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ON THE COVER: Happy New Year from NCURA Magazine! We all begin the year with resolutions and hopes of achieving goals whether they are personal or professional. I challenge you to forget your New Year’s resolutions and instead focus on making a bold move in research administration for 2018. The “Bold Moves” theme describes a move that is out of the ordinary with a strategic scope. Bold moves set the path for reenergizing and creating new and improved solutions to building an institution’s capacity for change and to stay relevant. Bold moves should provide an opportunity where research administrators are unafraid to share ideas, take risk and be a driver for change.

This issue focuses on what research administrators can do to invent, transform and/or implement changes that makes a difference and/or can be successful. Yoshiteru Fujimatsu and Hiroyo Clemente set the story of a section within new research institute and how they go about on their ambitious expedition to “catch a whale” through proposal and research development through their institution.

Heather Cody and Christopher Denman are inspired by “if they can do it, why can’t we?” Their article focuses on finding big, bold and transformative propositional and grant opportunities for research administrators which will change and to stay relevant. Bold moves should provide an opportunity where research administrators are unafraid to share ideas, take risk and be a driver for change.

As you begin fresh in the New Year, choose to do something different. Grow with confidence, define your move and set yourself up to win. Through the plan, sensing sessions, solutions and results that can transform and/or implement changes that makes a difference and/or can be successful. Yoshiteru Fujimatsu and Hiroyo Clemente set the story of a section within new research institute and how they go about on their ambitious expedition to “catch a whale” through proposal and research development through their institution.

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

By, Georgette Sakumoto, NCURA President

I am honored be at the helm of an organization that is at the forefront of professional development in Research Administration. This year, I am committed to encouraging volunteerism and creating an environment where members can openly share ideas to transform the advancement of Research Administration both nationally and globally.

I want to thank our NCURA family and corporate partners for their $6,320 in donations to the 2017 natural disasters relief efforts. It was unfortunate that we had to cancel our 2018 PRA/FRA engagement in Puerto Rico. We remain committed to our Puerto Rican universities and colleges and will hold the 2020 PRA/FRA meetings there so as to allow them time to recover. I want to send special thanks to the NCURA staff for securing the Hilton Buena Vista in Orlando for the 2018 FRA/PRA meetings on March 5-9, 2018.

We have accomplished so much in our almost 60 years. This year, the NCURA board will review the strategic plan and evaluate our vision to 2025 to ensure that we achieve our long-term goals. We will embrace taking bold moves into the future. We remain committed to our regional and national programs and are enriched by our increasing global partnerships. As we strive to ensure diversity and inclusiveness in NCURA, we will identify ways to engage the wide spectrum of our volunteers, at all levels, throughout our committees and activities. One of our ongoing goals is to continue to increase the recognition and visibility of our profession. Hence, we will explore the possibility of a certificate program, which could seed an undergraduate degree in Research Administration and be the pipeline to existing Master’s in Research Administration programs. Furthermore, as we develop new mechanisms for senior leadership and growth, I am excited to report that our new leadership development program—the Insight Leadership Group—has had a fantastic response and our first cohorts are beginning this month. We will continue to enhance our workshops and develop innovative learning environments on relevant topics throughout the year.

As Research Administrators, we must be able to successfully navigate the ever-changing landscape of our federal government, the myriad of both federal and non-federal funders and our global resources. We must be able to harness change and direct it to valuable outcomes; this requires us to be resilient and innovative. We hope this issue of the magazine will inspire you to make “Bold Moves” for the advancement of our profession. Each one of us has a role and the ability to contribute to the body of knowledge of our profession and its visibility. As NCURA members, we can all contribute to NCURA’s efforts to provide high quality professional development opportunities and enhance NCURA’s ongoing efforts as a leader in the profession of Research Administration.

Please mark your calendars for NCURA’s Diamond 60th Annual Meeting from August 5-8, 2018 in Washington, DC. Vice President Tony Ventimiglia and co-chairs Robyn Remotigue and Kay Gilstrap are planning a diamond jubilee to commemorate the occasion. I look forward to meeting our new members and reconnecting with colleagues at this special meeting!

Best wishes for a HAPPY NEW YEAR as we begin exploring the possibilities…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
Each new year brings resolutions: go to the gym more often, eat more vegetables, or leave the office on time. For research administrators, a new year often brings new regulations as well. This January, we will see a new Proposal and Awards Policies and Procedures Guide from NSF (PAPPG), significant changes to NIH’s human subjects sections, and the Grants.gov switch from legacy PDF packages to Workspace. How can we as research administrators resolve to embrace these changes and help our PIs navigate new proposal requirements just in time for February deadlines?
One way to ease the transition is to think intentionally about how we communicate upcoming changes. Fortunately for research administrators, we don’t have to reinvent the wheel. Change management is a growing field that seeks to ease the process of adopting changes at both an organizational and individual level. One of the most popular methods for change management is ADKAR®, developed by the project management consulting group, Prosci. The ADKAR® model involves five steps: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement.

Let’s walk through each step and consider how we can use this process to create an environment in which change is welcomed instead of feared.

**Building Awareness:** In order to build awareness about a change, you must go beyond communicating that a change is happening. It is vital to put the changes in context and explain why this is the best time to make these changes. Instead of simply forwarding an e-mail from the sponsor, take time to highlight the changes that will have the greatest impact on your PIs.

**Fostering Desire:** Build awareness focused on why a change was occurring. Now it’s time to answer everyone’s favorite question, “What’s in it for me?” Focus on something that will improve the proposal preparation process for your PI. For example, NSF’s new PAPPG will allow PIs five pages for a budget justification instead of just two. This allows for more room to provide budget details that may be helpful to reviewers. NIH’s new Human Subjects section collects all information and documents related to human subjects research or clinical trials and puts them in one place. NIH’s Mike Lauer hopes that “these changes will lead to stronger proposals and help PIs with project planning by making expectations clearer at the proposal stage.”

**Developing Knowledge:** The next step is to provide PIs with the appropriate tools and knowledge so that they are prepared to submit their proposals under new guidelines. Fortunately, this is an area where many research administrators already excel. Depending on the scope of the changes, you may need to provide formalized training, job aids, templates, or examples of documents in advance of the deadline.

**Encouraging Ability:** Yes, that’s right—there is a follow-up step after training, and this is where you really have a chance to shine. In order to transition successfully through change, plan to spend a little extra time coaching your PIs during the first deadline under new guidelines. Remember to be patient—you will likely be comfortable with changes far sooner than PIs. While you see multiple proposals during every deadline cycle, PIs may submit only once a year, so changes may not affect them immediately. Encourage PIs to get started early and to send any pieces that may have been affected for review as soon as they finish them. This will reduce last-minute surprises or returned proposals and demonstrate the value that you add to the proposal process.

**Reinforcement:** The final step of the process, reinforcement, is often the most easily overlooked. On the surface, it may seem easy to shift responsibility for reinforcement to the sponsor. If you don’t follow the guidelines, your proposal could be returned without review. Or, in the case of Workspace, if you don’t change over to the new system, you won’t be able to submit your proposal at all! While your tactics will vary depending on the change, it is important to keep open the lines of communication you developed in previous steps. For most PIs, it takes a few deadline cycles to accustom to new sections of a proposal. Similarly, it takes agencies a few cycles to get in stride with reviewing and enforcing new guidelines. Once PIs receive reviews, ask what comments they received on any of the new sections. Use this information to develop better examples and templates to send to your PIs. You can also use tools like NCURA Collaborate to stay in touch with fellow research administrators to see what they have learned from their PIs.

When you resolve to hit the gym more often, the first few weeks are always the most difficult. After a few weeks, though, your body and mind adjust to your new routine and you no longer dread going to the gym. Similarly, approaching change intentionally may seem like a burden at the start but will seem like second nature in no time. Even if you do not have time to go through each of these steps with every update or deadline cycle, just thinking through the process can be helpful and can make adopting new guidelines or systems significantly less painful for both you and your PIs. With any luck, your PIs will feel comfortable with these changes just in time to learn what our next challenges will be!

**References**


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These days, when you attend a research administration conference, you are sure to see at least one session on staffing or staff retention. I should know, because I continually sought out these sessions with the hope of learning something I could take back to my institution. Sadly, I often walked away with the same feeling of disappointment. Not because the ideas presented were bad or ineffective, but because I always felt like it’s not enough. I wanted to find something big, bold, and inventive! I wanted to bring what the companies of Silicon Valley have to my academic medical center. Why not? We like free food, massage and nap rooms, and other fun job perks!
While that did not quite happen, the story that follows outlines my bold move to try something new to retain staff. As you read it, I ask that you set aside any notions of catering to the demands of changing workforce demographics or pandering to the vocal few. The source of my inspiration was not about appeasing anyone. My inspiration was more about, *if they can do it, why can’t we?*

First, a little background. I worked in central sponsored projects administration in a large academic medical institution for about ten years. During that time, I witnessed the high cost of hiring and training bright, talented people who soon took their newly acquired knowledge and skills to one of our academic departments or across the street to a competing institution. They always seemed to be in search of more money and greater autonomy. As one of the worker bees, I felt the burden of carrying a workload that was more substantial due to this turnover. I knew well the frustration of receiving subpar documents due to undertrained personnel or overworked coworkers.

The culture was one of constantly putting out fires and moving on to the next squeaky wheel. This firsthand experience became my inspiration when I was given the opportunity to move into a leadership position.

Our office had a history of hiring young, bright people newly minted with a master’s degree and a little work-related experience. We hired the best people but often had little hope of being able to retain them for more than two years before they moved on to their next role. My position on the ground afforded me a perspective of understanding the consequences and frustrations that stemmed from this *modus operandi*. So I entered my leadership role with visions of change and asked myself the question, “What can we do to retain bright and talented people?” Fortunately, I would soon get the chance to explore answers to this question.

Several circumstances fell into place that not only created an opportunity to try something new and inventive, but in effect demanded that we did. With the help of a colleague also new to a leadership position in the office, we hatched a plan to create something he called “Sensing Sessions.” Terminology and methodology were taken from the military, but the sessions were inspired by a TED Talk by Dan Ariely. The sessions were designed to ask staff two simple questions: “What motivates you?” and “What do you find demotivating?” We pulled together a plan and received permission from senior leadership to move forward. There was one caveat: no money was on the table. After all, we did not have the resources of Silicon Valley to move to try something new to retain staff. As you read it, I ask that you set aside any notions of catering to the demands of changing workforce demographics or pandering to the vocal few. The source of my inspiration was not about appeasing anyone. My inspiration was more about, *if they can do it, why can’t we?*

The Plan

We wanted the sensing sessions to have a casual atmosphere conducive to an open dialogue and chose to divide the staff into small groups with strategically aligned personalities. We did not want to have a group full of dominant personalities who would take control, combative personalities who would argue, or quiet personalities who would not offer feedback. We decided on three groups, each with six to eight people from varying teams within the department.

Our next step was to establish a few ground rules. We prepared a session-opening dialogue that outlined the following: 1) salary is not open for discussion, 2) everyone would be given an opportunity to speak, and 3) we asked that the conversation be authentic and real, but also respectful of both the process and other participants.

Once we established our plans, we sent out invitations and anxiously awaited the unknown. We were engaged with our own teams and knew their complaints and concerns, and had heard rumors from the other teams, but we really had no idea what would come out in these sessions.

The Sensing Sessions

Nervously, we began the first of three sessions. We started with our opening dialogue, played the TED Talk, and then sat back to a quiet room as we waited for the onslaught of expected negativity. Yet what came next was completely different! Conversation was contagious once it began; everyone in the room had something to say. Sure, some people spoke with a tone of doubt and skepticism, but their topics were within reason, and amazingly, the quiet worker bees spoke up too! Everyone was engaged and vocal. It was an amazing experience.

Remember we only asked two questions: “What motivates you?” and “What do you find demotivating?” The answers we received were surprisingly simplistic, but they made sense and were consistent among each of the groups. The table below outlines a few of the consensus items.

| Water Cooler                                    | We needed a water cooler on our floor, so that they would not have to walk downstairs to get water. |
| Casually Dress                                   | Departmental personnel have lower level dress standards. Why are we held to a higher standard? |
| Flexible Work Hours                              | The institution has a policy allowing flexible work schedules. Why are we excluded? |
| Atmosphere                                       | The office has few window seats and many stark white walls. The few pieces of art are old and outdated. |
| Meaning                                          | How does our work impact the university? What is the end result? |
| Cross-training                                   | Can we grow our skills horizontally? |
| Career Ladders                                   | How do we advance our careers? |
| Breakroom                                        | We don’t have a place to eat lunch and talk. |
| Standing Desks                                   | If sitting is the new smoking, we need to have desks that allow us to stand. |

Most of what the sessions produced were demotivators. I suspect that it is easier to think of items that frustrate you, rather than things that bring contentment. This list is in no way complete, but it paints a picture of the types of items brought to our attention. The next step in our process was to determine what items are actionable and how would we put them to work.
Complex or expensive items were postponed. We were able to address each item immediately, but we identified a number of quick wins and more were shockingly easy to identify and implement. We were not able to address each group with the outlined issue and asked for a solution. Most of the results were enduring as the issues at hand was to turn some items over to our staff to find so-
hind the sessions was management's seeming inability to retain staff and they (management) did not want to fail. We agreed that the best approach to addressing the issues hand was to turn some items over to our staff to find solutions and created implementation teams of three to four people. We tasked each group with the outlined issue and asked for a solution. Most of the results were shockingly easy to identify and implement. We were not able to address each item immediately, but we identified a number of quick wins and more complex or expensive items were postponed.

### The Solutions

My co-worker was very adamant that the onus to create change fell not only to management, but to each individual in the office. After all, the impetus behind the sessions was management's seeming inability to retain staff and they (management) did not want to fail. We agreed that the best approach to addressing the issues at hand was to turn some items over to our staff to find solutions and created implementation teams of three to four people. We tasked each group with the outlined issue and asked for a solution. Most of the results were shockingly easy to identify and implement. We were not able to address each item immediately, but we identified a number of quick wins and more complex or expensive items were postponed.

| Task | Water Cooler | Solution: | Find an institution approved vendor, and get a pricing quote |
| Task | Casual Dress | Solution: | Identify a professional dress code acceptable to management |
| Task | Flexible Work Hours | Solution: | Seek Human Resource assistance for definitions and implementation guidelines |
| Task | Atmosphere | Solution: | Update art or paint walls |
| Task | Meaning/Impact | Solution: | Create a committee to address this topic |
| Task | Cross-Training | Solution: | Define cross-training and create a plan |
| Task | Career Ladders | Solution: | Communicate the existing structure |
| Task | Breakroom | Solution: | Identify a space that could be used as a breakroom |
| Task | Standing Desk | Solution: | Identify costs |

**Implementation Timeline:**
- **Water Cooler:** Two weeks
- **Casual Dress:** One month
- **Flexible Work Hours:** Two months
- **Atmosphere:** Two weeks
- **Meaning/Impact:** Immediate
- **Cross-Training:** Immediate
- **Career Ladders:** Immediate
- **Breakroom:** Two months
- **Standing Desk:** Postponed

Interestingly, staff were motivated to identify and create their own solutions. The water cooler solution, for example, was identified in a matter of hours and the new cooler was delivered within a couple of weeks. The only action from leadership for this implementation was approval of the minimal monthly cost.

### The Results

The goal of the sensing sessions was to ultimately improve morale and lead to staff retention. It is not clear as to whether the sessions contributed to any lasting retention of staff, but there was an immediate improvement in morale and a new, more satisfying precedent for dialogue with management was set. There were also valuable lessons learned that would continue to serve us well in our ongoing interactions with staff. First and foremost, we learned that where there is a will there is a way and we can accomplish more if we work together. With a demonstration of support from management, everyone was happy to find solutions to their concerns and paid attention to cost, feasibility, impact, and other typical management concerns. Also, everyone has motivators and de-motivators. Even the quiet hard-working experts we depend on to get the job done without complaint, have complaints. They have demotivating areas of concern that should be addressed, and given the right circumstance they will openly share.

The bigger picture of this experiment speaks to competition for the bright, talented staff we so desire. We can no longer simply dictate policy and procedure to our research administrators without consequence; the high turnover in research administration demands change. We must learn to listen to our staff and not dismiss concerns as superficial complaints undeserving of attention. The small things add up to a greater dissatisfaction. Not all issues can be easily addressed, but many can. Even large bureaucratic academic medical institutions can learn from the example of Silicon Valley! We might not be able to afford gourmet cafeterias, but if we actively engage with staff and truly listen to what they have to say, we can better motivate everyone.

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Impacts without Borders: Exploring International Perspectives on Research Impact

By David Coombe, David Phipps and Jory Weintraub

If you ask academics why they engage in their research, you are likely to get a number of different answers: to satisfy their own intellectual curiosity, to contribute to scholarship in their field, and to positively impact society, just to name a few. However, if you ask taxpayers what their expectations are for the academic research supported by their hard-earned dollars/pounds/euros, they will almost certainly reply that it is entirely about the impact the work has on them and their society. This disconnect, while not surprising, is the primary driving force behind an increased international focus over the last 20 years on research impact (RI). Who is working on RI? In what context? And, how are institutions supporting it? The answers to these questions and the terminology used to discuss RI can vary, but what is common across borders is an increasing effort to translate research, and the knowledge gained from it, to non-academic decision makers, policy shapers and professionals for the betterment of society. Here, we explore the similarities and differences in how impact is addressed in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

In the United States, the conversation around RI focuses primarily on broader impacts (BI), which is defined as the benefits of research to society. BI is one of the two merit-based review criteria by which all National Science Foundation (NSF) proposals are reviewed, with the other being intellectual merit (IM), or the potential of the research to advance knowledge or understanding (National Science Foundation, 2007). The NSF is one of several federal agencies in the US that support academic research (some of the other major funders of research being the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Energy (DoE), and NASA). However, the NSF is the only one that explicitly mentions BI as a review criterion. Why is this? The conventional wisdom is that the impact of research in areas such as biomedical sciences or national defense is self-evident, while funding for the types of research supported by the NSF (so-called “basic research” in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines and social sciences) must be justified to taxpayers via explicit explanation of its impact. It has now been 20 years since the NSF simplified its merit review criteria to intellectual merit and broader impacts. And, while researchers seeking funding from the NSF generally have a sense of what reviewers are looking for with respect to IM, many still struggle to fully understand exactly how to adequately address the BI criterion. Increasingly, institutions in the US are recognizing this, as well as the potential benefits of helping their researchers address BI more effectively, and are developing and implementing BI support at the institutional level. Additionally, there is now a national organization—the National Alliance for Broader Impacts (NABI)—which is promoting dialog on BI practice and policy, and creating a community for BI professionals. So, progress on BI is being made in the US, but it is important to recognize that, due to the nature of BI as being uniquely NSF-related, it is still largely within the domain of STEM disciplines, and not generally discussed in the context of the social sciences and humanities (SSH) or arts.

In contrast, research impact in Canada has traditionally focused on knowledge mobilization (KMb), which is “the process of connecting academic SSH research to non-academic decision-makers so that this research informs decisions about public policy and professional practice” (Phipps, 2012). While KMb and its elements (knowledge transfer, knowledge exchange, and knowledge utilization) have been discussed for more than 50 years, it was passage of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Act in 2000 that established knowledge translation as a mandate in Canada (Myers, 2011). One obvious difference between BI and KMb is...
that the former focuses primarily on STEM disciplines, as discussed above, while the latter has historically focused on the social sciences and humanities. It has been broadened at many institutions to encompass all research disciplines outside of commercially oriented research commercialization.

For example, at York University, approximately 40% of the KMB Unit work is on SSH, 40% is on health, and 20% is on natural sciences such as climate change. Another key advantage of KMB that it typically involves intermediaries (often referred to as knowledge brokers) to connect university researchers with the non-academic policy makers and practitioners (Wikipedia, 2017). While U.S. universities and research centers are beginning to take a more institutional approach to BI support (and NABI has only existed for about five years), Canadian institutions have a long, well-established history of supporting KMB through university-based knowledge brokers and KMB units (Phipps, Knowledge mobilisers: putting research into practice (and policy), 2009).

The United Kingdom’s efforts in the area of RI are focused on both arms of its dual funding system: research impact has been an explicit criterion in the granting of funding for research projects for well over a decade (each project must include a “Pathways to Impact” plan); since 2014, impact has become a core criterion of the national Research Excellence Framework (REF), which benchmarks universities’ research expertise and leads to core research grant funding. In the REF, impact is defined as “an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia” (Wikipedia, 2017). While the 2014 REF created some controversy, it also sparked a national conversation on assessing the impacts of research and impact is increasingly built into the fabric of research funding through the purposing of research funding towards global challenges and the industrial strategy, and with greater emphasis than ever on “knowledge exchange” and commercialization activities. The conversation has primarily focused on impact, however, and not on institutional supports (if any) for creating the conditions that might maximize the impacts of research beyond the academy.

One common RI challenge faced by all three countries is assessment and evaluation of impact. This is at the heart of the controversies that have arisen during discussions around the UK’s REF. It has also been a challenge in the US, where BI efforts are typically designed and implemented by STEM researchers who generally lack expertise in the types of social science research approaches necessary to effectively assess BI activities. Similarly, KMB efforts in Canada face their own unique challenges with respect to assessment and evaluation which has only recently become a focus for the Research Impact Canada network. Research Impact Canada has adapted elements of the REF into a research impact assessment tool (Phipps, Watching Impact in the REF and How It Informs the Canadian Context, 2017). While RI efforts vary in each of these three countries, it may well be worth exploring commonalities in RI assessment approaches which might apply to all. An additional opportunity for consideration is the role of institutional supports for BI/RI. While much of the focus is on the individual grant application, the researcher, and the project, there is a role for institutions in creating the environments where impact can occur.

Ultimately, researchers may (and likely will) continue to respond to questions about why they conduct their research with explanations about intellectual curiosity; a drive to contribute to scholarship in their field, and a desire to impact society. Indeed, societal impact may be a distant third on that list for many researchers. But as long as taxpayers continue to support research (a decent possibility), and as long as federal and other funding agencies continue to tighten their budgets and fund at lower rates (a near certainty), there will be an ever-increasing need for researchers to think about and communicate the impact of their work, and for institutions to support them in these efforts. And, regardless of geographic variances in terminology or methodology, research impact will continue to be an area of focus and growth, both within and beyond academia.

**References**


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**But as long as taxpayers continue to support research... there will be an ever-increasing need for researchers to think about and communicate the impact of their work...**

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Research administrators from seven Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) describe recent bold moves undertaken to enhance the culture of research at their universities ranging from investing in undergraduate research to realigning distribution of indirect costs. Susan Gavin, Director of Sponsored Programs at Taylor University, explains a culture common at many PUIs:

Most faculty at PUIs teach heavier loads and advise more students than those at emerging or research intensive institutions, serve on several committees, and attend institutional events such as sports, art exhibits, and musical performances, which are expected if not required.

As research administrators, we want faculty to be engaged in scholarship because it informs their teaching, keeps them current in their field, and enhances the institution’s presence. Stakeholders, including parents, prospective students, alumni, and donors, see this as evidence of high quality faculty.

Competing expectations create a sense of frustration for faculty and research administrators. Faculty tell me they cannot write a grant proposal because everyone in the department is teaching an overload, their tenure packets require them to write documents related to teaching and learning, and they really want time with family.

Investing in Undergraduate Research. Growing tired of stagnant program growth, Gavin focused on Taylor’s mission, embracing scholarship, research, and creative activity that includes undergraduates.

Following a university investment in a summer mentored scholarship program, Sponsored Programs boldly invested up to $500 for students who presented at regional or national conferences. The overwhelmingly positive response created opportunities for grant development conversations.

Another bold move is to teach a collaborative course with the Library entitled Introduction to Inquiry. A precursor to discipline-specific Research Methods courses, this course develops students’ library skills, critical thinking skills, and begins to transition students to scholars. Students must write a paper and present a poster at the university’s Celebration of Scholarship in May.

While these two items do not explicitly develop faculty research, they do provide support to students and support the institutional and faculty members’ goals of engaging students in research. Thinking outside the normal parameters of research administration includes meeting the needs of the faculty and developing opportunities to engage them where they are most passionate.

Creating a New Purpose. At Salt Lake Community College, the original purpose of the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) was simple: increase grant activity with projects that strategically aligned with its mission and goals. At that time, the role of grants at the College was relatively unknown and unclear. Now, however, according to Nicole Omer, Director of OSP, the climate is different. College leaders speak about the benefits of faculty, staff, and students engaging in research and scholarship. Also, the number of faculty actively pursuing research has increased.

Consequently, OSP dramatically changed its purpose to include boldly promoting scholarship and research. Activities underway to achieve its new purpose include:

- OSP partnering with the Faculty Development and Provost offices and other College leaders, will provide stipends for participants to engage in research projects or develop grant applications.
- A new indirect cost allocation method enables PIs to request up to 25% of indirect costs to support additional research or development.
- OSP restructuring included updating job descriptions, streamlining responsibilities, and developing consistent processes and a formal communication plan.
- A new online training program and an onboarding program was developed for new OSP team members.

Instituting International Research Initiatives. Appalachian State University (ASU), third in the nation among master’s degree-granting
institutions for sending students on short-term study abroad programs according to the Institute of International Education’s “Open Doors Report on International Exchange”, wants to increase faculty involvement. According to Katie Howard, Assistant Director, and Karen Fletcher, Director, both of whom are in the Grants Resources and Services area of the Office of Research (OR), OR boldly jumped in to support ASU’s Global Learning Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

OR hosted a very successful Board of Trustees (BOT) International Research Travel grant workshop to increase participation in BOT’s internal program and increase external international research endeavors.

OR partnered with ASU’s Office of International Education and Development in support of ASU’s QEP. For the first time, OR is co-sponsoring events for ASU’s International Education Week. Also planned is a Fulbright Celebration Week for Spring 2018, with Fulbright representatives from DC and panels led by past Fulbright recipients.

A new fellowship policy was adopted that led to a campus Fulbright “mini-tour” promoting the program and educating faculty about campus opportunities, including a new internal Fulbright peer-review panel facilitated by OR.

There is also discussion of OR staff attending international conferences, such as INORMS or Fulbright, and increased encouragement to explore administrative exchange opportunities, such as NCURA fellows program and Fulbright for Administrators program.

Moving from Paper to an Electronic Routing System. Amherst College went live in 2016 with GrantsLink, an electronic internal grant approval form. This bold move from an entirely paper-based process to a 100% electronic system took two years to implement. Mary Strunk, Assistant Director of the Grants Office, Kiku Ichihara, Grant Analyst in the Controller’s Office, and Amy Lashley, Senior Applications Developer in Advancement Operations, led this collaborative effort. The project stemmed from a survey distributed to PIs in 2014 that identified the paper-based internal approval process as a barrier to preparing proposals.

GrantsLink was developed internally using an open source framework used for other applications at Amherst after evaluating several off-the-shelf systems. It allows PIs to upload electronic copies of their proposals, provides tailored questions based on proposal type and the proposed research plan, and incorporates helpful “tool tips.” Once the PI submits a form, GrantsLink collects digital signatures from all approvers in the correct sequence and alerts campus compliance officers of proposed research pending compliance committee approval. It has significantly decreased the amount of time needed to complete internal approvals, reduced administrative burden, and enabled creation of an online database of submitted proposals PIs can easily access. This bold move has been a big success with PIs, administrators, and external auditors.

Realigning Distribution of Indirect Costs. University of North Carolina at Wilmington’s (UNCW) current strategic plan includes tripling funded sponsored projects by FY 2021. According to Panda Powell, Director of Sponsored Programs and Research Compliance (SPARC), to meet this goal, SPARC requested feedback from the campus. The current F&A policy was identified as a major challenge.

UNCW’s current policy is owned by the Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs. Funds are distributed annually after costs for billing staff and special agreements relating to F&A are deducted. Then, 30% is allocated to Business Affairs and 70% is allocated to Academic Affairs of which 15% is distributed to the Colleges who distribute a portion to the departments and PIs.

In August, UNCW’s Chancellor established a committee comprised of the Associate Provost for Research/Dean of the Graduate School; Academic Affairs Vice Chancellor for Resource Management; Vice Chancellor for Finance (Business Affairs); SPARC Director; two Faculty Senate Research Committee members, and one SPARC Grant Officer. Bold recommendations presented to the Chancellor in October included:

1. Adding the Provost as co-owner of the policy
2. Making the committee a standing committee that reviews and makes recommendations about F&A recovery budgets/allocations
3. Increasing over time the percentage of F&A distributed to departments/PIs
4. Budgeting funds for sponsored programs/research related expenses identified annually

Establishing Infrastructure, Increasing Visibility, and Leading Change. With the launch of the Life Sciences concentration in 2020, Soka University of America embarks on its next chapter, a bold move to increase institutional, faculty, and student research. In April 2016, the Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) was created to anchor a sustainable research infrastructure. Shuna Holmes, Institutional Research Administrator in OSR, fosters continued communication as the first strategic approach. How she communicates the significance of OSR to the Soka community’s research impacts its success and sustainability. Operational barriers have also been identified in collaborative efforts with key executive stakeholders.

OSR engages with Soka faculty by aligning their scientific strengths with the new focus. In strategic efforts with the VP for Academic Affairs, an “Academic Highlights” tab was created on Soka’s homepage to increase the visibility of Soka’s research faculty, highlighting their scholarly and research accomplishments.

As a change agent, Holmes has created metrics and established benchmarks to assist in setting measurable performance goals, assessing satisfaction with OSR, and measuring the efficiency of current processes to improve performance, faculty research engagement, competitiveness, and grow the research portfolio. The Ford Foundation awarded Soka its first grant within a year of OSR’s creation.

Establishing an Institute for Person-Centered Care. The College of Health and Human Services at St. Ambrose University plans a bold move to strengthen community and public health by developing an Institute for Person-Centered Care. Person-centered care means that individuals’ values and preferences are elicited and, once expressed, guide all aspects of their health care. Person-centered care places individuals and their families at the center of care, as equal partners with providers. The Institute will serve as a resource for best practices in preparing and educating a workforce aimed at advancing the person-centered care movement. Innovative models of care will be designed and tested in partnership with community stakeholders to address regional challenges with national implications. The Institute is funded by a $1 million gift from an alumni donor.

The Institute, the first of its kind in the Midwest, builds on the university’s core values and emphasis on social justice, lifelong learning, and service in community. Regina Matheson, Associate Vice President for Academic Grants and Sponsored Programs, supported this bold move by participating in a POIRI funding conference to learn how St. Ambrose might secure additional funds to support the new institute.}

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Research administrators, by their nature have a selfless, goal-oriented desire to provide excellent service to their institutions and researchers. We do not think twice about working nights or weekends to prepare or review a proposal, to redline a contract, or to take a call after hours because that’s the only time a faculty member is available. NCURA meetings give us a chance to step away from the daily buzz and re-focus on our craft, learning from each other about technical elements, soft skills, and career growth. They give us a chance to catch our breath, to meet new colleagues and rediscover the passion for our work. For these reasons, the PRA theme that we selected is “BE EXTRAORDINARY: RE-ENERGIZE AND ENGAGE.” Following the devastation of hurricane Maria, the NCURA staff was able to find a new location for us to meet, share stories and expertise with one another. Though not Puerto Rico, the ORLANDO venue and your participation will provide us with a vibrant atmosphere of sharing and learning.

A key soft skill for research administrators across all levels is the ability to exercise influence. Whether it’s convincing a faculty member to change a proposal element, or a sponsor to revise an award term, or a staff member to reach for the stars, the art of persuasion can be a powerful tool in a research administrator’s arsenal. We are thrilled to have KIMBERLY PACE as our KEYNOTE SPEAKER, as she shares practical tools on how to inspire others to execute willingly what your organization needs.

Browse through the program, and you will see that PRA 2018 is chock full of timely and diverse topics. The program committee has ensured that the program content and expert speakers/facilitators will keep you captivated and engaged. Here are some HIGHLIGHTS from a few of the tracks:

- Within the Compliance track we are privileged to have an experienced group of presenters to guide our members through recent changes such as the changes to the Updated Common Rule, as well as tackling real world compliance issues, data research, and building a successful compliance program at your institutes.
- The Medical/Clinical track for PRA 2018 offers something for everyone. Our presenters are seasoned partners who have an extensive background in supporting this unique area of operations, and by building upon their areas of expertise we have assembled an array of topics. They include: the unique factors of clinical trials vs. basic science, budgeting and contract negotiation, business process streamlining for management of clinical research, while guiding us through the emergent areas of 340B/Common Rule/human subject protection.
- As part of the Federal track, we have leaders providing updates regarding what is new on a national level. Gil Tran from the Office of Management and Budget, Jean Feldman from the National Science Foundation and Michelle Bulls from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will present their insights on various topics and developments. Sara Bible from Stanford University will provide an update on current Federal Demonstration Partnership activities and the impact of a new federal administration on institutions of higher education regarding the federal budget, and new and revised policies.
- The Sponsored Projects Administration track spans from high-level policy concurrent sessions to discussion groups on managing limited submissions at your institution. The track will provide tools to strengthen efficiency as a central research administrator in order to support the increases in your institutions’ research portfolio. The sessions will support the development of all central research administrators, and also provide perspective to a department administrator on why and how decisions are made on policies and procedures at your institution.

Please join us in Orlando for what is sure to be an excellent meeting. Join us to re-energize and engage! #NCURAPRA
YOU DO THE RESEARCH. WE HELP WITH THE REST.
In research administration, we are constantly fighting the turnover battle. It seems we are always posting job opportunities, serving on search committees, or making offers to candidates. If we are lucky enough to be fully staffed, it is still likely that we are training a new hire that has recently joined the team or are concerned that someone else may be leaving soon. We know why the turnover occurs. Research administration is not a highly paid profession and the stress that comes with the job can be quite significant. While many institutions offer tremendous benefit packages, alternative work schedules, and other incentives to provide a positive working environment, the turnover continues.

Even if we could reduce turnover, there is still the issue of hiring. Many searches can be difficult due to the lack of applicants who have previous experience in research administration. We issued a survey to colleagues around the United States to gain feedback on several questions to help determine if our perceptions on the difficulty on hiring experienced staff are true. Assuming it is difficult to hire research administrators with previous experience, we also tried to determine what professions successful research administrators come from if they do not have prior experience in our field.

Our survey generated 18 responses from individuals who had collectively hired more than 1,100 research administrators in their careers. One question we asked participants was, “Would you agree with the statement, ‘It is a challenge to find and hire candidates with prior research administration experience for positions at my institution?’” Participants answered on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “strongly agree” and 5 being “strongly disagree,” and the average response to the question was 1.83. From this, participants appear to feel that it is relatively challenging to hire candidates who have previous research administration experience.

A second question we asked participants was, “What percentage of the time do you interview candidates who have prior research administration experience?” Three participants answered with <10%, eight with 11-25%, two with 26-50%, and five with >50% of the time. Responses to this question indicated that it is not uncommon for participants to conduct searches in which no interviewed candidates had previous research administration experience.

We also asked additional questions to identify if there were circumstances in which the difficulty of hiring experienced research administrators was not present.

1. To determine if institutions with more research activity had less difficulty we asked, “What was your institution’s level of research expenditures in the last fiscal year?” Participants who stated they had more than $500 million in research expenditures indicated less difficulty in hiring research administrators with previous research administration experience (2.50) compared to those with less than $500 million (1.50).

2. To determine if institutions in larger cities had less difficulty we asked, “What is the population of your metro area?” Participants who stated they had a population of more than 500,000 indicated less difficulty in hiring research administrators with previous research administration experience.

“...the traits that led individuals without previous experience to become successful research administrators included communication skills, problem-solving skills, intelligence, and customer service.”

By David Smelser and Stacey Wade
(2.22) compared to those with less than 500,000 (1.44).

3. To determine if institutions close to other institutions had less difficulty we asked, “How many other research institutions are within approximately 50 miles of your institution?” Participants who stated they had 7 or more institutions within 50 miles had less difficulty (2.67) in hiring research administrators with previous research administration experience compared to those with between one and six institutions (1.82) or no institutions (1.25).

While it does appear that the difficulty of hiring research administrators with previous experience is more prevalent in some locations compared to others, the question still remains of where to find individuals who could become successful research administrators should candidates with experience not be available. To determine what hiring managers are actually looking for, we first asked, “What are the three most important characteristics you look for when interviewing candidates for research administration positions?” The responses to this question could be combined into the following general categories: prior experience, communication skills, problem-solving skills, intelligence, team player, and customer service.

Then we asked, “Please list the previous professions of some hires you have made in situations where the candidates did not have prior research administration experience, but ultimately turned out to be successful research administrators.” Of the 62 participant responses, 48 fell into one of five general categories:

1. Finance: Included professions such as auditor, accountant, and banker
2. Legal: Included professions such as attorney, legal aide, paralegal, or individuals with a juris doctorate degree
3. Technical: Included professions such as research technicians, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows, and project managers
4. Administration: Included professions such as administrative assistants
5. Educator: Included professions such as teachers and training coordinators

Finally, we asked participants, “For these previous professions of your most successful hires, what about their prior work experience made them successful research administrators?” To no surprise, the traits that led individuals without previous experience to become successful research administrators included communication skills, problem-solving skills, intelligence, and customer service.

While 18 responses are likely not sufficient to provide a comprehensive analysis of these questions, it was interesting to note that they were all essentially looking for the same traits in their candidates and had success finding those traits in the same professions. The full results of our survey can be found at: http://bit.ly/2ybT62W

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When you go fishing for small fish, you rarely need anything more sophisticated than a small rod and reel—the type that everyone has in the corner of their garage. Add a bug or worm for bait, and maybe a chair and a book to read while you are waiting for the fish to bite, and you are all set. With a bit of luck, you may bring home a fish that you can throw on the grill for a Sunday supper.

But, what if you were interested in catching a whale? What if you were interested in something not just for your own Sunday repast, but also for the long-term support of your whole village? Clearly, you would need entirely different equipment!

This analogy sets the story of a small section of a new research institute, the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST). Located on a semi-tropical island, this is their ambitious expedition to “catch a whale.”

New, but already unique and global
- 6 years old — our institute has been established since 2011
- 55% — this is the ratio of non-Japanese researchers (4.9% is the average at Japanese universities)
- English is our official language — all administrative staff are at least bilingual
- 59 labs without boundaries — we are not organized into departments, but organized like a segmented fruit, which facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration
- Okinawa — a beautiful semi-tropical island, conveniently located at the crossroads of Asia’s rapid economic development
- 95% funded directly by the Japanese Government — but with the administrative freedom to undertake innovative initiatives

As you can see, the establishment of OIST itself may sound like a big social experiment, where the Japanese Government has ambitiously spent a large amount of money to stimulate and support the economic and social development of Okinawa to promote and sustain the advancement of science and technology in Japan and throughout the world. However, we all know that political priorities shift over time and the Japanese Government expects OIST to make it on its own in future. To keep its uniqueness, freedom, and independence, one of the most important
challenges OIST must focus on is to develop external sources of funding. We need to become adept at catching big fish — and, perhaps, the occasional whale.

Catching colorful small fish
The primary mission of our section (Grants and Research Collaborations) is to assist researchers in securing and effectively managing grants. To date, these grants principally came from the quasi-governmental agencies that dominate research funding in Japan. Most of our efforts focus on pre- and post-award activities. However, since we work closely with our faculty, we understand what kind of support they need. Therefore, we do everything from helping research fellows find apartments, to concluding collaborative research agreements in any given day.

We have only six members, and each of us has come from different fields and brings different experiences. Our section is unique, flexible, and proficient in supporting our researchers in their attempts to secure small research grants. But what if we want to make more of an impact? We may have to go whale hunting.

WPI — Our first attempt to land a whale failed
In the spring of 2017, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture & Sports (MEXT) called for applications for an enormous institutional grant under its World Premier International Research Initiative (WPI)-Truly a whale!

The grant under the WPI initiative is the equivalent of US$600 million over a 10-year period, and is designed to build “globally visible” research centers in Japan capable of attracting frontline researchers from around the world.

Of course, OIST is already global and unique, and generously funded by the government. To succeed, we had to add “something attractive,” beyond our international character, as bait. Dr. Mary Collins, our Dean of Research, was designated to lead the effort. She surveyed OIST’s existing capabilities and narrowed down the number of substantive fields to just two: Neuroscience and Quantum Physics, in each of which, several our substantive fields to just two: Neuroscience and Quantum Physics, in each of which, several of our unique support departments (BINDS by the best support specialists in OIST, as an advisor as well and frequently says—Our Institute Shall Thrive!

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Hiroyo Clemente, Contracts Administrator, in charge of administering, negotiating and documenting Collaborative Research Contracts. Before joining OIST, she had been working in IP law offices, in Tokyo, as a paralegal and as a manager of the International Patent Filing Divisions of several leading patent law firms. She continues to be affiliated with the Takahashi IP Law Office, as an advisor as well and business development consultant. She can be reached at hiroyo.clemente@oist.jp

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im Luther (Duke), Lisa Nichols (COGR), and I (COGR) have spent the past three months writing about “F&A Wars.” While F&A Wars (not to be confused with Star Wars) is not universally defined, nor can it be found on Wikipedia, it has become a common phenomenon in the research community. Recovery of F&A (i.e., Facilities and Administrative) costs by research institutions regularly is questioned by lawmakers, federal officials, or our own faculty as an inappropriate cost of doing research. The questioning often leads to media scrutiny and our defense of these real costs of doing research, and may be accompanied by a threat of capping F&A rates. As Jim wrote in the first article of this three-part series, “Like clockwork, there seems to be renewed focus on F&A costs every five years.” However, we are now wishing this was an every-five-year event, as it’s possible we may need to remain focused on this topic well into next year, and even on an annual basis.

What is F&A? How are F&A rates developed? What is included in F&A rates? How can F&A rates be limited so that more funding can be channeled to direct costs of research? An annual deep-dive into these topics is not a healthy use of time or resources for the research community. While in the interest of transparency and good government, the first three questions should be and have been answered, the constant asking and re-asking of the fourth question distracts from the important business of doing quality research and further suggests that the answers to the first three still are not fully understood.

In the first article, Jim provided the history of the partnership between the federal government and research institutions, with an overview of his testimony on Examining the Overhead Cost of Research. In the second article, Lisa addressed several of the myths (and truths) surrounding F&A, including the status of the federal budget with respect to F&A. In this final article, we do a recap of where we started in this version of F&A Wars, where we are, and look to the future at how our community can continue to advocate for the importance of fair F&A reimbursement and the critical role F&A costs play in supporting the research enterprise.

Where We Started: Rallying of the Community

This version of F&A Wars started in the Spring and was highlighted in the Trump Administration’s FY 2018 budget request, released in late May, which called for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) F&A reimbursement to be “capped at 10 percent of total research” in an attempt to “bring NIH’s reimbursement rate for indirect costs more in line with the reimbursement rate used by private foundations, such as the Gates Foundation, for biomedical research conducted at U.S. universities.”

What quickly evolved as a voice to push back was the “Associations F&A Working Group,” or in typical DC-acronym-speak, the “AFAWG.” Comprised of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU), the Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI), the Council on Government Relations (COGR), and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), we joined forces, in coordination with leaders from your research institutions, with the goal of creating a unified voice to rebuff the Administration’s proposal.

Over the past eight months, the AFAWG has: 1) developed education and advocacy materials; 2) coordinated letters and meetings with OMB, HHS, and Congressional members to deliver messages on the devastating impact a cap would have on research; 3) successfully worked with Congressional staff to develop legislative language prohibiting caps on F&A rates; 4) initiated outreach to the private foundation and disease organizations to develop solutions related to F&A reimbursement and related issues; and 5) continues to meet regularly to address next steps in our advocacy campaign.

Where We Are: Crisis Averted (For Now)

On October 24, in front of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies – House Committee on Appropriations, Chairman Tom Cole (R-Oklahoma) and Ranking Member, Rosa DeLauro (D-Connecticut) presided over the Oversight Hearing - The Role of Facilities and Administrative Costs in Supporting NIH-Funded Research (The Role of Facilities, 2017). Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, Vice
institutions, including your presidents, financial lots of sympathy? continue to talk effectively about an issue that, around an alternative number? And if there is an chance, but could there be more interest budget request revisit this topic, albeit in a more complete as it is likely that the Administration will maintain, and that all other facilities, administrative, and compliance services are provided. In addition, Dr. Droegemeier’s written testimony includes an extensive history of F&A reimbursement by the Federal government and is a recommended read (Droegemeier, 2017). Notably, all four witnesses are accomplished researchers who have been on the side of F&A where F&A is not always popular: As Faculty! Still, each spoke definitively about the necessity of fair F&A reimbursement, which further enhances the credibility of our position on fair F&A reimbursement.

The hearing was “friendly,” and bipartisan agreement on the important role of F&A costs, by all members of the Subcommittee, was evident throughout. Congressman Andy Harris (R-Maryland), who has voiced his concerns about F&A for years, was the only consistent critical voice. The positive tone of Chairman Cole’s closing statements seemed to signal a successful closing to this version of F&A Wars, and the threat of a cap on F&A reimbursement seems unlikely…for now. However, the work on this issue is not complete as it is likely that the Administration will revisit this issue. The AFAWG and our entire community will need to remain vigilant, attentive, and ready to act.

The Sequel: Advocacy under the next Version of F&A Wars

What’s next? Could the Administration’s FY 2019 budget request revisit this topic, albeit in a more “gentle” manner? A 10% cap may have never had a chance, but could there be more interest around an alternative number? And if there is an interest, how does our community mobilize and continue to talk effectively about an issue that, frankly, is an issue that does not always garner lots of sympathy?

The AFAWG is a strong group with deep talent and is strategically adept at navigating the Washington, DC landscape. Leaders from your institutions, including your presidents, financial and research administrators, deans and academics leaders, federal relations staff, and many others on your campuses are passionate about and have significant expertise around F&A issues. And YES!, we are on the right side of this issue: The truth is, fair F&A reimbursement is integral to a healthy research enterprise. When we are able to explain the role of F&A and how it unequivocally supports the research infrastructure, thoughtful individuals at the federal level, including Members of Congress, will go to bat for our community.

So, how will we continue to advocate for the importance of fair F&A reimbursement and the critical role F&A costs play in supporting the research enterprise?

We propose the following:

1. Persistent Education. Our community has done an amazing job of conducting faculty workshops, writing good and understandable policies and procedures, developing creative videos, and other outreach. This work should never stop and should be a never-ending initiative at our institutions. The more we spread the word, the better position we will be in to receive universal support across our campuses.

2. Better Choice of Words (Language is Important). For example, F&A recovery is “Reimbursement” of costs previously incurred. It is not “revenue,” nor “return” to deans and departments, nor “profit,” nor anything else but “Reimbursement.” An “F&A rate” is not anything except an “application factor” to a subset of research costs (modified total direct costs). Rather than posting our F&A Rate Agreements on our websites, we could develop a template that shows our negotiated rates in combination with other metrics such as effective F&A recovery, institutional subsidy, and other related material, which would tell a more complete story.

3. Helpful Transparency. Posting an F&A Rate Agreement may be transparent, but it is not helpful. Helpful transparency would include simple narratives or visuals that show specific F&A costs (e.g., maintaining specialized laboratories, high speed data, safety protections, regulatory compliance, etc.) included in the institution’s F&A reimbursement. Some institutions have developed a “Federal Dollar” (see the previous article in this series), which tells both a truthful and transparent story about F&A reimbursement.

4. Explore Alternative Models. No, not Caps. Any form of price control often is bad policy and unintended consequences are the result. However, exploration of direct charging models (e.g., technology infrastructure, IRB, etc.), equitable treatment of certain types of costs (e.g., cloud computing), and meaningful, impactful reduction of regulatory burden, could make F&A reimbursement a more acceptable concept.

The sequel to this recent version of F&A Wars, most likely, will come sooner rather than later. If it is sooner, we need to be in preparation mode now. And even if it does not arrive next year, it most certainly will come, and our community must remain diligent in how we prepare for that sequel. May the Force Be With Us!

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I was working late one evening and my boss stopped in my office and told me that she received a complaint from a faculty member about me, and that she (my boss) was going to remove me from doing sponsored program work for that department. My work portfolio was being reassigned. I was stunned because I had no idea there was an issue, and also that my boss didn’t come to me to get my side of the story. I am angry and feel betrayed and am thinking about leaving the university. Should I leave?

I understand why you are questioning leaving your current university, but I am both ill-prepared and reluctant to address that question because there is so much I do not know about you or this situation. Instead, perhaps I can offer a few questions for you to consider as you make your decision:

What is giving you the most concern in this matter?
You say that you feel angry and betrayed. Can you specifically name the aspects of this matter that bother you the most? I am asking this question so you can begin to describe the events that prompted you to feel betrayed and angry. If you can put words to this, and describe for yourself how you feel/felt physically and emotionally, as well as what you think and believe about these matters, you will understand yourself better and create an informed answer to your question reflective of your good judgment. That is a first step toward deciding what, if any, actions make most sense for you.

So, for example, was it that there was a complaint expressed about you and your work? Have you ever had negative feedback about your work before and how have you responded? If you know the name of the faculty member, was there prior experience with this individual that added to your anger? You say that you had no idea there was an issue, but I wonder if you think back carefully in a peaceful and mindful moment you might recall more context. Had the faculty member seemed generally pleased with your work and this complaint seems to come out of the blue? Or, has there been a long-term pattern of discomfort in your working relationship? See a few paragraphs below.

Was it about saving face with your peers and colleagues?
None of us want to appear less than competent or acknowledged in our professional work. What happened was likely a blow to your ego and sense of effectiveness. Can you look at this situation more broadly and learn from it? Does this happen to you often? Is it a rare occurrence? As actors say before acting a scene, “More context, please.”

Was it more about your boss and how this experience violated your sense of trust?
If so, how so? Be specific. If you could set aside your own emotions about this matter, how would you describe your boss’ intent and rationale for making her decision? Could you possibly see the situation from her vantage and see whatever extenuating circumstances might have led to the decision? You do not agree with her decision, but do you understand how it would be possible for her to make it?

“What is giving you the most concern in this matter?”

Was it more about your boss and how this experience violated your sense of trust?

Was it about saving face with your peers and colleagues?

Is your concern about process and how you were not provided an opportunity for input or discussion before a decision was reached?
Talk with her. I would challenge you to consider discussing with your boss how you wish the process had occurred. Notice I do not suggest that you revisit the decision or argue for a different course of action. Focus on the process, and express your views in terms of “I.” So, for example, “I felt out of the loop, betrayed, blindsided…” Do not act accusatory; just express what it felt like from your perspective. It’s not about who is right and who is wrong. Discuss with your boss things like: What was it that prompted this decision? Is there something that you need to know about your work or the relationship with this faculty member? What were the actions/words, exactly, that caused this issue with the faculty member? Is there some learning that you can take away from the situation? Can you and your boss discuss how you can improve your communication? Many people feel that they should not have to ‘teach’ their bosses how to communicate and lead. Well, if that were true, then why are there so many articles and books about managing ‘up’? Offer your boss a safe opportunity—safe from you accusing her of things—to discuss this situation with the only goal being to improve communication and your working relationship. Use this opportunity to get feedback to help you in the future.

As promised, I didn’t answer your question about whether you should stay or leave the university. That’s clearly up to you. Something for you to consider is that if you leave, what will happen if you have something similar happen at your next employer? How will you want to communicate, and how will you want to be (your physical and emotional presence, attitude, resilience, etc.)?

So, the last question for you is: What have I learned from this situation and how will it prepare me to handle similar situations in the future, wherever I am working?

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Cases of unethical behavior, including research misconduct, are not only damaging to the overall scientific enterprise but have the potential for reputational harm to scientific disciplines and institutions. When reported in the press, these cases generally focus on the misdeeds of researchers and the institutional response to these misdeeds. Many of these high profile cases involve a series of misdeeds over the course of years if not decades.

What if institutions could prevent these problems from arising or detect them earlier? What if institutions could actually foster a culture of research integrity not only among graduate students and faculty but also in the key groups of individuals who have responsibility for administering and supporting the research programs? How do institutions empower these groups to not only be educated on these topics but also feel like they have the ability and resources to act? These are the questions that led to the development of an Advanced Certificate in Research Integrity as part of George Mason University’s Institutional Research Administration Certificate Program.

Research Integrity and the Role of Institutional Culture

Under the federal policy, research misconduct is defined as “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results” (OSTP, 2000). Most experts agree that these cases are relatively rare but, even so, are being underreported. In a commentary in Nature, Titus, Wells, and Rhoades described the low number of allegations of research misconduct reported to the federal Office of Research Integrity in comparison with reports of observations by NIH-funded investigators. There are many reasons why those who witness misconduct might not report it, but there are also institutional factors. Titus, Wells, and Rhoades call out the “common denominator” of “the [institutional] failure to foster a culture of integrity.” Specifically, “administrators may not recognize the significance of evaluating research misconduct and of course they may be poorly equipped to conduct an investigation in an appropriate manner.”

Beyond research misconduct, there is a suite of activities termed “questionable research practices” that have the potential to degrade the culture of high quality ethical research and lead to questions regarding the research team and research outcomes. These practices include actions such as dropping data points when reporting results without explanation, disregarding minor aspects of human subjects requirements, and having inappropriate relationships with other research team members or external sponsors, among others.

Part of the mandate spelled out in the federal Public Health Service research misconduct policy (42 CFR 93.300(c)) is that institutions “promote the responsible conduct of research, research training, and activities related to that research or research training” which would include not only educating about research misconduct but also providing education on various aspects of responsible and ethical conduct of research.

However, federal requirements for training in the responsible conduct of research focus on trainees working on NIH and NSF grants. Although institutions have voluntarily expanded this training in some cases to graduate students not on funded projects, it is rare for faculty to be required to participate in this training and almost unheard of for other groups, such as research administrators, to be required to participate in this training. This oversight could create a culture in which a critical group of individuals, who may witness ethical breaches, remains untrained in the responsible conduct of the research they are supporting.

Research administrators not only deal with day-to-day issues that arise on sponsored projects, they also regularly review accounting, progress reports, and other items related to research programs. Departmental research administrators often serve as the go-to people for PI questions about sponsor requirements, allowable costs, and other related matters. In busy departments and research labs, research administrators provide continuity and a full-time person that students see on a day-to-day basis. Research administrators have the strong potential for hearing about and receiving information about ethics concerns for the projects that they support.

The George Mason Advanced Certificate in Research Integrity – A Bold Move

George Mason University (“Mason”), the largest research university in Virginia with over 36,000 students, joined the ranks of Carnegie R1: Doctoral Universities — Highest Research Activity in 2016. During that same year, Mason’s Office of Sponsored Programs took the step of formalizing and supporting an internal certificate in research administration for the approximately 100 individuals with research administration responsibilities on campus. To obtain the certificate, research administrators are required to attend all training sessions, a total of 26 contact hours, and are eligible for 2.6 CEUs. The first class of 54 attendees graduated in June 2017 and,
Know When It Is Time to Move On

At some point in your career, you will likely find yourself in a situation that leaves you feeling dissatisfied. Sometimes this is due to a difficult supervisor or coworkers; sometimes it is a result of the work itself. In a less-than-ideal work environment, many things are within your control.

Self-Assess
- Is there a mentor who can help develop my skills, technical or soft?
- Have I adequately communicated my needs and provided solution-based feedback?
- How can I tailor my approach with a particular person?

Identify Your Burnout Behaviors
Everyone has their own behaviors to signal that burnout or dissatisfaction is occurring. Identify yours so that you can recognize them early and make a change. Some indications that it may be time for a bold move include:
- Feeling disengaged: Perhaps you lose focus when feeling overwhelmed.
- An increase in errors: This can be a sign that you are approaching burnout.
- Higher or more intense anxiety: Anxiety is a strong indicator that you are out of balance.
- More frequent “vent” sessions: If you notice that your work recaps to friends and family are increasingly negative, you may be reaching your limit.

Know Your Tipping Point
There is a threshold of tolerance that, when exceeded, shifts an individual into the world of unhappiness. Decide early what ratio of good to bad days you can live with. Once you know your tipping point, periodically take note of how close you are to it.

Re-think “Growth”
You may find that the situation does not improve despite your best efforts to self-assess and develop. If you are ready to make a change, do not limit yourself to just promotional opportunities. Taking a step back or sideways can sometimes be the best way to move forward.

Be Bold!
Knowing how to recognize and accept that your values, interests, and skills may never line up with those of your current environment can help you feel empowered to make a bold move for the better. Do not be afraid to take what you have learned and move on.

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at the graduation ceremony, the Associate Vice President for Research Operations mentioned the potential for follow-on advanced certificates. Also in June 2017, Mason hosted an Office of Research Integrity funded conference (#0IR1IR160026) focused on research integrity for research administrators in collaboration with the Society for Research Administrators (SRA), an idea that was developed with co-PIs Debra Schaller-Demers and Mark Hochman. During this two-day intensive conference, the PIs, facilitators, and attendees had in-depth discussions about the potential for research administrators to advance institutional missions of high quality ethical research and play an active role in the promotion of research integrity as well as the detection of potentially unethical incidents.

I served as the Mason PI for the ORI conference, taught a module for the research administration certificate program, and attended the research certificate graduation event where advanced certificates were mentioned. The research administration certificate course director attended the ORI funded conference. During a coffee break at the conference, we developed the idea for an advanced certificate in research integrity at Mason. This idea was evaluated and supported by a steering committee responsible for the research administration certificate program and is currently being implemented.

The first cohort of individuals will participate in the advanced certificate in research integrity in spring 2018. Individuals who successfully earned the certificate in research administration and/or hold the designation of Certified Research Administrator (CRA) are eligible to apply for the program. This advanced certificate will consist of 2-hour topical modules taught weekly for 5 weeks in the spring of 2018 for a total of 10 contact hours and 1 CEU. Modules will include the following: responsible and ethical research; human subjects research; animal care and use, chemical safety and biosafety; data protection requirements, export compliance and sanctions awareness; and financial compliance. Each module will be interactive with a mix of lecture, case studies (by administrative and faculty presenters), and small-group problem solving. Applications will be sought and reviewed within the next month, and the first cohort will be limited to 25 attendees. At the end of the advanced certificate program, our goal is that the attendees will have a deeper understanding of the complex legal and ethical framework for the conduct of research, understand what types of matters might be problematic, and know who to contact with questions and concerns. This will be evaluated with post-module and post-certificate program surveys of attendees.

We expect that research administrators completing this advanced certificate will serve as ambassadors for high quality ethical research practices both within the central Office of Sponsoring Programs and in departments and colleges where they work. This program will require a significant time investment for instructors, facilitators, and attendees, but we believe it is an important step in upholding our commitment to promoting ethical research for federal sponsors and the public.

References

Aurali Dade, Ph.D., is Associate Vice President for Research Development, Integrity and Assurance at George Mason University. She leads all research compliance functions, serves as Institutional Official for these programs, and heads central research development activities. She can be contacted at ADade3@gmu.edu
NCURA conferences are a great opportunity to immerse yourself in the world of research administration. During these conferences, you will have the opportunity to meet research administration professionals from around the world. These professionals come from small, large, urban and rural institutions, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, departments, central offices, to every other setting you can imagine, which means the breadth of experience present at these events is utterly advantageous and unique.

Conferences are a great place for networking, learning and sharing, and with over 2,000 attendees at the most recent NCURA annual meeting, these conferences are particularly fecund grounds for meeting new people and coming back to your home institutions with fresh and innovative ideas. While it may be impossible to predict what benefits you may take away from an NCURA conference, it is safe to predict that you will at least walk away with significant information, having been surrounded by colleagues from the research world.

When talking about the exchange of ideas, Steve Jobs is quoted as saying:

“Innovation comes from people meeting up in the hallways or calling each other at 10:30 at night with a new idea, or because they realized something that shoots holes in how we’ve been thinking about a problem. It’s ad hoc meetings of six people called by someone who thinks he has figured out the coolest new thing ever and who wants to know what other people think of his idea (“Steve Jobs,” 2011, para. 5).”

It is in this spirit that NCURA conferences allow research administrators to interact in a cooperative space and, in between karaoke rounds or courses at lunch, casually share their professional questions or concerns in a supportive and robust atmosphere.

Working in the research administration environment is a delicate balancing act between compliance and bureaucracy, and research administrators often have the unenviable task of reigning in principal investigators while maintaining amicable relations. Attending conferences allows a brief respite from the stressors at our home institutions. Because of the increasingly competitive nature of securing research funding, research administration has many complicated legal and regulatory requirements that can pose barriers to entry for those seeking funding. There is no group more sympathetic to this cause than the professionals at NCURA conferences, and these conferences allow us to mentally recharge and come back to our home institutions refreshed. By interfacing with research administrators of varying levels of expertise and backgrounds, it allows attendees to tap into a network of experience and different perspectives that they may not otherwise have had the opportunity to learn from.

Newer members of the research administration community may find that the benefit of attending these conferences is that they expose you to a wide range of topics that you may not have encountered yet in your fledgling career. While you may not routinely come across the niche kinds of challenges larger research institutions or more experienced research administrators face, learning about these precocious situations is a form of insurance: By actively seeking out these experiences, you are able to get ahead of problematic situations should they arise. For example, the session you attended at the Annual Meeting on the Horizon 2020 program can turn into a lifeline when you are faced with a last minute Horizon 2020 proposal, and remember some piece of obscure but pertinent information from the session. Similarly, when experiences are shared in a group setting—like in a panel session—answers can be collectively found. Sometimes, the questions and answers that are shared in these conference settings may lead you to your own questions you were unaware of.

For those who are not research administrators, but support the profession (such as electronic research administration system managers), attending an NCURA conference has a way of piecing things together and can shed light on problems that have befuddled you in the past. By attending these conferences, you gain a better understanding of the challenges posed in research administration. Lightbulbs tend to go off, things start to make sense, you leave feeling refreshed, and the tasks waiting for you back home are viewed with a different level of awareness—one that is more nuanced. For lack of better terms, the big picture of research administration is brought forth and the foundational

“If you do nothing else at these CONFERENCES but silently LISTEN TO THE INFORMATION that is presented, you will WALK AWAY ENRICHED from the experience.”
understanding is laid out in a way that not everyone can get through “on the job training” alone.

As newer members of the profession, it is easy to get lost in feelings of inadequacy and be intimidated by the thought of attending a conference full of your peers. Being at a conference where acronyms and jargon are hurled casually through the air like a frisbee on a lazy Sunday, where everyone is actively participating but you can lead to feelings of self-doubt. These feelings of self-doubt are what have commonly been referred to as impostor syndrome, as coined by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes (1978). Fortunately, NCURA is an inclusive and supportive community where all are welcomed. Furthermore, the best way to deal with impostor syndrome is by tackling it head-on and recognizing that you are not the junior most NCURA member in the room and that you do belong at NCURA conferences. By attending these conferences, you are engaging in the research administration community. If you do nothing else at these conferences but silently listen to the information that is presented, you will walk away enriched from the experience.

Although you may not leave a meeting knowing how to address a particular challenge on your own, you will gain the tools necessary to help you facilitate your own solutions. Sometimes, the tools can be as subtle as the proper terminology or correct phrasing for searching for an answer, or it could be a contact you connect with who in turn, has the knowledge to help you navigate your obstacle. Regardless of your expectations of going into an NCURA conference, you will leave the experience with a fresh perspective on research administration.

References


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POLICY/REGULATION/COMPLIANCE NEWS:


The Need for Slower Administrators: Senior administrators seem to be required to be busy at all times, and that has created the unfortunate situation where they are often isolated from faculty and staff members. [www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/10/31/why-campus-administrators-should-slow-down-essay?utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fbc04421-97108cf0b9-232228037&mc_cid=97108cf0b9&mc_eid=358676e11c](http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/10/31/why-campus-administrators-should-slow-down-essay?utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fbc04421-97108cf0b9-232228037&mc_cid=97108cf0b9&mc_eid=358676e11c)


US Research Integrity Head Temporarily Leaves Post: For two tumultuous years, Kathy Partin has led the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI), the government organization tasked with investigating claims of scientific misconduct among federal grant recipients. [www.the-scientist.com/articles.view/articleNo/51004/title/US-Research-Integrity-Head-Temporarily-Leaves-Post](http://www.the-scientist.com/articles.view/articleNo/51004/title/US-Research-Integrity-Head-Temporarily-Leaves-Post)

INTERNATIONAL/GLOBAL:

Chinese Philanthropist to Commit $1.5 Billion to Conservation: Beijing-based philanthropist He Qiaonv has announced a ten-year, $20 million commitment to Panthera and WildCRU, Oxford University’s conservation research unit, the initial down payment on her pledge to spend $1.5 billion in support of wildlife conservation. [http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/chinese-philanthropist-to-commit-1-5-billion-to-conservation?utm_medium=email&utm_source=pnd&utm_campaign=pndnews20171017](http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/chinese-philanthropist-to-commit-1-5-billion-to-conservation?utm_medium=email&utm_source=pnd&utm_campaign=pndnews20171017)


AGENCY NEWS:


FUNDING NEWS:


TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER:

Scientists to Discuss New Developments in Gravitational Wave Astronomy: Journalists are invited to join the National Science Foundation (NSF) as it brings together scientists from the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) and Virgo collaborations, as well as representatives for some 70 observatories. [www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=243379&org=NSF&from=news](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=243379&org=NSF&from=news)


Fitbit to Provide 10,000 Devices in Expansive Federal Health Study: Fitbit will be among the wearable brands that Scripps Research Institute uses in an expansive federal research study uncovering the health habits of American citizens. [www.sporttechie.com/fitbit-fitness-trackers-expansive-federal-health-study](http://www.sporttechie.com/fitbit-fitness-trackers-expansive-federal-health-study)

FUN, CHUCKLES, AND COOL RESEARCH INFO:

Quantum Communication is a Giant Leap for Humanity: The Structured Light Laboratory at the University of the Witwatersrand is pushing the limits of fast, secure communication with new research into quantum technologies for communication systems. [www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2017-10-11-quantum-communication-is-a-giant-leap-for-humanity](http://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2017-10-11-quantum-communication-is-a-giant-leap-for-humanity)

If you have any favorite links from e-Xtra that you would like to see in a future issue of NCURA Magazine, please email suggestions to eXtra@ncura.edu.
The daily life of research administration teams has been reshaped recently. It flung out of the loop of daily operations and bureaucracies and stretched out of its environment defined by seeking funding opportunities, preparing research and institutional development applications and negotiating agreements all the way to a more “out of the comfort zone” role. The outreach attribute was added, and research administrators nowadays are also involved in the entrepreneurial component of what they do and what their institution is doing, more engaged in the strategic planning process and how it aligns with institutional goals and governmental initiatives, legislations and mandates, both at the national and international levels.

“A global perspective” is the notion of how research networks operate nowadays. With what the globe is facing in climate change and other catastrophes, the university’s research in engineering fields communicates and answers the universal need for renewable energy and biomedical solutions. The field of agricultural and food sciences responds to the calls of communities within the spectrum of food safety and other agricultural and environmental concerns. The business perspective combines efforts to build the entrepreneurial platform, the corporate social responsibility component and innovative learning. Medical research and health science tackles pressing issues in community health, health initiatives and epidemics, contributing to public health policies of Lebanon, the region and beyond. Given this holistic view, the character of research support offices has changed. They have become involved in strategic initiatives for the university, providing resources and innovative solutions outside typical research administration capacities, which in turn facilitates and maximizes the outcome of communication among all these aforementioned fields, enhancing how knowledge is disseminated with value to internal and external stakeholders.

It is well established that science, technology and innovation are drivers for economic growth, improved productivity, job creation and sustainable development. Building on this, the American University of Beirut (AUB) established the Technology Transfer Unit (TTU) through the Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) to play the leadership role in driving local development. Research administrators received training and certifications from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and are now responsible for identification of intellectual property (IP) at the proposal stage and/or inventions disclosures, as well as for protection and commercialization of the proposed inventions. TTU at AUB is currently the only office of its kind in Lebanon. To encourage innovation and technology transfer in Lebanon and the region, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) implemented the UN-development project on the establishment of National Technology Transfer Offices (NTTO) in selected ESCWA member countries (Lebanon, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco,
Oman and Tunisia) in 2015. This initiative aims to enhance national innovation system capacity through updating related legislations, policies, and links of NTTO to universities and research institutions, thus facilitating the partnership among the research community, economic development sector, industry, and relevant governmental actors in the selected countries. AUB TTU works closely with the Lebanese NTTO and is being used as a model office for universities in Lebanon and the region.

The university, also through OGC, recently established the Centre for Research and Innovation (CRInn) to further support innovation and entrepreneurship among AUB community. Faculty members, students, staff and alumni. Researchers can now explore new ventures, moving out of the traditional classroom into a sandbox where they can translate their research results into tangible products and services. CRInn provides space, resources, guidance, trainings and other tools to startups in various fields related to health, renewable energy, environmental, etc. Through its two years of activity, CRInn had supported over 56 startups, which employed around 120 new university graduates and provided internships for business and engineering students.

Many of these startups have been capable of attracting funding and investment funds, and over 20 of those are now functioning as small businesses, providing new jobs and reversing the brain drain of many of our graduates. Recently, and through its new BOLDLY AUB campaign: Lead, Innovate and Serve, the Board of Trustees: …has approved the setting up of an Innovation Park (to be known as the AUB-iPark) … to contribute to the development of entrepreneurship in Lebanon and the region. The AUB-iPark will serve as a comprehensive solution for developing innovative ideas and converting them into profitable and scalable start-ups; it will be an experiential educational platform, a much-needed research window, and a means of sourcing venture capital to fund entrepreneurial projects (Khuri, 2017, para. 1).

From here, the work of research support offices in the educational models we operate under will always strive to combine the research outlook in its fundamental values and knowledge with bold innovative ventures in order to tackle the complex challenges of today and provide to the communities they serve. Increasingly, the university is reaching beyond the boundaries and frameworks of research as we know it, with the understanding that an evolving organization will prepare future generations of students and faculty to accelerate the pace of scientific discovery, unravel the complexities of developmental issues, and make meaningful contributions to their societies.

References

Makram Halawani, Assistant Director of the Office of Grants and Contracts at the American University of Beirut. He is a member of NCURA, Region VIII. He is responsible for managing federally-funded institutional projects and introducing best practices in procedures and compliance. He can be reached at mh149@aub.edu.lb

Dr. Fadia Homeidan, Director, Office of Grants and Contracts, Technology Transfer Unit and Centre for Research and Innovation at the American University of Beirut. Dr. Homeidan coordinates and actively participates in projects at her institution. She can be reached at fh01@aub.edu.lb

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When we took on the role of becoming trainers for our organizations, we knew we had to be creative. The learning platforms at our institutions depended on our research expertise and on our ability to create and design educational training courses. “From day one, I was bombarded with requests for training that ranged the gamut from basic budgeting to effort reporting, from contract negotiation to compliance,” said Tricia Callahan, Senior Research Education & Information Officer at Colorado State University (CSU). The biggest challenges we all faced were where to begin and what resources were available to help deliver effective training.

While we’re all well versed in the award lifecycle, that does not make us subject matter experts in all areas. To reach a broad audience with a wide range of experiences, we need to rely on subject matter experts. Fortunately for all of us, each of our institutions has subject matter experts (SMEs) who were more than willing to share their knowledge and time; they just need someone to organize trainings and guide them.

The first step is to identify your SMEs. This step is relatively easy. Look for the people in the trenches who are doing the work. For instance, if you are giving a session on writing to review criteria or the merit review process, seek faculty who have served as reviewers. If you want to lead a discussion on successfully applying to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP), enlist successful student applicants and their mentors to serve as panel members. If you want to teach your staff to use a new system, engage those individuals who were part of the implementation team. And if you are giving a workshop on copyright issues, look to your librarians.

While identifying SMEs is relatively easy, helping them create and deliver learning content effectively may be a larger challenge. Not everyone is comfortable or adept at sharing knowledge. The key is knowing how to help them create and deliver learning content. There are several steps you can take to help your SMEs effectively impart their knowledge.

Create an outline (Tolise Dailey)

To assist our SMEs at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) with delivering their training content, I provide them with a general description of areas they should focus on that will benefit their target audience. The outline includes topics and subtopics they need to address, and how to add case studies and educational activities to enhance their learning objectives. By mapping out the essential features of their training sessions, it allows the SME to stay focused on specific areas that are in their wheelhouse while highlighting their areas of expertise.

Be clear about expectations and objectives (Tricia Callahan)

Just like it is important to clearly communicate learning objectives with learners, it is equally important to communicate expectations and objectives with your SMEs. Presenters should be certain of your goals and anticipated outcomes. As a trainer, it is your job to discuss learning objectives with presenters/panel members at the outset so that they understand what you want and need participants to get out of the session. Where appropriate, develop learning objectives and outlines in tandem, set deadlines and milestones if need be, and share examples in order to clearly articulate desired learning outcomes. Leave room for any questions, concerns, feedback, or input they might have. Let them be creative in sharing their knowledge within a learning rubric you develop together.

Develop your SMEs (Roseann Luongo)

It is important to have SMEs participate in the delivery of training. Having SMEs bring the content to life by providing realistic examples, and being able to respond to in-depth participant questions is invaluable to imparting knowledge. In order to have your SMEs most effectively participate in delivering a session, it may be necessary for you to help them get more comfortable...
As a trainer, your role becomes identifying and guiding SMEs in sharing their wealth of knowledge effectively.

by Q&A over brown bag lunch), blogs, training videos and manuals, and even conversation over beer and appetizers can be just as effective as PowerPoint in conveying knowledge. This is not to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum.

As a trainer, your role becomes identifying and guiding SMEs in sharing their wealth of knowledge effectively.

Refresh Your SMEs (Carrie Chesbro)
Keep in mind that your SMEs will want new challenges from time to time. Refreshing your faculty panels or research administrator topic assignments will provide a break for SMEs to recharge for new topics. We frequently see more interest in certain topics over others, especially when new regulations or procedures are released. Encouraging staff to work as teams on SME topics that interest them will increase motivation and avoid knowledge silos.

Find the right forum (Tricia Callahan)
Not every learning session has to be a workshop. Discussion groups, panel discussions, lunch and learns (brief presentations followed by Q&A over brown bag lunch), blogs, training videos and manuals, and even conversation over beer and appetizers can be just as effective as PowerPoint in conveying knowledge. This is not to discount the traditional workshop; if geared to adult learners, it can be a very effective forum to deliver content. In fact, on my second day on the job at CSU I attended an all-day workshop on basic budgeting. SMEs from across the institution used an effective combination of NCURA video clips, short PowerPoint presentations, exercises, and group activities to tackle difficult material, and they did so successfully, according to post-workshop evaluations. Incidentally, questions that came out of the workshop became fodder for a yearlong series of lunch and learns.

Aside from the traditional workshop, I find the use of panel discussions to be effective in sharing knowledge on specific programs, like the NSF GRFP mentioned above. Your role here need only be to organize and advertise the event, prepare panel members with questions and lead discussion.

Enlisting faculty who have served as program officers or peer reviewers to share tidbits during lunch and learns is a good way to share information about a particular agency or program. Once, I invited a faculty member who served as a reviewer on the NSF DEB (Division of Environmental Biology) program to share his insights with colleagues over beer and appetizers, with the understanding that I was only buying the first round. This simple, informal gathering was extremely effective in sharing a few valuable key insights that faculty needed in order to make their NSF proposals more competitive.

The use of training videos/webinars or even a short NCURA YouTube Tuesday, followed by time for Q&A can also be an effective training technique. Here, you are relying on SMEs outside your institution. Don’t discount these experts: Faculty and administrators from nearby institutions, your NCURA colleagues, retired program officers, and consultants can bring fresh perspectives to your campus.

These forums and others can offer new and effective ways to convey information without breaking the bank in terms of time, resources, and money. As a trainer, your role becomes identifying and guiding SMEs in sharing their wealth of knowledge effectively.

Takeaways (Tolise Dailey)
What are takeaways? These are golden nuggets of information that participants can put in their pocket and take out for later use. At CU Boulder, we have created numerous bite-sized learning bits of information that we share with our research community to help them understand the basics of our university’s processes and policies: A Fly America Act infographic, a meals reference guide, an email template, and a roles and responsibilities chart, for example. Giving research administrators tools that can help them with their daily job functions helps to reinforce the organization’s training message.

In closing
Relying on SMEs is of particular importance when there is a high-volume need and paucity of resources. Set your training goals and objectives, get creative in identifying appropriate forums, and work with SMEs to effectively communicate learning objectives. By involving SMEs, you’ll have a successful training program at little cost to your institution, while building a community of inquiry and engagement.
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Research Management Review

Volume 22, Number 1

• It Takes an Eco-System: A Review of the Research Administration Technology Landscape

• A Measure of Excellence of Young European Research Council Grantees

• Research Strategies for Academic Medical Centers: A Framework for Advancements toward Translational Excellence

• Collaboration in Action: Measuring and Improving Contracting Performance in the University of California Contracting Network

• Research Administrative Burden: A Qualitative Study of Local Variations and Relational Effects

• Academic-Corporate Engagement: Strategic and Organizational Best Practices

• Faculty Member Perceptions of Facilities and Administrative Costs for Sponsored Research at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Louisiana

NEW CO-EDITOR APPOINTED

Sheila Lischwe has been appointed to serve as the new Co-Editor for NCURA’s journal. She will be joining Dr. Marianne Rinaldo Woods. Research Management Review (RMR) is the scholarly peer-reviewed online publication which focuses on a broad range of issues affecting the administration of academic research. The RMR provides a forum for the dissemination of knowledge about the study and practice of the research administration profession. Past editors of the RMR include immediate past editors Dr. Jo Ann Smith and Thomas Wilson, MBA. Former editors include: Dr. Jennifer Shambrook, Dr. Pamela Plotkin, Dr. William Sharp, James Casey, J.D., Robert Killoren, M.A., Dr. Stephen Erickson, Dr. Earl Freise and founding editor Dr. Mary Ellen Sheridan.

Sheila T. Lischwe has over fifteen years’ experience in research administration at a variety of institutions, including Saint Louis University, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and Webster University. She is currently Director of Sponsored Programs at Clemson University, overseeing pre-award services. In addition to earning a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, she is presently completing an MA in Writing, Rhetoric and Media.

“Research Management Review has a long and distinguished history of strong and rigorous scholarship that has, in many ways, formed the cornerstone of the research administration profession. I am truly honored to help continue this legacy as Co-Editor, alongside my esteemed colleague, Marianne Woods.”

Available at www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/ResearchManagementReview
When talking about scientific advances and growth, the first thing that I think of is the research that is conducted at universities. Federal funding for scientific research is so crucial within university settings because it unleashes breakthroughs on new technologies to cure diseases, enhance our national defense strategies and equipment and make everyday life easier and more enjoyable. Our nation depends on the outcome of basic and clinical research so that we can continue to thrive and push products on the market for commercial use. This commercial use impacts not only our everyday lives but is also a driving force that allows the market to flourish, creating new jobs and businesses. So, if scientific research is so important to our health and everyday lifestyle, why is federal funding being decreased across the nation?

According to a publication by the National Science Foundation, federal funding for universities has continued to plummet for the fourth year in a row (Britt, 2016). Moreover, federal funding for research at universities has continued to decline since its peak in FY 2011 (Britt, 2016).

At the rate federal funding for research is shrinking, it will not be long before our nation begins to feel the effects. The world depends on scientific research in universities for economic prosperity and growth. Cutting funding means less research and development, and less basic and clinical research, which ultimately has a major effect on our nation’s progress and economic growth. We need to look at scientific research as an investment. The mere fact that scientists are making astonishing developments and finding new ways to preserve and enrich the environment—which ultimately gives people a better quality of life—is reason enough to continue to fund scientific research, and perhaps even increase its funding.

For the past several decades, the US has been known for cutting-edge technology and innovation. With that said, federal funding should be increasing, allowing more scientists to conduct basic research that will create groundbreaking developments so that our nation can continue to discover new applications and make strides for a better economy worldwide. Due to the diminishing amounts of funding, we have to consider the long-term effect. If we fail to discover and market new technologies, we may lose our edge and find that we are taking a major hit economically. The more funding that we provide universities to conduct research, the more chances that we will discover new cures for chronic diseases and new products for the betterment of society. Federal funding is the key to embarking on new businesses and new commercial opportunities.

In a blog post about the importance of federal research funding for universities, University of Wisconsin-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank states that as the federal government cuts budgets for scientific research, many of the country’s competitors are working to increase their investments, even when many of them—the United Kingdom and Germany, for example—are dealing with fiscal problems. Despite their problems, they are making efforts to increase their spending on scientific research (Blank, 2013).

Increasing federal funding for scientific research needs to become priority in the US. If the budget for research continues to decrease, we are preventing the country from achieving more economic growth and allowing our competitors to gain control over the newest developments in medicine, military and the environment. As mentioned earlier, countries that are facing problems financially realize the importance of scientific research and are finding the money to invest. These countries understand that science is what can change the world and create opportunities for their citizens. Increasing the budget for scientific research will allow the US to make remarkable discoveries that can impact our world and financial state.

References


Kristina Gomez is Technology Manager in the Office of Research & Commercialization at University of Central Florida. She is pursuing a Master of Research Administration (MRA) at the University of Central Florida. She can be reached at Kristina.Gomez@ucf.edu
Dear Colleagues,

First, we want to wish Puerto Rico a speedy recovery from their current situation. Although we were slightly disheartened for not being able to host the conference in the beautiful city of San Juan, we are extremely happy that an alternate venue was found quickly by our NCURA team. We, the co-chairs of the 2018 Financial Research Administration (FRA) Conference, want to thank our wonderful program committee: workshop chairs, track leads and presenters for accommodating the new schedule.

The conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista, March 5-6, 2018, and will be followed by the Workshop Day for FRA and PRA. The theme for the 19th Annual FRA Conference is “In Support of Research: Re-Discover Your Passion.” With so many upcoming regulatory changes, some known, many still to be passed, that will impact research administration, it is important for us to remember our passion and stay on track.

We are pleased to announce, Eric Haseltine, an expert on managing innovation processes, will be our keynote speaker. Dr. Haseltine, through his experiences as a neuroscientist and senior executive of industry and government, shows organizations how to find opportunities hiding in their brain’s “don’t expect-don’t want” blind spots.

Our dedicated and hardworking program committee have put together some very interesting topics that will cut across all conference tracks.

Below are the list of tracks:

- Departmental
- Federal
- Financial Compliance
- Global
- Medical/Hospital
- Predominately Undergraduate Institutions/PUI
- Non-Financial Compliance
- Organization and Career Development
- Post-Award Accounting

We hope to see you in Orlando!

Co-Chairs,

Urmila Bajaj
University of Virginia

Jamie Caldwell
University of Kansas Medical Center
Research Administrators who have been NCURA members for at least one year and who are currently enrolled in a graduate degree program in Research Administration are eligible to apply for an award of $2,500. Review criteria include the applicant’s personal statement, record of past and current NCURA involvement, and access to employer-based educational support. Applicants will be notified in April by the Education Scholarship Fund Select Committee Chair.

Apply today! Application deadline is February 23, 2018


REQUIREMENTS:

☐ The applicant must be enrolled in a master’s degree program in Research Administration, or with a concentration in Research Administration.

☐ The applicant must be a NCURA member in good standing for at least one year at the time of the application submission and must remain a member throughout the duration of the scholarship award use.

☐ Applicants must complete the form and upload attachments.

☐ Scholarship awards must be used within twelve (12) months from notification of award.

☐ Recipients must provide proof of completion and receipt of academic credit within six months after completion; otherwise, the funds must be returned to NCURA.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact Latasha Johnson, NCURA Education Scholarship Fund Select Committee Liaison, at johnson@ncura.edu
Regulation and Compliance:
A Compendium of Regulations and Certifications Applicable to Sponsored Programs

NCURA's comprehensive resource of all the relevant regulations for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts.

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Many U.S. universities are expanding their education and research globally. This expansion provides universities the opportunity to leverage their expertise in higher education, university design, and research which in turn improves the quality of life and economy globally. At Arizona State University (ASU), the push to “go global” was heard loud and clear with the establishment of its USAID-funded, U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Energy (USPCAS-E). USPCAS-E is a partnership between USAID, ASU, and two leading Pakistani universities – the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) and the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) – to focus on applied research relevant to Pakistan’s energy needs and help produce skilled graduates and faculty in the energy field (see http://uspcase.asu.edu).

With the launch of USPCAS-E, ASU’s research administration faced many challenges. Some of the challenges included: establishing operations in Pakistan; hiring foreign nationals; tracking and monitoring project activities and tasks; and managing a global team. The purpose of this article is to share how we resolved these challenges.

**Establishing Operations in Pakistan**

Several solutions were possible for setting up operations in Pakistan but the one ASU decided to go with was forming a partnership with an organization already established in Pakistan and issuing them a subaward. ASU partnered with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to serve as our in-country administrative support team. IUCN is responsible for leasing office space and for working with our in-country project team to purchase equipment and supplies, arrange travel, process travel reimbursements, coordinate workshops and meetings, and market our project.

**Hiring Foreign Nationals**

The next challenge ASU faced was hiring staff to implement the project in Pakistan. Unfortunately, ASU couldn’t directly hire foreign nationals due to state statute, unless they had a U.S. work visa. The solution was to contract with a third-party professional employer agency who was authorized to employ people in Pakistan. The Mauve Group, Inc. worked with ASU to hire six Pakistanis to implement the project. Mauve was responsible for managing all payroll, taxes and benefits for these employees. In addition, Mauve guided ASU in developing hiring procedures and drafting employment contracts.
Once the Pakistani team was in place, it was important to establish their affiliation with ASU so they could effectively implement the project on behalf of ASU. To do this, each Pakistani team member was given an ASU ID number, ASU email address, and ASU computer which included access to ASU’s Business Dropbox and Microsoft Office 360 accounts. In addition, they were given ASU business cards and name tags to demonstrate their association with ASU at meetings and events.

Developing an Effective Global Project Management System

To effectively manage any project, it’s important to establish project management systems that monitor and track progress of activities towards meeting project objectives, and ultimately meeting the project goals. This venture posed a huge challenge in this respect, considering the 12-hour difference between the U.S. and Pakistan, and the team split between the two countries. To address this challenge, ASU hired a Project Manager with extensive experience working on development projects overseas. The Project Manager worked closely with the team to develop reporting tools necessary to provide the guidance and roadmap to effectively achieve project objectives, such as the annual work plan, life of project plan, and reporting templates required by the sponsor. This effort required frequent trips to Pakistan by the Project Director and Project Manager and several Skype meetings to work with USAID, NUST and UET to ensure alignment of all plans and expectations.

Once the reporting tools and templates to guide project implementation were in place, the next challenge was developing a project management system that would allow the teams based in Pakistan and the U.S. to document their progress on implementation of project activities. The system had to be accessible online and easy to use. We explored many systems, such as SharePoint, Asana, Smartsheet and Dropbox, all presenting different pros and cons. The biggest common challenge experienced with all these systems was instilling the culture of using them. To address this challenge, ASU hired a Project Manager with extensive experience working on development projects overseas. The Project Manager worked closely with the team to develop reporting tools necessary to provide the guidance and roadmap to effectively achieve project objectives, such as the annual work plan, life of project plan, and reporting templates required by the sponsor. This effort required frequent trips to Pakistan by the Project Director and Project Manager and several Skype meetings to work with USAID, NUST and UET to ensure alignment of all plans and expectations.

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Managing a Global Team

Of all the challenges ASU faced, this was probably the most difficult and one we continue to perfect. USPCAS-E has 11 full-time employees with 6 based in Pakistan and 5 based at ASU. To bridge the gap between both teams, the following practices were implemented.

• **Awareness of time zones.** Pakistan has a 12-hour time difference from Arizona so the team had to determine the most convenient time to have team meetings. In addition, the ASU-based team had to be flexible with their work schedule as some activities would require them to work late at night or early in the morning to be on the same work schedule as Pakistan.

• **Respect for national and religious holidays.** Pakistan honors different holidays than the U.S. and some of their holidays include fasting. In addition, some Pakistani holidays are based on the appearance of the moon, not based on a date. The team developed a holiday calendar within our project management system so everyone on the team knew when holidays occurred. Each team assigned a team member to keep the calendar updated and notify team members of upcoming holidays.

• **Sharing of cultural differences.** The USPCAS-E team share a diverse cultural background including Muslim, Navajo, American, and Jewish cultures. Team members were encouraged to share their culture and to research other cultures, which promoted cultural sensitivity.

• **Checking in with team members.** The majority of communication was done through email. However, calling team members before sending an email was highly encouraged by the Project Director. Discussing an issue over the phone or Skype allowed team members to connect on a more personal level and usually resolved the issues more quickly. The Project Director also had frequent “stay” meetings with every team member to evaluate their engagement and overall wellbeing. Frequent calls to and from Pakistan were expensive which increased the team’s personal phone bills. To overcome this problem, ASU issued all team members a monthly phone allowance to offset this cost.

Conclusion

A significant takeaway from this experience is that in order to effectively manage a global project, communication and cultural barriers must be addressed at the outset of the project in order to build a successful multicultural team with a united common goal. The USPCAS-E project presented a unique set of administrative challenges that extended beyond physical locations and time zones. The team had to work together to resolve issues quickly and efficiently regardless of where they were located. Having an appreciation of the diverse background each individual brought to the team was key in successful implementation.

"In order to effectively manage a global project, communication and cultural barriers must be addressed at the outset.”

Tara Seaton, CRA, Director, Fiscal & Business Operations for the USPCAS-E at Arizona State University in Tempe, is an ASU graduate and has been working as a Post Award Research Administrator for 15 years. She can be reached at Tara.Seaton@asu.edu

Georgina E. Melendez, MSPM, MBA, Project Manager for the USPCAS-E at Arizona State University, graduated from University of Maryland University College. Georgina is responsible for managing day-to-day project activities and reporting to project stakeholders. She can be reached at Georgina.Melendez@asu.edu
COLLABORATE LOCALLY
We work daily with others to accomplish our goals. Whether putting a new process in place, readying a proposal package for submission, or producing a product, rarely do we work in isolation. Instead, we collaborate to achieve the best results and meet our goals. We benefit by working in tandem with others within and outside our organizations, whether they be other institutions or industry, or with people in our professional organizations, like NCURA.

While the people within our organizations understand our internal processes and culture, working with professional colleagues outside our organization can give us a fresh perspective and help us see beyond organizational confines. NCURA's Collaborate is one way we can connect with our professional colleagues to share best practices and resources.

WHAT IS COLLABORATE?
Collaborate is an information-sharing network made up of communities that are literally at your fingertips. By joining communities of interest, you can quickly find colleagues and others with similar interests and challenges. You can start conversations, share resources, and have discussions around select topics.

Collaborate Communities include:
• Academic/Medical Center Departmental Administration
• CFRA (Certified Financial Research Administrator), CPRA (Certified Pre-Award Research Administrator), and CRA (Certified Research Administrator) Study Groups
• Compliance
• Departmental Research Administration
• Electronic Research Administration
• Financial Research Administration
• Pre-Award Research Administration
• Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs)

And there’s even a community for Global Research Administration!

COLLABORATE GLOBALLY
The Global Community is dedicated to providing a broad range of material and information for those who are engaged in global research administration. The Global Community is unique in that you do not have to be an NCURA member to join this particular community.

As part of NCURA’s Global Community, you will have instant access to a global network and resources. You will receive all communications in the Global Community including:
• Complimentary webinars
• Thoughtful discussions that help the research administrator navigate the global research scene
• Announcements and updates for professional development including workshops, conferences and fellowship programs

To join the Global Community as an NCURA member, sign in to NCURA, select “Collaborate” in the top menu bar, then select “Communities.” From the dropdown menu, select “Global Community” and “Join Community” and you’ll be on your way to an exciting experience connecting with colleagues from around the globe.

If you are not currently an NCURA member, just fill out a simple registration form at https://s.zoomerang.com/r/6L6GMD7?sm=g6pJCG3RWAbDfheEv2XuNtw%3d%3d and we will set up your free membership in the Global Collaborate Community.

COLLABORATE
Whether you join the Global Community or other Collaborate communities, NCURA’s Collaborate will keep you connected with research administration colleagues, allowing you to share resources and anticipate the next “big thing” in research administration. Don’t work in isolation. Instead, let’s support research...together...through Collaborate!

Sue Kelch is a Senior Financial Analyst, Department of Otolaryngology, University of Michigan. Sue joined NCURA in 2007, served as Chair of Region IV and was elected as a National Board Regionally Elected Member. Sue co-chairs NCURA’s Global Community. She can be reached at suekelch@med.umich.edu

Tricia Callahan is Senior Research Education & Information Officer, Office of Sponsored Programs, Colorado State University. A long-standing NCURA member, Tricia serves as a peer reviewer and as a traveling faculty for Fundamentals and Global Fundamentals. Tricia also co-chairs NCURA’s Global Community conferences. She can be reached at callahtl@colostate.edu
The National Science Foundation (NSF) is embarking on a multi-year initiative to modernize the proposal submission functionality currently enjoyed by applicants using FastLane. New capabilities will focus on an implementation strategy in Research.gov. One of the major goals will be to reduce the administrative burden associated with preparation, submission, and management of proposals for the applicant community as well as NSF staff. This past year, NSF has focused on gathering requirements, developing concepts, and building the back-end application infrastructure. Among other agenda items for next year, the NSF plans to launch a pilot application in Research.gov.

Revisiting the Past.

It is 1992. I relish NSF deadlines. Yes, there is the pressure of assembling paper copies of a research proposal and making last-minute changes by replacing individual pages to fix one typo. Yet everyone works together to package 15 or 20 copies – a collaborative effort with the adrenaline rush to help us through the day. The last application is rushed to the FedEx office for shipment. Whew! Now we can relax and catch our breath…

Inevitably Dr. Leed rushes through the door with a $5M application, 20 copies already printed, and a marked-up budget page penned with required corrections. This one isn’t on our radar. Armed with a bottle of White-Out, one of our team paints over the marks on the budget form, rolls it into the IBM Selectric typewriter making the appropriate corrections. I head to the copier and come back with 20 fresh sheets while others pull staples and help replace the budget page. We again staple and package the proposal, remembering it must be appropriate for airline luggage.

I’m now committed to drive to Denver Stapleton Airport in the morning to fly my precious cargo to Washington, DC on a DC-10 airliner. Hand-delivery of proposals to the NSF Proposal Processing Unit 1800 G Street in Washington, DC is my reward for the hectic day. I truly relish the downtime on the 6-hour flight. The NSF headquarters building was then located close to the Farragut West Metro stop, just a few blocks from the White House. After dropping the payload, I head south to visit the memorials and museums on the Washington Mall. I have a few hours before heading back to the Washington National Airport to catch my red-eye flight home.

Circa 1993 - Is there a better process?
Step back in time with me. 25 years ago, Gopher, with its ubiquitous green, pulsating cursor reaches its peak as a purveyor of text-based information and documents over the Internet, as CERN (.fr - Organisation européenne pour la recherche nucléaire) releases its World Wide Web (W3) technology to an unsuspecting world.

Yahoo! and the Netscape browser are in the planning stages. Microsoft is about to announce Windows 95 and their first version of Internet Explorer. There are 18 million American homes online, but only 3% have taken time to access the World Wide Web. Amazon.com opens as the “Earth’s Biggest Bookstore” and eBay opens as “Auction Web.” In this environment, the very last thing one might anticipate is a government entity taking a risk to develop a new e-commerce concept that connects a user to a database on a server through a browser on the World Wide Web. Yet Connie McLindon, the Information and Resource Management (IRM) Director at the NSF makes a decision to initiate “Project X,” an experimental process that would allow electronic submission of research proposals to the National Science Foundation over the Internet. FastLane is born.

The NSF Proposal Submission Modernization Project
By Ron Splittgerber

The NSF Proposal Submission Modernization Project

By Ron Splittgerber
The Formative Years.

As an experimental research initiative focusing on computerizing proposal submissions in 1994, the NSF team needs approval and funding for the project. Connie McLindon and Fred Wendling approach NSF director Neal Lane for Project X. Both are upfront about the inherent uncertainties of a cutting-edge software architecture based on an emerging World Wide Web infrastructure. To add to the challenge at hand, more than 75% of the NSF-funded researchers and their staffs have no Internet connection. A universal proposal system requiring Internet connection for everyone using it, and requiring those users to adopt the same software standards seems a tall order, indeed. Lane gives McLindon and Wendling the approval with first-year funding of $800,000. “It’s a research project - it’s OK if it fails,” Lane admonishes. “Make sure you get buy-in internally [across the NSF] and with the [research] community,” he continues.

With approval and funding to move ahead, Project X needs a catchier name. McLindon and Wendling work with Chuck Brownstein and debate dozens of possibilities. “Starts with N and ends with V” for “NSF” and “Visual” is considered, along with more unwieldy names such as Proposal and Award Administrative Office Processes, or PAAOF (pronounced “Pay Off”). Facing an imminent meeting with Director Lane, Wendling suggests a tongue-in-cheek name “Fast” for electronic and “Lane” after the Director. During the meeting, the two monikers are concatenated as “FastLane” in the conversation. “Connie, if it’s successful, it was named after me; if it’s a failure, I had nothing to do with it!” quipped Lane.

Following Lane’s advice, McLindon and Wendling’s attention focuses on buy-in from both the external university research community and the internal NSF staff. This critical concept contributes to the rapid development and success of FastLane. As the project unfolds, other notable NSF Staff join the team – we recognize folks such as Jerry Stuck, Albert Muhlbauer, Dan Hofherr, Craig Robinson and even Jean Feldman from the Policy Office. The very first FastLane transaction is a review submitted March 29, 1995, and subsequently the percentage of total transactions increases from 1% in 1996 to 80% in 2000. In 2000, Craig Robinson assumes the project manager role for FastLane preparing for the October launch. Presentations at NCURA, SRA and the Federal Demonstration Partnership pave the way for mandatory use in October 2000. As Jean Feldman recalls, “A huge assessment was the volume of proposals that were coming in electronically. That data point right there told us a lot about how the community was using it even prior to the launch.”

Not without its startup problems (early on, the system consistently crashes under heavy loads during CAREER submissions, and the NSF still prints paper copies of the electronic submission for the review process) FastLane is nevertheless remarkable in its nearly universal acceptance and an amazing life span of a quarter century. Understanding the need to move from the FastLane paradigm of PDF applications and the form-based user interface, NSF is now considering options moving FastLane to a web-based application accessible through Research.gov.

The Proposal Submission Modernization (PSM) Effort.

Along with a focus on Research.gov grants management system, the NSF now turns to a face-lift for FastLane. Announcing a FastLane replacement invites unreasonable scrutiny from researchers accustom to its familiar look-and-feel. Wisely, the face-lift is dubbed the “Proposal Submission Modernization” (PSM) process and will be released incrementally in a series of smaller steps. Following the precedent established by the FastLane development team, the PSM is focusing on both external and internal stakeholders.

The initial PSM team launches a survey in June 2015 and catalogs more than 16,000 responses. Initial findings include:

- More than 75% indicate FastLane meets expectations
- 40% report that FastLane webpage layout is not intuitive
- 10% Sponsored Programs Office respondents believe current proposal preparation process results in unreasonable burden
- 25% principal investigator respondents believe current proposal preparation process results in unreasonable burden

The survey also solicits suggestions improvements, and respondents provide these (and others):

- Pre-populate data and fields in forms where possible
- Revise screen appearance and format to match the specific solicitation
- 80% SPOs indicate expanded automatic compliance checking & validations would help
- 75% investigators indicate expanded automatic compliance checking & validations would help
- 20% indicated expanded use of preliminary proposals would ease workload
- 20% indicated additional context-sensitive help functionality would reduce burden
- 55% felt Just-in-Time proposal submission would help (submit science portion initially, then follow up with the budget and other components after an initial review)

PSM will follow an “Agile” development model. Rather than completely replacing FastLane with a new software implementation, new concepts will be drafted and presented to users for refinement, and wireframes (web page mock-ups) will be reviewed by users before release. Development and deployment of features and enhancements will be incremental.

In addition, the NSF team is consolidating various login credentials required for the following 4 modules:

- Proposal and Awards and Status (PAS)
- Research Admin Module (RAM)
- Graduate Research
- Panelist Functions (IPS)
This consolidation will improve the following:
- **Account**: Each individual user of NSF systems will have only a single account log in to remember
- **Self Registration**: Individuals are now able to self-register, eliminating that burden from the organization’s administrator
- **Role Request**: Requests for specific user roles has been automated
- **Profile Management**: Each user will have their own, unique, self-maintained profile

Consolidating these now separate login credentials into one will allow the use of an individual’s local university Single Sign-On (SSO) information. For example, to log in using SSO and the consolidated process, the steps would be:

**Open Research.gov and click the Log in link:**

**Select my organization from the drop down list:**

**Log in using my university user name and password:**

After logging in, user is able to create a new proposal, access those in progress, or view those previously submitted:

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**Award Acceptance**

NCURA Peer Reviewers have conducted more than 115 reviews at institutions of all sizes. One area NCURA Peer Reviewers look at when examining the effective operations of sponsored program offices is an institution’s processes for award review and acceptance. Effective sponsored research offices often share characteristics and notable approaches to award review and acceptance. Effective offices:

- Clearly identify and delegate award acceptance responsibility to trained and competent staff.
- Often use an award checklist or other tool to ensure that the award review process always looks at critical elements of agreements.
- Have institutional policies, procedures, and or guidelines on how to handle terms and conditions such as indemnification and publication rights.
- Provide training on award terms and conditions and the art of negotiation with staff who are authorized to negotiate awards.
- Consult the PI/PD and keeps him/her apprised at all steps throughout the award review/negotiation process.
- Have routine forms of communication and access to legal counsel for problematic clauses or areas of negotiation.
- Invest in staff professional development on evolving policy changes and terms and conditions.
- Ensure that those negotiating awards and signing award acceptance agreements understand and communicate terms and conditions to all stakeholders on campus.

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

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**NOTABLE PRACTICES**

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
The NSF deserves credit for efforts to solicit comments and suggestions from the FastLane applicant community as well as review panels and other customers. Those of us seeking a unified submission portal for all federal research applications must become involved when sessions are scheduled online and at NCURA, SRA and FDP sessions. More progress toward open Application Program Interface (API) design allowing universities and vendors to integrate research management solutions with Research.gov is possible during the PSM design process. The existing ability for the NSF to accept System-to-System (S2S) transactions from these systems exists, however not widely used because the APIs to allow validation of data from the applicant submission are not fully developed. Now is the time to make our design suggestions known and understood.

Notes:
The author wishes to thank William (Bill) Daus, Project Manager, NSF, for providing information on the NSF Proposal Submission Modernization effort.

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FastLane, Managing Science in the Internet World – Thomas J. Misa, Jeffrey R. Yost, Johns Hopkins University Press

Ron Splittgerber, Director of Research Services at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado where his responsibilities include IT support for the Vice President for Research. Ron has been involved in NCURA conferences and committees since 1995, serving on the program committee for eRA workshops including as Co-Chair for eRA VI in 2001. Ron also served on the Executive Committee and as Co-Chair of the eRA Standing Committee at the Federal Demonstration Partnership for Phase V as well as a founding member of the IAD team. He can be contacted at ron.splittgerber@colostate.edu
NCURA Member Milestones

Julie Cole  is now Director of Grants and Contracts at East Carolina University.

Amanda Humphrey is now the Director of Award Administration at Northeastern University. She also serves as a co-chair of the FDP Subawards Subcommittee.

Kerry Peluso is now Assistant Vice President for Research Administration and Finance at Florida State University.

Jeff Ritchie, CRA, CFRA, is now the Director of Sponsored Programs at Hamilton College. Jeff also serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Research Administrators Certification Council (RAAC).

Deborah (Debbie) L. Smith, Ed.D., Associate Vice Chancellor for Research at The University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, retired from UTHSC in June 2017, after more than 35 years of service. Upon her retirement, Debbie was named Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Emeritus.

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

EDITOR’S PICK Insight Out: Get Ideas Out of Your Head and Into the World By Tina Seelig

Going from an idea to an accepted business practice can be a difficult task that sometimes involves creativity. Creativity can be an important part of the process because it forces you to think about multiple alternatives. As research administrators were are tasked with coming up with inventive ideas and turning those ideas into reality. I recently read a book Insight Out: Get Ideas Out of Your Head and Into the World by Tina Seelig. The book was a great read because it gave me practical tools to gain insight and inspiration to stimulate a different approach to the way I thought about a project.

In the book, Dr. Seelig, a Stanford University Professor, describes the framework, she calls the “Invention Cycle.” This virtuous cycle uses four stages:

- **Imagination** is a vision of something which does not exist.
- **Creativity** applies the concept of imagination to address a challenge. By using creativity it involves tapping into motivation to address an opportunity.
- **Innovation** is developing a novel way to express the imagination combined with creativity. Innovation requires one to focus on the right things with undivided attention.
- **Entrepreneurship** is applying innovation, scaling unique ideas, by inspiring others’ imagination.

By applying these four stages, it gave me the tools I needed to re-engage the way I approach an idea to making it a fruition with an entrepreneurial mindset. I would recommend this as a good read for any research administrator coping with constant change and needing to model a pathway for change.

“The creative process is not controlled by a switch you can simply turn on or off; it’s with you all the time”

Alvin Ailey, American Dancer
The Program Committee for NCURA’s 60th anniversary meeting is hard at work putting together a program that will exceed expectations! This is NCURA’s diamond anniversary, and, as such, we are planning some special events, reunions and a few surprises but of more importance are the diverse sessions being scheduled with you in mind. There are some familiar tracks but you will also see some changes this year – including a separate focus within the professional development track on training (developing the team) and human capital (developing the individual). There is also a renewed focus on involving individuals new to presenting. In this regard we have a New Presenter Liaison that will work to connect individuals with potential opportunities. Of course, what better way to celebrate our diamond anniversary than to have the opportunity to view the Hope Diamond, the world’s largest deep blue diamond? That opportunity will be available as Sunday night’s event (yes, Sunday night…) will be a Night at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History! Stay tuned for more details – including plans for a very special Tuesday night event.

This year’s theme is “Demonstrating Resilience and Advancing the Profession.” Resilience is defined as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties (toughness). Resilient people are alert and aware of their current situation as well as the behaviors and emotional reactions of those around them. Resilient people also tend to be reliable and dependable. Research Administrators demonstrate resilience daily as we face deadlines, difficult conversations, personnel turnover and ever changing administrations (institutional, state, and federal). As we address daily changes, with a smile on our face, we are able to recognize that what we do matters and makes a difference. Resilience keeps us moving forward!

With this theme in mind, we are pleased to announce that the keynote speaker for the 60th anniversary meeting will be Mr. Kevin Carroll, MS, CP, FAAOP, Vice President of Prosthetics for Hanger Clinic. Mr. Carroll is a visionary researcher and skilled educator whose guiding principle is “people first.” Mr. Carroll is the co-developer of the patented Hanger ComfortFlex™ Socket System; a bone and muscle contoured socket that revolutionized socket design and comfort. He has appeared on news broadcasts such as Dateline, 20/20, CBS Early Show, NBC Nightly News, ABC’s Good Morning America, and the Discovery Channel. When not caring for his human patients, Mr. Carroll volunteers weekends to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium where he works with a young amputee dolphin named Winter. The real life survival story of Winter and Mr. Carroll’s innovating prosthetic tail design came alive in a 3D feature film starring Morgan Freeman, Ashley Judd, Kris Kristopherson, and Harry Connick, Jr.
Happy New Year Region I! With the new year comes new opportunities, new adventures, and new faces. One of those new faces is me, and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Chair of Region I for 2018: My name is Denise Rouleau, Research Administration Associate Director at Tufts University Cummings School for Veterinary Medicine. The new year is also a time to reflect on what happened in the last year. To that end, I would like to thank our immediate past chair, Jill Mortali, for her hard work and dedication to the Region. Moving into 2018, your Regional Officers include: Jill Mortali (Immediate Past Chair), Donna Smith (Chair-Elect), Alice Ingham (Secretary), Jason Hagan (Treasurer), Suzanne Araujo (Secretary-Elect), and Jori Barabino (Treasurer-Elect). In addition to our regional officers, the Region I Advisory Board will also include the leaders of committees charged with curriculum, governance, nominations, awards, sponsorship, and volunteers.

In my role as chair, I am looking forward to working with our officers and advisory board to bring our members the highest level of education and support we can. I am always open to hearing any member’s questions, comments, and/or suggestions. Please feel free to email me at chair@ncuraregioni.org. I would love to hear your input on what you would like regarding programming, networking, professional development, or other topics.

**SAVE THE DATES! 2018 NCURA Region I Spring Meeting:** Portsmouth, New Hampshire

*April 30th – May 2nd, with Workshops to be held Sunday April 29th*

The Program Committee—co-chaired by Donna Smith, MGH (Chair Elect 2018), and Heather Dominey, Brown University—is gearing up for our region’s 2018 Spring meeting, **“Adventures in Research: Mapping your Pathway to Success.”** The meeting will set sail on Sunday, April 29th with a full day of separately registered workshops. Followed by a Welcome Reception and more than 40 informative, dynamic concurrent sessions, discussion groups, and panels planned between Monday, April 30th and Wednesday, May 2nd. Expect plenty of networking opportunities, federal sessions, an onsite FDP/COGR update given by Cindy Hope, as well as several fun adventures! A special thanks to everyone who responded to our call for presentation proposals. We can’t wait to learn from you!

If you are interested in learning more about the conference or about volunteering opportunities, please contact the Program Committee at springmeeting@ncuraregioni.org

Denise Rouleau is the Chair of Region I. She serves as Research Administration Associate Director at Tufts University Cummings School for Veterinary Medicine. She can be reached at chair@ncuraregioni.org

Happy New Year Region II! It is amazing that 2017 has ended and 2018 is here. I would like to take the opportunity to thank last year’s officers for such an outstanding job they did in 2017. Timothy R. Schailey, Thomas Jefferson University (Chair), Jennifer E.B. Harman, Nazareth College of Rochester (Secretary), Charles Bartunek, Johns Hopkins University (Treasurer). They certainly helped guide me in what to expect coming in as Chair of Region II.

Usually, about this time of year, Region II is buzzing about the upcoming spring meeting. But this year, we have to wait until fall. The Region II annual meeting will be held at the Ogleby Resort in Wheeling, West Virginia on October 20 - 23, 2018. There are many things that need to be done, so if you are interested in volunteering to be part of this meeting, please contact Charnel Bohn at bohncm@rwjms.rutgers.edu

Region II Professional Development Committee is working at providing regional training opportunities for our Region. Please visit the PDC section of our Region II website for a current listing of PDC workshops near you! But if you want a workshop to come to your area or interested in hosting a workshop at your institution, please contact Rebecca Hunsaker at hunsaker@umd.edu. Any institution hosting a workshop will receive either two free registrations or one free Region II Fall Meeting registration!

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

Dennis Paffrath, serves as the Chair of Region II and is the Assistant Vice President of Sponsored Programs at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. He can be reached at dpaffrat@umaryland.edu

**Denise Rouleau** is the Chair of Region I. She serves as Research Administration Associate Director at Tufts University Cummings School for Veterinary Medicine. She can be reached at chair@ncuraregioni.org
Region III is ready to make 2018 another remarkable year! We are looking forward to the 2018 Spring Meeting in historic Williamsburg, VA. The Kingsmill Resort will be hosting NCURA’s largest region May 5 - 9, 2018. The Regional Meeting provides a great opportunity for professional development, to share ideas on how to handle issues that institutions currently face, and to relax a bit in a magnificent location. This year’s theme is “Together Towards Tomorrow: Shaping the Future of Research Administration.” The program will offer workshops and sessions for the novice and experienced research administrator alike! Below are some ways that you can get prepared for the Spring Meeting:

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

If you are interested in helping at the regional meeting, we will need room monitors, registration desk help and folks who are tech savvy to help with AV set-up. Consider contributing to your region by volunteering! If you have an interest in volunteering, please contact please contact Bruxanne Hein at bhein@georgiasouthern.edu

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

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

Happy New Year to all and see you soon in Williamsburg, VA!

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

Happy New Year! This time of year gives us a perfect opportunity to reflect on the past and look toward the future.

In the past year, Region IV:

• implemented the new Recognizing Awesome Volunteerism & Engagement (RAVE IV) program. See http://ncuraregioniv.com/rave-iv.html for more details.
• redesigned the Mentoring Our Own (MOO) program. The cohort is currently finishing up their capstone projects.
• reviewed and updated job descriptions for all board and committee positions and posted them on the website for greater transparency.
• thanked Craig Reynolds for his service as Regionally-elected Member to the National Board and welcomed Sue Kelch to her new term.
• thanked Gavyn Clasemann-Ryan for his work as Treasurer and thanked Heather Offhaus for stepping into the Treasurer position.

In the upcoming year, Region IV will:

• undertake a member survey to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the region. We’d love to hear your feedback!
• put out a call to design a new pin to represent the region.
• work with Region III to plan a joint Spring Meeting in 2020 — somewhere warm!
• potentially host two pilot traveling workshops.
• develop manuals for all board and committee positions.
• offer an amazing Spring Meeting!

Nourish. Discover. Grow. Join us in Des Moines April 15-18 for our 2018 spring meeting! The Midwest is well-known as the heartland of America and Iowa certainly helps sustains this tradition. Iowa is number one in egg production, ranks first in soybean, hog, and corn production and is home to five Nobel Prize winners! Make history with us as we bring our regional meeting to this state for the first time ever. We will welcome Dr. Terry Wahls, a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine. Dr. Wahls has an incredible story of self-healing through proven researched method based on mitochondria, diet, and multiple sclerosis. She has received funding from Direct MS of Canada and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society of America and greatly appreciates the support she receives from her very own research administrators every day. Look for registration to open in early February. We look forward to seeing you there!

Katherine Durben is the Chair of Region IV and serves the Executive Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Marquette University. She can be reached at Katherine.durben@marquette.edu
As I write this Regional Corner, Region V leadership is in the process of nominating candidates for the Executive Leadership Program (ELP). For those members who may not be familiar with the program, ELP is a national program that identifies regional members ready to take on leadership at the national level. The ELP is not an easy program; that’s by design. The overall process takes five months (January through May) and involves homework and teleconferencing meetings leading up to a four-day retreat. At this retreat, you have an opportunity to bond with other members of the cohort from across the country, learn more about NCURA, and practice what it takes to be a leader.

I graduated from the program in 2014, and the process solidified my desire to be a life-long member of NCURA. I was amazed by the dedication level demonstrated by the previous graduates for building the foundation for NCURA’s future and I wanted to be a part of it.

Region V is one of the smaller NCURA regions, and we have not graduated as many candidates as some of the other regions. However, as I look back on our list of graduates, I see names of people that are standouts at the national level of NCURA. Some have retired, some have moved on to other regions, but I know that I can still call on them anytime I need them for advice or a helping hand.

To those members who have been selected to be in the 2018 cohort, you are about to embark on a journey toward NCURA leadership. You have already shown dedication to our organization and I personally thank you for your service. Members like you make NCURA an excellent professional society.

NOTE: Region V continues to post information about the upcoming meeting in San Marcos, Texas May 6-9, 2018. Be sure to check out the website for more information and to volunteer. Be sure to email Michael Castilleja at micasti2@uiwtx.edu with any questions.

To learn more about Region V history and see our list of ELP graduates, please visit the Region V History page. www.ncuraregionv.com/region-history.

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

With New Year upon us, I look forward to serving as Chair for another productive and engaging year for our membership. Our region will continue to have the sustained opportunities to engage and network at our combined Region VI/VII meeting in the fall, the Annual Meeting in the summer, and PRA/FRA Conferences in the spring. Stay tuned also for another localized Region VI educational/engagement opportunity in 2018, building on the success of the full day workshop on Managing Data Security that was held in June 2017.

For the wrap-up of our 2017 year, I must acknowledge the success of our Region VI/VII Meeting in Portland, Oregon in November. There was a great turnout with over 350 registered attendees who were able to connect and engage in a robust and well-planned program. The success of our meeting was in no small part due to our outgoing regional officers, Sinnamon Tierney of Portland State University (Chair), Caroline Jones of Stanford University (Treasurer), and Heather Kubinec (Secretary), as well as the entire Program Committee and all our volunteers.

I wish to acknowledge our 2017 Region VI Award program winners for both the Region VI/VII Meeting Travel Award program and for our annual recognition awards. Our travel award program provides financial support to promising newcomers to our Region and offsets the cost of attendance at member’s first NCURA meeting or conference. The winners for the 2017 NCURA Region VI/VII Meeting were Melissa Campbell of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Kendra Dinh of the University of California, Irvine, Kurt Durlesser of the UCLA, Laura Gray of the UC San Francisco, and Stephanie Gray of the University of Oregon.

The Helen Carrier Distinguished Service Award was awarded to Nancy Lewis of the University of California, Irvine. Nancy has been involved in NCURA for many years and continues to support our region in various capacities, including for her continuing roles in the Educational & Leadership Development Committee and as co-Chair of the LeadMe Program. We appreciate her dedication to NCURA and to the profession, and her willingness to share her knowledge and perspective with all of us.

For those who would like to be involved in our Region’s activities in 2018 stay tuned for announcements for various volunteer opportunities that will be facilitated by regional leadership and the Membership and Volunteer Committee.

Kevin Stewart is the 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
I hope everyone had a pleasant holiday season!

Our joint (Regions VI and VII) Regional Meeting was held in Portland, Oregon from November 5th through 8th at the Portland Marriott Waterfront. The conference garnered a total of 347 attendees, with 70 of those from Region VII. We offered nine workshops that had 66 participants across the morning and afternoon sessions, as well as a wide variety of concurrent sessions.

Attendees were treated to some of the eclectic features that Portland has to offer, including session breaks from Voodoo and Blue Star Donuts, food truck fare, local comedian Sharon Lacey, and the Portland State University a cappella group, The Green Note.

Next year’s Regional Meeting will be held in the Doubletree Hotel, in downtown Billings, Montana, from Sunday, October 7th through Wednesday, October 10th, 2018. More details will be available in the next few months!

Finally, if you missed previous announcements, election results for Region VII are in!

Chair-Elect/Chair: Diane Barrett, Colorado State University
Secretary/Treasurer: Jennifer Lawrence, University of Arizona
Member-at-Large: Joelina Peck, Arizona State University

The region is lucky to have such a talented slate of officers for 2018-2019! I look forward to working with them to serve the needs of the region.

Bella Blaher (Chair Elect)
Stefania Grotti (Secretary)
Nicholas Schulthess (Treasurer Elect)
Fadia Homeidan (Volunteer Coordinator)

We would like to take the opportunity to thank Annika Glauner for her leadership as Chair of the region in 2017 and Bryony Wakefield who represented the region on the National Board of Directors for the last two years. Both Annika and Bryony would be known to many of you for their significant contribution to the development of the international region over the last few years – thanks Annika & Bryony!

We would also like to make you aware that 2018 is an INORMS year! For those of you who are not aware of what INORMS is, the acronym stands for the International Network of Research Management Societies and they hold a biennial congress hosted by one of its member societies. This year it is in Edinburgh on the 4-7 June hosted by ARMA (Association of Research Managers and Administrators). This is an exciting opportunity for research leaders, managers and administrators to come together. More info can be found at www.inorms2018.org

To everyone across the world, we hope that you start the year looking forward to the many wonderful activities that NCURA has to offer, and if you haven’t yet, register to attend FRA/PRA and catch up with your NCURA colleagues in March in Orlando.

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
UC Irvine and Australian chemists have figured out how to unboil egg whites – an innovation that could dramatically reduce costs for cancer treatments, food production and other segments of the $160 billion global biotechnology industry, according to findings published in the journal ChemBioChem.

“Yes, we have invented a way to unboil a hen egg,” said Gregory Weiss, UCI professor of chemistry and molecular biology & biochemistry. “In our paper, we describe a device for pulling apart tangled proteins and allowing them to refold. We start with egg whites boiled for 20 minutes at 90 degrees Celsius and return a key protein in the egg to working order.”

Like many researchers, he has struggled to efficiently produce or recycle valuable molecular proteins that have a wide range of applications but which frequently “misfold” into structurally incorrect shapes when they are formed, rendering them useless.

“It’s not so much that we’re interested in processing the eggs; that’s just demonstrating how powerful this process is,” Weiss said. “The real problem is there are lots of cases of gummy proteins that you spend way too much time scraping off your test tubes, and you want some means of recovering that material.”

But older methods are expensive and time-consuming: The equivalent of dialysis at the molecular level must be done for about four days. “The new process takes minutes,” Weiss noted. “It speeds things up by a factor of thousands.”

To re-create a clear protein known as lysozyme once an egg has been boiled, he and his colleagues add a urea substance that chews away at the whites, liquefying the solid material. That’s half the process; at the molecular level, protein bits are still balled up into unusable masses. The scientists then employ a vortex fluid device, a high-powered machine designed by Professor Colin Raston’s laboratory at South Australia’s Flinders University. Shear stress within thin, microfluidic films is applied to those tiny pieces, forcing them back into untangled, proper form.

“This method … could transform industrial and research production of proteins,” the researchers write in ChemBioChem.

For example, pharmaceutical companies currently create cancer antibodies in expensive hamster ovary cells that do not often misfold proteins. The ability to quickly and cheaply re-form common proteins from yeast or E. coli bacteria could potentially streamline protein manufacturing and make cancer treatments more affordable. Industrial cheese makers, farmers and others who use recombinant proteins could also achieve more bang for their buck.

Besides Weiss and Raston, the paper’s authors are Tom Yuan, Joshua Smith, Stephan Kudlacek, Mariam Ifikhar, Tivoli Olsen, William Brown, Kaitlin Pugliese and Sameeran Kunche of UCI, as well as Callum Ormonde of the University of Western Australia. The research was supported by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (grant R01 GM100700-01) and the Australian Research Council (grants DP1092810 and DP130100066).

Originally published at: https://news.uci.edu/2015/01/23/uci-fellow-chemists-find-a-way-to-unboil-eggs

By Janet Wilson
Educate
Inform
Improve

Following a recognized model of academic program review, an NCURA Peer Review provides an objective assessment of your sponsored programs operations. Peer review and academic program review are recognized throughout higher education as a process that promotes external objective assessment and critique in order to yield a quality product or program. The dialogue and discussions are opportunities to identify, and at times enlighten, misunderstandings or misperceptions about research administration.

Peer Reviews are conducted using Standards that represent the core and vital functions of sponsored programs—regardless of size and type of institution. At the completion of the evaluation, the institution receives a detailed confidential report that provides valuable feedback on program strengths and areas for improvement. This feedback assists research administrators in providing quality services, minimizing risk, and promoting a positive culture for research administration.

peerreview@ncura.edu
www.ncura.edu/institutionalprograms.aspx
NCURA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

Departmental Research Administration Workshop
February 12-14, 2018....................................................................Scottsdale, AZ

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

LEVEL II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
February 12-14, 2018....................................................................Scottsdale, AZ

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Financial Research Administration Conference
March 5-7, 2018...............................................................................Orlando, FL

Pre-Award Research Administration Conference
March 7-9, 2018...............................................................................Orlando, FL

60th Annual Meeting
August 5-8, 2018.............................................................................Washington, DC

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

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

DEADLINES FOR MARCH/APRIL 2018
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors ....................... January 19, 2018
Submission of Advertisements ............................................... January 24, 2018

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

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