic approach. Global research agenda-setting and power dynamics among collaborating universities are a subject of ongoing debate. Exchanges that equip developing country research administrators and their North American counterparts with knowledge of the developing world will improve the management of research projects. Several African presidents have publicly endorsed the link between local knowledge generation and economic development. The African Union’s (AU) Continental Educational Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) seeks to, “Revitalize and expand tertiary education, research
and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness” (African Union, 2016, para. 5). Developing research administration leaders at ARUA universities will impact how research is organized and disseminated globally.

IREX is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to building a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world by empowering youth, cultivating leaders, strengthening institutions, and extending access to quality education and information.

IREX UASP Fellowships in Research Management were made possible by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York.

References


The ARUA universities comprise: Ghana – University of Ghana; Ethiopia – Addis Ababa University; Kenya – University of Nairobi; Nigeria – University of Lagos, University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University; South Africa – University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University and University of the Witwatersrand; Rwanda – University of Rwanda; Senegal – Université Cheikh Anta Diop; Uganda – Makerere University; and Tanzania – University of Dar es Salaam.

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IREX UASP Fellowships in Research Management were made possible by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York.
For 70 years, Fulbright programs have represented an outstanding example of international cooperation and mutual understanding based on intellectual achievement. With programs designed for advanced students, teachers, academics, professionals and administrators, the range of opportunities is not only vast, it can be confusing. Where does one fit? How does one select a program and an award? How does one measure up to the 57 Nobel laureates or the 82 Pulitzer Prize winners who are Fulbright alumni? And most important for NCURA members – are there research opportunities? The answers will depend on the individual, but there is no question that Fulbright supports research. Each of the four main components of the Fulbright Program addresses a particular audience and features awards designed for their talents and interests. The Fulbright Scholar Program is one of the four and is the focus of this brief description.

For members of NCURA, the Fulbright Scholar Program may be one that they have overlooked. The 800 grants annually for American scholars are to individuals who apply during an annual competition. Unlike some other opportunities, they are not institutional. Because Fulbright also receives scholars from abroad (approximately 900 a year), some of those grants are based on institutional applications from U.S. hosts and may also be of interest to NCURA. On a more personal note, research administrators should also consider Fulbright grants, especially the serial, shorter flex grants for their own use. They give support for research or teaching overseas and their time frames will fit into schedules that are typically too busy to allow for long absences.

First, Fulbright Scholar Core Program awards have both long- and short-term options. The Fulbright competition opens at the beginning of February each year and closes at the end of August. Information about the annual competition is found in the Award Catalog. It is the appearance of that on-line document that marks the beginning of a six-month competition for placements.
in the following academic year. The 2018-2019 Core competition opens this month.

Fulbright has always been characterized by its bi-national nature. Core awards for U.S. scholars are designed in the host country. For that reason the program descriptions and specific awards in the catalog are a statement of the academic needs and interests of more than 125 countries around the world. Among the features found in the catalog offerings are the activities covered by each individual award. For the Fulbright Scholar Program they are teaching, research and teaching/research (a combination of the two). Options vary by award. In some, only one activity will be designated. Others may allow applicants to pick among two or all three. That is determined by the host country.

At one time there was a perception that the Fulbright Scholar Program was solely for teachers and that research was not an option. But as the 2016-2017 competition has shown, 35% of grants were for research and an additional 49% were in the combined option, teaching/research. Only 19% were awarded for pure teaching. For research administrators seeking out funding opportunities, there are, among the 500+ awards offered annually, a sizeable number of options.

Although most Fulbright Scholar awards are country-specific, there are several regional research programs that allow applicants to work in, typically, two to three countries in that region. Such awards are found, currently, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, the ASEAN countries, South and Central Asia, North America (Canada and Mexico), the European Union as well as special programs for the China and Taiwan and another in Austria and Hungary.

Folded into the research options there is a relatively recent addition to Fulbright – the flex grant. These awards, specifically designated as including the flex option, allow scholars who need several, shorter visits to accomplish their goals by spreading their grants over two years. Most flex grants are made in research topics, but they are possible in teaching awards, too. A significant development in the program, flex grants are, in effect, a series of short (1-3 month) grants all of which result from a single application in the competition for the first of the two years.

The most recent development in Fulbright truly breaks the mold. Initially grants were all country-specific because they were based on agreements between the United States and a long string of countries around the globe. Next came the regional grants. The Global Award is the newest development. A two year-old initiative, it offers a flex grant opportunity to applicants desiring research on a global scale. The work of the grant must be accomplished in at least two of Fulbright’s six world regions. Typically two to three countries are visited. As is the case with other flex options, the award can be taken over two years and addresses a topic requiring a global perspective. The combination of a worldwide vision and a flex grant stretched over two years has brought about a strong response in a short time.

One additional option is the International Education Administrator (IEA) programs in France, Germany, India, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Short, two to three week visits, the IEA programs send a group of American administrators to one of six countries to spend time together while visiting and talking with peers and others in the host country. Although research is not their goal, the programs’ meetings might be used to discuss mutual interests and support potential full-length Fulbright grants in the future.

An aspect of the Fulbright Scholar Program that is not competition-specific is its value in winning or supplementing other grants. Numerous Fulbrighters have pointed out that their grants were fundamental to establishing relationships with overseas colleagues that, later, produced additional, often multi-year individual and institutional funding. Further, in cases where grant funding was limited to use in the United States, scholars who needed an overseas component have applied to Fulbright.

As noted above, Fulbright is bilateral and brings significant numbers of overseas academics to the United States through their local Core competitions. Most Fulbright grantees from abroad conduct research during their time in the U.S. An invitation from an American scholar included in the application can often play a significant role in its success. Research administrators should consider encouraging their scholars to contact overseas colleagues and suggest that they apply. Not only will their Fulbrights support work in the United States, the connections established here often lead to research opportunities for Americans overseas. There is also the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence program for which U.S. institutions apply to act as hosts for specific scholars, for scholars from certain world regions or countries or for scholars in specific disciplines. The goal is to bring teachers to American campuses. But their presence may open doors to future research.

Yet another opportunity to begin or support contacts is through the Outreach Lecturing Fund.

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NCURA Magazine Seeks Co-Editor

The *NCURA Magazine* seeks applicants for the position of Co-Editor. The volunteer position is a three year term, beginning January 1, 2018. The Co-Editors work with the Managing Editor, Senior Editor, and Contributing Editors in ensuring the timely release of six issues during the calendar year.

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

Individuals interested in the position should contact either Managing Editor Marc Schiffman at schiffman@ncura.edu or Senior Editor Pat Hawk at patricia.hawk@oregonstate.edu
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Here’s to spring fever in New England! We all really appreciate spring, almost as much as we appreciate our fine region. There are many Region I accomplishments to appreciate and several events to look forward to in the coming months.

A highly successful and well-attended RADG was held in December to cap off the year. Thank you to our presenters Cindy Hope of the University of Alabama and John Sholhead of NSF who provided us with timely information on NSF and the Federal Demonstration Partnership.

One of our biggest events of the year is about to take place in Newport, Rhode Island. The Region I spring meeting will take place from May 1st - 3rd at the Hotel Viking. Register soon and take advantage of the early discount. A broad range of timely topics will be offered including program tracks on hospitals, post-award, pre-award, compliance, department and predominantly undergraduate institutions. Workshops will provide a deep dive into complex topics. Take this opportunity to really hone your skills in your current role or explore a new skill or knowledge area. Thanks to the co-Chairs, Denise Rouleau of Tufts University and Suzanne Araujo of Rhode Island Hospital and to the entire program committee.

The Region I Distinguished Service Award is now named in honor of Julie Norris. At the spring 2016 meeting, we all had an opportunity to learn about leadership qualities and how Julie exemplified these qualities. In keeping with the theme of leadership, the award will be given to an outstanding Region I member who works to professionalize the field of research administration. Please monitor the Region I eblasts for the nomination process.

Thank you to Heather Dominey, Brown University, for her ongoing work in providing professional development and networking opportunities to members. Several individuals are currently being mentored by colleagues. The mentoring program is a big win for both mentors and mentees. The opportunity to connect with someone new on a one-on-one basis is extremely rewarding. In a similar vein, the Executive Shadow program has been a huge success in bringing folks into the inner-workings of regional leadership roles. Three individuals have been selected to participate on the Advisory Board which not only opens up opportunities but provides critical feedback to the Board.

If you are interested in volunteering or getting involved, please email Karen Woodward Massey at vmc@ncuraregioni.org

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 spring, Region II! It is hard to believe our regional meeting is quickly approaching. This year, the meeting is going to be held at the Gideon Putnam Resort & Spa located in Saratoga Springs, NY, April 30th – May 3rd. Whether you are in the nascent stages of your career or are a seasoned administrator who shares in the passion of our profession, the program committee has been working diligently over the course of the last several months to develop a robust program with content that will offer attendees opportunities to attain higher levels of achievement and success given the knowledge that will be shared among those in attendance. I encourage you to visit the 2017 Spring Meeting website https://regioniispringmeeting.wordpress.com/ for more information about the hotel, registration, the meeting program and information about our esteemed colleagues who are committed to delivering quality presentations.

While the regional meeting may only offer an opportunity for us to come together as a region once per year, I would like to remind members of the workshops offered by the region’s Professional Development Committee (PDC) that further aid in providing educational opportunities at a more localized level. The PDC’s workshops offer institutions a cost-effective way to bring professional development to respective institutions with no cost to a host organization. If you are interested in learning more about the PDC workshop offerings, please visit http://ncuraregionii.org/pdc/ or contact the Chair of the PDC, Jill Frankenfield at jfranken@umd.edu

I would like to take an opportunity to congratulate our graduates of the 2017 Cheryl-Lee Howard Mentor-Me program:

Bryan Cacciotti, University at Buffalo, and mentor, Brenda Kavanaugh, University of Rochester

Anthony Maranto, The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and mentor, Magui Cardona, University of Baltimore

Heidi Moldenhauer, Fredonia State University of New York, and mentor, Jennifer Harman, Nazareth College

Laura Salvati, Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and mentor, Mary Louise Healy, The Johns Hopkins University

Michal Woodbridge, Barnard College – Columbia University, and mentor, Jared Litman, St. John’s University

A special thanks to your mentors for volunteering their time to ensure successful and rewarding experiences.

Have you navigated the different areas of Region II’s newly designed webpage? If not, please visit the site at http://ncuraregionii.org/. If you have ideas of what you might like for the website to include beyond what is already present, please contact me directly or through our website, http://ncuraregionii.org/contact/. Don’t forget, you can also follow Region II on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii/) and on Twitter at @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

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

Jill Frankenfield at jfranken@umd.edu
A great opportunity for continued professional development is participating in the regional meeting, and Region III is excited about our fast-approaching spring meeting! There will be sharing of knowledge and experience for today’s administrators and tomorrow’s leaders as we join one another May 6-10 in historic Savannah, Georgia, at the Hilton Savannah Desoto. If you have not already registered, it’s not too late! Registration information is available on our web page: www.ncuraregioniii.com/springmeeting.php. The Program Committee worked very hard to put together a series of workshops, presentations, and discussions that will help us all enrich our knowledge about research administration. Check out the 2017 Spring Meeting page on our website for information regarding the program, volunteer opportunities, things to do in Savannah, and much more!

We are also delighted that our Region III Alumni and Emeritus group is convening for the first time as a group in Savannah at the Regional Meeting! Many of them are presenting, but all are coming to have a good time and connect. Thank you to Pam Whitlock and her committee for reaching out to folks and making this happen!

Please help us congratulate our newest Region III members on obtaining their CRA credentials: Terri Dildine (University of Florida), Rashmi Pershad (Virginia Commonwealth University), Carey Reinicke (University of Virginia), Drew Speer (University of Kentucky), Diana Thrasher (Clemson University), Michelle Wachter (Vanderbilt University Medical Center), and Jennifer Webster (University of Tennessee). Great job everyone! We wish you continued success in your professional development.

Remember that volunteering is an excellent way to make the best of your NCURA membership. Volunteering offers tremendous networking potential, and you may also find that it is a great way to discover and unleash your potential. You can sharpen a skill you already have or broaden your repertoire of talents through working with one of the committees in our region. Volunteering will serve you well as you serve NCURA. If you would like to volunteer, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Sandy Barber at barber@business.gatech.edu. Visit our website for additional details about the various opportunities available.

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

Spring is welcome!! When I think of spring, I think of new growth. Our regional officers change over in the coming months and new growth happens again. I want to thank Region IV for the personal growth opportunity that being Chair has given me. The faith you put in me has been a real inspiration. I am deeply humbled and honored.

Registration for the Spring Meeting in Madison, WI is open! The Meeting will be held April 23-26. The theme is The Sport of Research Administration and the meeting will kick off with outstanding workshops on topics including pre and post-award, compliance, departmental administration, contract negotiation, NIH training programs, proposal writing and effective presentations. Mark Johnson, head coach for the UW-Madison women’s hockey team and a member of the “Miracle on Ice” Olympic team will be the keynote speaker. There will be a wide variety of concurrent sessions for the entire spectrum of research administrators and great opportunities for networking, including a Tuesday night tailgate party at the Madison Children’s Museum. The Concepts Expo poster session will also return for a second year. Get your registration in by April 14 to get the early bird discount. Also, be sure to make your hotel reservation at the Concourse Hotel by March 25. Check out the Region IV website, Facebook and Twitter to get the most current information.

Recognizing Awesome Volunteerism & Engagement (RAVE IV) is a new Region IV program to recognize volunteers. Volunteers are vital to the success of Region IV and this is one way to say thank you. Have you heard of RAVE IV yet? If not, be sure to check out our website for all the information and the tracking form. 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 or wear it around your office. I would like to thank all of the volunteers that step forward to make our region a success!

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.

Diane Hillebrand, CRA, is Chair of Region IV 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
Regional Corner continued

Thomas Spencer, Chair-Elect, has been working to finalize the plans for Region V’s Annual Meeting. This year the meeting will be in Tulsa, Oklahoma, April 30-May 3, 2017. We are looking forward to a great meeting with lots of networking opportunities. NSF will be providing a session for our attendees.

It takes many hours and many volunteers to coordinate a successful meeting. Please be sure to contact Thomas Spencer, Region V Chair-Elect and Program Chair, at thomas.spencer@uthsw.edu or Becky Castillo, Region V Volunteer Coordinator, at bcastillo@mdanderson.org for volunteer opportunities during the Tulsa Meeting.

Registration and accommodations for the meeting can be found on the Region V website http://www.ncuraregionv.com/calendar.

After our first few executive committee conference calls, leadership is up and running with some great ideas on helping our membership with our Mentoring and Leadership Development Programs. It is our goal to give each member the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and professional development skills to enhance their personal career goals.

We are also actively working on documenting our administrative procedures so that future members will have easy access to know the ins and outs of our processes and procedures, therefore creating a smoother transition as leadership changes.

We are gearing up for our Spring Elections. This year we will be electing a Chair-Elect, Treasurer-Elect and At Large Board Member. For those in our region, you have probably received the information on nominations, so please consider a leadership role in the region.

I have started looking into venues for the 2018 Region V Annual Meeting. I will keep everyone informed of the time and place once that is decided.

I believe I have one more regional corner article before my term ends. I am happy and sad all at the same time. This has been an amazing journey and I can’t wait to see what NCURA has in store for me.

Until next time!

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

Greetings NCURA Region VI! The Region VI/VI meeting will be in Portland, OR November 5-8, 2017. Our theme is: “Navigating Research Administration: Pioneers Adjusting to Our New Future.” Meeting planning is well underway.

Meet your Regional Advisory Committee:

Regional Chair (Regional Advisory Committee Chair):
Sinnamnon Tierney, Portland State University
Chair-elect: Kevin Stewart, UC Santa Barbara
Immediate Past Chair: Derrick Jones, LA BioMed
Secretary: Heather Kubinec, UC Irvine
Treasurer: Caroline Jones, Stanford University
Treasurer-Elect: Samuel Rodriguez-Flecha, Washington State University
Elected Members: Randi Waskl, University of Washington
Appointed Members: Sean Williams, California State University
Eadsay & Gareth Evans, Stanford University • Awards Subcommittee, Chair: Billy Gellepis, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center • Nominating Subcommittee Chair: Rosie Madnick, University of Alaska Fairbanks • Membership & Volunteer Subcommittee Chair: Micb Pane, Stanford University • Education & Professional Development Subcommittee Chair: Melissa Mullen, Calpoly • Education & Professional Development Subcommittee Chair, Lead-Me, Co-Chair: Matt Kerk, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
National Board Representative: Julie Guggino, Central Washington University
Professional Development Committee, Chair & Representative: Csilla Csaplar, Stanford University • Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (N&LDC) Representative: Nancy Lewis, UC Irvine

Our goal is to engage our members to participate in NCURA volunteer opportunities. The expertise and talent of our membership is strong. We rely on our members to keep our region running. No matter what your experience is in research administration, there is a place for you to contribute and grow.

To quote Winston Churchill - “You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.” The rewards of giving back to your research administration community are tremendous. I have found engagement in our region has given me perspective and understanding of the complexities in our field as well as pride for this profession. My colleagues across institutions have become my network for problem solving and as a bonus, close friends.

I invite you all to get involved, whether it is to volunteer for a couple hours at the conference registration desk, writing an article for NCURA Magazine, presenting at a conference, mentoring research administrator, or serving on a committee.

Looking for starting point? Consider serving on the Membership & Volunteer Subcommittee. Please contact Mich Pane at michiko@stanford.edu. If you are unsure how to get involved, please reach out to a RAC member or myself.

Sinnamnon 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
After an unexpected delay in our election process, I am excited that the results are in! Please join me in welcoming our newly-elected Region VII officers for 2017-2018:

**Chair-Elect:** Debbie Shaver, University of Idaho  
**Executive Committee Member At-Large:** Ashley Stable, Colorado State University  
**Regionally-Elected Member of the National Board of Directors:** Ralph Brown, Colorado School of Mines

Thank you to all the candidates that participated in the elections. We are so grateful to those willing to serve the region, your expertise and enthusiasm are essential to the success of our membership. I look forward to working with our Regional Executive Committee in the coming year. We welcome membership feedback on any aspect of regional business so feel free to reach out to any one of us with questions or concerns.

For more information on the officers, please check out our website [ncuraregionvii.asu.edu/officers](http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu/officers).

### “Navigating Research Administration: Pioneers Adjusting to Our New Future”

Please save the date for the Regional Meeting in Portland, OR. It will be held at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront **November 5-8, 2017.** The Program Committee is hard at work putting together an exciting professional program for Regions VI/VII and we hope many of you will submit presentations and workshop ideas! Our goal is to have a preliminary program posted by mid-May 2017.

You will likely see a common theme to my articles this year and I hope you will indulge me this opportunity to bring up volunteerism. For me, volunteerism is the heart and soul of this organization. We need each other—to share with, learn from, and look to for support and guidance. Each of us has something valuable to contribute no matter how long or short your tenure as a research administrator might be. There is always a place for you and your ideas, you don’t have to be an officer to contribute to the success of Region VII! We are always in need of volunteers to participate in committees and assist the regional leadership in a variety of capacities. You are all pioneers, innovators and trailblazers with promising ideas and your feedback is how we will adjust to our new future and move forward as a region together! Please contact me if you are looking for a way to get involved.

*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.* — Mahatma Gandhi

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

What a great year we have ahead of us with so many exciting opportunities available for present and new members to join in.

Firstly, welcome **Annika Glauner** from ETH Zurich/University of Zurich as the new Chair for Region VIII. Many thanks to **Eva Bjorndal** for all her work in this role in the past few years and her continuing contribution now as the Past-Chair. We are also excited to welcome **Julie Ward** from the University of New South Wales as the new Chair-Elect. **Siegfried Huemer** from Technische Universität Wien has taken over as Treasurer from **Susanne Rahner** and many thanks for all of Susanne’s contributions to this role.

Now, down to business — conferences! In March there are the PRA and FRA conferences in San Diego. Julie will be attending these meeting so please make sure you say hello to her. Then there is the exciting 59th Annual Meeting in August in Washington, DC where I have been told, in person by Georgette Sakumoto, (Vice President/President-Elect and Conference Committee Chair) that this will be an amazing conference. Don’t forget to register as this meeting will provide you with many opportunities to learn from colleagues from around the world and to meet great people. If this is the first time you are attending the Annual Meeting please apply for the $1,000 USD travel award. This year we will be awarding two awards. Travel awardees will be guaranteed Washington Hilton rooms at the lowest tier rate. Stay tuned to the website about details on how to apply.

If that is not enough, there is an exciting opportunity that is exclusively for Region VIII members to attend a workshop at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on the Thursday (10 August) after the Annual Meeting concludes. Since we will have travelled from all around the globe to attend the 59th Annual Meeting the extra day will be well worth the amazing experience to see the largest biomedical research agency in the world. Part of the workshop will include visits to the Fogarty International Center, The National Eye Institute (NEI) and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). Stay tuned for further information.

Don’t think you will have any down time for the end of the year as there is a workshop, the NCURA-IR Global Fundamental workshop in Vienna, Austria in the pipeline organised by Siegfried Huemer. There will be more details coming in the next article in the May/June edition.

Have a great year ahead!

**Bella Blaher** is Region VIII Secretary as serves as Senior Grants Officer International, Research, Innovation & Commercialisation at the University of Melbourne. She can be reached at bblaher@unimelb.edu.au
Think different, maybe

Companies that hire employees to fit in run the risk of their falling down, professor says

By Christina Pazzanese of Harvard University Gazette

“I generally come in at least 15 minutes late… After that, I sort of space out for an hour. I just stare at my desk, but it looks like I’m working. I do that for probably another hour after lunch, too. I’d say in a given week I probably only do about 15 minutes of real, actual, work.”


For those lucky enough to find a career doing what they love, work is a daily joy that challenges the mind and stokes the flames of passion.

But for too many, work can feel like a transactional necessity, a soul-crushing exchange of time, effort, and freedom for a paycheck.

According to a 2015 Gallup Poll, 68 percent of employees said they didn’t feel engaged at work, a figure that’s held steady for well over a decade. But typically, when people join an organization, they’re excited and eager to dive in. So what grinds the honeymoon down and turns it into an ordeal?

“I hear a lot of people saying, as soon as they get in, they feel the pressure to conform” to company culture and norms, said Francesca Gino, a Harvard Business School professor who studies workplace behavior and wondered why employees became disenchanted with work.

To conform, many employees deliberately or unconsciously express emotions, offer opinions, or agree with ideas that appear popular, even if they’re not accurate reflections of their true selves. Or they may go along with prevailing notions and standards without questioning the status quo to seem like agreeable “team players.”

In the short term, fitting in can seem appropriate, easing what can be an unnerving transition into a new environment. But Gino’s research suggests that tamping down individuality triggers feelings of inauthenticity. Over time, that can create anxiety that leaves people unenthusiastic and uncommitted to their jobs.

Ultimately, that can prove detrimental to employees and employers alike. Disengaged workers experience higher levels of boredom and stress, which can lead to burnout and greater staff turnover. Job performance also tends to suffer. Productivity, innovation, and creative thinking decline as complacency sets in and commitment to the company wanes, a distinct business disadvantage.

“There are good reasons for why people do it, and yet we don’t realize that it’s costly,” said Gino, who conducted fieldwork and case studies of maverick restaurants, investment firms, and manufacturers around the world that embrace what she calls “constructive nonconformity.”

While most businesses say they want engaged workers or will hire “new blood” to bring fresh perspectives, few give more than lip service to the importance of creativity and fresh ideas. Leaders worry that if staff members freely express themselves or are allowed to handle decisions or situations on their own, quality and other institutional standards may decline or productivity could lapse because workers will prioritize their own needs ahead of the organization’s.

“Instead, it’s just the opposite,” said Gino. “When you give people the opportunity to be who they are more often, rather than checking themselves at the door when they come into work in the morning, they actually bring out the best in themselves.”

Fighting conformity doesn’t require sweeping changes or moving people into new positions, Gino said.

“Small wins are important,” she said. Tweak existing protocols and then test them to see if they deliver positive results. “Often, the best way of driving big changes at the top is to have good evidence that small changes and a different approach toward work can have meaningful impact.”

Other helpful interventions include:

• Hiring for attitude and personal qualities, along with specific skills;
• Asking employees to identify their strengths and then jointly determining how best to draw upon them;
• Encouraging lively debate and challenges to assumptions without combativeeness;
• Modeling unconventional behavior that defies staff expectations;
• Creating an atmosphere of collaboration, not competition;
• Finding opportunities to let employees problem-solve and show their personalities.

There’s no one-size-fits-all approach, Gino says, but every industry and company can find ways to benefit from being flexible and nonconformist. The most successful organizations try to strike a thoughtful balance between freedom and structure, and executives or managers have clearly defined what’s fair game to tweak and what’s not.

Urging employees to be more authentic doesn’t mean lowering expectations, eliminating rules, or letting workers show up to the office in pajamas, she cautioned.

“You want people to be good in executing, but you also want people who… don’t take procedures and traditions for granted, but ask, ‘What if they were to be different?’ Because that’s what leads to innovation, and that is also what leads you to stay engaged,” Gino said.

The workshops at AM59 have been designed to tie in nicely with the conference theme Exploring the Possibilities...Navigating into the Future.

New to the annual meeting will be two half-day workshops offered on Saturday and an NSF half-day workshop on Wednesday afternoon. In addition, there will be ten half-day, basic/intermediate level workshops scheduled in the morning with follow-up half-day workshops in the afternoon that will build upon these topics with advanced subject material.

For example, a contracts/FARs basics will be offered as a half-day workshop. Then, if the participant wants additional education, they can sign up for an afternoon workshop in Contracts/Negotiations (advanced). This format will provide a great continuum on topics and will allow participants to dig deeper on a topic of their choice.

The goal for each participant is to come away with the necessary tools and resources to take back to their home institution.

Participants of workshops walk away feeling refreshed and rejuvenated, with new colleagues and full of ideas. These workshops can also create confidence in carrying out something new at your institution. We look forward to you exploring the possibilities with the workshop offerings!

Here are the top ten reasons for attending a NCURA Pre-Conference Workshop that will assist you in Navigating into the Future:

1. Gain access to what colleagues are doing across the nation
2. Collaborate on best practices
3. Get to network with people in your field
4. A resource for ideas, suggestions and possible solutions to problems
5. Motivation and/or rejuvenation (reenergize and refocus your passion for research administration)
6. Learn new things and perspectives; fast track your knowledge
7. Learn how to incorporate strategies into your work
8. Low cost
9. Build your knowledge base, and fulfill your institution's commitment to learning
10. You owe it you yourself

Registration opens April 2017.
REGIONAL MEETINGS

Region I – New England
May 1-3, 2017 ..............................................................Newport, RI

Region II – Mid-Atlantic
April 30-May 3, 2017 .........................................................Saratoga Springs, NY

Region III – Southeastern
May 6-10, 2017 ..............................................................Savannah, GA

Region IV – Mid-America
April 23-26, 2017 ............................................................Madison, WI

Region V – Southwestern
April 30-May 3, 2017 ........................................................Tulsa, OK

Region VI/VII – Western/Rocky Mountain
November 5-8, 2017 ........................................................Portland, OR

Region VIII – International
August 10, 2017 ..............................................................Bethesda, MD

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

Financial Research Administration Workshop
May 22-24, 2017 ..............................................................Baltimore, MD

LEVEL I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
May 22-24, 2017 ..............................................................Baltimore, MD

LEVEL II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
May 22-24, 2017 ..............................................................Baltimore, MD

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

WEBINAR PROGRAMS: AVAILABLE ON-DEMAND

• 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

DEADLINE FOR MAY/JUNE 2017
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .......................March 10, 2017
Submission of Advertisements .................................................March 15, 2017

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