Weathering the Storm

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

🔥 Emergency Preparedness
📚 Research Administration the Mindful Way
🤝 Enhancing Faculty-Administrator Collaborations

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ON THE COVER:
By the time you read this issue of the NCURA Magazine, we will have gone through a lot! We’ve seen hurricanes, mid-term elections and a lot of rhetoric pointing to the 2020 elections.

One of the things that makes research administrators so valuable is that we learn how to “weather the storm.” It could be a big proposal deadline, it could be preparing for your annual audit, or it could be implementing a new eRA system. This issue of the NCURA Magazine can tell you about all of those things and more!

You will find an article discussing proposal deadlines from Kimberly Ross, Deralyn Miller, Kelley Tealer and Crystal Winters. I loved their description of a “perfect storm.” Laurel Haluk, Jamie McKe and Lori Schultz give you some good advice on some tools to help weather the storm, and my friend Diane Meyer provides a very nice article from the departmental administrator’s perspective.

From my global colleagues, please take a look at the article by Tashitiana Price and Anna-Karin Consoli. I think you’ll enjoy their comparison of a Swedish winter to the “survival tools” we use in research administration.

Our president’s article includes mention of NCURA’s involvement and recent travel to meetings in Japan and China. It’s very humbling for me to be part of an organization that is truly “global and local” at the same time.

Finally, this is my last issue as Senior Editor of the NCURA Magazine. I cannot begin to describe all of the great people I’ve been surrounded with to help me guide this fantastic publication. While I couldn’t mention everyone, I would like to mention the co-editors I have had the pleasure to work with during my tenure as Senior Editor: Kris Monahan, David Smelser, Toni Shaklee, Denise Moody, Rosie Madnick, Janet Simons and Angela Wishon. They are the ones who line up the contributing editors. Between the contributing editors and the co-editors, that is where the real work takes place. But the magic is brought by Marc Schiffman, our Managing Editor. His contributions to this publication have been innumerable, and my heartfelt thanks go out to him and all of the editors who make this wonderful publication possible.

Pat Hawk is Assistant Vice President, Office for Sponsored Research and Award Administration at Oregon State University. She has served NCURA in various capacities including President, traveling faculty and Professional Development Committee chair. She can be reached at Patricia.Hawk@oregonstate.edu

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1015 18th Street, NW, Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036
1-202-466-3894
schiffman@ncura.edu

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

By Georgette Sakumoto, NCURA President

Sixty years of supporting research together — what a thrilling accomplishment! My year as your President has been filled with amazing people and initiatives. I am most proud of the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion policy developed by our task force. We must continue to work hard to ensure that we embrace and encourage this policy in all facets of NCURA.

We launched a new Insight Leadership Group Program led by Garry Sanders, and we have developed and offered a new Contracting Workshop. We are supporting the future of the profession by awarding our first Education Scholarships, and we will continue our ongoing commitment to strengthen the infrastructure of the Education Scholarship Fund with a goal of increasing the number of scholarships that we offer. NCURA recognizes the need and value of Research Administration as a degree program at our universities and colleges, and we are making steady progress towards establishing an undergraduate degree in Research Administration.

We have expanded our global educational outreach and in November had our first successful bilingual workshop (Spanish-English) in Cuba. I hope that we will continue to engage our international members to ensure NCURA educational outreach is responsive to the needs of our members across the globe. Thanks also go out to our global members for translating our children’s book, The Best Job of All, into eight languages as we reach out to future research administrators globally.

In order to increase transparency in our bylaws, your Board of Directors proposed and the membership ratified the change to put forth one name for future Executive Committee positions. The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair, the Immediate Past President, as well as regional and at-large representatives, will vet the candidates and put forth recommendations to the Board of Directors to select the most qualified individuals to fill our leadership roles. In addition, the Board then interviews the candidates and determines whom to put forward for ratification. We have revised our bylaws to ensure that our future leadership will be the most engaged and knowledgeable NCURA members.

The NCURA Peer Review Program, a powerful tool for enhancing sponsored programs operations, is now in its tenth year and we have completed over 125 reviews. This year the program surpassed all prior year activities. Our future goal is to continue to further develop our global peer review offerings.

In October, NCURA participated in the Research Manager and Administrator Network — Japan (RMAN-J) meeting in Kobe, Japan. As the first female Asian American NCURA President, I was also invited to speak with Research Administrators at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology and discuss how we might encourage the growth of the profession in Japan. NCURA also partnered with Peking University in the 120th Anniversary NCURA-PKU Research Administration Symposium. With the support of Claire Chen, NCURA Global Manager, we were able to meet with the leadership of several top universities in China after the symposium, and I am confident that we have increased future collaborations to deepen our Asia Pacific partnerships.

Your Board met in November, and we participated in an in-depth training to learn to how to assess, through effective evaluation methods, NCURA programs. We will be working with NCURA staff to ensure that all existing and future programming will be the most responsive and cost beneficial programs.

As I reflect on my first NCURA Annual Meeting in 1990, I was fortunate to have met many of you and have the honor of considering you as friends, colleagues and NCURA family. I did not imagine that my journey of volunteerism would culminate with the honor of representing my peers as NCURA President. The generosity of NCURA members remains constant and today is stronger than ever. It is part of what keeps our members engaged, involved, informed and knowledgeable. This is the core of the NCURA network.

I am honored to have worked with the best Officers: Tony Ventimiglia, Shannon Sutton, Denise Moody and Barbara Gray and the extraordinary NCURA staff led by Kathleen Larmett and Tara Bishop. This is my professional family that has kept me inspired and energized to represent NCURA globally. I will forever cherish the opportunities to engage in strategic planning, vision building, program planning and brainstorming that makes this organization the premier leader in the field of Research Administration.

As I pass the torch to your incoming president Tony Ventimiglia, I bid you aloha and share a few words, shared by a Hawaiian colleague that helped guide me as president:

A “akahai” – Gentle, Modest, Unassuming
L “lokahi” – Unity, Harmony, Agreement
O “ohana” – Family
H “ha’aha’a’” – Humility, Unpretentious
A “Ahanui” – Patient, Enduring, Tolerant

Living in Hawaii’s richly diverse culture, we try to LIVE ALOHA. I trust that I represented NCURA globally through the meaning of ALOHA. I am confident that we as individuals and an organization will continue to create an open and diverse environment for our members as we move into the future…together.

Georgette Sakumoto is NCURA President and serves as Contracts and Grants Specialist, Office of Research Services, University of Hawaii. She can be reached at gsakumot@hawaii.edu
Weathering the Storm during Proposal Submission Deadlines

By Kimberly Ross, Deralyn Miller, Kelley Tealer, and Crystal Winters

Many coastal areas are aware of the dangers of storms and the damages that lack of preparation can cause. Submissions for a request for proposals can often be categorized much like the hurricane category system. Research administrators cannot stop the storm but can utilize a structured approach. This article will examine some catastrophes and steps to take that can limit errors due to the crisis.

Category 1
The world of research administration and finance can often times resemble a storm of sorts. Based on storm category systems, category one storms can cause damage, but it is usually minimal and recovery is easily attained. A category one type of submission process can be as simple as being prepared. The best way to prepare for grant and research application submissions is to utilize checklists, communicate with parties involved, and to increase one’s knowledge level on the sponsor and the specific type of application being submitted. No matter how involved the submission process is, administrators are often relieved when a proposal is successfully submitted.

Category 2
It’s raining requests for applications (RFAs)! The anticipation of not knowing the disaster rate, the direction of the storm, and what will be needed in order to prepare for the worst can be stressful. Preparedness is only as good as the knowledge of what’s coming, what should go on the checklist, and whether every scenario has been considered. A category two storm can cause damage to structures that are not effectively sound or are poorly built. If an administrator does not have a solidly structured plan, the smallest hiccup can cause damage to a submission that cannot be corrected in time. The best course of action for a challenging submission process is to learn from previous submissions, consult with other administrators to compare best practices, and utilize resources offered by the institution applying and the sponsor. Preparation for everything that could possibly happen is the key to a successful submission and substantially increases the probability of receiving an award. Know your investigator. There are many types: the procrastinator, the perfectionist, the enthusiast, the opportunist, and the first timer; administrators should be prepared. If the primary investigator is a physician, responsibility to patients may limit their availability. To make needed changes to their proposal, a strong plan for patient care should be established from the beginning. There should be a designated co-investigator that can provide last minute updates and details in the event the primary investigator has patient obligations.

Category 3
The term “weathering the storm” has been defined as, to endure a period of hardship or disorder (Farlex, 2017). Whether it’s your primary investigators traveling with limited email access, an impossible budget that does not meet with the sponsor’s requirements, or a whirlwind of other roadblocks, unexpected circumstance can cause delays or be identified as showstoppers in the submission process. Preparedness can often mitigate these effects.

Struggles for research administrators are not just limited to grant submissions. Struggles can be a part of every aspect of the job. It does not matter if a research administrator is working to submit a clinical protocol, resolve a deficit, set up funding, recruit for research support staff, or any other circumstances that go along with research projects and funding. There are often milestones that need to be met to continue research or to receive additional funding. A proposal often outlines a timeline for the research that can have delays for many different reasons. Working hard to have standard operating procedures in place to assist with general issues will help an administrator concentrate on new issues that could arise.
The Eye of the Storm
I’m funded; now what? Receiving an award notification is rewarding, but now the hard work begins. Often times when a project is awarded a smaller budget than the primary investigator proposed, the research administrator is tasked with updating the budget using the smaller funding amount. If there is no strategy established prior to the notice of award, the administrator could end up scrambling to accommodate the adjustments the sponsor has made to the project. When there is the potential threat of a storm, strategic planning can definitely benefit all parties involved. Many individuals that live in areas that have potential threats of dangerous storms have strategic plans and begin to prepare prior to any threats that are identified. Research administration should always have a strategic plan; not only for pre-award activity, but post-award as well.

Being prepared for a storm is one aspect of preparation, planning for the aftermath is another. Working with changes made to a project once funded affects the budget, the milestones, staffing, and much more. Strategic plans cannot anticipate every issue that will arise, but understanding what your institution’s limits are and the policies that are established by the sponsor will go a long way in providing tools that can be used to establish a course of action.

The Perfect Storm
A category 5 hurricane is the largest class on the hurricane scale. The damages for a storm of this magnitude can affect many areas regardless of the preparations, the sturdiness of the structure, and the strategic plans. What does a perfect storm look like to research administration personnel? A perfect research administration storm could have multiple grant application submissions, awarded projects that are in deficit, primary investigators that have requested no-cost extensions, or projects that have suffered milestone delays, limited staff, or institutional effort certification deadlines. The perfect storm could have many unexpected deadlines and crisis.

No one knows everything about research administration. The best way to effectively manage research in your institution is to plan, document standard operating procedures, inspire trust with your primary investigators, and delegate and share the responsibilities. Remember that you cannot do it all by yourself. No matter how bad the storm is, the sun will come out tomorrow and then it’s time to prepare for the next storm.

Get Ready
We have discussed the importance of preparing for tasks required by research administration personnel. What should be done to get prepared? News reports almost always show bare store shelves when a storm gives the potential of an impending threat. There are also reports of price gouging and, in some extreme cases, looting. Research administration should compose a checklist. This document should be updated as new tasks and issues are discovered. Other suggested ways to prepare is to develop a questionnaire to personally review with the primary investigator. The personal question and answer session will assist with establishing trust between the investigator and administrator. Once the questions are answered in reference to the investigator’s needs, the administrator can establish a timeline and even assign tasks. The timeline should have realistic dates, and tasks should be assigned to knowledgeable personnel. Assigning tasks to support personnel provides the administrator the freedom to address unforeseen issues. These are basic suggestions, but with everyone working as a team, multiple tasks and changes during the proposal process do not have to be disastrous.

References

Kimberly Ross, M.H.A., is an Operations Manager at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in the Department of Radiation Physics. As an Operations Manager, Kim is responsible for the coordinating pre-award and post-award including financial management, and an active member of NCURA. Kim can be reached at kross@mdanderson.org

Deralyn Miller, M.B.A., Radiation Oncology Department Administrator at University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Deralyn received her Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Baylor University and her Master of Business of Administration degree from Southern Methodist University. She can be reached at dmiller1@mdanderson.org

Kelley Tealer is an Operations Manager at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in the departments of Neurosurgery and Orthopedic Oncology. Kelley is responsible for financial and administrative management which includes personnel tasked with pre-award and post-award responsibilities. Kelley is an active member of NCURA. Kelley can be reached at KDTealer@mdanderson.org

Crystal Winters, M.B.A., is a Grant Program Coordinator at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in the Department of Radiation Physics. Crystal is also a recent graduate of the MBA program at the University of Houston-Downtown. As a grant coordinator, she is responsible for grant submissions, both pre and post award duties, and some financial support. Crystal can be reached at ckwinters@mdanderson.org

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With the winter months come the holidays and time spent inside with family and friends. As everyone knows too well, warm gatherings around the fireplace can quickly devolve into heated arguments around a table full of dirty dishes. Just as our family and friends gathered together for holidays don’t always agree, the teams we gather together in our research administration offices can have heated conflicts.

One way to bridge differences of opinion is to act more mindfully. Thinking first and acting second can lead us to habits that will bridge the gaps between ourselves and our colleagues.

In his article “‘I Don’t Have Time to Think!’ Versus the Art of Reflective Practice,” Joseph Raelin laments our action-focused culture, and advocates taking time to reflect on events and to consider what they can teach us about potential future actions (2002). We can adopt his prescription both as a general philosophy and in our day-to-day work. For instance, at times of major proposal deadlines, all of us—staff and faculty alike—are under considerable stress. So we should remember to take a breath and think before responding. Did our colleague intend for that comment to be as sarcastic as it sounded? Do we really want to say something angry in response?

We can also examine the method with which we use to communicate. Many of us have a default form of communication—maybe email, maybe the phone—that we rely on without much thought. Yet no one communication method works for every situation (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). Email can reach many people at once, and it is an easy way to document communications, but it can’t express our tone of voice or our body language (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). It is too easy to produce emails that are dense blocks of text full of information that is difficult to absorb (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). The next time you approach a difficult conversation, consider using a communication method that isn’t second nature. Maybe it will be best to have a difficult long-distance conversation over Skype? Maybe your written message will be better understood and accepted if you add diagrams, or even a well-chosen cartoon?

When one of our co-workers asks for guidance, or questions one of our decisions, we may be tempted to just state or restate our opinion and move on to our next task. But is this really the best way to respond? The problem may have been resolved momentarily, but it is unlikely that we have convinced anyone of our opinion. A better method may be to explain how we reached our conclusion. This can be a kind of storytelling, and storytelling can be one of the most compelling ways to make a point. Not only does a good story engage the listener, it makes complex issues easier to understand, and a co-worker who understands our thought process is more likely to agree with us on the next steps to take (Berk, 2013). Additionally, detailing out our thought processes requires us to elaborate on the facts of the issue. Often this will highlight gaps in knowledge: either in our co-worker’s understanding of the problem, or in our own understanding of the solution. So next time, instead of just stating that an indemnification clause is too risky, explain how you came to that conclusion, and how you could envision the specific risks playing out. Maybe you will help your colleague reach a new understanding of indemnification and liability. Or, maybe he will point out an interpretation of the clause that you missed, thereby deepening your knowledge of the subject.

In her book Change Your Questions, Change Your Life, Marilee Adams introduces the concept of “question thinking,” a process in which self-righteousness and condemnation is replaced by being open to new solutions (Adams, 2015). Adams argues that our internal thoughts consist mostly of questions and answers (Adams, 2015). To get new, better answers, we need to ask ourselves better questions (Adams, 2015). Ideal questions point us to new possibilities and new ways of thinking (Adams, 2015). We can start asking ourselves questions such as “are there other options that I haven’t considered?” and “can I identify incorrect assumptions that I’ve been making?” (Adams, 2015). In our research administration offices, these sorts of solution- oriented questions can help us stop blaming the office down the hall for a negative audit finding. Instead, we can start asking ourselves questions like “what changes can we make to our systems to make them more robust?”

None of these tactics offer a guarantee that we won’t unthinkingly fall into conflict with our co-workers (or our cousins). But getting into the habit of making our actions more mindful will, in the long run, make our work more careful and effective. And just maybe, it will bring a little holiday cheer into our upcoming gatherings.

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Raelin, J. (2002). “I don’t have time to think!” versus the art of reflective practice. Reflections (4) 1, 66-79.

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Preamble to the Uniform Guidance (Published in Federal Register/ Vol. 78, No. 248/Thursday, December 26, 2013, 78590-78608)
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Research Administrators have a lot in common with meteorologists. We monitor looming deadline storms and workloads that swirl around us like a hurricane. We forecast both sunny and cloudy days based on current and historical information. Our information and expertise are used to prepare our faculty researchers for the days ahead.

We work as generalists, not specialists, and we are trusted to solve many different problems covering activities throughout the proposal lifecycle, in addition to tracking and providing information used for a number of institutional initiatives. All of these activities involve a blizzard of data, much of it related to the profiles and productivity of the researchers we serve. The pieces of an individual researcher’s profile live in multiple places, from institutional systems and sponsor systems to files stored on the individual’s hard drive, and it can be difficult to compile the right version of the data to properly communicate information to sponsors, publishers, and our own institutional systems.

ORCID – the Open Researcher and Contributor ID, is the umbrella we need to tie this information together and leverage data to provide support in the proposal lifecycle, reduce faculty burden and improve data quality for a number of
stakeholders. The ORCID ID for researchers is a unique primary identifier, allowing us to associate works with a person throughout their career — through changes in name, education, and employment. Researchers share their ID when interacting with sponsor, publisher, and institutional systems, which in turn update ORCID with public information that researchers can easily share. The ORCID ID is a powerful tool that allows researchers to enter data once, and reuse often.

Here are some of the ways the ORCID ID can help with research administration:

**Proposal Lifecycle:** The ORCID ID can help simplify the process of applying for, and managing the grant application process. Many sponsors are starting to store, and even require the ORCID ID. For example, sponsor systems—including the NIH’s eRA Commons and ProposalCentral—use ORCID as a source from which to auto-populate application information and automate aspects of reporting. ProposalCentral handles applications for many non-profit sponsors; many of them request the ORCID ID, including the American Cancer Society and the Susan G. Komen Foundation. The eRA Commons established a real-time link with ORCID, which allows users to associate ORCID with their eRA account.

**Publications and Public Access Policies**

ORCID IDs are commonly requested or required by publishers and funders. Over 20 publishers representing around 2,000 journals now require ORCID IDs for corresponding authors, and more than 5,000 additional journals request IDs during the submission process. In 2012, the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy issued a memorandum directing agencies with more than $100M/yr in R&D to develop plans to make publications resulting from that funding publicly available. Some agencies, both federal and non-federal, are making ORCID a part of that process, particularly as they make use of the NIH Manuscript Submission system & PubMed. Some examples are: NIH, NASA, the American Heart Association, Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, CDC, DOT, FDA, NIST, USGS, VA, etc. Researchers can easily import publication information in their ORCID record from sources including CrossRef, Scopus, ResearcherID, and others, to ensure that researcher profile information is in one place.

### Reducing Faculty Burden

ORCID can help with initiatives to reduce faculty administrative burden by leveraging data they already track. The ability to store and reuse data over and over again can make processes simpler and more automated. In 2017, the American Innovation & Competitiveness Act (AICA), directed the Office of Management and Budget to establish an interagency working group to reduce administrative burdens on federally funded researchers. The Research Business Models Working Group is working on these requirements from the AICA:

1. Establishment of a centralized researcher profile database
2. Simplified uniform grant application format and associated processes
3. Simplification of mandatory progress reports

The Research Business Models Working Group’s report from this year recommends using existing workflows and systems, that already include linkages with ORCID, to work on the centralized researcher profile database. Projects like the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) SciENcv, which is an online platform to prepare biosketches in the format of NSF, NIH, and Department of Education Inst of Education Sciences. SciENcv is a greatproof of concept and starting point for how the linkage with ORCID can work to satisfy the AICA’s requirements. Going further, having this information can provide a case for building an application system that draws from this information to simplify the application process, and provide an integrated way to produce progress report throughout a grant’s lifecycle.

### Institutional Systems and Initiatives

The ability to pull together researcher data allows us to answer institutional questions related to tracking activities and outputs of researchers on a number of fronts including the promotion and tenure process, communicating impact to stakeholders, and the ability to track return on both broad and targeted institutional investments. ORCID’s leverage of the data can also help with interoperability and facilitation of institutional profile systems.

The NIH and other funders are collaborating on the ORCID Reducing Burden and Improving Impact Tracking (ORBIT) project. This international effort is both expanding the ORCID data model to capture additional data elements typically requested in grant applications, and is also working toward funder-initiated harmonization of critical application data fields. Projects like these show us how much further ORCID can go in helping coordinate information that serves many institutional needs.

Preparing faculty researchers for the continuing deluge requires tools that cross disciplines, sponsors, and shifting priorities. They need to be flexible and work for the long haul. You can learn more about ORCID and how your researcher can register for their own iD at [https://orcid.org/register](https://orcid.org/register). The ORCID umbrella for faculty data is an important part of our changing weather toolkit!

This article is based on an ORCID webinar from September 11, 2018. Find the recording at [https://orcid.org/about/events](https://orcid.org/about/events).

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**Laurel L. Haak, PhD,** is the Executive Director of ORCID. She can be reached at l.haak@orcid.org

**Jamie McKee** is the Director of proposal CENTRAL at Altum, Inc. Jamie can be reached at Jamie.mckee@altum.com

**Lori Schultz** is the Sr. Director of Research Partnership Services at the University of Arizona. Lori can be reached at lschultz@email.arizona.edu
As the calendars changed from Halloween to Thanksgiving, your NCURA board of directors met in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia the first weekend in November. The highlight of the meeting was Saturday’s session on “How to Objectively Review Association Products” facilitated by Michael Anderson, CAS, FASAE, FAUSE, from Tecker International Consulting Services. Michael was engaging and dynamic. During the introduction, Michael ran the board through some current trends for associations. He said, “The most significant trends impacting associations are occurring at the confluence of shifting demography (e.g. multicultural and multigenerational) and evolving technology (e.g. digital transformation and new competencies).” NCURA is seeing that within our own organization as the membership base shifts and as the association continues to look for new ways to educate and disseminate information. Michael listed five key things high-performing organizations do:

- “Clear understanding of the business model” which includes the rationale of how an association creates, delivers and captures value;
- “Clarity and consensus on what constitutes success” which includes strategic planning that looks at future opportunities and determines those of value to stakeholders;
- “Confidence in the competence of partners” that includes a culture of trust and respect and ongoing efforts made to build and maintain it;
- “Clarity of roles and responsibilities” meaning the board chair, board members, CEO, and staff clearly understand the boundaries and the board chair and CEO work together to ensure compliance; and finally
- “Knowledge-based decision making” whereby the board, CEO, and staff embrace strategic planning and thinking, ensuring the association knows how and where to allocate resources.

High-performing organizations should never avoid taking risks. This holds associations back and makes them more vulnerable. Instead, the association should embrace risk and understand how it helps better serve stakeholders.

After Michael laid the groundwork for our session, he educated the board on why associations must sunrise and sunset programs and products. Members need change on a regular basis. Associations cannot afford to invest time and money in products that no longer meet member and stakeholder needs. The board used an evaluation process to look at four existing programs and one new product. The purpose of the activity was to learn how to evaluate products, not to make a determination that day. The evaluation looked at strategic fit, member needs, market viability, feasibility, innovation, revenue and expense, and red flags. NCURA staff members Tara Bishop, Kati Barber, and Stephanie McJury described the products individually and the board discussed the information and asked questions. Michael explained the questions under each category and the members of the board individually voted on each question using a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This created a visual which was very helpful as the board reviewed the programs. Michael facilitated the discussion when the votes were close together, indicating a consensus, and when they were spread across the continuum. He indicated the best discussions yielded very good comments and discussion. Michael summarized the day and reminded the board of the five attributes of high performing associations. When decisions are made, it is imperative to have a strong communications strategy so members understand the rationale for the decisions. Communications include all forms — email, snail mail, magazine articles, to name a few. Michael was an excellent facilitator, engaged the board throughout the day and the board now has an evaluation tool and a process to look at sun rising and sun setting programs and products in 2019 and beyond.

The second part of the board meeting was the business activities. The board reviewed the proposed 2019 budget, made some adjustments, and approved the modified 2019 budget. The board also conducted the annual review and approval of committee members for the upcoming year. Committees put out a call for volunteers, review the applications, and then put the name(s) forward to the board for approval. The board reviews the committee reports, recommendations, and the volunteer’s vitae and either accepts or rejects the committee’s nomination. It is very exciting to see all the new, and a few seasoned, NCURA volunteers who will be working diligently for the organization in 2019 and beyond. If you are interested in being a part of a committee, watch for the eblast next year or talk to a current member of the committee. NCURA’s success is based on its strong volunteer base, so be part of the organization and watch it strengthen and grow.

Shannon Sutton serves as Treasurer of NCURA and is the Director of Sponsored Projects at Western Illinois University. She can be reached at sm-sutton@wiu.edu
When a severe storm is on the horizon, communities focus on safety and emergency response. However, communities must also prepare for and respond to the impact and aftermath of severe weather on behavioral health” (SAMHSA, 2017).

As children, we have/had emergency drills to prepare for fires, tornadoes, nuclear bombs, and active shooters. As adults, do we prepare for the storms that may come our way as Research Administrators? If you haven’t considered this already, maybe it’s time to do so.

Just like the emergency drills of our youth, it’s best to practice these skills before the storm comes. Here are some things to consider (Nash, 2017). They aren’t intended to solve the crisis, but are to help you cope as you move through the storm:

1. Take a few deep breaths. Sounds simple, doesn’t it? However, in an emergency, we tend to take shallow breaths, which promote a panic response throughout our body. So, practice taking slow, deep breaths to encourage a sense of calm.

2. Try to ground yourself in the here and now. This is easier to do once you’ve concentrated on your breathing. Notice what you hear, see, smell, taste, and feel throughout your body.

3. Change your instinct. Do you want to walk/run away? Maybe you want to sleep, watch TV, or turn to food and beverages as an escape.

4. Consider whether you need support or advice (in a crisis we normally do!). Ask for help; do you know who to ask?

5. Make lists and a plan for action. To-do lists can be created on paper or digitally; use whatever works best for you.

6. Be kind to yourself.

Kostigen (2014) presents specific actions to take before, during and after a variety of extreme weather conditions. Recommendations for actions to take before an event focus on being knowledgeable of the pending event, preparing yourself and your environment, and avoiding the brunt of the storm if possible. During the storm, keep yourself as safe as possible (i.e. remain indoors, find a dry shelter, be careful when walking through water). Afterwards, check for problems resulting from the storm and clean up areas that were affected (e.g. sewage may have backed up and this contaminated water isn’t safe to play with).

How can you apply this to Departmental Research Administration?

What are your storms?
- Last minute notification of a proposal submission
- Revised budget/scope of work
- PI is transferring an award to/from your institution
- Overspent account
- Late reports to the sponsor

Before: The anticipation of the event can create anxiety. This heightened state of alert is more common when you experience “disasters” often. Be prepared; read the guidelines and/or award terms and conditions. Stay in contact with your research investigators; ask them early and often to tell you what they have coming up. Gather resources/tools for management of your pre-award and post-award actions. If you haven’t done so already, document your best practices in a manual/workbook. Practice items 1-6 above.

During: The event can cause you to make poor eating choices, not get enough sleep, and not drink enough water; affecting your health. Remain calm and attend to your physical and mental health needs as well as the work needs. Remember to continue to practice items 1-6 above.

After: You may want to evaluate what processes worked well and what didn’t. You can then use this information to improve your processes, which will prepare you for better outcomes next time. Clean up your files and put them away.

References


Diane M. Meyer is a Pre-Award Project Manager of the Grants Hub at Iowa State University. She has been in sponsored programs for 20 years. She can be reached at meyerd@iastate.edu
THANKS TO OUR OUTGOING VOLUNTEER LEADERS!

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

Thank you to the following volunteers, who are completing their service terms in 2018:

Executive Committee
Barbara Gray, East Carolina University, Immediate Past President
Shannon Sutton, Western Illinois University, Treasurer

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Ralph Brown, Colorado School of Mines
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Craig Reynolds, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Departmental Research Administration Workshop
David Schmidt, Colorado State University, Financial Research Administration Workshop
Leslie Schmidt, Montana State University, Financial Research Administration Workshop
Marianne Woods, Johns Hopkins University, Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop

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

If you are interested in becoming more involved with your professional association, visit NCURA’s Volunteer Central to learn more about available volunteer opportunities. Please contact Maggie McCool, Staff and Volunteer Services Associate, for more information at mccool@ncura.edu or by calling 202-466-3894.

We have worked hard to ensure this list represents all of our volunteers completing service terms, but if we missed you, please accept our apology and our sincere thanks for your contributions to the research community.
While most federal agencies allow for exceptions in these types of exceptional situations, we cannot always rely on the dedication or availability of our staff to log-in from home to submit proposals, or process awards and other actions when your organization is officially closed. Having a sound plan for how to resume essential functions is critical; and as with any plan, communication is key.

How does emergency preparedness differ from business continuity planning? The primary goal of emergency preparedness is to safeguard people from harm and the first objective is to direct people to safety. Emergency preparedness planning focuses on raising awareness through the assessment of risks, assigning roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency, and conducting training and drills. The primary goal of business continuity planning is on restoring essential business processes as quickly as possible either in normal or alternate business locations. The focus is on mitigating the disruption of business and getting back to work.

Continuity Guidance Circular 1 (CGC1) Continuity Guidance for Non-Federal Entities issued December 9, 2013 in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security and other non-federal partners provides guidance to non-federal entities for the development of continuity plans and programs. Continuity planning facilitates the performance of essential functions during emergencies or other situations that may disrupt normal business operations. Some federal contracts may require such plans as a condition of award.

Developing an emergency preparedness plan is essential regardless of the geographic location of your institution. Your employees are your most precious resource so it pays to plan accordingly. The most effective plans are made...
by the employees themselves, as the more buy-in employees have in the process, the more likely they are to follow the process. The best person to lead your emergency preparedness planning committee likely isn’t the person in charge of leading your organization. An emergency preparedness team can plan for the unexpected. Allowing employees to self-select onto this team provides a great opportunity for your employees to engage.

In contrast, a business continuity plan should be championed by the leadership team for your organization. The leadership team will be expected to mobilize and provide guidance to the rest of the team in the event of an emergency that forces a disruption of business. An effective business continuity plan will mitigate disruption of services and focus on the continuity of essential business functions. Scenarios such as lack of water, power, staff, and infrastructure are difficult to imagine but must be considered.

The process begins with understanding your institution’s broader plan and procedures. It is critical to ensure your plan fits into the overarching strategic plan for your organization and addresses gaps that do not fully address the unique challenges relative to research administration. Your institution has probably done an adequate job of assessing the risks faced by your institution. For example, coastal states directly impacted by hurricane threats will have a concern for the impact of wind and tidal surges while inland states will be concerned about the ancillary impact of ice storms, tornados, and flooding. Scenarios can be helpful tools for planning as they provide tangible examples.

One of the intangibles that cannot be measured with any degree of accuracy is the psychological impact an emergency event may have on individuals or a community. That should factor into any recovery plan. As indicated above, making it clear that ensuring the well-being of your people is your top priority is paramount to getting buy-in and cooperation. Productivity in the best of times is not 100 percent and in the wake of any major disruption or catastrophe, productivity will be impacted.

The following tips are derived from a thoughtful, if not totally thorough, process implemented at an institution that is no stranger to weather alerts and by someone who has experienced the gamut of emergency situations: an active shooter on campus, campus-wide evacuation due to a bomb threat, a flood in the tunnel where the informational technology surges while inland states will be concerned about the ancillary impact of ice storms, tornados, and flooding. Scenarios can be helpful tools for planning as they provide tangible examples.

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The following tips are derived from a thoughtful, if not totally thorough, process implemented at an institution that is no stranger to weather alerts and by someone who has experienced the gamut of emergency situations: an active shooter on campus, campus-wide evacuation due to a bomb threat, a flood in the tunnel where the informational technology hub was located causing loss of internet service, and winter weather events in the underprepared South.

- Ensure all staff and, ideally, all principal investigators, are compliant with your institution’s emergency notification system. Having current contact information for your staff, including mobile phone numbers, is essential. Make sure that any visitors or temporary workers on your campus are aware of how to sign up for emergency notifications. It will not bode well for you if you fail to tell any visiting auditors about this process.

- Be weather and security aware and vigilant. If something doesn’t look right on campus, notify campus police.

- Assign roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability of everyone. Assign safety coordinator designations with alternates who can shepherd everyone to the appropriate spot, whether shelter-in-place or evacuation of a building. Whether it is a brightly colored hat or vest, make sure those individuals are easy to spot in a crowd. Those safety coordinators should be willing to be the “last ones out” and are responsible for making sure that everyone has evacuated the building, including restrooms, training/meeting rooms, and break rooms.

Finally, it cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to practice through mock drills or at least remind your staff of the need to stay prepared and aware of the plan. As mentioned above, in a true emergency and in the absence of a leader, the best laid plans may be for naught. During a campus evacuation, the leader of an office was at a remote location when the evacuation order was issued. She arrived at the predetermined meeting place for her office only to see that neither of the coordinators were wearing their “marshal” vests. In the frenzy, no one had checked the training room. Several employees and guests with no cell phones or other means of knowing about the emergency were left behind. Not only did this create an additional crisis situation during the event, but didn’t do a lot for some office relationships for a while.

Remember, planning is the first step. You must practice, observe, and revise as necessary. After each drill or actual event, take time to review what worked well, what was perhaps suboptimum, and revise the plan. Planning for the unexpected is a process rather than a one-time action.

"Planning for the unexpected is a process rather than a one-time action."

- Consider the implications of any plan on staff or visitors who may have permanent or temporary disabilities—especially if your office is on an upper floor. Ensure everyone knows the location of stairs and exit doors. For those who need assistance or are unable to use the stairs, ensure they have a clear understanding of where to go and wait for assistance in the event of a building evacuation.

- Planning helps but experience tells us that there will be lapses in procedure without a strong written plan and checklist; for example, leaving several people in a training session during a building evacuation.

- Plans should be reviewed and updated at least annually and ideally following any emergency event. Assess what worked and didn’t work, and update checklists and procedures based on gaps in performance while the gaps are fresh on everyone’s minds.

- Involve the staff. Having their input will generate better compliance, a more effective and informed plan, and increase their willingness to go above and beyond to ensure success.

Susan Wyatt Sedwick, PhD, CRA, CSM, is a senior consultant with Attain LLC. She has over 24 years of experience in research administration at The University of Texas at Austin, The University of Oklahoma, Norman and Texas A&M University-Kingsville. She served as the chair of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Phase V, 2008-2014. She can be reached at ssedwick@attain.com

Andrea Deaton, CRA, is Associate Vice President for Research and Executive Director, Office of Research Services, at University of Oklahoma. She can be reached at adeaton@ou.edu
From September 25th to October 1st, under the auspices of the BILAT USA 4.0 Project, NCURA organized several Horizon 2020 workshops around the United States as part of its BILAT USA 4.0 US tour. This special workshop series, which was held in Atlanta, Chicago, and Tempe, intended to open discussion on funding opportunities for US faculty and researchers, specifically on how research collaboration can be increased between Europe and the United States through Horizon 2020 (H2020). The workshop series provided an overview of how to participate in Horizon 2020, legal and financial issues and their complexities, additional resources for US-EU research collaboration, as well as hands-on training and exercises to write a professional and competitive proposals for Horizon 2020.

The BILAT USA 4.0 Project, funded by the European Union, has the overall aim to enhance, support, and further develop the research and innovation cooperation between Europe and the US. Horizon 2020 is the EU’s biggest Research and Innovation program with approximately €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020), in addition to the private investment that this money will attract. It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries, and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market. However, the participation of non-EU countries in Horizon 2020 might not be as straightforward as it sometimes seems and could be much higher and much more successful. Even in the final three years of Horizon 2020, there are still many opportunities for funding. NCURA is co-coordinator of BILAT USA 4.0. Within this project ETH Zurich is also a partner and earlier this spring had organized an EU tour to raise awareness on and promote various cooperation and US funding opportunities between Europe and the US. As a complementary deliverable, NCURA organized this US tour to increase US awareness and expertise in Horizon 2020. Lead faculty for the BILAT USA Tour were Jennifer Ponting, Director Pre-Award Services, Office for Sponsored Programs, Harvard University, Nicolas Schulthess, Program Manager, the Institute of Photonic Sciences (ICFO), and Annika Glauner, Senior Policy Advisor and Head of Research Development at EU GrantsAccess, ETH Zurich/University of Zurich.

The workshops took participants through the most important information needed to write an application. This includes: how Horizon 2020 relates to EU policies; the common problems in proposal writing; and criteria for the success. The program provided tips on how to collect information, how to select strategic partners and how to develop a strategy for proposal writing. Additionally, the workshop provided an overview and the history of framework programs as well as an introduction to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship and the European Research Council (ERC) Grant.

The workshop also introduced priority topics for EU-US collaborations and rules of participation in Horizon 2020 as a US university, alternative ways of participating/collaborating, and the Implementing Arrangement. The final part of the workshops included Horizon 2020 in practice, and faculty walked participants through the Participant Portal.

An Atlanta participant commented “Really helpful! very engaging presentation, useful tips and information, and wonderful enthusiasm for supporting research!”

In all, we should continue to expect the cross-border collaborations in research teams to continue, and the US-European partnership will continue to be a major component of this trend. We expect that the BILAT USA 4.0 workshops have provided deeper knowledge and practical skills for research administrators in the US and in Europe to facilitate these collaborations while taking advantage of useful references and compendiums to navigate the complexities of international research administration.
The 4th Annual Research Manager and Administrator Network Japan (RMAN-J) Conference

By Tokiyasu Teramoto, Takuya Murata, and Kazuyo Shiroya

On September 19 and 20, 2018, the 4th Annual Research Manager and Administrator Network Japan (RMAN-J) Conference was successfully held in Kobe, a famous historical port area most popularly known for “Kobe Beef” in Japan. With the theme of “Communication, Collaboration & Creation by University Research Administrators (URAs),” the conference was organized by a collaboration of the RMAN-J and the Annual Conference Executive Committee at Kobe University. Approximately 700 people participated in the conference, which is the highest number of participants of any previous RMAN-J conference, and we expect more to attend the conference as the number of the participating organizations in the RMAN-J increases.

History of URA in Japan and Aim of RMAN-J
We provide a quick introduction of the University Research Administrator (URA) and RMAN-J. In Japan, the history of the URA began when the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology undertook the “Development of systems to nurture and secure research administrators” in 2012. RMAN-J, established in 2015, is a group of research administrators working in universities, technical colleges, inter-university international institutions, independent administrative agencies, local independent administrative agencies, special corporations, and other public research institutions. The network contributes to strengthening research capabilities of universities and other institutions in Japan through information exchange on establishing and deploying organizations; training and capacity building of research administration personnel; and discussions for sharing and resolving issues. It aims to contribute to the promotion of academic and scientific technology as well as innovation.

Specific Contents of RMAN-J
We have six specific contents of RMAN-J:
1. Activities that contribute to business collaboration among members of the society, construction, and operation of a nationwide system.
2. Workshops and seminars for the purpose of human resource development and certification of competence.
3. Promotion of exchange and dissemination of information on universities’ research administration work.
4. Communication, exchange, dialogue, and cooperation with domestic and international organizations and alliances.
5. Enlightenment and dissemination of activities of universities’ research administrative work.
6. Other necessary projects to achieve the purpose of the society.


Preparation Policy for 4th RMAN-J Annual Conference
The RMAN-J annual conference has been held three times in the past (in Shinshu, Fukui, and Tokushima) with the aim of learning and sharing knowledge and methods as well as forming new networks by gathering stakeholders on research management and administration including URAs, once a year. RMAN-J has launched a committee within their steering committee for this conference and accumulated enormous expertise on annual conference management from the past three conferences. In this conference, we incorporated previous expertise and further tried to systematize our expertise in management. In addition, we worked on the preparations following our six policies:
1. In order to satisfy the participants, we aimed to manage the conference and produce the contents of the program in an enriching and vibrant manner.
2. In preparation towards hosting of the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) 2020 in Japan, we set up four special international sessions and began to accumulate expertise on hosting international conferences.
3. In order to encourage participants’ personal announcements and further assist individual achievements, we established and formulated rules for a new individual award for oral and poster presentations.
4. As a useful session for building networks among participants, we implemented a convention program, which we have been carrying out with volunteers, to enhance participant networking. As a result, the burden on caretakers was reduced.
5. Aiming for sustainable and efficient convention management, we organized and systematized the management expertise that we have cultivated up to the present time.
6. We reviewed the corporate advertisement content at the conference and made a more comprehensive list for sponsored companies.
Program and Participants of the 4th RMAN-J Annual Conference

In this conference, we held 31 oral sessions and 48 poster presentations for two days. We had two special sessions by guest speakers from the concerned government agencies, executives of academia, and industries. These sessions focused on roles that universities and URAs play in the acceleration of innovation and enhancing research activities as well as university managements. For the first time, we organized four international sessions for enhancing international corroboration between Japan and other countries, and invited chairpersons from NCURA, EARMA, and SRA International. We also founded a poster and oral presentation prize to encourage the URA activities. The other 24 sessions consisted of topics that were of high concern to the members of RMAN-J such as pre- and post-award grant activities; enriching research or university management skills; IR (Institutional Research); methods for alliance between academia and industries and networking.

Six hundred and ninety-six marked the highest number of participants in attendance (419 participants in 2015, 514 participants in 2016, and 559 participants in 2017). This was partly because RMAN-J is in a growth period. The total number of participating organizations was 170, which has remarkably increased in the past three years (116 in 2015, 140 in 2016, and 146 in 2017). There were participants from 100 domestic universities, 21 ministries and agencies, five foreign institutes, and 27 companies. The participants from other countries came from the US and Europe. There were 491 participants from domestic universities, which was the largest number in the past three annual conferences.

New Individual Award for Oral and Poster Presentations

The individual presentations were divided into nine topics, with 15 oral and 48 poster presentations in this conference. The nine topics were as follows: (1) Organization and human resource, and role of RA office, (2) Research strategy and IR, (3) Pre-Award, (4) Post-Award, (5) Expert works, (6) Cooperation with industry-government-finance-academia, (7) International, (8) Human resources development for academia, and (9) Others. The oral presentations were conducted in three rooms. Each of the two judges (senior and young RMAN-J committee members) evaluated from the four viewpoints of the review. After that, vice-presidents and senior committee members conducted a panel examination as first evaluations and chose three winners.

The posters were on display at all times during the conference with two presentation core times. The three winners of the poster presentations were decided by votes from the conference participants. All participants could vote for up to three presentations.

In the voting results, 101 participants voted and three winners were selected from three topics: (1) Organization and human resource, and role of RA office, (3) Pre-Award, and (6) Cooperation with industry-government-finance-academia.

From the results, it was established that many URAs were mostly interested in topics 1 and 2, because they had the largest number of presentations and votes. Interestingly, topics 5 and 8 gathered relatively large numbers of votes, although they had the smallest number of presentations. There were a few specialists of these topics; however, many URAs were interested in these topics. We congratulated the winners and hope that individual awards will be of higher status in future annual conferences.

Finally, we hope that many people worldwide will be interested in participating in our RMAN-J annual conference and the INORMS 2020 in Hiroshima. The next RMAN-J annual conference will be held in 2019 in Tokyo, Japan.

For the first time, we organized four international sessions for enhancing international collaboration between Japan and other countries.

Results of Poster Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th># of Presentations</th>
<th># of votes in topic</th>
<th>Average</th>
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</thead>
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<td>71</td>
<td>7.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research strategy and IR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5.40</td>
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<td>Pre-Award</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Award</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>5.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expert works</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperation with industry, government, finance and academia</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human resources development for academia</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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</table>

Tokiyasu Teramoto, PhD, is a research administrator in the Academic Research Management Section, Office for Academic and Industrial Innovation, Kobe University, Japan. He has worked as a URA for 9 years at Kobe University and Kanazawa University, after his academic research in entomology. He can be reached at teratoki@gold.kobe-u.ac.jp

Takuya Murata, PhD, is a research administrator at Kobe University. He is a molecular and developmental biologist as well as a geneticist. He has worked at RIKEN and Kumamoto University. He can be reached at murata@people.kobe-u.ac.jp

Kazuyo Shiroya, PhD, is a research administrator in the Academic Research Management Section, Office for Academic and Industrial Innovation, Kobe University, Japan. He has been engaged in geological research and worked at the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology from 2011 to 2015. She can be reached at k-shiroya@panda.kobe-u.ac.jp
The end of the summer and beginning of fall conjure up thoughts and feelings that could either be happy or cause for concern when you think about hurricane season and the looming winter. For me personally, the changing of seasons is a happy time of family gatherings and fun projects (i.e. baking). For others, it’s a time for gathering supplies and preparing for the coming changes in weather and conditions in their environment.

The common definition of weathering a storm is: “If you ‘weather the storm’ or ‘ride out the storm’, you survive/come through a difficult situation or period without being seriously harmed by it.” I like to call these ‘challenges’ in research administration, whether those storms are in the form of a person, a process, a regulation, or a deadline.

There are no roles I’m aware of in research administration that are free from challenges, however some of the challenges you encounter may lean toward extreme. The challenges generally cross all industries and organizations, and include areas such as proposal preparation and submission, award set up, award management, PI transfers (in and out), the never-ending flow of students (in and out), and award closeout, to name a few.

What may appear to be minor challenges for one person may be a major challenge for another, such as a new employee. For the manager it may be a minor challenge getting a new employee set up in their role. For the new employee, it may be a major challenge starting a new job, taking a promotion, transferring to a new organization or department. Both have to keep in mind that the long-term goal they are working toward is success in whatever form it takes. Their paths may be adjacent and aligned but not exactly the same.

In my career, I have weathered many storms including extreme conflict between a direct report and a PI; unauthorized purchases; unanticipated funding reductions; planned workforce reductions; last-minute proposal submissions, financial reports, and invoices; changing agency deadlines; and the impact of changes in the top layer of management at institutions. Other challenges include disengaged supervisors/staff, micromanaging supervisors, being the recipient of potentially damaging advice, unacceptable behavior in the workplace, inheriting unskilled workers, and having a ‘revolving door’ with staff when positive change comes too slowly.

I am dealing with a staffing shortage right now and my first reaction is to protect my remaining staff by picking up work that would otherwise fall to them because I can’t afford to replace them too. However, this is a disservice to me and to my staff. I don’t want to be the manager who dumps everything, but I also don’t want to be the manager who doesn’t share and provide...
When I take on too much I begin to spin in circles, and pretty soon that’s all I am doing. I think I look like Wonder Woman but others think I look like the Tasmanian Devil, and I didn’t even get a cool costume!

I have tried over the years to lead by example, remain poised and professional, stay silent rather than respond in kind when a response could escalate a situation, and am still working on facial expressions! There is no one who handles every situation perfectly but each situation is an opportunity for learning and growth. Be open to offers of assistance, be fair to yourself because you can’t do everything, be honest with your staff and supervisors about what can and can’t be achieved, and always have plan B (and maybe C) in your back pocket.

When I was participating in NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute, one of my classmates mentioned “emotional hijacking” and I use this phrase today when I encounter an especially difficult situation. My interpretation is that when someone purposefully pushes your buttons, you react emotionally and are hijacked or diverted from the issue at hand. Keep this in mind when you find yourself in those situations and think before you speak or react. When you can no longer be emotionally hijacked, the focus remains on the business issue and what needs to happen to resolve it. This has a huge impact both professionally and personally, and is a triumph each time you’re able to maintain your poise.

With so many storms, why are we still working in this field? We are engaged and invested in our roles because we love what we do, and for the most part, the people we work and interact with. I tell people that I’m not a scientist but have seen the benefits of the science. From holding a polymer in my hand to changes in drugs to benefit aids-related illnesses (thank you to my PI’s). I did not grow up thinking I’d be a research administrator, but I do love the industry and the variety of job options we are exposed to.

The key to surviving the storm is being flexible, resilient, open, retaining a sense of humor, remembering that this is my job (not my life even when I’m working too much), and that I’ve chosen to be where I am today. When I feel the need for a break to regroup, I get up, leave my desk, leave my office, and walk for a cup of coffee. This has multiple effects and benefits — it gives my mind and body a brief break, it forces me to put down the item(s) I was stuck on/troubled by, and the best reason of all is that I get a fresh cup of iced espresso! This keeps me sane and I come back ready to look at the challenges with fresh eyes.

It is also helpful to have a colleague or two that you can use as a sounding board when faced with new or unique challenges. Remember, you are not alone in this profession and other people may have had similar experiences that may benefit you. And while everyone is busy, most are willing to share. Find something that works for you when you’ve hit your wall — a call, a walk, chocolate — and remember why you’re working in this profession. We have all weathered some kind of storm in our lives — are you a survivor?

Jennifer Crockett, BS, MBA, Exec MPAs, is Assistant Vice Provost, Research Accounting and Financial Compliance at the University of Massachusetts Boston. A graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute, Columbia University, Suffolk University, and the University of Massachusetts Boston, her work spans departmental and central responsibilities. She can be reached at jennifer.crockett@umb.edu
What lessons do international research management fellows take from their time in the United States?

**Lessons from IREX’s University Administration Support Program**

By Rebecca Ward

Sometimes looking at our practices through the eyes of others can lead to fresh understanding. So, what are the dominant lessons that international research management fellows take from their time observing practices in the United States and can we learn anything from them?

Since 2002, IREX has been running the University Administration Support Program (UASP), most recently with a focus on research management. The program aims to improve the skills of mid- to senior-level research managers across Africa and Eastern Europe enabling them to improve their institution’s ability to compete and collaborate internationally, win international research funding, and transfer knowledge and technology to the economy. In 2016-2017, 26 fellows spent six weeks in the United States; most of this time was spent embedded within a university research or knowledge transfer office. In their final week, fellows spent time reflecting on their experiences and identifying dominant lessons. These are shared below.
Research Culture
Despite the considerably greater resources available to U.S. research managers, when reflecting on what makes research ‘work’ in U.S. institutions, fellows repeatedly returned to ‘soft’ factors such as culture and relationship management. Undoubtedly, resource-rich institutions have a range of incentives in their toolbox (e.g. reduced teaching loads, performance-based bonuses, and royalty rights) but efforts to build collegiality and collaboration and to create a vibrant, supportive environment were perceived to be just as important for incentivizing research. Participants were particularly impressed by efforts to showcase research work, create communities of practice, to publicly recognize and celebrate research success, and to identify role models and champions to encourage and mentor staff.

Strategic Approach to Research and Fundraising
Fellows observed that the most successful research-intensive universities approach research fundraising as a strategic function, ensuring they understand donor priorities and proactively shaping the research agenda through lobbying and engagement with governments and major funding agencies. Once funding priorities at the local, regional, national, and international level are understood, institutions tailor their effort to align with these.

In line with the current global funding trend toward ‘grand challenges’ and interdisciplinary research, fellows also noted that many of their host institutions had established mechanisms to support this in their own institutions, breaking down silos, and encouraging cross-faculty work, including collaboration between the humanities, social and natural sciences. Interdisciplinarity was promoted at all levels of the university, for example through the development of research clusters aligned to global problems, cross-faculty project competitions at undergraduate and post graduate level, and programs that deal with societal challenges and grand challenges.

Visibility and Communication
Fellows noted that their host institutions also took a strategic approach to raising the institution’s visibility. In addition to traditional outputs such as publications and conferences, this included requiring staff to have complete and current profiles on the university website, encouraging or mandating use of research-focused and generic social media platforms (e.g. research gate and Twitter), establishing institutional repositories, and systematically communicating research results through a variety of channels including news media, YouTube and Facebook. Fellows recognized that the ability to communicate research in a meaningful and engaging way is a competency actively developed in research staff, including training on communicating to non-experts, developing ‘elevator pitches’, and using storytelling techniques to talk about research outputs.

Researcher Development
Fellows noted U.S. universities are increasingly thinking in terms of a ‘Researcher Pipeline,’ which begins at the undergraduate level and steers promising young researchers through a program of experiential learning, mentoring, and training. They were impressed by universities who took undergraduate student research seriously, for example by mandating research projects in the undergraduate curriculum, providing student access to laboratory space, providing small grants for student research projects, and providing post-graduate and post-doc mentoring for students. Emphasis was placed on developing a research culture and exposing students to the possibilities of an academic career as early as possible.

The provision of comprehensive skills and support programs for early career researchers was also a standout feature, with mentoring and formal training observed in host institutions, including research methods, management and personal development skills. Fellows were impressed that universities consciously sought to identify known stress points such as peer review and rejection and ensured that supervisors, mentors, and administrators were equipped to deal with the pastoral support required.

Data Informed Decision Making
Finally, fellows noted that all host universities supported their strategic planning with strong institutional research and data management – collecting robust data and, most importantly, using this data for institutional learning and to inform decision making. Notably, this was perceived to drive transparency and accountability ensuring that institutions and individual researchers are both highly transparent about the funding that they have received and are highly accountable for their performance.

So, can we learn anything from these observations? Many of the fellows’ institutions understand that there are policy and procedural requirements to successfully access international collaborations and grant funding. They are taking steps to address these, professionalizing research management, and establishing organizational structures that reflect those in the “Global North”. But it is interesting to note that, when asked to pull out the dominant lessons, fellows focus predominantly on the actors in the system...
and the relationships between them. Lower cost “soft” actions, such as identifying the stress points in researchers’ careers, developing support structures and competencies to address these, and creating a supportive and celebratory culture for research were highlighted as critical success factors. This focus on individuals is a reminder that no matter how sophisticated our structures and systems, it is the actors within them that make research management work.

IREX is working closely with the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and universities in Eastern Europe to identify the 32 fellows who will be supported in 2018 (September – November) and 2019 (January – March) and is currently seeking host U.S. institutions. In the last cycle, 92% of hosts indicated that the host experience not only supported the professional development of the fellow, but was also valuable for their own university. Alumni surveys capturing fellows from as far back as 2002 indicate that approximately one third of fellowships have resulted in formal collaborations or partnerships between the fellows’ and host institutions, including exchange programs, joint development of training modules, joint grant applications, joint summer study abroad programs, and joint research. If you are interested in participating in the UASP program as a host or guest speaker, please contact uasp@irex.org.

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

1. Participating countries are Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine in Eurasia, and ARUA members in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Rebecca Ward is a Senior Technical Advisor in the education practice at IREX. She can be reached at rward@irex.org.

“IT’S A CHAIN OF RESEARCH, A CIRCLE OF RESEARCH: ESTABLISHED FACULTY MENTOR POST-DOCS, POST-DOCS MENTOR POST-GRADS, POST-GRADS MENTOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS”
Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 13th Annual Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA) Conference! There’s no other destination on earth quite like Las Vegas, and no better place to host the conference than at The Mirage, the original center-Strip mega-resort, with its iconic volcano firing nightly.

This year’s theme, “Lucky #13: Odds-On-Favorite !o...Learn. Connect. Lead.” accentuates how you can find success at the intersection of preparation and opportunity. More than just a collection of professional development offerings, you will be able to immerse yourself to...

Learn: Whether you’ve been in research administration for less than one week at a predominantly undergraduate institution or more than twenty years in a department at a top ranked research institution in the world, it’s a sure bet there are Workshops and Educational Sessions from mainstay tracks designed to meet your educational needs. You’ll gain insights, for example, on federal hot topics and regulation changes, developing more competitive applications, and cultivating and managing global relationships.

Connect: It’s a research administrator jackpot: Dr. Laurie Santos will deliver the Keynote Address. Drawing from her course “Psychology and the Good Life,” the most popular class in Yale’s 300-year history, you’ll learn what psychological research says about what makes us happy and how to put those strategies into practice. Interact with new and long-time friends at breakfast roundtables, networking luncheons and refreshment breaks, plus dinner groups. The connections you make today become the go-to contacts you’ll leverage tomorrow for knowledge, advice, and opportunities.

Lead: You don’t have to be a high roller to engage in Educational Sessions from special tracks including career development, leadership, research development, and sponsored research administration. You’ll recognize the attitudes and actions necessary, for instance, to implement best practices at your institution, chart your long-term career trajectory, and inspire staff and supervisors to become their best selves.

As you can tell, PRA is the natural choice: a premier conference event that sets you up in local and global contexts with the research administration knowledge you need presently and the professional networks you need for the future. Let’s go all-in to make “Lucky #13” your best PRA conference ever and Support Research...together!

PRA Conference Co-Chairs,

Jeremy Miner
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Dan Nordquist
Washington State University

Las Vegas

Odds-on-favorite to
Learn. Connect. Lead.
Many people hear of or talk about collaboration and think that it refers only to working on a project with another person or team: completing a task, developing a presentation or even writing an article. But collaboration can be something much more than tasks such as these. As a leader or as a strong contributor to your office, collaboration can and should be, a state of mind.

The definition of collaborate, “…to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor” (Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, retrieved 2018), identifies that this is not always project focused. Collaboration can offer brainstorming opportunities to solve an issue that has arisen – to reach out to your colleague or a group of colleagues to discuss something you have never encountered before and either learn from their experience, or work together to define and address the issue or situation you are encountering.

Often associated with teamwork, collaboration offers opportunities to become more productive, to hear other ideas, to get another perspective, or even just to talk about what works and what doesn’t. It provides the ability to tap into the strengths of everyone involved, even when they differ.

Early in my career, project collaboration made me nervous. Would I be able to pull my weight, would others think me inferior? These were the thoughts running through my head – collaboration left me feeling exposed. I wasn’t sure how to approach the collaboration process, so I remained reserved and didn’t put myself out there too far and risk being “discovered” as being under-developed in my experience or lacking in my ability to contribute at the same level as my peers. I was lucky enough to quickly learn that it was better to speak up and take a chance. In many cases I was contributing a perspective, not necessarily just expertise. And frankly the more collaborative projects I participated in, the more I gained in expertise as well as my confidence.

I argue that collaboration does not and should not happen only in project environments. Instead, it should be the daily goal in your workplace. In an office that is working well, collaboration should be part of the way you work as a team. In research administration, I have found that being collaborative can be synonymous with being collegial. To not only be available to participate in resolving issues, but to work with and bounce ideas off a department administrator or faculty member, to share challenges and experiences to support a stronger relationship, and ultimately a more efficient way to work.

In one of the past institutions that I worked at, I had the pleasure of collaborating in many ways, but the most rewarding ones had to do with sharing of practices and ideas rather than specifically working on a project. One such encounter was with a colleague from the United Kingdom. He was a seasoned administrator in the central support office and was visiting our campus and others in the Northeast to gain some insight into the ways that research is supported in the U.S. In our conversations, we found many similarities but also many differences. The interactions were beneficial to both of us. In my mind, it was more collaborative than informational as we discussed the approach for addressing certain critical issues in research administration and both came away with valuable ideas to incorporate into our own institutions.

Another such collaborative encounter included interaction with a Principal Investigator (PI) and his department administrator in an effort to proactively address a complicated research project as they approached the next year of their complex state contract. Rather than follow what we had done in the past, they engaged in a collaborative approach that allowed them to learn from each other and refine their strategies as the project progressed.
past, we met to review and discuss more efficient ways to set up the project and address any issues before it began. It was very successful and very collaborative in that we both understood each other’s desired outcome. We worked together to find a way to be compliant yet attain the PI’s ultimate goal – we each gave a little, which helped us to come to a resolution that worked. When the contract renewed, we were prepared to move forward immediately on the path we had agreed upon without delay or frustration.

In any collaborative endeavor, identifying potential obstacles and resolving them in advance further enhances the collaboration process. This is most important when working with colleagues from non-U.S. countries because many times there may be cultural obstacles you may be unaware of and tripping over them will adversely impact the success of your collaboration.

In one such instance many years ago, I was working with a group of professionals in Spain. This example may be unique to this group or the time, but always reminds me of the importance of being culturally aware. Apart from the language differences (they all spoke English, I spoke almost no Spanish), there were other barriers that I was unaware of. In a group setting, as we began discussing an issue we were tasked with resolving, I found that I was the only one speaking. When I asked for individual input, I was met with almost no response. Thinking I was approaching this incorrectly, I asked if we could take a break and spoke with one of my colleagues. I found that many of the staff were not comfortable providing their opinions because I was a senior leader and in their culture, they were taught not to disagree or offer a different perspective in a large group setting with someone they saw as their superior in the work environment. Interactions where there may be dissenting opinions were to be handled individually to resolve and save face. She explained that I was making them more uncomfortable by pressing them for their input. With her guidance, she helped me navigate this cultural difference and offer them a way to provide their input by working in teams and then presenting their ideas as a group. This provided the ability to collaborate in a way that worked within the boundaries of their culture.

There are many different examples of collaboration in the workplace and research administration is no different. I believe that the work we do in support of research is no longer for that of a single contributor, but one of collaboration – of collegiality. We can learn from each other, tackle issues together and support the great work that our researchers are doing together. The result is something quite amazing and can only highlight a .

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When I recently changed institutions, one of the best compliments I repeatedly received from colleagues, department administrators and even PIs was that I had always been collaborative in my approach to working with them. My greatest wish as I left that institution was that the collaborative approach would continue with my colleagues that I left behind.

Yes, the ability to successfully collaborate is often identified as a required leadership quality. It is a mechanism to solve problems faster, innovate, build efficiencies, network and develop employee skills and expertise. And it is truly a respected and valued trait in the work environment.

Reference

Cynthia Kane is Assistant Vice President, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Lehigh University. She can be contacted at cjk418@lehigh.edu

NOTABLE PRACTICES

Business Continuity Planning:
Weathering the Storm

Business continuity plans should address what happens, among other things, in the event of a utility failure, communication disruptions, fire, explosions, inability to access the workplace, or other natural or manmade disasters. NCURA has a review program against its standards of effective sponsored programs at both the unit and central levels. One important area of focus in these reviews is the approach an institution takes to plan for business continuity. NCURA Peer Reviewers have seen notable practices in ensuring functional operations during or shortly following disruptive events.

Some of these practices include:

1. Engaging and communicating regularly with oversight committees in developing the business continuity plan so the team is ready to act when an emergency/disaster happens.
2. Proactively seeking, promoting, and communicating a business continuity plan to stakeholders best positioned to ensure sponsored programs and the research enterprise can be continued with the least amount of disruption to research.
3. Using campus-wide emergency response systems, networks, and planning a “test or drill” can help prepare individuals to implement the plan.
4. Working across divisional borders to cultivate institutional media and public relations staff to be ready to speak about research-related matters/disasters.
5. Collaborating with neighboring/nearby institutions to share resources, develop redundancy plans, and/or develop back-up plans for research animals, etc.
6. Planning for research-specific data management, storage, and information technology needs are seen as central for business continuity planning in effective sponsored program organizations.

Kris Monahan, Ph.D., is the chair of the Select Committee on Peer Review. She has participated in peer reviews and has more than 17 years of research administration experience, spanning pre-award, post-award, and research compliance at small institutions. She is the director of Sponsored Research & Programs at Providence College.

Whether you work at a research institution or a predominantly undergraduate institution, the importance of providing quality services to your faculty in support of their research and scholarship is undeniable. NCURA offers a number of programs to assist your research administration operations and to ensure a high-quality infrastructure that supports your faculty and protects the institution.

Please contact NCURA Peer Programs:
NCURA Peer Advisory Services and NCURA Peer Review Program at peerreview@ncura.edu

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It was an exciting year full of milestones for the Education Scholarship Fund (ESF). In fall 2017, the fund reached the $100,000 threshold that allowed scholarships to be issued. In spring 2018, the ESF solicited scholarship applications for the first time. After reviewing numerous applications, NCURA issued the ESF’s first scholarships to Sylvia Bradshaw (Dixie State University) and Amanda Tan (Boston University School of Medicine). In fall 2018, the ESF issued a second call of applications and issued the ESF’s third scholarship to Tammy Pratt (Clarkson University).

After scholarships began to be issued, the membership reached new levels of generosity in their contributions to the fund. The “Regional Competition” to see which region could generate the most contributions was restructured to be on a per member basis, which sparked a new interest in the challenge. Region V participated and generated more contributions in 2018 than every year combined since the ESF was created. In the end, Region II continued its strong support of the ESF and emerged as the 2018 Regional Challenge winner. Most importantly, NCURA members contributed $17,500 to the ESF between Annual Meetings 59 and 60. There will be even more to come in 2019 as the ESF is preparing to release the next call for scholarship applications, which will be released in early spring. Also, the 2019 ESF Select Committee has been formed and is excited to continue the momentum to provide financial assistance to our members seeking graduate education in research administration. Your 2019 committee will include: Jill Frankenfield, Chair (University of Maryland), Tanya Blackwell, Vice-Chair (Children’s Hospital of Atlanta), Kallie Firestone (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Laura Friedeberg (Connecticut Children’s Medical Center), Abby Guillory (University of Louisiana at Lafayette), Bonniejean Zitske (University of Wisconsin), Robyn Remotigue (University of North Texas Health Science Center), Krista Roznovsky (Stanford University), Deborah Shaver (University of Idaho), and Susanne Rahner (YGGDRASIL).

Even a little makes a difference!
The American research enterprise is an evolving, dynamic, complex system in which the “discoveries it produces are used to develop new technologies and other innovations” (Committee on Assessing the Value of Research in Advancing National Goals, p. 2). Using a system-level approach to the research enterprise, the National Research Council’s Committee on Assessing the Value of Research in Advancing National Goals contends that the benefits to society resulting from the federal government’s investment in research can be “enhanced by focusing attention on three crucial pillars of the research system: a talented and interconnected workforce, adequate and dependable resources, and world-class basic research in all major areas of science” (Committee on Assessing the Value of Research in Advancing National Goals, p. 2).

Universities that support scientists and research administrators in their quest for knowledge will benefit from having engaged, interconnected and talented people. The National Research Council report calls attention to the importance of supporting our brightest and best scientists through formal education and professional development opportunities such as attending conferences, being mentored by more experienced researchers, and collaborating with colleagues at other institutions in the United States and across the globe. The same pillars of support apply to research administrators who sustain the ongoing research enterprise with leadership, management and day-to-day service. Institutions that embrace a system-level approach and value this partnership between scientists and research administrators cultivate environments in which professional development opportunities are offered to both.

Research administrators operate in a highly complex environment where government regulations, institutional policies, and intricate procedures involving sophisticated software systems require us to have a breadth of knowledge that can be formidable. Unlike the formal educational training researchers receive through undergraduate and graduate degree programs, an undergraduate degree in research administration does not currently exist. Such a program would provide interested students with an introduction to and foundation in research administration and provide universities with a talented pool of job candidates for these important jobs. Although the handful of master’s degree programs in research administration that are currently in existence help to fill this void, most people step into this profession by accident. They accept jobs with pre- or post-award responsibilities or duties that fall within the realm of compliance. Once in their new roles, these administrators slowly begin to realize they have joined a network of people in similar roles across the world that fall within the research administration profession. Every one of these individuals “must be well-trained, engaged, and knowledgeable” to enhance the research enterprise (Kulakowski and Chronister, 2011, p 4).

Research administrators have the freedom to plot their own career trajectories and often move between department and central offices and between pre- and post-award positions to gain a variety of experiences. Fortunately, there are countless options for administrators looking for training. Many universities offer home grown training, mentoring, and job shadowing opportunities for their administrators. Additionally, professional associations that focus on general and specialized research administration subjects provide numerous choices for individuals who wish to expand their knowledge and engage with colleagues at other institutions. Furthermore, an increasing number of research administrators are pursuing professional certification as a way to demonstrate expertise and experience the personal satisfaction of accomplishing a goal.

The research enterprise cannot survive without the combined efforts of scientists and research administrators who are purposeful in their professional development. There are many paths to success in a research enterprise, but each one requires a level of expertise that can only be achieved through professional development. Continuous professional development that deepens technical knowledge, fosters leadership skills, and explores topics that span the lifecycle of awards ensures strong research administrators and scientists who are prepared to meet the ever-changing demands of the research enterprise.

Reference

By Dorothy Johnson

“Research administrators have the freedom to plot their own career trajectories”
As we were discussing how to best prepare ourselves to face this coming Swedish winter season and the darkness that comes with it, we realized that there are many lessons we can adapt and apply to the way we tackle our jobs in research administration. We’d like to share seven great tips on how to survive the Swedish winter, which are also helpful for weathering the many storms that we survive in research administration.

1. **Dress Warmly = Policies and Procedures**
   In Swedish, there is a saying, “Det finns inget dåligt väder, bara dåliga kläder,” which means there is no bad weather, only bad clothes. To survive winter in Sweden, one needs to dress warmly in layers, from the inside out. Similarly, documented policies and procedures act as insulation for an organization, protecting against the cold draught that is negative audit findings. So layer up!

2. **Be Social = Networking**
   When it’s cold and dark out, it’s easy to give in to the urge to curl up on the sofa alone and watch TV with a cup of hot cacao — and some days that’s great — but not every day. Here in Sweden, we know that the best way to combat the winter blues is to spend time with friends and be social. Being social can also pull us out of the cold darkness that is sometimes research administration. Rest assured that there are always others who have already survived the vast majority of storms that you are facing, and it can be immensely helpful to reach out to a colleague and get sound advice and hear about their experiences. It’s also extremely comforting to commiserate and not have to suffer alone, or know that you’re not the only one struggling with a specific issue. Membership in groups like NCURA and EARMA (for EU) can be a goldmine in terms of network building, collaborative learning, and professional development. In addition, web-based networks, such as NCURA collaborate, create an easily accessible community for global research administration offering a number of useful resources and platforms for information sharing.

3. **Walk in the sunshine/Take vitamin D = Prevent Controls and Detect Controls**
   During the long, sometimes harsh Swedish winters, sunlight is precious and rare. In order to get some essential vitamin D and ward off seasonal affective disorder, it is recommended to take a daily walk, in whatever light there is. This is like a preventive control in research administration, which is intended to prevent errors from happening. Just like a walk in the winter sunlight, preventive controls help avert problems so that they don’t occur in the first place through proactive management and risk reduction. Division of duties between departments and central office, management authorization and sign off requirements, and having standardized best practices in place are some examples of preventive controls.

   When a walk in the sunlight isn’t enough - perhaps if there isn’t any sunlight at all - then popping a few vitamin D tablets will help as well, just as detective controls catch errors that were not prevented by the preventive control. Regular project follow up, audits (both internal and external) and having internal US specialists serve as a help desk, are all methods that can detect errors that have already occurred before they become major issues.

4. **Set routines = Standardized best practices**
   Setting routines takes some of the guess work out of daily life, and routines can offset the seemingly eventless winter months by giving a sense of regularity that can help with warding off winter depression. Best practices based on lessons learned and evidence-based standards
create a set of guidelines, processes, and strategies that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action in many situations. In this way, best practices take the guess work out of daily research administrative life by laying out the most efficient and effective routes to ensuring success. Standardization of these best practices also ensures consistency across the board, and that all parties are utilizing the same set of guidelines for decision making.

5. **Take Advantage of it = Visit new places!**
The lake is frozen, so what? Put on your ice skates and enjoy it! The Swedes built a hotel and better yet, a bar out of ice, so why don’t you apply for the NCURAs fellowship program and/or attend an annual meeting or PRA/FRA conference? These programs offer the opportunity to see new places, all while gaining new skills for your profession! Yes, research administration can be tough, but it can also be fun and enriching, too. Take advantage of all the networking and learning opportunities available to you in so many different locations!

6. **Get Exercise = Continuous learning and training**
Building on tip #5, this one is pretty straight forward. Exercising can do amazing things for both the body and mind, keeping us strong, flexible, and refreshed – all important when weathering an actual snow storm, or a research administration storm of noncompliance, unallowable costs, and eccentric PI’s. Exercising our minds through training and learning continuously builds up our skills to make us better administrators and increases our flexibility, allowing us to be better problem solvers. Familiarize yourself with and be open to all types of trainings that are available, especially web based trainings, such as webinars, that are easily accessible and usually low cost.

7. **Embrace it = Embrace it!**
Sometimes the best approach is to just accept the situation and light a candle. So, if you get a lot of audit findings, embrace it and use the results as a tool for improvement! Audit findings can be very useful in identifying pain points. Rather than thinking of it as a bad report card, embrace audit findings as roadmaps towards improvement.

We hope that these Swedish winter tips help you in your research administration activities. But, just remember: a positive mindset makes all the difference, and it’ll be spring before you know it!

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**Tashitiana Price** is US Grants Manager at Karolinska Institutet (KI) in Stockholm, Sweden. An American implant in Sweden, she manages the financial reporting and compliance for several US projects, and also works as part of the US specialist group at KI to develop systems and best practices for the management of US awards. She can be reached at tashtiana.price@ki.se

**Anna-Karin Consoli** is EU/US Grants Manager at Karolinska Institutet (KI) in Stockholm, Sweden. She’s coordinating the administration of US federal funds in the KI central office for sponsored projects, overseeing post-award financial processes and compliance issues. She can be reached at Anna-Karin.Consoli@ki.se

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**NEITHER SNOW NOR RAIN NOR GLOOM OF NIGHT**

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NCURA Magazine | December 2018 | 29
Enhancing Faculty-Administrator Collaboration to Achieve Institutional Research Goals

By Mark Haselkorn

The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) is a cooperative effort among 10 federal agencies and 154 universities and nonprofits with the aim of improving the national research enterprise. Over the past two years, FDP has fostered a unique initiative that is working to better understand and enhance the role of faculty-administrator collaboration in achieving a successful institutional research program. This initiative, the Faculty Administrator Collaboration Team (FACT), is leveraging FDP’s unique membership and mission to achieve this goal. FDP is one of the few organizations where both faculty and administrators attend together as representatives of their organizations, but even at FDP these two groups rarely connect systematically. FACT brings together faculty and administrator teams to explore their current relationships and collaborative efforts in support of the research goals of their individual organizations, and the national research enterprise overall.

Current FACT institutions provide a diverse mix of academic research enterprises. The eleven participating institutions are: Case Western Reserve University, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, College of Charleston, Duke University, Northeastern University, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Washington. Each FACT institutional member is represented by a faculty and administrator “pair.”

FACT teams are studying the wide varieties of structures by which faculty and administration interact on both an operational and strategic level. Why do these structures exist and how do they affect the success of institutional research programs? Are they primarily historical structures that may no longer provide optimal support, or are they more sophisticated and creative structures that complement and take full advantage of dynamic institutional and national goals, organizations, and cultures?

“Qualitative interviews and quantitative data-gathering were used to explore institutional factors.”
FACT began with preliminary quantitative and qualitative studies of institutional research structures and their impact on the quality of faculty-administrator collaboration. Qualitative interviews and quantitative data-gathering were used to explore institutional factors such as:

- Research strategies, goals and priorities
- Policies and practices
- Measures of success
- Pre award development
- Post award management
- Relation between proposal output and faculty-administrator size and makeup

Early findings and impressions include:

- Institutional factors are widely diverse
- Meaningful, comparable quantitative data are extremely challenging to gather
- Both faculty and administrators feel disconnected from their institution’s research priorities and goals
- Both faculty and administrators desire more training, although they learn about policies and practices in different ways
- Faculty and administrators differ on perceptions of how their institution measures success of the research program, with researchers especially unclear
- Proposal submission is a primary area of faculty-administrator collaboration; identification of research opportunities less so
- Faculty are less focused on post award management than administrators
- Faculty tend to see themselves as doing, and want more help managing
- There is great variability in perceptions of faculty-administrator collaboration, ranging from excellent to poor
- Administrators consistently see faculty-administrator collaboration as absolutely critical; faculty consider collaboration important, but less so

FACT will be following up this preliminary work with a more in-depth analysis of the faculty-administrator collaborative process of grant development from inception to submission. We will continue with further analysis of post-submission collaborative processes in a second phase. This will include how faculty and administrator collaboration impacts related FDP issues, such as reducing administrative burden, faculty workload, and regulatory barriers to research. There will be a preliminary FACT report to FDP in December 2018 and a final report December 2019.

The success of the national research effort depends upon the success of the various institutional research programs. FACT is bringing together faculty and administrators for dialogue and joint efforts to enhance their collaboration, which is essential to that success.

“Meaningful, comparable quantitative data are extremely challenging to gather.”

Mark Haselkorn, PhD is Professor, Human Centered Design and Engineering at the University of Washington. He serves as co-chair of the FDP FACT subcommittee. He can be reached at markh@uw.edu

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**Navigating Regulatory Change**

Optimizing F&A Reimbursement

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This phrase describes a research administrator perfectly! We are always juggling priorities, dealing with deadlines, and working so hard to support our researchers. One of things that I’ve always relied upon is my sense of humor and keeping things in perspective. Not only does it help me, it helps others around me.

Humor can be a good thing when used properly, and I was witness to a great example of that goodness. Last week, a lot of us who work with a particular Federal grants management system (which will remain nameless) received a message in error. There were probably hundreds of “take me off this e-mail list” messages generated by a list-serve type of address in the “copy to” line. Of course, when one uses the “copy all” feature, this gave “e-mail proliferation” a whole new meaning.

Then one person wrote something to the effect of “What’s everyone doing this weekend? I’m thinking of grilling and watching the game.” It completely turned the e-mail string around! People started coming up with some great weekend plans, and then started attaching pictures of pets, kids, homecoming floats, etc. It was a beautiful thing to watch, even though I was deleting e-mails after enjoying the camaraderie. I loved that these respondents “flipped the switch” and responses changed from “take me off this list” to “I feel like I’ve made so many new friends” and “I’m never deleting from this list!”. Rumor has it that there’s a Facebook page for this exchange.

I really appreciate when people can take a breath, and keep things in perspective. Sometimes we get really wrapped up in our jobs, which is a good thing. That means we are dedicated to our craft. But it is also important to keep things in perspective.
Over the years, the FRA Conference has developed a reputation for its strong post-award curriculum provided by the best presenters in some of the most beautiful destinations in the country. Expectations are always high, as they should be. Therefore, when we agreed to co-chair FRA 2019 we understood this, yet readily accepted the challenge. Supported by an incredible program committee committed to excellence, we are proud to serve as co-chairs of FRA 2019 in Las Vegas.

**TRENDING NOW** represents the never-ending challenge of staying abreast of the ever-changing landscape in research administration. Today, research administrators are expected to process faster, to know more, to multi-task efficiently, all while serving as effective stewards of sponsored research funds. Often, we must learn to do more with less, and be prepared to deal with the urgencies presented in any given day, apparent or real. As such, our occupations are not for the weary. We are often blamed for circumstances beyond our control, and fast is rarely fast enough. Through it all, we are not deterred from recognizing the value of improving ourselves by developing each other. That is why conferences like FRA are so appealing for NCURA members. We attend to learn, to commiserate, and importantly to rejuvenate ourselves.

With that in mind the Program Committee has assembled what we hope to be the best FRA ever, highlighted by sessions and discussions that span the spectrum of issues that may arise by managing sponsored projects. From essential sessions such as effort reporting, service centers, subrecipient monitoring, allocability, procurement and closeouts to more refined topics such as data management, optimizing space and fixed asset depreciation, managing grants across borders, as well as a stellar federal track line-up. Of course, the FRA Conference will conclude with the always popular joint FRA/PRA Workshop Day on Wednesday, March 13th.

We invite you to peruse the FRA Program to confirm what we already know – that FRA 2019 will have something for everyone, at every level of experience.

Our keynote speaker this year is Bob Stromberg, an outstanding motivational speaker with an incredible sense of humor, known to connect with his audience while delivering a poignant yet thoughtful message. We could not think of a better FRA keynote speaker given our membership and the venue, and we could not think of a better way to kick-off FRA but with laughter and inspiration. We deserve it!

Las Vegas hosts more meetings and conventions than any other city in the world. The variety of attractions from its casinos to its shows and restaurants, make Las Vegas the perfect setting for an unforgettable conference. And, may the odds be in your favor.

**FRA Conference Co-chairs,**

Leslie Schmidt
Montana State University

Jeff Seo
Northeastern University
As early as the 1800’s, scientists have been dreaming up wild inventions to stop a drought, weaken a hurricane, or kill a tornado. In a 2013 article, Liz Burlingame discusses many attempts humans have made to control the weather, including cloud seeding to enhance precipitation, and attempting to break up hurricanes with F-4 jet fighters, a method for which University of Akron at Ohio professor Arkadii Leonov and his colleagues applied for a patent in 2008. Additionally, hail cannons have been used in the past to disrupt the formation of hailstones (Burlingame, 2013). The merits of many of these methods are debatable and often yield inconclusive results.

Still, so much depends on the weather, doesn’t it? We have all experienced the frustration of carefully designed plans interrupted due to inclement weather - a cancelled flight, a rained-out baseball game, or a looming thunderstorm forecasted for tee time. In these moments of disappointment, we may think to ourselves, “If only I could control the weather…”. “Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get” is a saying often attributed to Mark Twain. In other words, expect the unexpected, and prepare for it. Meteorologists use scientific data to explain, observe and forecast the weather. These forecasts often guide our plans and enable us to prepare accordingly. Similar to a pop-up thunderstorm, workplace disturbances are not always foreseeable on the radar. (If only there were meteorologists for the workplace, right?) Like our inability to control the weather, we are unable to control the actions and behavior of others. While none of the aforementioned inventions has been successful at stopping the weather entirely, research has shown that some have demonstrated a clear interference. Similarly, we can attempt to influence the behavior of others by using what is arguably the most powerful tool we have - communication. Specifically, an approach called coaching conversations can often help to mitigate workplace dilemmas and provide a sense of stability in the workplace climate.

Coaching conversations are a way of asking questions instead of providing advice. It is an approach that can cause others to become more self-aware and spark self-development. “Conversational coaching can be used as a way of helping someone to establish their desired outcome, make the best possible decision about a given situation, analyze a complex scenario, look at an issue from a new perspective, find a solution to a problem or simply just trigger a new or more positive pattern of thinking.” (Grant, 2014). Ultimately, the coaching conversation is intended to deepen learning, improve effectiveness, and create desired outcomes. If properly applied, coaching conversations is an artful way to modify behavior without the express knowledge that the “coaching” is taking place.

The Office of Completion and Student Success at Indiana University applies coaching conversations as an avenue to create meaningful engagements with their students. Coaching conversations are used to elevate the
interaction with the student. For example, a transactional related requirement (completing the FAFSA) can be achieved through building a rapport with the student and identifying self-management tools (active listening, boundary setting). Similarly, we can apply coaching conversations to our interactions with co-workers and PIs in a research administration setting. First, we need to be specific about the conversations we have with one another.

We can consider three variables that research has shown cause the stress index to rise among research administrators. Following are the three sustained stress factors and how each may benefit from a coaching conversation.

1. Lack of control
We can all relate to an early morning arrival to the office with our to-do list in hand, only to quickly realize it’s after 5 p.m. and we have yet to complete even one item on the list. Pending inquiries, last minute requests, unexpected personnel issues, and same-day deadlines often hijack our entire work day and leave us feeling powerless over our work environment. If we can create a conversation that recognizes the need to ask others for help and, consequently, request additional time or resources to complete a task, we may realize a sense of command over the situation. Rather than cultivate a reactive environment by instinctively responding to the largest fire, we can consider alternate responses to last minute requests, such as “When do you need me to complete that?” “I’m afraid that I currently have another commitment that requires my immediate attention,” or even, “I can respond to your request tomorrow or see if I can identify another team member who has the capacity to assist you. In the meantime, here is what I need you to do in order to work towards meeting the deadline.” This approach assumes you have the internal support required at all levels of the University. If you do not, it may require a conversation with your supervisor first to clarify priorities or request the additional resources you need in order to be successful.

2. High volume of work
Many of us who work in institutions of higher education are frequently tasked with doing more with less. This requires a thoughtful plan for our daily tasks and a manageable approach to equitable workload distribution. We may not always get it right, and it’s important to understand that progress is not always a straight line. We need to be flexible in our approach and in conversations with others so that we are poised to adjust to a goal post that is subject to move. We all have a tendency to advocate for our personal preferences when it comes time to solve a problem. For example, we may believe that the solution to a higher volume of work is to increase personnel. But when we exclude others’ ideas to solve a problem, we may lose the buy-in from necessary team members. This means that even if our idea of increasing personnel is the best one, we may not be successful in executing it. We need to convince others with strong data, a compelling argument and, ultimately, secure the additional funding. Perhaps a better starting point is to use conversational coaching with our team members: “How do you feel about your workload? Do you have the capacity to take on more?” We may be pleasantly surprised by the answer.

3. Disaster potential
Non-compliance issues, missed deadlines, and unrealistic expectations can all set the stage for disaster when managing research. Conversational coaching means asking questions instead of providing the answers. This can be done by asking co-workers and PIs additional questions that can lead to insight or allow them to arrive at a conclusion on their own. Additionally, when working with PIs on a grant or research project, if clarity is
needed, we might ask “What is the ultimate goal or outcome of your project?” or “What is it that you want to see accomplished?” If there are PIs who have difficulty delivering pieces of the proposal in time for review, a possible solution is to develop a responsibility grid to make it clear who owns each item and a date when they are due for review. Ask the question, “In order for the proposal to be submitted in a timely manner, how do you see us working as a team to get it completed?” and “What do you see as a reasonable timeline in order to have complete, compliant, and timely submission?” If it is a PI with whom you have worked on a previous proposal submission, ask a question such as “What could we do differently this time to ensure we have ample time to review before we submit to the sponsor?” Remember that a research administrator’s definition of success often differs from a PI’s definition of success. For example, a research administrator may consider a complete, compliant, and timely proposal submission a success, whereas a PI considers it successful only if it gets funded. This may help us empathize with a PI who is tweaking the final project narrative up until the final seconds before the deadline. Finally, when we ask our questions, it is important to listen carefully to the response and be prepared to ask follow-up questions in order to provide clarification.

As long as we attempt to invent ways to control the weather, there will inevitably be those of us who attempt to control the actions of others, both in and out of the workplace. As rewarding as it would be to control the weather (and let’s be honest, our PIs/coworkers, too), the reality is that we cannot. What we can do, however, is use the tools we have at hand to deal with pop-up storms that arise in the workplace climate. In a highly regulatory and policy-driven environment, achieving desired results is often challenging and requires an appreciation for competing agendas and diverse definitions of success. It is helpful to be responsive (not reactive) to criticism, listen actively, identify strengths and diagnose challenges. Understanding how to influence behavior through coaching conversation allows us to establish stronger connections with our coworkers and PIs, and may make the workplace climate a little less stormy.

References
The passing of the year brings about marked changes in the climate, including occasional storms. Recurrent changes not only impact the weather, but they also impact our mental states and physical well-being. Just as we batten down the hatches against a predicted storm, we need to be cognizant of ways to help weather the storms we encounter in the workplace. In this update, we gathered ideas from our training team to provide a storm survival kit to help you and your staff weather the storms that come your way.

Season Transition. Whether you are moving from a paper-based system to an electronic one or from actual to negotiated fringe benefits, changes can be chilling your campus. Emphasizing the positive side of the new norm can foster cozier feelings. Help establish a positive outlook by setting up informational meetings to get ahead of big changes and provide time for planning and implementation. Establishing implementation teams with all stakeholders also goes a long way in establishing buy-in.

As the snow falls. If you are experiencing a more impactful change, such as new leadership or a major reorganization, it’s critical to keep staff motivated. Changes that may have major or unforeseen effects require staff engagement, opportunities for open team discussions, and comfort in team bonding. Plan half or full day retreats to allow time for team building, sharing, and contingency planning.

Rainy days. A key staff member retires, leaving everyone feeling down like a torrential storm. Help your staff adjust to the loss and extra workloads by providing trainings in key areas where your recent retiree excelled. Additionally, use the time to do a little job-duty shuffling in ways that incentivize, revitalize, and challenge individual employees.

Heated times. Chronic, ongoing stress, like a lingering audit, requires making time to manage current chaos while preparing for the next round of storms. During times like these, a balance among time management, workload duties, and communication is essential. Consider coaching on time management for those in need. Also consider a redistribution in workloads, so that one or two key individuals are free to address issues, while keeping the team informed. Finally, plan activities that promote team building, while promoting physical and mental well-being.

Just remember, when the weather is less than desirable, address key issues and keep communicating. And as always, reach out to your NCURA community for help when a storm strikes your campus—we’re all in this together!
Paper forms, manual processes, and shadow systems have become dreaded words in a research administrator’s lexicon. In an effort to reduce administrative burden, increase researcher productivity, and create greater efficiencies and synergies, more institutions are shifting from archaic, labor-intensive methods to sophisticated, automated systems. Gone are the days of accordion-like hanging folders, replaced by a future where grant files are stored in the cloud.

NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) is a research-intensive university with a fully-integrated liberal arts and sciences college. Located in the United Arab Emirates, the institution was established in 2010 and has since experienced rapid growth in both academics and research. To support this growth and to create a long-term, sustainable administrative infrastructure, NYUAD recently began the implementation phase for a new electronic research administration (eRA) system. However, the road to get to this point has been long, consisting of several months of careful planning. Below are three key areas of consideration that were instrumental in NYUAD’s planning phase and could very well serve as helpful advice for other institutions considering an eRA system, particularly those in an international setting.

**Define the Requirements**

Every institution is unique when it comes to the policies, procedures, and processes that govern research administration, and more so in an international setting. The funding lifecycle in North America is somewhat homogeneous, with most institutions having a heavy reliance on external funding and requiring a system that addresses the pre-award, post-award, and compliance functions.

However, some international institutions may have additional, unique functions. As an example, NYUAD receives a majority of its research funds as block funding from the local government.

The funding is then distributed to various faculty and projects at NYUAD’s discretion through both competitive and non-competitive mechanisms. As such, NYUAD very much functions as its own funding agency and has a very unique requirement to review, score, and approve funding proposals.

During this definition stage, it’s also critical to identify which requirements are a must-have and which requirements are nice-to-have, with the understanding it’s unlikely that a solution can address 100% of an institution’s need (unless the institution decides to develop a home-grown system). This exercise can provide an institution with realistic and achievable expectations during the vendor selection process.

**Select the Vendor(s)**

Greater emphasis on multidisciplinary projects is a growing trend in research. Funding agencies are stressing the importance of reaching across disciplines when developing project plans, so much so that it has become a criteria for many funding opportunities. This multidisciplinary

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**Planning for Success**

*Era Systems From An International Perspective*

By Ryan Dodd
concept translates well into research administration, particularly when selecting an eRA system solution. While one vendor may not meet all of an institution’s must-have requirements, multiple vendors in partnership may be better positioned to deliver a viable solution.

During its planning phase, NYUAD defined four critical functional requirements: 1) preaward, 2) proposal review, 3) post-award, and 4) compliance. Several vendors proposed solutions that met one or more of these requirements, but not all four. Fortunately, one vendor who specialized in a traditional solution (preaward, post-award, and compliance functions) offered to partner with another vendor that specialized in competitions software (proposal review function). Together the two vendors pledged to deliver an integrated solution that met all of NYUAD’s critical requirements.

This approach of utilizing multiple vendors may also be helpful for those who have established ERP systems that have research administration modules which only address some of an institution’s eRA needs. Additional vendor(s) can be brought in to focus on those requirements that are currently not being met.

While this multi-system approach can be quite beneficial for an institution with unique requirements, it’s important to ensure that all systems are integrated and streamlined to provide a seamless solution that looks and feels like one system. Faculty members, administrators, and other end users are less likely to buy into a patchwork solution that requires multiple URLs, double logins, etc.

### Utilize All Resources and Engage All Stakeholders

This last area of consideration is intuitive in theory but sometimes difficult in practice, particularly given the complexity and scale of an eRA systems implementation. Research administration is a truly collaborative process that involves many individuals from across various units and departments. The planning and implementation of an eRA system should be approached in the same manner.

While research administrators are the subject matter experts in matters related to the lifecycle of grants and contracts, other individuals may be better suited to deliver results in other aspects of planning and implementation. IT professionals are the experts on the technical requirements such as technology architecture, integrations, and data hosting. The Procurement department can lead the solicitation process to ensure a fair competition, and they can take the lead on the contract negotiations to secure the most favorable terms for the institution. The Project Management office can be in charge of tasks, meetings, and deliverables to ensure that the project plan and timeline is met.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it’s crucial to involve the end users from the very beginning as they’ll likely provide the most valuable feedback during the planning and implementation phase. NYUAD formed an advisory board consisting of faculty members and administrators to ensure that they have a say in the process and clear visibility on the progress. Their involvement during the planning and implementation will go a long way in securing their buy in once the system goes live and ensuring success for the project.

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**Ryan Dodd** is the Associate Director of Research Administration and Grants Finance at NYU Abu Dhabi and oversees the post-award and internal funding functions. He has 10 years of experience in research administration both in the United States and abroad. He can be reached at ryan.dodd@nyu.edu

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Fifteen years ago, I was hired as Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects at a small state college. There was no office there before, I was to be the entire office, and I had been a research scientist at a small non-profit prior to this position. I went to an NCURA Fundamentals class to learn what I would be responsible for and what I had to “create”. After the two-day workshop, I called home, told my husband that I was in over my head, and would probably end up in jail.

If you are working in a small Primarily Undergraduate Institution (PUI), or a 1-2 person office, you are familiar with the feeling of being overwhelmed with all the things for which you are responsible. The certifications, the representations, the compliance issues, the regulations, the audits. Then, just when you start to feel like, perhaps, you have a handle on all that and you are getting the proposals in, and understanding the award language, and maybe you won’t go to jail, a big change happens in the field (like when Uniform Guidance was introduced) or on your campus (for instance, a new STEM center is proposed). It can feel an awful lot like being stuck on a small boat in the middle of a big storm.

Staying afloat and still having a life
It may seem hard to find balance when you have to keep up with the daily work of the entire office (submitting proposals, writing reports, answering the barrage of questions from PIs and administrators, etc.), stay current with changes at the federal regulatory level, and still have a life outside the walls of your office. As with most things, it is all about setting priorities and delegating when you can.

Identify resources on campus and take advantage of opportunities that already exist
While it may seem that you are on your own, there are probably plenty of resources available on your campus. If your office is a pre-award only office, then it is likely that your business or finance office is handling the grants accounting, the human resources department is managing hiring of grant funded personnel/student workers, the purchasing office may be handling the purchase of supplies and equipment, and many other offices have services and duties that interact with sponsored projects.

Develop allies in these other offices and resources on campus. When possible, have a liaison that is the go-to person for grants/sponsored projects. For example, if sponsored projects are (can be) identified in the accounting system with a particular accounting code, can one accountant always be the accountant for that code? Offer collaborative training opportunities.

What resources do they already have that you could tap into and use? If you have a Faculty Development group that plans and offers training sessions for faculty, work with their existing infrastructure to plan training sessions for grant writing, budget development, searching for funding. They may have the resources for the logistics planning, advertising and outreach, and refreshments that your budget does not include.

Find out when schools or departments have “all hands” meetings and ask for 10-15 minutes to do a quick review of a policy, process or an FAQ overview relevant to a particular department or school.
Identify highest priority risks

Obviously, you are responsible for compliance with all regulations and statutes, but clearly some are more likely to be of concern for your institution than others. At the Fundamentals meeting that I mentioned, the reason I was sure I would be headed to jail was because I didn’t know enough about the institution I had just joined to know what types of research we did and what the college’s risk management style was to know what was already in place. Upon learning that we did not do any clinical trials, minimal animal research, and already had an IRB, IACUC, and BioSafety team in place relieved a lot of the pressure that I was feeling. We also had a someone in the Finance office who was reviewing grant purchases for compliance and a purchasing policy that was compliant with current federal regulations. Phew! Maybe jail time wasn’t in my future after all.

With my colleague in the Finance Office we created a matrix of the federal regulations, what our risk was in terms of likelihood that it was an issue on our campus, whether there was a place on campus that addressed it, and how high a priority it was. That provided the road map for moving forward to fill in the gaps for things that needed attention.

NCURA resources:

And of course, as a member of NCURA, you are never alone in that small boat. There are multitudes of resources available to you. First there are regional and national conferences. The both generally have a PUI track. I always found the discussion group sessions to be particularly useful for hearing a range of ideas around a particular topic area and a great venue for networking.

The NCURA website (www.ncura.edu) offers valuable resources. From the homepage, hit the drop-down menu and navigate to the COLLABORATE page. Once you log in, if you aren’t familiar with Collaborate, start with the UST SHARING page. Once you log in, if you aren’t familiar with Collaborate, start with the homepage, hit the drop-down menu and navigate to the COLLABORATE venue for networking. For hearing a range of ideas around a particular topic area and a great venue for networking.

Another great resource on the Collaborate page is the Sample Policies and Procedures. NCURA members from institutions large and small have shared their policies and procedures for all sorts of topics ranging from allowable costs to whistleblower policies and everything in between. Peruse the policies and procedures; see what you can use/modify to fit your institution. You don’t have to start from scratch! It’s a great time saver and resource.

Tips and Tricks to see all that is available. There are communities you can join — discussion groups where you can post questions, share resources, etc. Each community is monitored by a team of volunteers who are members of that community. At a minimum, I recommend you join the PUI community.

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...as a member of NCURA, you are never alone in that small boat. There are multitudes of resources available to you.
**Elizabeth Adams** is now the Director, Office of Research and Project Administration at Princeton University.

**Anne Albinak** is now Director of Research Administration Operations, Whiting School of Engineering at Johns Hopkins University.

**Tolise Dailey** is now Training Manager at Johns Hopkins University.

**Tamara Hill** is now Associate Vice President, Shared Services at Morehouse School of Medicine.

**Cynthia J. Kane** is now Assistant Vice President of Research and Sponsored Programs at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA. Cynthia’s focus will be on building robust and scalable systems to support sponsored programs across the university.

**Julie Luster** is now Manager, Sponsored Research Accounting at Princeton University.

**Diane Meyer** is now the Pre-Award Project Manager for the Grants Hubs at Iowa State University.

**Mary E. Schmiedel, JD, CPCM**, is now the Senior Director, Office of Research Oversight at Georgetown University.

**Roger Wareham** is now Executive Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects at University of West Georgia.

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Fun, Chuckles, and Cool Research
Greetings Region I!

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your chair for the past year. I can’t believe the year has gone by so fast and that this is my last Regional Corner article. It has been my privilege to work with our members, volunteers, committee chairs, and committee members. Together, we have done some amazing things over the past year, including a very successful spring meeting in Portsmouth, NH, two RADG meetings, three well-attended Workshops (Essentials of Sponsored Research, Advanced Topics in Sponsored Research, and Clinical Trials) in our new location at Partners Healthcare, a Night of Networking event attended by over 75 people at MIT, and we brought to life our mascot Larry Lobster at AM60.

The great events will continue into 2019 as planning for the 2019 Spring meeting is already underway! Mark your calendars for April 27th – May 1st, 2019 at the Westin Portland Harborview, Portland, ME. Watch for registration information in early spring 2019.

Sadly, this year we learned of the passing of two members of our region family, John Kavanagh and Jim Grayson. Both were well known and respected members of Region I. Donations have been made in each of their names to their charity of choice.

I want to personally thank all the officers who have served the region during the past year. Alice Ingham, Secretary, who has served in this role for two years and Jason Hagan, Treasurer, who has worked to streamline our financial statements. To the rest of the advisory board, my many THANKS to you for all your hard work and dedication to the region, Suzanne Araujo, Secretary-Elect; Jori Barabino, Treasurer-Elect; Stacy Riseman, National Board Rep; Jill Mortali, Immediate Past-Chair; David Barnett, Profession Development Committee Chair; Laurel Donnell-Fink, Curriculum Committee Chair; John Harris, Governance Committee Chair; Laura Friedeberg, Volunteer and Membership Committee Chair; Pattie McNulty, Sponsorship Committee Chair; Kris Monahan, member at-large; Heather Dominey, member at-large; and Adam Carter, Executive Shadow member. I will be turning over the reins to the region to Donna Smith, who has many exciting ideas for the upcoming year! Donna has served as Chair-Elect and Spring Meeting Chair in 2018. She has been a major asset to the advisory board and I look forward to continuing to work with her over the next year as she becomes chair.

Happy Holidays to you all and best wishes for a happy 2019!

Denise Rouleau, CRA, is Region I Chair and serves as Associate Director, Research Administration, School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University. She can be reached at chair@ncuraregioni.org
Happy Holidays from Region III! As 2018 comes to a close, Region III is reflecting on a productive and prosperous year for research administration in the Southeast.

This year, we launched the Region III Research Administration Mentoring Program (R3-RAMP), an exciting initiative to help our members gain career-enhancing skills and experiences that will build upon the knowledge of current and emerging leaders in the field. In addition, the executive committee, regional standing committees, and other volunteers brought the benefits of NCURA membership to life by providing opportunities for members to learn, share, and network on both the regional and national levels. We would be remiss not to thank these volunteers for their efforts. Thank you all for being a part of our successful 2018! In anticipation of an even greater year to come, we want every Region III member to know that there are many ways to get involved. If you are interested in lending your time and talent to our region, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Lacey Rhea, at lacey.n.givens@ufl.edu to find out how you can get involved.

Region III is busy preparing for the 2019 Spring Meeting at Margaritaville Resort in Hollywood, FL. This meeting’s theme will be “Collaboration: Creating Connections that Count” and we’re putting together an exciting program with all the great presentation proposals we received, including more advanced level sessions that will provide members with quality professional development opportunities. A big thanks goes to the Program Committee for their tireless commitment to bringing us the best in workshops, concurrent sessions, and discussion groups. We hope to see you in Margaritaville May 4-8, 2019!

The 2018 hurricane season has ended, but not without having an impact on our region. Our thoughts are with our friends and colleagues who have been affected by this year’s storms.

Don’t forget to stay in touch with Region III and keep informed about what is happening in the region by visiting our website at www.ncuraregioniii.com, signing up for the monthly newsletters, joining the Region III Members Collaborate community, and following us on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). We look forward to sharing all the wonderful things that will happen in 2019!

Justo Torres is Chair of Region III and serves as Director, Office of Contracts and Grants at North Carolina State University. He can be reached at justo_torres@ncsu.edu

Season’s greetings! I hope you are able to spend some time considering gratitude this holiday season. Personally, I am thankful for my NCURA family and the network of experts and friends I have gained over the years. You are all smart and important members of this community.

On to NCURA Region IV news! We held our first Regional Traveling Workshop, “Sponsored Programs Essentials: Pre-Award and Post-Award” at the University of North Dakota in October. This full-day workshop provided an introduction to the lifecycle of an award and sponsored research administration. Heather Offhaus from the University of Michigan and Shannon Sutton from Western Illinois University led over 50 local research administrators in learning about concepts, strategies and best practices related to grants management. If you are interested in bringing a traveling workshop to your campus, contact Patience Grayhill, Chair of the NCURA Region IV Traveling Workshop Subcommittee at patience.grayhill@wusl.edu or Michelle Schoenecker, Co-Chair, at schoene7@uwm.edu. Thanks to everyone for their hard work in making this long-time goal become a reality!

Also in October, the Region IV Board met at the Sheraton Capitol Square in Columbus, Ohio for the fall Board meeting. This gathering provided the Board an opportunity to explore the site of our next Spring Meeting. The program is coming together nicely. Keep an eye out for opportunities to volunteer! To learn more about the 2019 NCURA Region IV Spring Meeting visit the website here: https://ncuraregioniv.com/conferences.html

Speaking of the Region IV Board, there is still time to get your application in to run for open positions. This year we are recruiting candidates for the positions of Chair-Elect, Secretary, Regionally-Elected Member to the National Board, and two At-Large members. If you are interested in running for an open position contact Kathy Durben, katherine.durben@marquette.edu. The deadline is January 4, 2019.

Until next time, have a peaceful holiday and a happy new year!

Bonniejean Zitske is the Chair of Region IV and serves as the Assistant Director for Research Financial Services at the University of Wisconsin Madison. She can be reached at bzitske@rsp.wisc.edu
Hello Region V!

It has been a great year and I cannot help but remember all the wonderful things we have accomplished. From having Region V members in attendance in the PRA/FRA conference in Florida (both attending and presenting), to the wild and rapid float ride during the Region V Spring Meeting in San Marcos; our record-breaking collection of donations going towards the Education Scholarship Fund and the recognition of two of our outstanding Region V members at the national meeting. It has been one huge rollercoaster and I am thrilled of the direction we are headed.

Planning for the 2019 Spring Meeting in Houston is in full swing. The meeting will be held at the Omni Houston Hotel on April 28 – May 1, 2019. We plan to open early registration in January 2019, so be on the lookout for an announcement in your inbox next month. Special thanks to the members of the program committee, who are evaluating presentation proposals, securing sponsorships, and planning networking events to provide a great meeting experience. If you have any questions about or recommendations for the meeting, please email Chair-Elect Katie Plum (katie.plum@angelo.edu).

I am excited to announce the officers have chosen to award out a new travel award that will assist two current members with their travel cost up to $500 to attend the Region V Spring Meeting. Current members who have five years or more experience in research administration will be eligible. Keep an eye out for the formal application process on the Region V website and eblast.

Looking for more opportunities to get involved? We are always updating our list of opportunities for member to get involved. Contact John Valenta at john.a.valenta@uth.tmc.edu for a current list.

Finally, I would like to take this time to wish all our members a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Michael R. Castilleja is Chair of Region V and serves as Grants Accounting Manager at the University of the Incarnate Word. He can be reached at micasti2@uiwtx.edu

The end of 2018 is upon us and reflection is in order! Our first regional meeting in the state of Montana took place in October and there are many to thank for its success. Thanks to the Program Committee for building and delivering a strong program and to all presenters for sharing their knowledge and expertise in line with our theme of “Education, Networking, and New Connections in Big Sky Country!” The Monday happy hour/networking activities, dinner groups, and evening night talk on Crow Indian (Apsáalooke) astronomy by Dr. Tim McKeary of Little Big Horn College were all opportunities to make the most of our time in Big Sky country and further opportunity to network with our colleagues. The keynote talk by author John Clayton was a timely examination of nearby Yellowstone National Park in light of current discussions surrounding our national parks.

Our meeting success was also thanks to the Region VI/VII Planning Committee, including Lisa Wottrich (Site Coordinator), our UC Irvine tech team, and our Volunteer Coordinators Michiko Taniguchi Pane and Natalie Bays (Region VII). I also thank the Region VII leadership, including Deb Shaver (Chair) and Jennifer Lawrence (Secretary-Treasurer) – it was a pleasure to come to your region in 2018. And a very special thank you is in order for the support of our Montana State University Billings colleagues, Cindy Bell and Jenay Cross.

At the meeting, the Region VI Awards Committee announced the regional meeting travel award winners (John Butzer, Miriam Kader, and Jenna Nakano), as well as the winners of our 2018 Region VI recognition awards: Linda W. Patton Emeritus Award: Julie Guggino, Central Washington University (retired) Meritorious Contribution Award: Michiko Taniguchi Pane, Laura Register, and Megan Dietrich (all Stanford University) for their work on the Region VI Social Media Charter Barry Dorfman Outstanding New Research Administrator: Nicole Joyce, University of California, San Diego Helen Carrier Distinguished Service Award: Rosemary Madnick, University of Alaska Fairbanks

In closing, I thank everyone for the opportunity to serve Region VI. Happy holidays and best wishes for 2019!

Kevin Stewart is Chair of Region VI and serves as Associate Director, Industry Contracts at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He can be reached at stewart@tia.ucsb.edu

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Photos from the recent joint (Regions VI and VII) Regional Meeting in Billings, Montana have now been posted: www.facebook.com/groups/NCURARegionVII

If it looks as if we were having a good time, it’s because we were!

The recent 2018 Regional Meeting was also the host location for a much-needed Strategic Planning session. Throughout this past year, our Chair-elect, Diane Barrett, has been focusing on refreshing the vision, policies and processes for Region VII, since all are badly outdated. We also wanted to bolster the Region’s identity both within the region and externally. We had a wonderful group of participants that included long-time regional members, new members, members that have recently moved from other regions, and our very special guest, Tara Bishop.

The session included lively discussions on a variety of topics:
• Discussing our regional identity
• Documenting region strengths, challenges, and opportunities
• Identifying strategic priorities for the next year
• Communicating goals, strategies, and programs to the region
• Engaging and motivating volunteers

Near-term and long-term goals were identified and members will be hearing about those soon, as part of an effort to expand communications and services to the region. As I write this, we are in the middle of elections for new regional officers. The individuals elected will support and spearhead the forthcoming growth process. Soon, you will have an opportunity to review and vote on revisions to our bylaws and the regional mascot. We hope you will support the “Region VII on the Move” atmosphere by letting your votes and your feedback steer us in the right direction.

Special thanks to Tara Bishop, Deputy Executive Director at NCURA, who has been pitching in to help with our review and implementation process as well as Barbara Inderwiesche, who acted as the facilitator for the planning meeting.

Deb Shaver, CRA, is Chair of Region VII and is the Assistant Vice President of Research Administration and Director, Office of Sponsored Programs at University of Idaho. She can be reached at dshaver@uidaho.edu

It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair this year and I thought I would take this opportunity to wrap up all the wonderful achievements in 2018:
• Our region continues to grow at a steady rate and we have finally reached the 200+ bracket for Region VIII membership!
• We continue to exceed year-on-year attendees at the NCURA national meetings with record numbers at FRA, PRA and the AM this year (85 members from 27 countries!). Our members are also getting more involved and presenting more and more at each meeting which is wonderful to see.
• Our AM travel award recipient this year was Hanna Salo from the University of Turku in Finland.
• We piloted a new partnership at the EARMA conference in Brussels this year with an ‘NCURA international’ themed track.
• We had five members from Region VIII participate in the NCURA Fellows program this year: Carole Amroune, Shaofeng Fan, Andrei Tolstikov, Nilay Papila & Susanne Rahner.

We congratulate the six members that were selected as the inaugural NCURA Global Traveling Faculty: Abiodun Tunde Adelee, Eva Bjorndal, Bella Blaher, Simon Kerridge, Julie Ward and Anders Wennstrom.

We have also been working hard behind the scenes on future initiatives which include a joint meeting in 2019 with our friends in Region II. So, save the date: 16-18 October, 2019 for the Region II/VIII Fall meeting at the Westin Jersey City Newport, just moments away from New York City!

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to your new Chair for 2019 - Bella Blaher from the University of Melbourne. Bella is a very dedicated member who has previously served as Secretary at the regional board level and is always first to volunteer to help wherever she can and will make a wonderful Chair for our growing region. I would also like to send a big thanks to Annika Glauner and Siegfried Huemer for all their support and involvement over the past few years as they step down from the Region VIII board at the end of this year.

Lastly, thank you to the Board and all the Region VIII members for all of your support and dedication this year. We can only continue to succeed and grow through your efforts. Please consider volunteering in the future — there are so many opportunities — on the board, committee member, presenter or volunteer at a meeting. You will learn and develop so many new skills and also meet a bunch of great people.

Julie Ward is Chair of Region VIII and serves as the International Research Manager, UNSW Sydney. She can be reached at julie.w@unsw.edu.au

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How to compute faster with less power consumption is one of the world’s most pressing problems. Right now, cloud computing takes huge buildings with monster air conditioning because fast computing generates lots of heat.

Researchers at the University of Florida have been working with quantum materials for two decades, in search of a solution. Now, they will have the opportunity to pursue the answer to this and other energy-related conundrums in a brand-new, state-of-the-art research program.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recently chose the University of Florida as a winner in its recent competition for Energy Frontier Research Centers (EFRCs).

Led by Hai-Ping Cheng of UF Physics, the new $10.5 million Center for Molecular Magnetic Quantum Materials, which officially launched on August 1, is the only one led by a Florida institution and one of only five in the Southeastern USA.

M2QM, as it will be known, involves four other UF Physics faculty (Art Hebard, Neil Sullivan, Sam Trickey, Xiaoguang Zhang), two UF Chemistry faculty (George Christou, John Stanton), and one Materials Science and Engineering faculty (Richard Hennig). Cheng, Christou, Hebard Sullivan and Zapf are also associated with the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory (NHMFL), while Cheng, Hennig, Stanton, Trickey, and Zhang are members of the Quantum Theory Project (QTP), the longest-running interdisciplinary physical science institute at UF.

“QTP members together with colleagues in physics and chemistry have been working on the idea to bring a major national center to UF for nearly 20 years,” says Cheng. “Trickey, Zhang, and I have participated in a center proposal effort at least three times in the last 3-4 years, and we succeeded this time.”

Collaborators from the California Institute of Technology, Los Alamos National Laboratory (NHMFL), Florida State University (NHMFL), and the University of Central Florida comprise the rest of the team.

EFRCs are established to target the DOE Office of Science’s basic research aims, which are to develop future technologies for the grand challenges of an energy-demanding world.

M2QM targets the need for quantum magnetic materials at the molecular scale, in other words, nanoscale magnetic materials possessing various exotic (or “spooky”, as Einstein once called them) quantum properties that are important to new 21st century technologies.

M2QM’s goals are thus to learn how to design molecular magnetic materials with targeted quantum properties, link them to form quantum devices, and support them on sustainable substrates. With the support of the DOE, the team can make important contributions to new energy-efficient quantum technologies.
WORKSHOPS OFFERED:

- Departmental Research Administration
- Export Controls
- Financial Research Administration
- Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration
- Level II: Sponsored Project Administration: Critical Issues in Research Administration
- The Practical Side of Leadership

For more information contact
Stephanie McJury, Senior Meetings Manager
mcjury@ncura.edu

For Outside the U.S. please contact
Claire Chen, Manager, NCURA Global
chen@ncura.edu
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NCURA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Financial Research Administration Conference
March 11-12, 2019 .............................................................. Las Vegas, NV
Pre-Award Research Administration Conference
March 14-15, 2019 .............................................................. Las Vegas, NV

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

Departmental Research Administration Workshop
March 25-27, 2019 .............................................................. Portland, OR
Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
March 25-27, 2019 .............................................................. Portland, OR
Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
March 25-27, 2019 .............................................................. Portland, OR

ONLINE TUTORIALS – 10 week programs

A Primer on Clinical Trials
A Primer on Federal Contracting
A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements
A Primer on Subawards

WEBINARS

• General Data Protection Regulations
  January 31, 2019, 2:00-3:30 pm ET
• What a Departmental Administrator Needs to Know about Federal Contracts
  February 14, 2019, 2:00-3:30 pm ET
• OIG Audits from the OIG Perspective
  March 21, 2019, 2:00-3:30 pm ET

DEADLINES FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .............. November 26, 2018
Submission of Advertisements ................................. December 3, 2018

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