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ON THE COVER: The theme of the 60th Annual Meeting, and of this issue, is “Demonstrating Resilience and Advancing the Profession.” Change and challenges— in leadership, in regulations, in expectations— give rise to research administrators who are responsive and dynamic, who see the big picture as well as the details, moving past adversity and looking forward.

In this issue, Shuna McMichael remembers when there was no career path to research administration and describes how she now enthusiastically participates in high school career days.

Is it a surprise that there are two articles about stress as a factor in “demonstrating resilience”? Jennifer Shambrook analyzes the 2015 Research Administrators Stress Perception Survey for lessons we can learn, and Arlene Hogans discusses how to persevere through the demands of the profession.

In “Challenges to Research Administration in the Arab World,” discover how research administrators support the development of research infrastructure and advance the profession with their own set of best practices.

The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Expanded Clearinghouse is becoming an important resource for organizations to share data needed for subrecipient monitoring under the Uniform Guidance, and to streamline related processes. Pamela Webb and Lynette Arias present the methods, results, issues, and challenges of developing this new tool.

The 2018 Annual Meeting celebrates NCURA’s 60th year and all those resilient research administrators who support and encourage their investigators, and by doing so, advance the profession.

Janet Simons, a Co-Editor for NCURA Magazine, is an Export Officer and Director, Research Policy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. She can be reached at jsimons@umaryland.edu

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

By Georgette Sakumoto, NCURA President

60 years is a notable milestone for an association that demonstrates resilience in everything we do! As I reflect on my years as a research administrator, I am reminded that this is something we do every day in our jobs. We address a never-ending myriad of changes in regulations and policies as well as changing leadership. We work to get the job done, and we will continue to work to advance our profession by rising to the challenges of change and uncertainty.

As we look to the future of NCURA, your Executive Committee and Board of Directors are working diligently to ensure NCURA remains at the forefront of our profession with the ability to nimbly and rapidly respond to the changing landscape of research administration. We will follow through with the Task Force Report on Diversity to ensure inclusiveness and diversity is in all we do. We are continuing to evaluate and update our offerings and looking for new ways to educate and reach the next generation of research administrators.

We listened to your feedback and have revisited and re-evaluated the changes to the election process. To guarantee the most qualified members lead us, your Board of Directors has approved clarifying the language about the process of selecting our future leaders. Specifically, we propose clarification of the language in our bylaws to reflect how the nomination and selection process will be conducted. We will not be “electing” the officers but rather ratifying a slate of qualified individuals. This slate will have undergone a complete application process starting with an independent review by the N&LDC members and being collectively vetted at an in-person meeting. Each nominee will be ranked and interviewed by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. We will then present a slate of names, one for each open position, for ratification by our membership. This process has been evaluated thoroughly and follows the trends of other leading associations globally to ensure the most qualified leaders are leading.

We are continually gathering information and learning about best practices for governance as we grow domestically and globally. As a Board, we have concluded that clarifying the language to reduce misinterpretation will ensure NCURA is poised and prepared to promote the success of the next generation of leaders. We will continue to show our resilience as a professional organization and embrace new ways of doing business. Change can be challenging and difficult but we will make the necessary changes to keep us moving forward!

I am very excited to be a part of the 60th celebration of NCURA, and I look forward to catching up with old friends and meeting new ones in August. Hope to see you at AM60! 🎉

Georgette Sakumoto is NCURA President and serves as Contracts and Grants Specialist, Office of Research Services, University of Hawai‘i. She can be reached at gsakumot@hawaii.edu

INSIGHT INTO THE ELECTION CHANGES

By Michelle S. Vazin

Dear Membership,

As the 2018 Chair of the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee (N&LDC), I have the opportunity of sharing with you the history that led to the most recent changes to how officers of NCURA are to be selected. Like all things with the NCURA leadership, the Board of Directors is very strategic and forward looking in its guidance and direction of the future for our association. I have had the privilege of seeing first-hand the dedication and commitment of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors to ensure the continued success of NCURA.

Back in 2015, NCURA and the N&LDC found itself in a position that was concerning. The association was faced with the growing challenge of finding qualified members willing to put themselves in the running for the officer positions. At the same time, it was recognized by the Board
that the officer positions were pivotal and crucial jobs to the ongoing success of the association. Therefore, it presented the Board with an opportunity to examine the selection process for our officers and question whether it still made sense to continue in the same manner at this juncture in the association’s existence.

The Board tasked the N&LD C with doing some homework on this topic. A subcommittee was formed and the members reached out to other successful associations to gather information about how their key leadership positions were selected. The committee talked with large and small associations comparable to NCURA. The benchmarking exercise revealed that NCURA might want to rethink how it went about selecting its officers. The key leadership roles are vital to the ongoing success of the association which is no different than the key leadership roles on our campuses and other non-profit businesses. NCURA was presented with an opportunity to transform the selection process to strengthen the continuity of competency from one officer to the next. We have provided leadership pathways within the association and invested in our future with the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) and now the Executive Leadership Program (ELP) programs. It is now time to take advantage of these pathways as the next generation of leaders is chosen.

This journey of discovery has led us to the point we find ourselves today. A very thoughtful process has been designed to guide the N&LD C and the Board of Directors on a successful path in choosing our officers. The vetting and review that applicants go through is similar to a job interview process, and it is extremely thorough to ensure it supports and facilitates the Board of Directors’ ability to select the best candidate for the job at hand year after year. Once the top applicants have been thoroughly examined, the top choice will be presented to the membership for ratification.

I hope you join me in embracing and supporting this transformational change for NCURA to solidify our association’s ability to stay strong and continue to move the profession of research administration to great heights and respect. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michelle S. Vazin
2018 N&LD C Chair
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Research administration is an ever-changing profession; thus, it is critical to disseminate information ranging from new federal regulations to new institutional policies and technologies in an efficient and timely manner.

This requires coordination at multiple levels within a university. Kyle Johnson will be providing perspective on how Sponsored Projects & Contracting Services at the University of Arizona handles disseminating information to campus. Michelle Jarvis will discuss how the Department of Neurology at University of Pittsburgh disseminates information to faculty and staff. Both departments suffer from information overload, and have developed varying strategies to mitigate the problem and improve communication.
Dispersing information to campus at the University of Arizona
As a central unit, Sponsored Projects & Contracting Services (SPCS) faces the challenge of dispersing timely and relevant information across campus. This is broken into several different categories: Policy changes (federal, sponsor, or university), System changes (sponsor or university), and Training. In order to effectively and efficiently inform campus of new information, we have to understand the audience and the timeline for dissemination.

Large overarching federal policy changes are often the easiest to communicate because the information affects the whole campus and the timeline for dissemination is typically long, which provides ample opportunities for training. However, as the information becomes more specific, reaching the intended audience becomes a challenge. While it is easy to blast out mass emails containing general information, this can cause the communication channel between central offices and departments to become noisy. The noisier the communication channel, the more difficult it is for the intended audience to filter incoming information and determine its relevance.

The first hurdle is determining your main audience. Do you have a medical school, a large college of agriculture, etc.? What do those audiences need to know and what is the best way to inform them? Once the audience is determined we can develop dissemination strategies based on the length of time until a major change occurs.

Last summer, SPCS decided the best way to prepare for the change from Grants.gov to Workspace was to ask research administrators from the College of Engineering, University of Arizona Health Sciences, and the College of Agriculture to act as pilot groups. These three areas of campus volunteered to start submitting in Workspace so that we could work together to understand the abilities and limitations of the system. We learned far more about how Workspace was going to affect campus by having pilot groups than if we had researched the change alone. This allowed us to provide targeted and relevant Workspace training ahead of the campus-wide rollout. In addition, it provided opportunities to research and address specific campus pain points.

Effectively and efficiently disseminating information is challenging. There is no one right way to accomplish the task. However, it is important to realize it is rarely sufficient to disseminate information the same way every time. Consideration needs to be given to the audience and the timeline for dissemination in order to communicate as effectively as possible. We want all of our communication to be relevant and timely, but that only happens when we deliberately craft our dissemination strategy to match the situation at hand.

Dispersing Information to Faculty and Staff in the Department of Neurology at the University of Pittsburgh
In our profession we are constantly bombarded with information from various sponsors and agencies, as well as new regulations. We have to be able to adapt and move forward. Our faculty and researchers are faced with the same challenge. Part of advancing the profession of research administration is learning to categorize relevant and irrelevant information. Not every piece of information is pertinent to us and our faculty.

The majority of funding in the Department of Neurology at the University of Pittsburgh comes from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), so changes to NIH policy and procedures have a direct and immediate impact on how I do my job. Currently, we do not have any funding from the National Science Foundation, so while I am aware their guidelines have changed, it is not information that is currently applicable to the work my faculty and I do.

Part of my job in the Department of Neurology is to serve as the department trainer. In this role, I sift through information that comes to us from various sources, determine what is relevant to the department and then disseminate it to the appropriate recipients. This is done through training sessions and through email lists.

Each week we receive an email with that week’s NIH notices. I read through the listing, determine if there are any changes that apply to my faculty and staff, and then write a short synopsis of what is in the notice. This synopsis, along with the link to the notice, is emailed to my faculty and research administrators.

I also have the opportunity to attend various trainings, either at conferences or as webinars. This is another time that I summarize what I learned that is applicable and then email it out.

As systems change, I also provide trainings. When NIH rolled out ASSIST, I did a number of training sessions for our faculty that focused on the items they were responsible for and highlighting items handled by our Research Administrators. As the University of Pittsburgh has moved from using ASSIST to using a Click product, I have again provided training to the faculty, focusing on the pieces that they needed to do in the new system.

Conclusion
Disseminating information is a critical part of research administration and occurs at both the institutional and departmental levels. How we manage the information and make sure that it effectively reaches the target audience is imperative. As our faculty and researchers are bombarded with information from various places, it is our responsibility to make sure they receive only relevant information. To do this we must develop targeted communication strategies to ensure information is being communicated to the correct audiences at the correct times. Such strategies will vastly improve our ability as research administrators to disseminate information.

Michelle Jarvis, CRA, is the Senior Financial Administrator and Trainer in the Department of Neurology at the University of Pittsburgh. She has worked in Research Administration for over 10 years. She can be reached at mjarvis@pitt.edu

Kyle Johnson is a Principal Sponsored Projects Administrator and an Outreach and Systems Development, Lead within Sponsored Projects and Contracting Services at the University of Arizona. Kyle specializes in utilizing technology and operational techniques to optimize team performance. He can be reached at kylejohnson@email.arizona.edu
“Publish or perish” is not simply a catch phrase for faculty seeking tenure. It is a reality for science in general. The act of sharing research results in academic journals and at scientific conferences is a vital component of the pursuit and validation of research. This openness and transparency in research allows scientists from around the globe to work together and advance science faster and more efficiently than would ever be possible if scientists and researchers worked alone. This inherent fact is exactly why, in September 1985, the Reagan administration issued National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 189 - National Policy on Transfer of Scientific, Technical and Engineering Information. With NSDD 189, the federal government codified the definition of Fundamental Research, and confirmed the real need to ensure that the results of fundamental research be free and unfettered from dissemination controls (NSDD 189, 1985). Decades later, in May, 2010, the Department of Defense reaffirmed this decision, in a memorandum issued by then Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter. "The Department of Defense (DoD) fully supports free scientific exchanges and dissemination of research results to the maximum extent possible." Besides limiting the ability to share, dissemination (publication) controls will often create the secondary consequence of limiting who can work on the affected funded projects. Due to the impact of the federal export control regulations and new cybersecurity regulations, a publication approval clause in a contract might mean the principal investigator can only include on his or her project team U.S. persons or may require extensive and, in many cases expensive, cybersecurity controls (Export Administration Regulations, 2017; International Traffic in Arms Regulations, 1996; Ross et al., 2016). For today’s cost-conscience, research-intensive universities that do a tremendous amount of federally funded research and often have a robust international workforce, achieving the delicate balance between preserving both national security and the necessary right to appropriately share their research can be difficult, but essential.

Research administrators are on the front lines in critically reviewing program announcements and resulting agreements to identify any clauses or contract language that result in publication restrictions or limitations on participation of foreign nationals. Effective research administrators can assist their researchers in navigating this landscape by helping them better understand when the federal government may wish to impose controls and by encouraging them to analyze their research scope through the fundamental research prism. It is vitally important that research administrators stay current on the evolving regulations and share best practices to assist researchers in successfully navigating this landscape.

What are some steps that a researcher can take to ensure that this balance is accurately achieved? Keep in mind that in today’s federal regulations, the authority to confirm what is or is not fundamental research is often left to a federal contracting officer, who is probably not a subject matter expert on the proposed science. A researcher can, however, take some deliberate steps to assist that contracting officer in making an informed, nuanced decision. Here are a few suggestions:

1. If the researcher believes the proposed effort is fundamental research, say so clearly and succinctly in the proposal. To strengthen this argument, focus on the possible civilian or non-defense related implications of the proposed work.
2. If the proposed project is worthy of a graduate student’s thesis, that is often a clear sign that the effort is fundamental research. Explicitly state this in the proposed statement of work. Since most federal program officers are also scientists, they recognize the scholarly requirements for a graduate level thesis. This adds further weight to the fundamental research determination.
3. When citing previous research, look to open source and published works, rather than works that may be, themselves, subject to limited distribution rules.
4. If the proposed effort, while at the onset is fundamental research, might evolve and advance to a point where dissemination controls may become necessary, consider planning the research in phases. Clearly delineate phases within the proposal statement of work. Often, contracts can be structured in such a way that dissemination controls can be added when warranted, but only if the contracting officer can clearly determine when one phase ends and the next phase begins.

5. Recognize that in some cases, certain information, even information that results from research, needs to be withheld from the public and the general scientific community. While it might seem counterintuitive, acknowledging this point with our federal partners gives them confidence that the university, the researcher and research administrator recognizes that some controls may, in fact, be necessary. When beginning discussions on a project that may have national security implications, explore with the researcher, contracting officer, federal program manager or industry partner what that information might be; and be specific. You will also want to make sure that your university’s policies allow for such a restriction. Discuss the limits where open publication may become a concern, and encourage your researcher to include in the proposal or statement of work an explanation of how sensitive information will be avoided or sequestered.

While taking these steps may not totally prevent the imposition of dissemination controls on the results of research, they will strengthen the researcher’s argument that the work should be free from such limitations. Researchers will need to be prepared, however, to modify their scope of work or work within the confines of the restrictions, if the federal contracting officer doesn’t agree that the work is fundamental research and the research administrator is unable to successfully negotiate removal of the terms. Planning ahead for that scenario can also increase the reliance of the research team.

Mary Duarte Millsaps is Research Information Assurance Officer at Purdue University. She is a member of the NCURA Global Working Group. She oversees the compliance programs at Purdue related to the security of research information that, either due to federal law or contractual obligation, is subject to greater controls. She can be reached at millsaps@purdue.edu

End Notes
1. “Fundamental research means basic and applied research in science and engineering, the results of which ordinarily are published and shared broadly within the scientific community, as distinguished from proprietary research and from industrial development, design, production, and product utilization, the results of which ordinarily are restricted for proprietary or national security reasons.”
2. “U.S. person is any individual who is a citizen of the United States, a permanent resident alien of the United States, or a protected individual as defined by 8 U.S.C. 1324b(a)(3)”

References
On March 5-6, 2018, more than 750 of our colleagues from all regions and across the globe assembled together to Re-Discover our Passion for Research Administration at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista.

Our colleagues that joined us in Orlando, were tremendously thrilled and excited to be a part of the FRA community, for the 19th Annual Financial Research Administration Conference.

We opened the conference with a continental breakfast among great conversation at the breakfast roundtables and with our partners at their individual booths in the exhibit hall. These breakfast roundtables were a great way to get the juices flowing for what would be an exhilarating day and a half of dialogue, engaging and learning.

Our keynote speaker Eric C. Haseltine, a neuroscientist by educational training, worked in senior executive positions in both the United States intelligence community and industries, such as Walt Disney Imagineering. Dr. Haseltine took us through a wonderful scientific journey: THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: PREDICTING THE PAST TO PREDICT THE FUTURE.
Following the conclusion of the keynote address, attendees were introduced to over 181 concurrent sessions, discussion groups, and spark sessions. The following tracks covered by these offerings were:

- Departmental
- Federal
- Financial Compliance
- Global
- Medical /Hospital
- Non-Financial Compliance
- Organization & Career Development
- Post Award Accounting
- Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUI)

This year, the 26 Workshops were combined with the Pre-Award Research Administration Conference and were held on Wednesday, March 7, 2018, in between the FRA and PRA conferences. This proved to be a great idea! We heard from several attendees, one who commented, “Having the workshops in between gave me the opportunity to choose to attend either conference or both.”

Finally, we wish to thank our host hotel and acknowledge the great support we received from the NCURA Staff and the Program Committee, in making our experience as Conference Co-Chairs a memorable one.

We look forward to seeing you at the 20th Annual Financial Research Administration Conference, March 11-12, 2019, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Best Regards,

Urmila Bajaj
University of Virginia

Jamie Caldwell
University of Kansas Medical Center
The 2015 Research Administrators Stress Perception Survey (RASPerS) of over 600 research administrators in the United States showed that over 51% of our colleagues reported having either high or extremely high workplace stress. There were 43% that reported moderate workplace stress compared to a little less than 6% who reported having minimal workplace stress.

One may assume that the resilient six percent of our colleagues reporting minimal stress are just in a happy place where demands on research administrators are static, rather than increasing. Data did not support that assumption. Almost 70% of the six percent of our colleagues reporting minimal workplace stress also said they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: Over the past few years, my job has become more and more demanding.

Is there something we can learn from those research administrators reporting minimal stress that may help more of us be more resilient to workplace stress? Is there something they have that those 51% reporting high or extremely high stress don’t have? Yes, there is, and it is something that every one of us can offer to our fellow research administrators. There is something we can do about stress in our workplace. You already have the primary required instruments at your disposal: your eyes, your ears, your consideration of others, and your initiative.

The 2015 RASPerS survey participants were asked to answer the following four questions about their immediate supervisor, other people at work, and family/friends:

1. How much is each of the following willing to listen to your personal problems?
2. How easy is it to talk (in general) with each of the following people?
3. How much does each of these people go out of their way to do things to make your work life easier for you?
4. How much can each of these people be relied on when things get tough at work?

The questions were answered using a five-point Likert scale. What the data showed was that research administrators have a higher likelihood of experiencing higher levels of workplace stress if they are receiving lower levels of support from their immediate supervisor and co-workers. Family and friend support was not always directly associated with the level of reported workplace stress.

You can help build resilience to stress in your co-workers by offering them social support because your behavior can help...
lower the stress in your co-workers. When their stress is lower, your own is likely to be lower, because it is stressful to be around stressed out people! If you are a supervisor, the data indicates you have an even greater deal of influence over the level of perceived workplace stress in your office environment by your own behavior. Whether you are a supervisor or a co-worker, there are four questions you can ask yourself to help you be a part of the solution in building resilience and lowering stress in your workplace:

**Are you listening?**
When asked how much your supervisor is willing to listen to your personal problems, 41% of those reporting they experience minimal workplace stress said that their supervisor was very much willing to listen to their personal problems. Less than 14% of those in the extremely high stress category indicated they felt their boss was willing to listen to their personal problems. Coincidentally, 41% of those with extremely high stress said that their supervisor was not at all willing to listen to their personal problems. Only 8% of those reporting moderate stress said their boss was not willing to listen to their personal problems.

The contrast between stress levels was less stark when it came to co-workers, but it still held true that for those who indicated they had co-workers that cared enough to listen to their problems the level of perceived workplace stress was lower.

So what is your take home message? Listen. You will be glad you did when you are able to help someone by just being a sympathetic ear, or when it is you that needs someone to be a sounding board for your own problems. Do your part to create a supportive culture where others are treated as people, rather than just inanimate cogs in the wheel. Just being willing to listen may make a world of difference to your colleague. I have often been surprised to learn just what someone I see every day is facing every night when they get home.

**Are you talking to me?**
Another factor that showed a directly inverse relationship to the level of perceived workplace stress, was the level of how easy it was to have a conversation with supervisors and other co-workers. Those reporting minimal stress were also more likely (73% for supervisors and 81% for co-workers) to report they worked with people who were easy to talk to in general. Those who reported higher levels of stress were about three times more likely to report their supervisors and co-workers were not at all easy with whom to have a conversation.

What can you do to make it easier to talk to your employees or co-workers? Going back to the previous question being an active listener is one tactic. Another would be to find something in common with people with whom you share your long, busy days. Smile. Look for an opening to make an overture toward a conversation. Ask questions. Offer a potential solution to a problem, or better yet, give that person a chance to offer a solution and validate it. Look for an opportunity to give a sincere compliment. Ask about their weekend and exhibit sincere and genuine interest.

**Is there something I can do to help?**
Probably the most distressing statistic in the results was the low level of people reporting their supervisor would go out of their way to do things to make their team members’ work life easier. As senior management, if the supervisors reporting to you aren’t doing that, then you may need to reassess if they are well suited for a supervisory role. As a supervisor, looking at processes and tools to make work life easier for those you serve as a leader, is a major part of your responsibility. Be on that constant quest to streamline and eliminate the unnecessary. Bulldoze through roadblocks and kick over hurdles for your staff.

There were slightly less than 49% of those in minimal stress group who reported their supervisor would go out of their way to do things to make their work life easier. About 14% of those in the extremely high stress group reported their boss would go out of their way to do this. One question is whether those supervisors are truly not going out of their way, or if they are just being modest and not letting their staff know what they are trying to do on their behalf. Just think about it, would you rather think your boss tried and failed to do something for you, or just think they didn’t realize or care that something needed to be done? Let your staff know when you are attempting to do something on their behalf, not so that they feel grateful to you, but so that they feel acknowledged by you.
People with higher stress actually had more social support (3.67) at home than those with lower stress (3.49) when looking at the weighted averages. There was still a distinct association that those who had higher social support with supervisors and peers had lower perceived work place stress. Those with lower social support at work commensurately showed higher perceived work place stress. This indicates that even with good social support at home, poor social support at work creates greater workplace stress.

Can you be counted on when the going gets tough?

One of the most frustrating experiences of my professional life has been when I have found myself in a nest of “blamestormers” when we desperately need brainstormers” when a problem surfaces. When a problem surfaces, look around to see who are the “blamestormers” and who are the “brainstormers.” Those who are “blamestormers” are the people you want as supervisors. When a problem arises, “blamestormers” look for a bus to throw someone under, while “brainstormers” look for a solution that will help reduce or eliminate the recurrence of the problem. And if that is not happening, be the one who pulls your staff out of harm’s way and tell the bus driver to slow down!

Interestingly, those reporting minimal stress were more than three times more likely to report both supervisors and co-workers could very much be relied upon when things got tough than those with extremely high stress. Those with extremely high stress were more than five times more likely to report that their supervisor and colleagues could not be relied at all.

Knowing that someone “has your back” when the going is tough can really make a difference to the morale of a team. If you want to be a part of a strong team, be a strong team member; whether in the role of supervisor or individual contributor. Supporting one another in times of crisis really defines the mettle of a team.

Run the experiment

Run the experiment for yourself to see if your own feelings of resilience to stress are increased. If you go first and model the behavior you would like to see in others, that is the first step. Listen, talk, be helpful, and be reliable in the time of trouble. Given this research you may just find your own levels of stress resilience are increased, along with those around you.

References


Dr. Jennifer Shambrook is the Director of Contracts and Grants and an instructor in the Master’s in Research Administration program at the University of Central Florida. She is the former Editor of Research Management Review and a Past Chair of NCURA Region III. She can be reached at jennifer.shambrook@ucf.edu

NCURA Publications available exclusively ONLINE

HOW TO MANAGE A FINANCIALLY FOCUSED UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AUDIT EFFECTIVELY

AUTHORS:
ASHLEY DEIHR, CPA, CIA, CFE, Senior Manager, Baker Tilly
KIMBERLY GINN, CIA, Partner, Baker Tilly
JEFFREY SILBER, Senior Director of Sponsored Finance, Cornell University

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

A PRIMER ON EXPORT CONTROLS

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This publication provides a thorough introduction to the complex topic of export control laws and regulations. Topics include key definitions and concepts, which federal agencies oversee regulations, violations and penalties, fundamental research, licensing (and exceptions), international travel, and additional resources. (30 pages, PDF).
The AM60 Program Committee has been hard at work finalizing the details for the annual program “Demonstrating Resilience and Advancing the Profession.” We are looking forward to joining you for this special Diamond Anniversary celebration from August 5-8, 2018 at the Washington Hilton! We are confident that you will be impressed with the amount of sessions available that will both support your role as a research administrator as well as enhance your professional development as an individual.

It is continually evident that Research Administrators demonstrate resilience daily as we face deadlines, difficult conversations, personnel turnover and ever-changing regulations and policies (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. We hope you are looking forward to opportunities to network with like-minded individuals and build new professional connections, and of course take some time to celebrate this milestone in NCURA’s history.

Don’t miss the opportunity to start and end the meeting off strong with one of the many targeted workshops developed with you in mind. We begin with offerings on Saturday, August 4th and Sunday, August 5th. We will close AM60 with workshop offerings for you on Wednesday afternoon August 8th and a full day on Thursday, August 9th. We want to give as many opportunities to take advantage of these deep dives, with expert faculty and tools that will help you be more effective when you go back to your institution.

Sunday night, August 5th the celebrating begins as we enjoy a Night at the National Museum of Natural History. Take some time to learn about the Arctic Narwhal or enjoy drinks at the watering hole in Mammals Hall! Of course, what anniversary would be complete without a visit to the museum’s collection of gems and minerals, including the Hope Diamond and the Dom Pedro Aquamarine?

We will officially kick the meeting off with our keynote speaker, 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 entitled “Dolphin Tale” starring Morgan Freeman, Ashley Judd, Kris Kristopherson, and Harry Connick, Jr.

In addition to the varied concurrent sessions, discussion groups, ignite sessions and breakfast round tables, we are pleased to highlight services and programs via open forums which will provide a new opportunity to connect with NCURA’s partners. Our partners provide educational opportunities to advance our knowledge-base, as well as consulting and solution services to support our institutions and the research enterprise. These forums will provide our participants with insight, from each partner, regarding the services they provide and how they can assist you and your institution. Not your institution’s decision maker in these areas? Take this opportunity to hear from our partners and take the information back home.

New this year is an effort to enfold new presenters to the annual meeting into the program! Be prepared for an opportunity to learn from someone you may not have heard before, as well as supporting them through the process.

What anniversary would be complete without surprises – and we have one for you - so be sure to make it to lunch on Monday, August 6th to welcome a special guest to the NCURA family. Following a great day of sessions on Tuesday, August 7th, get ready to dance the night away to the sounds of Soul Source and the No-cost Extensions, a group of research administrators by day and rock stars by night, as we welcome them back to the Hilton stage for the Denim and Diamonds party (bedazzling optional).

Networking opportunities will be plentiful again this year. Don’t miss the regional NetZone (in a new location) and traditional Hospitality Suites! We will continue with the morning round tables at breakfast so whether you are a morning person, night person, or both – we have something for you!

As you can see, NCURA knows how to celebrate an anniversary and it includes a strong slate of sessions for professional development and advancing the profession, opportunities to grow our networks, and time to relax and celebrate this milestone with our NCURA family. We hope to see you there – and Happy 60th Anniversary NCURA!
February 9, 2015 started as most Mondays do in Tucson at The University of Arizona. Sunny and blue skies, students in shorts on their way to class. Our sponsored projects team members, fueled with coffee and breakfast burritos, settled into the routine of reviewing emails and preparing for the week. That is, until we opened the email containing the words that no research administrator wants to read: National Science Foundation, Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Scrolling through the email, the usual suspects popped out from the screen: Federal Audit. Cost Allowability. Three years of transactions. Site Visit. Contracted Firm. Disallowed Costs. Repayment. But then, more unusual phrases: System architecture. Data dictionary. Metadata. Schema. We soon learned that this would not just be an audit of costs, but a test of our research administration systems as well. Over the next three years, we would come to truly appreciate the value of having powerful and user-friendly electronic research administration systems to stay a step ahead of the audit process.

Data Analytics and Audit: As a large research institution, we have experienced our share of Federal audits. However, this was our first experience with a data analytics-based audit. Data analytics is not a new concept, but technological advances have made its capabilities far more feasible and powerful for auditors. Traditional audit techniques rely on the auditor’s ability and judgement to review transactions and identify audit samples. Data analytics takes the auditing process a leap forward by allowing the auditor to configure a software model that will review and identify the audit samples. In the UA’s case, our three-year audit period encompassed over $176 million of costs across 568 grants. The sheer volume of costs made this an ideal case for NSF to use data analytics to comb through the transactions and identify high risk costs for review.

NSF’s requirement for the expenditure transaction download included data elements spanning across all of our systems. Our university business intelligence team was invaluable in linking the systems together in their data warehouse environment, and flowcharts to explain the architecture and interactions within our systems. This information was needed to configure their data analytics model to process our $176 million of transactions and produce an audit sample. Assembling this documentation required collaboration between our sponsored projects team and the university technology team. Fortunately, the teams had recently collaborated on installing our new research and financial systems, and developed an existing working relationship that eased the process.

“...we can now leverage our systems to replicate the data analytics model ourselves in order to proactively review costs on our federal grants.”
and preparing the expenditure download. NSF also required the expenditures for each account to be reconciled to cash draws, which added an additional layer of complexity for our sponsored projects team. This process showed the value of having a modern system that contains these data elements, and it reinforced the value of having collaborative relationships with our technology counterparts.

Audit Review: After using the data analytics model to comb through three years of expenditures, the auditors identified 250 high risk transactions for testing. Examples of these transactions included expenditures at the end of the project, cost transfers, travel, equipment, subaward payments, and preaward costs. The auditors requested all supporting documentation for the costs.

Under our prior systems, pulling this documentation would have been a mountainous hurdle requiring efforts across campus, but our new systems allowed our sponsored projects team to electronically download everything from the relative comforts of our cubicles. The auditors were pleased with the timeliness and organization of the documentation, which played a major role in starting the audit off on the right foot.

Questioning of Costs: The auditors closely scrutinized each of the 250 sampled transactions. Daily, we found ourselves reviewing documents from our systems to answer their questions. The usability and features of the systems allowed us to answer their questions in a timely and accurate manner, which we believe that played a large role in defending the costs. We also demonstrated that our systems have numerous checks and balances to ensure costs charged to Federal awards are appropriate.

Lessons Learned with our Research Administration Systems: Three years later we find ourselves in the final stages of audit resolution, with five findings totaling $56,904. Certainly, zero findings is always the goal as a compliance officer, but compared to the starting point of $178 million, we are pleased with the result. We believe our electronic research systems played a large part in avoiding major findings. A lesson learned after going through this data analytics audit, is that we can now leverage our systems to replicate the data analytics model ourselves in order to proactively review costs on our Federal grants.

For example, a commonly questioned cost by auditors is equipment near the end of the project period. Our business intelligence tools coupled with the structure of our research systems gives us the capability to setup monthly sampling reports to identify these costs, and review them for allowability before closeout. The systems are powerful, yet user friendly enough that our sponsored projects team can create these monitoring reports without outside assistance.

Another lesson learned was the value of selecting research administration systems that have electronic workflow for approvals, and storage of relevant documentation in electronic format within the system. This greatly streamlined our ability to produce records of the proper approvals for costs, along with justifications of how those costs benefit the Federal grant.

Our hope is that sharing our experience undergoing a Federal data analytics audit will help, should one Monday morning you be the (un)lucky recipient of notice from the OIG.

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NCURA Magazine Seeks Senior Editor

NCURA Magazine is seeking applicants for the position of Senior Editor. The Senior Editor helps steer the overall direction of our premier publication. The position works closely with the Managing Editor and Co-Editors in the development and execution of thematic issues, ensuring the timely release of six issues per year, and is responsible for bringing in outside feature articles.

The volunteer position begins summer of 2018. 2018 will be an onboarding period primarily shadowing and working closely with the current Senior Editor and Managing Editor, followed by two years (2019-2020) serving as Senior Editor.

Applicants should be experienced senior research administrators with strong writing and editing skills, a history of NCURA volunteerism, and strong connections within NCURA as well as affiliated organizations (such as COGR, FDP, NORDP, SRA, etc.).

If you have questions regarding the position contact Managing Editor Marc Schiffman at schiffman@ncura.edu or 202-466-3894.

NCURA Magazine | May/June 2018
Kyushu University, one of the principle comprehensive universities in Japan, is situated in the city of Fukuoka, in southwest Japan. In 2011, Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) initiated the URA Development Project (URA Project) to enhance research activities at universities. This was based on the MEXT’s report “Survey on Full-Time Equivalents at Universities” (Kanda and Kuwahara, 2011), which indicated that researcher’s actual time researching had significantly decreased in recent years. Kyushu University was selected as one of 15 universities to develop the research management system (separate from research administration) in 2012. URA s assist the University by developing research strategy plans, developing research projects, supporting grant applications, coordinating government and industry collaboration research projects, managing and utilizing intellectual properties, supporting venture start-ups, and supporting other research-related administration for the advancement of academic research. In 2013, Kyushu University was also selected by MEXT’s Promoting the Enhancement of Research Universities Program to further enhance a URA’s role at the University. In this article, we discuss one of the URA’s roles – improving research capability with a focus on young and foreign researchers.

Need for improving Research Environment
As one of the universities selected for both the URA Project (2011) and the Promoting the Enhancement of Research Universities Program (2013), Kyushu University decided on the following strategies to enhance research performance.

- Improve research capability by fostering future star researchers through improving research environment for young researchers and foreign researchers
- Accelerate top-level research
- Strengthen global research capabilities by acquiring and collaborating with international faculty

The first strategy was identified after internal analysis of research activities of Kyushu University. From this study it became evident that the research environment of young and foreign researchers needed to be improved. Compared with more experienced senior researchers, it is a common problem that young and foreign researchers have more difficulties to secure competitive funding, paradoxically, they need research achievements to propel their research career. In order to develop their successful career, their research environment had to be improved, and it is one of the most critical issues to build the foundation for future success of the University.

Diversity of Research Administrators and research support activities.
To improve the research environment of young and foreign researchers, URA s with diverse nationality, gender, and research backgrounds were employed; including two foreign research administrators (one from Europe and one from Asia) and a Japanese national with extended research experience at United States institutions. Most of the URA s hold a Ph.D. or its equivalent, who understand research processes and specialized needs. These URA s were hired to support diverse faculty and their wide-range of needs to achieve their goal. In order to strengthen the
research environment of young and foreign researchers, the following measures were taken:

1. Establishment of internal funding with a dedicated quota for young and foreign researchers.

Research achievements are an important factor for the acquisition of further funding. In order to support start-up in research and/or reestablishment of research activities for young and foreign researchers, the Q-dai Jump Research Program (internal seed grant) was established using the Promoting the Enhancement of Research Universities Program funding. This established their research foundation and put them in a better position for more competitive, larger funding awards. URAs are involved in the program design, the dissemination of information on the call for proposals, organizing explanation seminars, and reviewing the proposals. Nearly half (46.8%) of the researchers who were selected for this program (n=62) were able to successfully apply for Japanese competitive funding (n=29).

2. Proposal review support for applying to and acquisition of Japanese competitive funding (KAKENHI).

Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (commonly referred to as KAKENHI) are Japan’s most comprehensive competitive funding system, which supports all types of scientific research from basic to applied research. This is considered the backbone of Japan’s scientific development. Each year, a seminar explaining the KAKENHI system and proposal brush-up workshop are organized and administered by URAs. Special explanation sessions on KAKENHI are held for researchers who are in their first years of the funding eligibility in addition to the regular seminar on KAKENHI. For foreign researchers special sessions in English are also held. These are followed by proposal review support by URAs or senior researchers, who can review the proposal from a more technical perspective. Although open to all eligible faculty, this service is actively used by young and foreign researchers who have less experience in applying to the KAKENHI. The URAs are in charge of organizing the seminars and review the proposals to be submitted by the applicant. This program only started three years ago, therefore, there is insufficient data yet to recognize its effect on the acceptance rate, but by organizing these seminars and providing proposal review support, awareness of the KAKENHI has increased, and the participants felt that the quality of their proposal has improved significantly through this service.

3. Interdisciplinary meetings for young and foreign researchers.

Interdisciplinary research is one of the critical components in the internal funding program as well as other competitive funding. However, like most Japanese universities, interdisciplinary research is more of an exception than a rule. Interdisciplinary meetings involving all campuses are now held regularly to facilitate interaction between researchers of different disciplines as well as information exchange among researchers having a similar background. URAs are involved in organizing these meetings, sometimes in collaboration with the departments, with follow up on introduction and application to funding that require interdisciplinary research. The result is that researchers from different campuses found out about research interests of their colleagues on other campuses they did not know about before and stimulated application to on-campus interdisciplinary research funding.

In this way, activities supported by URAs provide opportunities to young and foreign researchers to improve their research capability, thereby putting them on the road of becoming excellent scientists.

Advancing the Profession

In this article, we focused on the improvement of research capability of young and foreign researchers as one of the measures taken by Kyushu University to enhance research performance. In order to deal with the other measures of accelerating top-level research and strengthening global research capabilities, URAs have been employed to perform increasingly diverse, but specialized duties related to export control, technology transfer, industrial alliance, project management, and the like. Through job rotation, URAs are made more resilient to diverse issues that come up in the research cycle from research planning to valorization of research results. By doing so, URAs are being prepared to become professional staff in the research administration for duties not only within the University, but also for research administration in governmental and company research centers and maybe even beyond borders. Kyushu University hopes to contribute to the establishment of research administration as a recognized profession in the Japanese society.

References


Harold Kusters, Ph.D., Senior Research Advisor at the Academic Research and Industrial Collaboration Management Office of Kyushu University, is in charge of grant applications. Main duties include supporting foreign researchers to apply for Japanese funding and support faculty at Kyushu University to apply for international funding. B.A. from Leiden University, M.A. and Ph.D. from Hiroshima University in Linguistics. He can be reached at kusters@airimaq.kyushu-u.ac.jp

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Figure 1. Fundamental Research Support for Young and Foreign Researchers
THE FDP EXPANDED CLEARINGHOUSE PILOT:

How 127 Organizations Saved 17,500 Staff Hours and Improved Subaward Issuance and Monitoring

By Pamela A. Webb and Lynette Arias

The FDP Expanded Clearinghouse pilot successfully demonstrated that an on-line entity profile system can significantly save staff time and facilitate subaward issuance and subrecipient monitoring, while maintaining stewardship of federal (and other) funding.

Inception and Goals

In 2011, the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) created a Public Health Service (PHS) Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) Clearinghouse as a mechanism for FDP member and non-FDP member organizations to document the existence of their organization’s PHS FCOI compliant policy. Nationally, pass-through entities quickly became accustomed to checking the FDP FCOI Clearinghouse repository in lieu of the exchange of thousands of individual transaction-specific certification documents. As of January 2018, 1150 organizations are listed in the FCOI Clearinghouse (http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/PGA_070596). The success of this initiative led to FDP’s creation of an “Expanded” Clearinghouse containing audit, demographic, compliance, and fiscal information needed by pass-through entities (PTEs) when they are issuing subawards.

The need for a national profile repository was exacerbated by release of the Uniform Guidance, which emphasized subaward risk assessment and monitoring obligations. Many institutions created or expanded their “Subrecipient Commitment Forms” to collect entity profile data needed during the subaward process. The proliferation of many different forms collecting mostly similar information on a transaction-by-transaction basis underscored the need for national consistency and a more efficient process. In 2015, the FDP collected 133 subrecipient commitment forms from its 154 members and analyzed the data elements to derive a single, common entity profile that could be broadly used. This entity profile became the template for Phases I and II of the Expanded Clearinghouse.

Data included in the profile included demographic data, audit results, F&A rates, fringe benefit rates, PHS FCOI policy status, debarment and suspension status, other representations and certifications, and contact information for the organization’s key research administration officials.

The Phase I pilot sought to test whether a standardized, streamlined subrecipient entity data repository was feasible, and whether such a repository effectively reduced the data collection and review burden for pass-through entities and subrecipients alike, while maintaining stewardship over federal funding. It also sought to test whether such a repository could be successfully maintained by participants. Success criteria were established in advance to test these parameters.

The Federal Demonstration Partnership is a cooperative initiative among 10 federal agencies and 154 institutional recipients of federal funds for Phase VI. Our Chair and Vice-Chair are Richard Seligman from the California Institute of Technology and Dr. Michele Masucci from Temple University. The FDP is a program convened by the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable of the National Academies. Its purpose is to reduce the administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts. The interaction between FDP’s 450 or so university and federal representatives takes place in FDP’s 3 annual meetings and, more extensively, in the many collaborative working groups and task forces that meet often by conference calls in order to develop specific work products.
Phase I: On-Line, Excel-based Repository
The FDP Executive Director, David Wright, created a webpage on the organization’s website that mimicked the earlier FCOI Clearinghouse’s easy-to-navigate product. Meanwhile, pilot participants (“piloteers”) from FDP member institutions agreed in advance to:

- Participate BOTH as a pass-through entity and as a subrecipient with other pilot members
- Create an entity profile based on a standard Excel template, and to have that profile certified by an authorized institutional official
- Submit their completed and authorized profile for review by one of the Co-Chairs of the Expanded Clearinghouse pilot for review prior to being posted on the FDP website
- Allow their institution’s profile to be publicly posted on the FDP website
- Timely update their profile (e.g., for new audit results, updated F&A rate agreements, changes in contacts, etc.)
- Forego use of their individualized subrecipient commitment forms to collect entity-level data when issuing subawards to other piloteers (and instead access the publicly posted profile of their proposed subrecipient entity to gather that information). Transaction-specific information (e.g., IRB and IACUC approvals) were still allowed to be collected; however, the pilot discouraged collecting such data in advance of when those data were actually required.
- Provide suggestions for improvements on the entity profile template
- Report at pre-established intervals about subawards they issued to other piloteers (using a provided template)
- Update their profile at least once annually
- Evaluate the effectiveness and the impact of the tool at least twice during the 18-month pilot

A 16-member FDP Expanded Clearinghouse Working Group provided detailed instructions to piloteers on profile creation, updating, approval, and submission processes as well as a clear articulation of the specific expectations for participants. Piloteers were also offered the option to terminate their participation in the pilot at any time (with their profile subsequently also removed from the website). No site chose to withdraw permanently from the pilot, although one briefly suspended involvement due to internal organizational challenges.

Before being publicly posted, profiles were reviewed by the projects’ co-chairs to validate the entity’s name with their DUNS number, ensure that the hyperlinks embedded in the template worked and were accurate, and verify that the data were complete and appeared reasonable from a common-sense perspective. Errors were identified and corrected before profiles were approved for posting.

Groups joined Phase I in “cohorts”, approximately 40 institutions at a time. Lessons learned in the early months of the pilot were harvested and used for later cohorts – for example, cohorts 2 and 3 were offered the option to participate in a one-hour “Welcome” call that supplemented the written instructions with oral walk-throughs of the profile completion process as well as hints and tips from the FDP group running the pilot.

Published master lists of participating entities helped institutions know which FDP member institutions were “in” the pilot and which were not. A listserv of each cohort and a master listserv of all piloteers helped share information common to all and remind piloteers of due dates for their periodic reports or as a vehicle to send pilot evaluations. An FDP website provided key documents and copies of presentations reporting progress at the eight FDP meetings held between May 2015 and January 2018.

Phase II: On-Line Database System
Following favorable results from the “proof-of-concept” Excel template version of the Expanded Clearinghouse, the next step was the development and deployment of a web-based database system that allowed entity profiles to be entered, reviewed, published, and maintained entirely on-line. The importance of implementing the on-line version was quickly underscored by the inherent maintenance and review challenges experienced by both piloteers and FDP reviewers during Phase I.

But how could this vision be achieved in an organization that has no dedicated IT staff of its own? In an act of extraordinary generosity, FDP member Vanderbilt University (later Vanderbilt University Medical Center) offered, without charge, access to their excellent IT staff to create the on-line database system. FDP then partnered with Vanderbilt via a system development working group, including representatives from FDP’s Electronic Research Administration Committee, the FDP Executive Director

Clearly the most pressing question was, "Does having a Clearinghouse actually result in a reduction of administrative burden?”

FDP EXPANDED CLEARINGHOUSE WORKING GROUP DURING PHASES I AND II

| Lynette Arias (Co-Chair) | University of Washington [now in private sector] |
| Jennifer Barron (former Co-Chair) | University of Minnesota |
| Pamela A. Webb (Co-Chair) | Brown University |
| Patrice Carroll | University of Texas, Austin |
| Sara Clough | Northwestern University |
| Tyra Patrice Darville-Layne | Florida State University |
| Marcy Friedle | University of Alabama, Huntsville |
| Gloria Greene/Steve Parker | Purdue University |
| Amanda Hamaker | Vanderbilt University Medical Center |
| Michael Johnson | Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai |
| Jennifer Pan | UT Austin |
| Robert Prentiss | Vanderbilt University Medical Center |
| Christopher Renner | University of Wisconsin-Madison |
| Jennifer Rodis | UT Austin |
| Courtney Swaney | Institute for Systems Biology |
| Julie Thatcher | |
(a skilled IT professional in a former life), and FDP Expanded Clearinghouse Working group members and one of the initiative’s Co-Chairs. Using the baseline Excel profile, instructions, and pilot membership agreement already created (with minor refinements learned through the Phase I pilot) the on-line version of the Expanded Clearinghouse was designed, programmed, and tested.

Harnessing the power of a database, the new on-line version was able to incorporate powerful features not (fully) available in the Excel version, such as enhanced data validation at time of entry, on-line help text and instructions, user “roles” (e.g., profile primary contact, local account manager, profile certifier), and automated emails alerting key institutional officials of upcoming expiration dates for certain fields (e.g., System for Award Management (SAM) expiration dates). Print/download functionality allowed entity profiles to be viewed or downloaded and saved as pdf files for local archiving or printing. For FDP admin reviewers of the profiles, an on-line queue of profiles needing administrative review was created, as well as the ability to “publish” approved profiles without having to manually send that entity’s profile to the FDP Executive Director for posting. A “history” tool was added showing what fields had been updated by piloteers, allowing more rapid FDP administrative review of updated profiles. Profiles were able to be “assigned” to a certain reviewer to help build continuity of relationships. Reports were also written to help identify and locate entity profiles that appeared to be “stuck” in the local approval process or identify institutions that had not performed expected maintenance on their profiles.

The on-line version of the Expanded Clearinghouse was launched in April 2017, and the ~80 institutions then participating in the Clearinghouse were asked to re-enter their profiles via the new system. Several members of the system development group stepped up to create a volunteer “Help Desk.” Problems or questions that arose during profile creation or updating were directed to a standard email address and quickly answered by this group (typically within hours). 77% of users found that it took less than 60 minutes to populate all required fields to originally create their profile, and 91% reported completion within ninety minutes. The certification process (by an authorized institutional official) also featured automatic email notifications, and these reviews were generally rapid and easily accomplished.

As soon as all existing piloteers had migrated their profiles to the new system, the Excel system was “retired” and a third cohort of ~40 FDP members were invited to enter their profiles. This third cohort was “on-line only” and was offered an optional Word-based “Organization Worksheet” to use locally to collect data before entering data on-line. Many reported they found it helpful since for many institutions, the data sources were spread across various research administration offices (e.g., pre-award, post-award, compliance, purchasing, etc.). This cohort also had the option of watching a short (<10 minute) video describing how to use the Expanded Clearinghouse. For this cohort, in addition to approving the institution’s profile, the certifier also accepted the on-line business agreement outlining the responsibilities and benefits of membership.

In late Fall 2017, the pilot was declared complete, results were reported (see next section), and the system was approved by the FDP Executive Committee to become an ongoing FDP initiative. The remaining FDP members (~43) were invited to join the Expanded Clearinghouse whenever they wished to do so, and the concept of inclusion into the Clearinghouse via a “cohort” was dropped. As of the writing of this article, there are 179 organizational profiles representing 126 institutions in the FDP Expanded Clearinghouse.

Expanded Clearinghouse Results Show More than 17,500 Hours of Annual Staff Time Saved

Clearly the most pressing question was, “Does having a Clearinghouse actually result in a reduction of administrative burden?” The answer to this was a resounding “Yes!” During period July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017 (the last full year of the pilot), the 127 campuses engaged during that time exchanged 10,830 subaward transactions. All participants had previously been asked how much time they spent sending out individual subrecipient commitment forms and reviewing the answers (their business practice pre-Clearinghouse), and how much time they spent filling out subrecipient forms sent to them from other institutions. Based on these calculations and the volume of subaward activity reported during the pilot, it was estimated that 17,562 staff hours were saved during the final year of the pilot.1 On a per-institution basis, this equated to an average of 153 staff hours of staff time per campus per year, or 266 staff hours for the 66 institutions who reported having at least 25 subawards with other piloteers. The average time savings was 1.62 hours per transaction.

Two research-intensive institutions imputed the time savings if all of their subaward activity would have been done using the Expanded Clearinghouse (instead of just those subawards with other pilot institutions). These two institutions estimated they could save between 1400 – 1800 staff hours per year, or nearly one FTE. While not a game-changer, most of us would happily accept such burden reductions. In addition, the Expanded Clearinghouse facilitated timely processing of subawards, since the data in the Clearinghouse was available 24/7 to subaward

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1 Per-institution basis, this equated to an average of 153 staff hours of staff time per campus per year, or 266 staff hours for the 66 institutions who reported having at least 25 subawards with other piloteers. The average time savings was 1.62 hours per transaction.
Like any pilot, there were lessons learned along the way.

Evaluations (of the Clearinghouse, instructions, tools, and available help) took place at several times during the pilot phase. An impressive 98.6% of piloteers said they agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the Expanded Clearinghouse, including its ease of navigation, user instructions, and the ability to enter and maintain profiles.

The cost of the Clearinghouse pilot was about approximately $80,000, including funding from FDP for meeting travel and computer hosting costs, Vanderbilt University Medical Center for its donated programming time, and the University of Washington and the University of Wisconsin, who paid for work-study students to help with the project. In addition, a large amount of volunteer time was devoted by the three co-chairs, who in addition to running the initiative also serve as volunteer profile reviewers for all of the Excel and web-based profiles, and by a 17-member working group, who contributed all of the instructional documents, help-desk support, and data analysis as well as wisdom and guidance. These individuals are listed so you can thank them for all their efforts on our collective behalf!

Issues and Challenges
Like any pilot, there were lessons learned along the way. In Phase I (Excel) the group experienced challenges with piloteers having different versions of Excel that behaved in different ways, contributing to questionable or erroneous data. The profile review and posting burden was greater than originally anticipated, and while not impeding the rollout, it proved a fortunate choice that only ~40 new institutions were added at a time. Lessons were also learned about phrasing of certain questions on the form, and changes were made (and on-screen reminders added) to enhance data quality when Phase II (Web-based System) was deployed.

One issue recognized upfront was the public sharing of certain data fields. For most public institutions, posting audit results or F&A rate agreements was non-controversial. For some (mostly private) institutions, this was a new concept and represented a fundamental change in business practices. A few institutions had to delay their involvement in the Clearinghouse until they could obtain agreement from their leadership that these documents could be made public. One of the core tenets of the Clearinghouse was that certain frequently used documents (including audit reports and rate agreements) had to be available either as an uploaded document or as a direct hyperlink.

As indicated above, a core understanding was that pass-through entities would not request — and subrecipient entities would not complete — subrecipient commitment forms from other pilot institutions when those forms contained entity data equivalent to what was stored in the Clearinghouse. It took some time for the existence of the Clearinghouse to “trickle through” the pilot institutions, and for requests for such data to stop being promulgated. Sample polite yet firm “push-back” language was provided to members to use for this purpose. Since transaction-specific data (as opposed to entity-based data) could still be requested, some institutions choose to section-ize their forms so that pilot entities were asked to complete only what the PTE considered transaction-specific data. Considerable discussion occurred during the pilot about what constituted transaction-specific data, and eventually an optional (but recommended) Letter of Intent form was created for use at time of proposal. The FDP Subaward Subcommittee incorporated certain other compliance data fields into their heavily-used subaward templates to provide transaction specific data (e.g., IRB and IACUC approvals) at time of subaward issuance or modification.

A major source of confusion arose about the definition of an “institution.” While the intent was always to allow FDP members to join the Clearinghouse, it quickly became apparent that some institutions had joined FDP with their entire system or institution in mind, while others had joined only for certain campuses. This left confusion about what entities were entitled to join the Clearinghouse. A norm arose that an institution with multiple campuses doing business with multiple DUNS numbers would complete and submit a profile for each campus with a unique DUNS. It is anticipated that FDP, when it next invites membership in 2020, will clarify this issue to the benefit of all parties.

Finally, a new field was added to the web-based system to allow institutions to specify both their “Common Name” (the name under which they expected others to search for them) and their “Legal Entity Name” (used for contracting and for their SAM record).

Expanded Clearinghouse is Available for Public Use
While only FDP members are able, at this time, to add their institution’s profile into the Expanded Clearinghouse, any institution may harvest and use all of the currently posted profiles (179 campuses). To use these profiles, navigate to fdpclearinghouse.org, and search for the name of the potential subrecipient. If that organization is in the Expanded Clearinghouse, feel free to view or download/print their entity profile for use in your institution’s subrecipient monitoring practices. A 7-minute video that walks through this process is also available under the “Help” tab of the Expanded Clearinghouse website.

The Future of the Expanded Clearinghouse
FDP has already endorsed promotion of its remaining 43 members joining the Expanded Clearinghouse, and that activity is underway at this time. In addition, the system development workgroup is rolling out an API (application programming interface) that will allow profile data from Clearinghouse
participants to be downloaded for use in members’ local data management systems. These data will be required to be refreshed frequently to ensure that they are up-to-date, and it is projected that use of the data in these systems will further streamline and simplify institutional business practices.

In addition, the group is exploring whether or not APIs might be able to be created to harvest data on a batch feed basis from federal governmental systems (e.g., SAM and the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC) to further reduce data entry requirements and improve data timeliness.

A companion initiative is the continued development of a financial questionnaire that could be used with subrecipient entities who do not need (or are not subject to) an annual Single Audit. If the questions from this document are incorporated into the Clearinghouse, it may be possible to include entity profiles from other types of organizations (non-FDP members).

The Expanded Clearinghouse has now been operational for more than a year. Future plans include assessing the viability and need for the data housed in the Clearinghouse. The working group will review what data are most frequently used, and whether there are data being collected that have not proven to be useful or worth the burden of keeping current.

At the present time, only the institutions who are members of the FDP are eligible to participate in the FDP Expanded Clearinghouse. No decisions have yet been made about whether non-FDP members will be eligible to join in the future and, if so, under what conditions that might be possible. Please stay tuned for more information!

End Notes

1 Several institutions had pre-Clearinghouse practices that did not involve transaction-based subrecipient commitment forms, usually because they had already implemented some form of a local campus subrecipient entity profile database. In order to accurately reflect the time saved, the more modest impact of the Clearinghouse for those campuses was included in the calculations.

TRAINING TIPS

Jumpstart Your Educational Platform— “8 Ways to Move It Forward”

Finding new ways to reach and engage participants is important for maintaining a successful training program. As the demands on our time, and the complexities of research administration increase, we seek ways to enhance and update our trainings. Below are ideas to help reboot your training program.

• Explore new delivery methods. People learn in different ways. Providing content in various formats such as live sessions, workshops, online slides, etc. can ensure that we reach a wide audience.

• Explore new delivery methods. Acknowledge time and geographic constraints. Consider building online modules for campus participants to review at their convenience, or provide online live webinars to limit time away from the office for busy faculty and staff.

• Raise participation factor. Infuse your sessions with games, case studies, clicker surveys, quizzes, and other educational activities to keep your participants engaged during heavy content sessions.

• Leverage outside content. There are many excellent webinars available for purchase from NCURA and other sources that can be easily shared with your campus via your learning management system. Consider bringing speakers from outside your institution for a fresh perspective (e.g., NCURA traveling workshops).

• Invite guest speakers. Renew the focus of central office staff by inviting faculty members to present on their research. Partner with members of central offices or colleagues from other universities to provide a new perspective on research administration topics.

• Address the needs of senior administrators. While onboarding is a focal point of most training programs, it is also important to engage long-time administrators in advanced topics and mentoring groups.

• Create investigator sessions. Find ways to deliver key research administration topics to investigators. These could include short online modules, monthly email blasts, or visits to department meetings.

• Stay current. Lead your campus in timely discussions about new regulations, funding trends, best practices and sponsor updates. Set routine meetings, newsletters, or other communications to share new information. Special topic training sessions can be added to your training calendar and provided until everyone has the information necessary for success.

Share your ideas and successes with your NCURA colleagues—we’re all in this together!
I appreciate this question. It is fun to take a break from prior columns and talk about the strong connection and inspiration that art can bring to leadership, and vice versa. When I think of the relationship between art and leadership, the word “courage” comes to mind. We know that courage is the ability to act in the face of fear. Art can depict heroes in victory and in defeat; all in pursuit of the practical demonstration of courage.

Courage is not about being a bold and fearless leader. It is more than Admiral David Farragut and “damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.” (By the way, Admiral Farragut had made many military decisions, appraised his fleet’s situation with care, lived through many sea battles, and looked his sailors in the eyes before he made this, to some, reckless remark.)

Courage is about leaders feeling the strain of decision-making, of doing what we believe is necessary, of feeling and experiencing fear and stress, managing risk best we can, having high empathy with others, disappointing others on occasion, challenging popular opinion, and finding the push, motivation, energy to overcome and inspire. We may not necessarily thrive individually through exerting courage, but we are demonstrating what it is to think and act institutionally — a theme that has appeared in many of these columns over the past few years. Art can capture and portray courage better than most textbooks.

When you are next in Washington, DC (perhaps for the NCURA Annual Meeting this coming August 2018), I recommend you visit the National Portrait Gallery and walk around and see the paintings of leaders. I have done this and each time I draw inspiration. There are leaders in the arts, social justice, politics, and individuals with emblematic experiences that are, well, courageous. It is not just about the presidents of the United States.

OK…You asked about a movie, so here goes: The King’s Speech, from 2010 and winner of four Oscars (for those of you who are only interested in a movie’s pedigree before you commit to watching it!) The movie takes place upon the precipice of Britain’s entry into the Second World War, and it is about the monarch who became king upon the abdication of his brother, King Edward VIII.

"We each have the possibility of being courageous"

The King had a coach. According to IMDB reviews, the movie is, “The story of King George VI of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, his impromptu ascension to the throne and the speech therapist who helped the unsure monarch become worthy of it.” www.imdb.com/title/tt1504320

The movie can be seen as a dynamic coaching exercise in which the speech therapist, played by Geoffrey Rush, teaches the king (nicknamed “Bertie”), played by Colin Firth, techniques to overcome stuttering sufficiently enough to broadcast a war message to the citizens of the British Kingdom worldwide via radio. Of course, the movie is more than that. It is about the challenge and provocations put forth by the therapist-coach and the resistance-reluctance-anger-acceptance of the client-king. It is about “Bertie’s” feeling worthy of what it is to be king and finding a larger purpose in managing his worries in service to the British people. This is about someone finding courage through examining his own fears and personal history, and then understanding and taming his fears enough (not completely, but enough) to do the important tasks of leadership. Coaching is about moving forward. The interactions between therapist and Bertie are such that the therapist acts as scaffolding for the new King to safely experiment, learn, get angry, etc. The movie is about Bertie becoming a wartime leader: becoming King George VI.

As a movie about “leadership,” what this film has taught me is we each have personal demons, difficulties, and worries we seek to manage and overcome in service to something bigger, broader, and more important than us as individuals. Leadership is about institutions. David Brooks writes in The Road to Character, “The good leader prefers arrangements that are low and steady to those that are lofty and heroic.” But, like King George VI, what if a leader’s circumstances do not allow for such a patient and incremental approach? How do we transform ourselves to be worthy of leadership? I often ask coaching clients: “What would it take for you to be courageous?” We each have the possibility of being courageous. And, courage is what is needed to move a strategy to action, to listen to an opposing and angry viewpoint with an open and empathetic heart, to disagree with a boss, to make that decision you have been postponing, to undertake the personal transformation you know in your gut and heart is needed. To define personal courage, many of us draw inspiration from literature, biographies, art, theatre, films, and the stories of others. Curate those stories. Build your own story of courage. What are the sources of courage in your own life?

What would it take for you to be courageous?

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A cademia, and the wider research arena, is under increasing pressure from multiple directions. In the UK, Brexit is looming large in academic concerns, whilst both here and internationally, changes to government leadership and parliamentary constitution are bringing a sense of unsteadiness.

Academia is a place of privilege in many respects – those within it are able to drive advancements in knowledge and contribute to social change. However, for many, this sense of privilege is eroded by intensifying pressures to justify national research portfolios to government treasurers, competing for increasingly scarce funding opportunities and amid ever-pervasive fears around ‘publish or perish’. The research sector is littered with challenges that amplify the sense of pressure already present in the economic and political systems; e.g., short-term contracts and institutional restructuring, meaning that pressure is perceived at every tier of the research sector. The effects of these uncertainties are widely felt, with potentially stressful repercussions for academics and research managers alike.

The research management profession works from both the factory floor to the board room of the research agenda. It reflects all tiers and subject areas of academia and is invariably charged with navigating academics and institutional portfolios through changing political, economic and social contexts. It is no surprise, then, that within this operating environment research managers must be resilient.

In psychological terms, resilience is the ‘process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress’ (“The Road to Resilience,” 2013). In other words, resilience is the ability to persist when things get tricky and bounce back when problems hit. Resilience is a key component in successfully managing ongoing stressful situations. At a personal level, when encountering anything we perceive as a threat, our bodies immediately ready us for action (‘fight or flight’) and switches on those functions which help us to survive. However, if the threat doesn’t go away, or we are faced with a series of threats, our response stays ‘on’. If not turned ‘off’, we become exhausted from the constant vigilance of looking for and dealing with a/the threat. In the workplace, this tends to corrode into burnout, depression and learned helplessness, all of which undermine personal wellbeing and by extension the long-term sustainability of research delivery.

Resilience is crucial to ensure individuals and institutions alike feel equipped not only to endure but thrive in the face of continuing change.

So what can we do? How can we build both individual and institutional resilience to more successfully adapt to a changing research environment? Well, let’s take impact as an example of such change in recent years. The application of research to ‘real world’ problems is nothing new; indeed, problem-focused exploration forms the basis for many funding programmes worldwide. However, for the UK, the term ‘impact’ was more formally catapulted into significance with its weighted position in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment (www.ref.ac.uk), bringing an immediate challenge to individuals and institutions alike.

Impact suddenly became an assessable and comparative currency, with a financial reward for the victors. With little warning, the game had changed, and institutions needed to adapt or fall. Whilst it would be misleading to suggest the UK has come full circle in embracing impact, we have certainly witnessed a significant shift, as over time the sector started to recognise the opportunity to generate and showcase its contribution to the wider world. Institutions started realigning themselves towards research implementation and investing in staff to drive this new agenda. Individual impact officers – often operating in disconnected roles within institutions – started to galvanise a community of practice (e.g., the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) Impact Special Interest Group) to build a collective support. Individuals are increasingly less isolated, institutions are more expertly staffed, and the weight of requirement is progressively coupled with triumphant storytelling.

It is this suite of institutional investment, strategic realignment and collaborative professional growth which exemplifies the resilience of the research community to switch a challenge into an opportunity.

Ultimately, resilience is a personal and collective trait; we can each shift our minds to ‘opportunity’ rather than ‘challenge’, but it is imperative that organisations and communities rally in the same way. If change is poorly managed, pressure falls unequally onto individuals and particular types of institutions, leading to tensions and longer-term inequalities in the system. As the research management community continues to cement its place as a vital part of a changeable research ecosystem, communities of practice such as ARMA (https://arma.ac.uk) and NCURA are vital in supporting the growth of collective resilience within and beyond institutions.

References


Dr. Julie Bayley is an impact specialist and Chartered Health Psychologist and has just been appointed as the Director of Research Impact Development at the University of Lincoln. Julie is champion of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) Impact Special Interest Group, leads ARMA impact training and sits on the ARMA Professional Development Committee. You can find Julie on Twitter (@JulieEBayley) or visit her blog https://juliebayley.blog for more information.
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The world is changing rapidly, both in terms of broad global trends that are driving research and innovation and the immediate space around our day-to-day lives. A fundamental shift is that we now face the shrinking of time spans, in large part due to the exponential change in technology coupled with the instantaneous propagation of ideas and information across a connected world.

With the accelerating pace of change, the relevance and validity of holding a stable stock of knowledge is diminishing while other abilities, such as creativity, empathy, the ability to read context, becomes increasingly more important.

As partnerships and collaborations in research broaden and we face an unknown and unpredictable environment, there is a need to be able to enhance a set of proactive skills and practices that can help shift the cultural communication paradigms we have come to understand in our daily approach. These skills and practices expect and allow us to slow down and maybe even re-anchor ourselves while at the same time building a diverse social media network, traveling to speed up and explore new areas for learning and growth, allowing us to become more adaptable, more capable of learning across changing contexts, more empathetic and more creative and flexible in creating new approaches and adapting old ones.

**Don’t Mind the Gap, bridge it**
The most popular word of 2014 in Merriam Webster’s dictionary was “Culture.” In academia as well as within industry, culture is a growing challenge internally as well as externally. It can boost performance and competition. As research managers in the 21st century, we need to develop a better understanding of culture and value systems and the implications for current and future research, innovation and the business environment. However, culture – as language – is constantly changing; it’s mobile, not fixed. Today, more than ever before, our roles as members of permanently changing teams challenges our individualism. As individuals, we do not act out of ourselves but as a consequence of our links with bigger systems – whatever we do or say depends upon our frame of reference, and this is constantly shifting in a highly networked and decentralized global research area. Cultural awareness is as important as ever, and new ways of making meaning are emerging.

On a daily basis we are confronted with autonomous and reflective individuals, be it at home, on the move, in a sports club, or at work. In the professional environment power is diffused and shared. In contrast with traditional management, where structures and systems are derived from a pre-defined strategy, the new workplace within international consortia, be it H2020 or NIH, NSF or the Gates Foundation, will seek to balance
what matters for the consortium (its strategy) and what matters for the individual. In fact, management and researchers decide and execute interactively. In this world of the customized workplace, conflict is a normal part of life and the reconciliation of dilemmas is the source of authority.

Our approach to understanding the field of research management transcends these changes by closely connecting to the dilemmas that derive from the tension caused by cultural (value) differences – whether from national ethnic, institutional, or generational cultures. All cultures, institutions and consortia share similar dilemmas and the approach to them is usually culturally determined. For example: is it better to steer researchers or should they be self-directed and innovative? The success of a consortium will depend, among other things, on both the autonomy of its people and on how well the information arising from this autonomy has been centralized and coordinated. If you fail to exploit fully centralized information, your scattered and highly self-motivated team might as well remain independent. If various teams are not free to act on local information, then centralized directives are detracting, rather than adding value.

Everyone acts in a frame of opposing set of poles: openness and coherence, regularity and irritation, conformity and disruption. As research managers, we must be aware and understand cultural differences and also be able to integrate them. Thus, we consider a successful framework for research managers needs to be based on Recognition, Respect and Reconciliation.2

RECOGNIZE: While easily recognizing explicit and open cultural differences, we may not be aware of hidden implicit variations and frames. Most importantly we need to recognize and accept discrepancies in the governance of social behavior.

RESPECT: There is no “right” or “wrong,” there are just different opinions for different, but equally valid reasons. Hence after RECOGNIZING differences, we – as research managers – need to understand and respect any external interpretation of “our” area of activity.

RECONCILE: Respect is necessary to resolve any situation, especially in international research management. Hence it is the task of the research administrator to bridge the differences between the opposing parties and facilitate an agreement between them while at the same time contributing to a balanced, more harmonized international organization.

Over the years, we have all developed and continue to build a healthy and intuitive approach to detect cultural changes and how to deal with them. Nothing scary, there is no magic. In a cross-cultural framework, the attributes of an effective research manager are very simple and straightforward:

- Listen carefully and often (you don’t always need to agree; you do always need to understand)
- Ask, don’t tell (seek information)
- Be assertive, clear, firm, not aggressive
- Focus on “others”
- Build relationships
- Focus on today and tomorrow (long-term goals)
- Clarify and summarize
- Focus on what is said and not said
- Ask questions that reveal the information needed
- Be clear in questions, observations and feedback

A successful communication framework is required to develop strong partnerships, it allows a research manager to be flexible and adjust accordingly. The framework must include the five key elements of active listening.3 These elements contribute to a three-prong approach to hearing, listening and understanding. It ensures the research manager hears the other person, and that the other person knows he or she is heard and each person comes closer to understanding:

1. Pay Attention: Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also “speaks” loudly.
2. Show that you are listening: Use body language and gestures to convey your attention.
3. Provide Feedback: Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.
4. Defer Judgment: Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.
5. Respond Appropriately: Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down. It is the passion and energy of a team/partnership that makes the development of an idea successful.

There may be a requirement to adapt established processes or negotiate anew. As research administrators, we need and are required to explain the organizational framework to the researcher and foreign institution, we need to explain the foreign institution’s and/or the sponsor’s framework to our organization and researcher. One cannot depend on what “has always been.” New processes need to be constantly updated and adapted, depending on the partners and our partners’ communication styles. Without this understanding, the ability to bridge the communication gap becomes difficult and can lead to frustration — or worse — breakdown of the partnership.

Understanding the differences in communication styles and acumen becomes ever so critical. Negotiation tactics differ around the world. Comparing Swiss and American communication style illustrates that understanding that your partner’s communication is or potentially is different will help guide how you may need or want to adapt your style to develop a productive partnership.

According to the communication consultant Richard Lewis, the Swiss in their communication style (https://assets.weforum.org/editor/jqACoIcNR3Td77MH0G4kGYZ60Ozb664jTqW9CLPui44.jpg) tend to be “straightforward, nonaggressive negotiators. They obtain concessions by expressing confidence in the quality and value of their goods and services.”4 On the other hand, the American style (https://assets.weforum.org/editor/5E4bjlhX-kz1gW0-8rj88BlNyleU8Nnw8wxxzLtg80.jpg) is to seek to conduct business with a sense of urgency, and consider sarcasm and conflict part of the process leading to clarity. Even though there are differences, as the relationship becomes more established, trust builds, communication seems to get easier, and we start learning the languages of our partners. We then start to speak two languages simultaneously — our own institution’s terminology and culture and that of the sponsor.

In times of rapid change, the past may no longer predict the future. The very things that made an individual successful may actually be his or her downfall when underlying assumptions and contexts fundamentally shift. In such times, we need to adopt new perspectives to see what is not working and set ego aside to work to achieve the end goal. This helps us muster the courage for unlearning old patterns and learning new ones. We need to seek external validation of reflection and reframing. By joining communities of interest of best practices, the topic can be deeply explored. Cultivating community, done well, requires us to make ourselves vulnerable, to expose our goals and thoughts about each other. Though difficult, it
NOTABLE PRACTICES

Strong Human Subject Research

In addition to sponsored programs standards, NCURA has standards and a review program for effective regulatory and research compliance operations. One particular standard of interest to most institutions is the ethical treatment of human participants in research. NCURA Peer Reviewers have seen notable practices in building effective human participant protection programs. Some of these practices include:

- Effective operations regularly publish and communicate to the stakeholder community clear policies and procedures on the use of humans and human tissue in research. Examples are often included in communications. There is also often an FAQ document to accompany lengthy policies and procedures.
- Institutions that have data safety monitoring boards and/or privacy boards have clear and formal connections to the IRB and promote regular communication.
- The Intuitional Official (IO), IRB manager, IRB members, and administrative support all understand their respected roles and meet to have an open line of communication on the nature of their respected roles in protecting human participants.
- Effective research compliance operations invest in the professional development of IRB functional staff and members AND the campus community. Professional development often focuses on rules and regulations while promoting ethical research and a culture of compliance to the entire community.
- Effective operations have regular administrative and communication interfaces with other compliance areas such as controlled substances, radiation safety, and financial conflict of interest.
- Sponsored programs and research compliance staff work effectively and transparently at both the pre and post award stage to share information with each other and to send unified communications to principal investigators across the campus.

Reviewers have found that offices that are proactive and seek to promote regular, formal and/or informal communication are more likely to create cultures of compliance to ensure the ethical treatment of human participants in research.

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.

Helps us to gain a “second perspective,” to get an external view, while at the same time being supported by likeminded individuals, encouraging us to move forward with our approach. Finding leverage helps our actions have greater impact and enables us to move towards our goals more quickly than if we act alone. It increases our rate of learning and impact by getting involved in activities and knowledge flows that are already underway and related to our goals.

Action is critical for movement and learning. Being proactive and deliberate rather than reactive is a key differentiator of actions in this context. We also need to adjust and align. The experience and information gathered with each new foreign grant, new interaction with a non-EU institution should be used to assess and adjust the short-term learning focus.

Change of perspective, being out of our comfort zone, is one indication that we have an opportunity to learn something new. Being comfortable in contrast occurs when we are on autopilot. When we are uncomfortable our brain and all our senses are paying attention. They are processing the new experience or new information and making sense of it. So, don’t just send emails; try to connect, talk, use video-conferencing, where possible meet our colleagues in person – just like we would with our national grants; and clearly outline our position right from the beginning.

If we understand the goal is to develop a synergetic, cross-cultural partnership and outline the strategy through active listening, seeking validation, taking action and changing perspective, this approach will help us be brave and take the risk to ensure that our partnerships will be competitive on the global stage.

References


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Caroline E. Jones, MBA, is the Assistant Director of Pre-Award Operations in the Office of Sponsored Research at Stanford University. She currently serves on the NCURA FMC and SGOA Committees and was 2017 Region 6 Treasurer. She can be reached at cjones@stanford.edu
I’m always curious about how people organize, whether it’s the papers and folders on their desk, the documents on their computers, or the projects they are managing. The “KonMari Method” of tidying did not spark joy with me, though it inspired several of my friends whose homes are now less cluttered than mine. Instead, I’m inspired by the joy of crossing an item off my to-do list. For years I have depended upon to-do lists to organize my work and declutter both my desk and my mind.

Years ago, my lists were on legal pads or an organizer calendar. Now I use an on-line tool called “Remember the Milk”. I set up specific lists (Training, Agreements, and so on). Then, I add tasks to the relevant list. Tasks can be tagged. For example, I could tag agreement tasks with agreement type, investigator name, or other data to aid in searching. I can add a website URL and timestamped progress or reminder notes. Perhaps most importantly, I can add a deadline. When I arrive in the morning, I open Remember the Milk on my web browser and focus on my tasks due today, tomorrow, and next week. It’s very easy to review lists and update deadlines (or delete tasks) as priorities change. And I get that sense of accomplishment as I check off a task and it disappears into the “Completed” tab.

As with so many on-line tools, there is a free version (which I use) and an enhanced version with more features (subtasks, advanced sorting, sharing, syncing with other apps).

I recently downloaded the app to my phone, so now I can enter new to-dos as I think of them, instead of waiting till I return to my office. I even have a “Personal” list in case I really do need to “Remember the Milk”. There are many “list” tools available. Which one is valuable to you?

Janet Simons a Co-Editor for NCURA Magazine, is an Export Officer and Director, Research Policy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.
Please join us in extending a big and heartfelt thank you to NCURA and our wonderful staff there who managed to move the entire meeting to a completely different city and venue in an impressively transparent way. Our exceptional PRA 2018 Program Committee also worked tirelessly to ensure that all sessions and workshops had high caliber, experienced, and engaging presenters, taking into consideration not only the change in venue, but additionally the storms hitting a great portion of the east coast immediately prior to the meeting!

This quote from Walt Disney seems especially relevant and fitting to lead off our recap of PRA 2018: Be Extraordinary: Re-energize and Engage! Not only does this maxim fit seamlessly with the meeting theme, it also perfectly describes the essence of our profession in research administration.

“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”
Day 1 started with the revolutionary day of shared workshops with FRA, and from comments we heard from many of our attendees, this experiment was a rousing success! The joint PRA/FRA workshop offerings allowed our attendees the unique opportunity to attend a session that might not have otherwise been available to them as a part of their meeting registration. Workshop topics ranged from basics on pre-award and post-award tips and tools, to senior forums on Building Human Capital through Coaching, and Leadership Boot Camp.

Day 2 began with a warm welcome to our 486 attendees from NCURA’s Executive Director, Kathleen Larmett, and NCURA’s President, Georgette Sakumoto, followed by the greeting and acknowledgements to our attendees from Australia, Canada, Egypt, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey! What an amazing turnout from our global community! We then had the pleasure of introducing our dynamic, funny and captivating keynote speaker, Kimberly Pace. Kimberly presented a motivating and entertaining exchange on “How Leaders Influence and Persuade,” providing excellent and thought provoking case studies as well as tips on how to improve communication and interactions with faculty, supervisors and other institutional leaders.

The remainder of the day and the one following (Day 3) were packed with concurrent sessions, discussion groups, and spark sessions on a variety of topics that fell within the 11 tracks: Compliance, Departmental, Federal, Non-Federal (new half-track added this year), PUI, Medical/Clinical, Global, Contracting/Subcontracting, Career Development/Advancement, Sponsored Projects Administration and Systems/Metrics/Data

Attendees happily took full advantage of the many networking opportunities: by attending one or more of the excellent breakfast roundtables on topics as diverse as “How to Transfer 1 or 150 Federal Grants: Best Practices,” to “Rising from the Ashes: Rebuilding after Severe Budget Cuts,” chatting with colleagues during breaks and at lunch. We had a great turnout at the poolside reception on Thursday evening. Many of our colleagues joined one of the dinner groups and enjoyed the tasty options available within the host hotel, or at one of the incredible restaurants located at the nearby Disney Springs, demonstrating that all were indeed engaged and energized!

We are so thankful to have worked with an incredible, hardworking, and responsive team, all of whom contributed to making this meeting the success that it was – from the program committee who built a strong and stimulating program, to our outstanding session presenters and volunteers, and especially to Kati Barber and Susan McKenna, who kept us on track, handled every numerous detail with professionalism, tact and humor, and made everything SO easy for us. We also want to extend a big thank you to Georgette Sakumoto, NCURA’s President, for giving us the opportunity to serve as your PRA Co-Chairs for 2018 – we were delighted and honored to be asked, and loved every minute of this rewarding experience.

Thank you!

PRA Conference Co-Chairs

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NCURA Magazine’s e-Xtra

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We believe in a future where a trusted, frictionless, collaborative research ecosystem drives progress for all.
Resilience can be defined as the ability to adjust easily to misfortune, change, or new paradigms. Flexible, elastic, and stretchable are all great synonyms. That’s our life as research administrators. Like a rubber band, we are expected to snap back after serious setbacks and perform as required to get the job done. Resilience is our defining trait—if you can bounce back quickly, you are an ideal candidate for research administration. Why is that? Resilient research administrators are people who are deadline driven, don’t shy away from holding difficult conversations, face challenges in every direction with new and different situations, and of course move with the ever-changing research landscape.

The Federal deadline is two weeks out, and you’re anticipating an avalanche of applications again this cycle. The phone rings. You know who it is and what he is asking for. “Hi! It’s Dr. Smith. Thanks for all your help during the last submission. It seems like this deadline sneaked up on us? Unfortunately, we’re not going to be able to get you the proposal in advance of the deadline. I know there is that policy, but is it going to be okay?” Dr. Smith, a well-funded principal investigator, explains that they need this coming weekend to finalize the science and polish the application; the grant isn’t due until Monday anyway. You have given Dr. Smith this flexibility previously. Yet, the very next email you get is from Dr. Simmons. She is writing to let you know that she’s going to need the weekend as well.

We all have dealt with the pressure of deadlines, and the added pressure of last minute work. Are you resilient enough to stretch and accommodate? How do you respond? You could choose to get frustrated. Don’t the faculty know that these internal deadlines serve a purpose, to ensure that their grants are submitted without complications? Don’t Drs. Simmons and Smith know that you have several other grants going in at the same time?

It can be hard to demonstrate resilience at times like this. It is helpful to remember that PIs are generally doing the best they can and want to submit the highest quality application possible. So, we can remember that even after all the framework and structure we put in place, the behavior and actions of our researchers are not within our control.

Rather than let frustration rule the day, we can draw on the resilience we’ve been building as research administrators. Avey, Luthans, and Jensen (2009) found that “resilient individuals are better equipped to deal with the stressors in a constantly changing workplace environment, as they are open to new experiences, are flexible to changing demands, and show more emotional stability when faced with adversity.” Despite the compressed timeline we often face around deadlines, we are responsible for doing the best job we can. When we demonstrate resilience in response to deadlines, our can-do spirit inspires those around us to do their best as well. This helps keep all parties focused on the larger goal of submitting grant proposals successfully.

Resilience is a perfect example of advanced Emotional Intelligence (EI). Your EI indicates how you intentionally handle your emotions in any given scenario and how you portray that to others. We are not always aware that we are being resilient. Often we are simply coping with the situation as it presents itself. Most of us are aware of the idiom, “service with a smile.” That’s what we do as research administrators. Good customer service, trust, and respect develop through interacting on a regular basis. We know that intentionally managing our emotions—no matter how crazy or surreal a situation may seem—presenting our best selves, is the most successful way to deal with these situations.

Research administrators need emotional resilience to get through those difficult conversations at work. You know the ones—the proposal is late, the budget is over the cap, or the sponsor isn’t responding. We enter these conversations with sensitivity, taking time to understand the other perspective, working toward resolution and keeping that (however tight lipped) smile on our faces. Emotional resilience isn’t easy and requires practice, but it can be learned.

Research administrators are survivors. We navigate through massive challenges: reorganizations, policy upheavals, submission snags, bad budgeting, difficult collaborators and complacent staff unwilling to communicate, to name a few. We have all gone through some form of reorganization, perhaps separating pre- from post-award. Talk about turmoil! Sometimes there are changes that feel threatening, such as reassignment of work to other departments and divisions. A pre-award research administrator may worry that his or her ability to meet immediate requests for proposal documentation gathering and rapid submission is in question. If there is no real understanding of why these changes are occurring or how they’ll work out, then our resilience may be more difficult to maintain. Thankfully we can receive generous support from colleagues and management reminding us to stand tall and strong, as things are bound to change again. Sure, we understand and remain very optimistic in our own abilities and purpose. But there still is the challenge and the choice before us—do we run away and get another job? Do we stay, with smiles on our faces demonstrating our value to the organization? We remind ourselves that change is simply a shift from what we used to know or do, to something new and potentially better. These kinds of challenges are opportunities to flex our resilience muscles, set new goals, and modify perspectives. Our ability to be resilient, meet these challenges head-on,
accept where we are in them, and make choices to move in a positive direction lead the way for current and future success.

The only constant across the research landscape is change. Movement in priorities at the federal sponsor level, swings in popular opinion toward research (and the associated allocation decisions), and working with emboldened industry partners, we are familiar with change. A resilient pre-award research administrator can see the changes, hear the pundits yelling “the sky is falling,” and still be an effective resource for our institutions and PIs. We can embrace the reality of change, not simply tolerate it, and certainly not allow ourselves to be surprised by it, but embrace and lean into the uncertainty.

Simultaneously, a resilient research administrator will keep an eye focused above the turmoil on the bigger picture, and keep the other eye steadfastly trained on their role and responsibility to facilitate research. We demonstrate resilience in the face of these challenges by staying focused on our role and executing it with professionalism and excellence.

Will we be frustrated at times? Will it seem like there is a disconnect between policy and practical reality? Yes! The landscape will shift under our feet no matter how hard we stomp down and demand consistency. The resilient research administrator will draw on his or her experience, will reach for the end goal, and then will turn toward the challenge and perform their responsibilities as best they can.

So how do we maintain, or better yet, build resilience? Remember what your purpose is, believe in yourself and your abilities, embrace the change, strengthen your relationships, nurture yourself, set realistic goals, stay optimistic, develop your skills and problem solving, and keep learning. No matter how complicated the research landscape is, what deadlines are looming, how many difficult conversations you must have, or how complicated the challenges that materialize in your organization’s pre-award environment are, the ability to be resilient will always lead the way to success.

References

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As research administration professionals, many of us can honestly say this is not what we planned to be when we grew up. In my role as a leader in research administration, I have an expectancy of fresh and innovative approaches to advance the profession. This expectancy is driven by the need to manage complex and ever-changing regulatory requirements to sustain a successful research enterprise. While specializing at an organizational level in developing new research administration infrastructures or enhancing existing ones, I am often tasked with seeking the best talent willing to help facilitate organizational change. With today's workplace changing at warp speed, not only am I continuously seeking new innovative ways to recruit, but I am also looking for bold new ways to promote the research administration profession.

In addition, I also serve as a board member and treasurer of a public STEM charter high school in southern California. Serving as a board member in the urban community is very important and rewarding to me. Though my duties as a board member are outside the office, they are not outside the scope of the research administration profession. There are multiple layers of similarities of responsibilities. In both roles, I share fiduciary responsibility, an obligation to uphold the public’s trust, and work to ensure students obtain the best education possible. Leading in both roles grants me the opportunity to give back to my community and help both organizations succeed while acting in the best interests of the institutions, students, and public.

The concept of Aim High: Career Exploration started several years ago when I was invited back to my high school during its homecoming celebration to talk to the 10th and 11th grade students about my profession. Just as many adults do not know what research administration is or what a research administrator does, the same thing applies to high school students but magnified. After asking the question to a room full of high school students, I could honestly hear the birds chirping outside the open classroom window. It was at this very moment I saw the need to get myself invited to as many career days as I possibly could in my local area. I realized in order for me to gain and keep their focus and attention, I needed to speak their language. This involved the recruitment of my three children. I needed to learn from them how to talk to the students in their language. This involved multiple sessions throughout the year with my children, learning the trending terminology or whatever happened to be the popular slang words at that time. It was a rewarding and great learning experience for me as well.

Atkinson and Pilgreen (2011) often refer to Research Administrators (RA) as transformational leaders (TL) and I consider myself to be one based on their findings:

TL is based on the following three assumptions: subordinates will band together around a person that inspires; leaders with a vision and passion can accomplish amazing things; and the way to accomplish great things is to interject vehemence and encouragement. It is not really leading if one does nothing, but it helps to define one’s actions (p. 45).
Everyone makes mistakes. It is part of the human experience. However, when we make mistakes at work they can have an impact on those around us and those that we are trying to serve. Mistakes can range from small and manageable to large and needing mitigation, but to be resilient we need to learn from them. There are three main steps in the learning process:

**Step 1**
The first step in the learning process is to admit that you made a mistake. Admitting when you have done something wrong can create feelings of shame, guilt, and fear, but it is the most important step in creating personal and organizational resilience. It shows integrity and that you are willing to be responsible for your actions. It also opens a pathway forward to fix what has been damaged, including your relationship with those affected by your mistake.

**Step 2**
The second step is to reflect and gather feedback. What circumstances led to the mistake? What could have been done differently? Get feedback from a supervisor, mentor, or other advisor about things you may have missed. Once you know why the mistake happened you can work on creating a plan for correcting it and for preventing it in the future.

**Step 3**
The third step is creating a prevention plan. How will you ensure that this does not happen again? What things are within your control? What processes need to be in place? Demonstrate to others that you have learned from your mistake and have a plan in place to prevent it from happening again.

Others are more willing to forgive mistakes if they know that you will own up to them, learn from them, and prevent them from happening again. Use these steps to think more strategically and intentionally about your performance and your role in the organization. Create regular feedback loops to keep yourself accountable, agile, and responsive. Not only will you become more resilient, but you will also become more effective.

As leaders in the research administration profession, always be inspired to do more while motivating others to join you in your journey. What we do does not stop at the end of the day when we leave our work space, because research administration is all around us. I may be biased when I say this, but we have the coolest jobs on the planet! Each and every one of us have great research stories we can share with young students, I am often asked the question “Can I earn a STEM degree and become a research administration professional?” I always eagerly respond A-B-S-O-L-U-T-E-L-Y! Now when I speak on career day, I can share a clearer educational path to becoming a research administrator.

In past years, I was often stumped when asked by students what the educational path is to enter into the profession. These questions came long before the Certified Research Administrator (CRA) credential, or a certificate in research administration was offered at various universities across the US, or even the graduate programs now being offered in research administration. When speaking to the STEM charter high school students, I am often asked the question “Can I earn a STEM degree and become a research administration professional?” I always eagerly respond A-B-S-O-L-U-T-E-L-Y! Now when I speak on career day, I can share a clearer educational path to becoming a research administrator.

**References**

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In his 2017 book, *Principles*, Ray Dalio, founder and co-chairman of Bridgewater Associates, shares the Principles that helped him create success in life and business. This book was the #1 New York Times bestseller and the #1 business book sold by Amazon in 2017. Over a period of forty years, Mr. Dalio created the largest and best performing hedge fund in the world, Bridgewater Associates, Inc. Though he achieved phenomenal success, along the way from start-up to his present achievements, he made many mistakes, some nearly catastrophic. His principles have evolved through the experience of learning from errors. Bridgewater manages what the investment community calls “OPM” (other people’s money). We, as research administrators, also manage OPM according to the terms and conditions set forth by the sponsor, the government, and our institutions. We seek to enhance the research enterprise through effective review, submission, management, oversight, compliance, accounting and reporting. Application of Dalio’s Principles can help us to be more resilient in the face of our many challenges, and to promote our profession at the same time.

Mr. Dalio describes Principles as fundamental truths that serve as the bases for behavior. Without them, he argues, we would be forced to react to all the things life throws at us as if we were experiencing each of them for the first time. In our profession, we can classify situations based on fundamentals of good administrative practice and create sound principles for dealing with them, thereby making better decisions more quickly. Dalio states that “having a good set of principles is like having a good collection of recipes for success.” While all of the many principles presented in the book apply to most business situations, we selected three key principles that were especially pertinent to research administration:

- **Embrace Reality and Deal with It**
- **Trust in Radical Truth and Radical Transparency**
- **Remember That the WHO is More Important than the WHAT**
Embrace Reality and Deal with It - As Dalio states, “an accurate understanding of reality is the essential foundation for any good outcome”. Logic, reason and common sense are your best tools for synthesizing reality and understanding what to do about it. His fundamental premise is that decision making needs to be evidence based and logical when groups of people are working together. We work closely with our sponsors and many other offices at our institution (e.g. Contract and Grant Accounting, Information Technology, Human Resources, Payroll, Budget, Procurement, Risk Management, and Institutional Advancement). Such collaboration must be based on a shared acceptance of reality achieved through openness, transparency and sharing of information. Failure to embrace reality leads to dissonance across the team and impedes individual and collective performance.

The key to begin to embrace reality is to set goals, identify and diagnose problems, and come up with solutions needed to accomplish each goal. This involves being open minded and transparent and taking ownership of the outcomes. Owning the outcomes, another phrase for accountability, is necessary at all levels of an organization. Incorporating others who are strong in areas you are not develops teamwork and collaboration and results in better outcomes.

Trust in Radical Truth and Radical Transparency - At Bridge-water, radical truth and transparency is likely taken much further than most of us could hope to take it at our institutions. While we may not have a culture where the most junior level staff member has the ability to question the Vice President for Research, we can, in our own offices and with our own staff, promote a culture of trust and transparency. This starts at the top—by exhibiting integrity in everything you say and do and demanding the same from your staff. Creating an environment where your staff members are encouraged to question your decisions and discuss pros and cons in a respectful manner leads to everyone learning the best way to accomplish shared goals. Dalio talks about the importance of having an open mind, realizing that you don’t always know the best way to do everything, not talking about others behind their backs, and being encouraged to question people openly and constructively.

If radical transparency is implemented well, it leads to what Dalio refers to as “meaningful relationships and meaningful work.” Since we spend so much of our time together at work, isn’t this really what we all wish for?

This trust and transparency in our research administration offices naturally carries over to our relationships with our PIs, our sponsors, and the other offices we deal with on campus. When everyone lays it all out on the table we all benefit from improved relationships and the proposal process or post award management goes much more smoothly.

Remember That the WHO is More Important than the WHAT - Getting the right people in the right roles in support of the goal is key for accomplishing what needs to be accomplished. We all know that some temperaments are ideal for the pressures of submitting a proposal under tight deadlines while others are better suited to handle financial issues or research compliance. The task of a leadership team is to identify those skill sets in order to maximize the impact. This may require some staff reassignment. The ability to be resilient and adaptable is critical because of the dynamic nature of research administration.
Since different people produce different outcomes based on differences in what they are like, Dalio states that whenever we create a team, we need to seek to “engineer” the right mix of attributes and people to achieve our goals. People have different ways of seeing and thinking which makes some individuals more suitable for certain jobs than others. Our team members may already have assigned duties. While we may not be able to “reengineer” our hiring, we can reengineer our working unit to maximize skill sets for the betterment of the whole. People are happiest when they are learning, improving, producing, and doing things that suit them naturally. For supervisors, learning your employee’s weaknesses are just as important as learning their strengths. Dalio recommends that we view our teams the way sports managers do: no one person possesses everything required for success yet everyone must excel together. Have you ever looked at a rainbow? No one color is as beautiful alone as is the beauty of all of the colors together.

Mr. Dalio states that we need to “Create a culture in which it is OK to make mistakes and it is unacceptable not to learn from them”. He is convinced that we learn much more from our mistakes than from our successes. Think about it: can we all remember that major mistake we made that we vowed to never repeat? Can we remember the success of last week as well as that mistake? When a new employee makes a mistake, the supervisor must determine the root cause for the error. Is it a lack of training, unrealistic expectations, or impossible deadlines for someone so new to the field? Mistakes are inevitable; it’s important to recognize and accept this fact—but every mistake teaches something when staff are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and those of their colleagues in a genuinely open and transparent environment.

Mr. Dalio emphasizes that commitments people make to each other need to be explicit to be actionable. They need to be firm enough to hold each other accountable. For example, meeting notes or an email which summarize action items following a meeting are key to helping people understand who requested what and who will be providing the conclusive items in the future.

Although some parts of “Principles” may be hard to incorporate inside large bureaucracies, Mr. Dalio’s larger message about self-reflection is relevant to all. Applying these principles can help us cope with constant change and develop our own pathways to manage the change process.

References

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What is Dimensions?
A research information platform like no other, Dimensions links research outputs, including articles, clinical trials, patents and policy documents, to grants and funding information, providing an overview of the entire research process, from funding to publication.

Publications and citations are free for everybody to access. Paid for versions Dimensions Plus and Dimensions Analytics provide more powerful tools for researchers, administrators, institutions, publishers and research funders.

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Research information and grants databases are familiar tools for researchers. But a plethora of different platforms has led to information becoming siloed or trapped behind paywalls. Dimensions aims to break down barriers between different types of information that is vital for the research community, especially grants and funding at the beginning of the research process, and research outputs at the end.

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Digital Science is a portfolio of companies with different skills and a combined passion for creating new digital spaces that open up the research process. Developers from figshare, UberResearch, Altmetric, Symplectic, Digital Science Consultancy and ReadCube, created the platform. They were guided by input from over a hundred external development program partners. Participants came from organizations and institutions with very different perspectives on the research process and were able to provide real world examples of situations where the platform would be most useful, from demonstrating research impact at key points in the funding cycle, to deciding which grants were the best fit for a mid-sized university.

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Research administration in the Arab World requires navigating a different set of challenges than our colleagues in the West. We undoubtedly have to maintain resiliency in our daily work, but also a sense of dynamism to cope with an environment that is in flux due to the developing nature of the research infrastructure in the region. While the oldest continually operating educational institution is in fact located in the Arab country of Morocco (University of Karueein, since 859 AD (Guinness World Records, 2018)), many of the universities in the region are much younger. In fact, up until the middle of the 20th century, the Arab World only contained approximately 20 universities (Abu-Orabi, 2016, pgs. 11-12). It is now estimated that there are over 1,000 institutions of higher education across the region (Ranking Web of Universities, 2018). The increased proliferation of private institutions of higher education in the last 40 years fuels a considerable portion of the recent growth (Al Fanar Media, 2018). International branch campuses of Western universities have also contributed to the educational landscape and have become increasingly ubiquitous especially in the Arabian Peninsula.

Despite the rapid increase in the number of universities, the region has considerable room for growth when it comes to research investment and output. The Arab World overall spends about 0.3% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on research and development, compared
with a global figure of 1.7% and 2.4% for Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (UNESCO, 2015, pgs., 25-26). In 2016, the region produced about 2.4% of the world’s scientific publications, whereas it makes up 5.5% of the world’s population (Scopus Scientific Journal Rank, 2017; The World Bank, 2018).

We work at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI), a nascent research institution in Qatar that opened its doors to the first cohort of graduate students in October 2015. The DI was established on the premise of providing an impactful Arab contribution to global research and knowledge production, and our Research and Grants Department is at the center of facilitating the attainment of this goal. Operating within the context described above presents a unique set of challenges for us as research administrators. In this article, we will outline some of these challenges and describe how we deal with them. While our description is derived from our own personal experience, we argue that many of these challenges apply to research administrators in the region in general.

The relative young age of our research institutions means we do not have a long tradition of research administration to draw upon in order to implement the relevant support systems, processes and procedures. On many occasions, research administrators in homegrown institutions have to “learn on the job” in the most literal sense and figure out, relatively unguided, the best practices taking into consideration the specificities of the local context. Helping develop a process or policy at the foundational level is certainly an exciting aspect of our job, but sometimes we must also cope with the added pressure of being one’s own guide. Nonetheless, we relish the opportunities to share these self-learned lessons in order to further the profession of research administration in the region.

The Arab World faces many hurdles (UNESCO, 2015, Second revised edition 2016, p. 438) that slow down research infrastructure development and while tackling these hurdles requires strategic initiatives at the policy level, the role of research administrators is crucial in mitigating them. For example, many of the research institutions in the Arabian Peninsula recruit qualified and experienced faculty from countries all over the world to make up for local capacity shortfalls. The mix of transient backgrounds and nationalities makes the critical goal of establishing an indigenous research culture and enabling environment more difficult to attain. Clearly communicating and applying research policies and procedures is more challenging in this context, and our administrative facilitation role has the additional responsibility of bridging the cultural and communication gaps between researchers both inside our institutions and with external collaborators.

In an effort to attain international recognition for their research and to enhance collaboration with international partners, many of the institutions in the region partially or wholly adopt research policies and regulations primarily developed in the West. Research administrators must communicate these policies to staff, faculty and students and implement them in the local context. This can be a challenging prospect, as it often means dealing with issues of cultural unfamiliarity and language barriers. A prime example of this pertains to human subject research ethics. Applying Western notions of ethics to a part of the world that possesses different cultural, social and religious values is a difficult task. Because of this, we often have to deliver additional trainings and provide supplemental information. The second challenge is communicating English policies and guidelines to a non-English speaking audience. It is crucial to relay the correct message when translating research ethics policies and concepts. This is a laborious endeavor in itself and often times requires some iteration.

The challenges to research administration in the Arab World are numerous and expected for a region undergoing rapid growth and ongoing development. Exhibiting resilience is undoubtedly necessary in order to succeed in this environment. As research administrators in the Arab World contribute to our field at a foundational level, they engage in an immensely rewarding experience. We look forward to a mutually beneficial conversation with our peers in the NCURA network about this topic.

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It is now estimated there are over 1,000 institutions of higher education across the region.
“TODAY IS GOING TO BE A REALLY GOOD DAY”, you tell yourself as you leave home and start the daily commute to work for another wonderful day in research administration. As you arrive and walk into your office you quickly learn there has been an unexpected crisis and all of the fresh anticipations you had planned for the day just went up into a puff of smoke. This describes the typical day of balancing the challenging workload and hectic demands of research administration.

As a research administrator, learning the art of resilience is a key attribute to obtaining and maintaining success in the profession. Mastering the obstacles of the profession will help advance your knowledge and enhance your skill set. For research administrators with responsibilities in clinical and basic science, the days can be overwhelming as each area has unique challenges. Administrators should plan, create strategies, and set goals daily, monthly and yearly for themselves and their staff. If possible, allot some time each day for unexpected deadlines, last minute requests and interruptions. When you leave a few openings in your daily schedule, you are better able to balance the day in a productive manner. Avoid being overworked and overwhelmed by delegating or creating a team project to divide assignments.

Many of us realize that working in research administration can, at times, be stressful. Stress can lead to staff and self-burnout. Being patient with yourself and others is an effective way to manage stress. In addition, research administrators should garner effective communication skills that will aid in managing stress. These skills will also aid with managing staff burnout which leads to turnover. The challenge of effectively managing staff to reduce personnel turnover is another important consideration in research administration management. Some basic principles in avoiding employee turnover are to improve relationships through coaching,
mentoring and soliciting employee feedback. The art of being proactive to eliminate a potential employee crisis is a win-win for everyone.

Another important job of the research administrator is learning how to balance the requests of principal investigators with the requirements of institutional, state and federal agencies. This is doubled for research administrators whose responsibilities include clinical and basic science. The demands of clinic operations, maintaining and meeting budgetary requirements, grant deadlines, burdensome but necessary regulations, essential policies and procedures challenge research administrators on a daily basis. Research administrators learn to develop partnerships within their area and across the organization. This skill is vital to ensure the success and perseverance of these important individuals. They are the life line of many organizations.

In addition to daily operations and maintaining staff morale, research administrators must be able to manage their supervisors; managing up is an important part of each day. Many administrators find that their supervisor is very skilled at leading and organizing projects and responsibilities, but understanding the federal, state and local regulations and requirements is missing. These regulations and requirements are the foundation of this profession and must be adhered to. Administrators in these situations continuously inform their supervisor as well as staff of these essential items.

How does one persevere through the constant demands of the profession? While not always simple, developing a detailed strategy and working to achieve the goals of the strategy should be your aim. As an example, your goals could be as follows:

- Work to hire the best staff;
- Educate yourself on how to retain the top staff;
- Develop partnerships within your domain and at the central office level;
- Manage your time properly to maximize your day;
- Embrace the team approach for shared responsibilities; and
- Be proactive in avoiding crisis to reduce stress.

A good research administrator adapts the attitude of saying that “I can” when the situation presented says you can’t. After all, being a research administrator is a very important and prestigious position. You bring stability to many individuals and daily tasks. Keep your mind open, chin up and always be ready for change.

Arlene Hogan has worked in research administration for over 10 years primarily supporting post-award, pre-award and research finance areas. She is currently the Sr. Administrative Manager at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, Texas. She can be reached at Arlene.P.Hogan@uth.tmc.edu
The Maltese physician, Edward de Bono, once said that “perception is real even when it is not reality.” In research, any perception of impropriety can taint the results of the research and ruin an investigator or an institution. This is especially important when considering the impact of a potential conflict of interest (COI). While tangible conflicts of interests, such as financial conflicts, are readily identifiable, other conflicts are less obvious yet just as important. Webster’s Dictionary defines conflict of interest as “a conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust.” In the research realm, a COI exists when there is the possibility that private interests of the investigator may bias the results of the investigator’s professional research, destroying the trust placed in the research to produce valid, untainted results.

A COI is not intrinsically bad (just because the potential for bias exists) and does not mean that the research is flawed. On the other hand, even the perception of a conflict can damage the trust placed in an investigator. Any conflict not appropriately handled can have lasting implications for an investigator or an institution and can damage trust between colleagues, tarnish a reputation, and destroy public faith.

Recent years have seen a shift in research funding sources, especially with industry sponsorship becoming increasingly more common. In addition, investigators often hold patents and profit from their discoveries. Industries have taken a great interest in sponsoring research, leading to the eventual development of a marketable product. This increase in the commercialization of research brings a higher risk of outside influence on investigators as industry sponsors seek a favorable outcome. An investigator offered a financial incentive, such as a consulting fee, equity in a company, or other monetary reward may be unconsciously swayed to produce a certain result. Prior to the Bayh-Dole Act in 1980, the government held all patents to discoveries from federally funded research. This act strengthened the commercialism of research by allowing investigators to patent their discoveries and take an active interest in private applications of their work. While arguably a great benefit to the institutions and investigators, this also increased the odds of investigators having a financial interest in their research endeavors.

Investigators should be cautioned to avoid any perception of bias when there is a COI.

However, these blatant financial conflicts are not the only threat to the purity of the research. Other conflicts, such as intellectual bias, are less tangible and more difficult to quantify. These results could be biased by an investigators’ quest for recognition, causing them to rush to publication. They may take less care in selecting subjects or following safeguards in their attempt to publish quickly. Professional judgment could even be clouded by an investigator’s social or political views, unconsciously causing them to favor a particular outcome. Investigators should make every effort to eliminate or reduce these potential biases, reducing the risk of any perception of impropriety or ethical conflict. These perceptions have the potential to derail a study, no matter how scientifically valid and must be given the same consideration as blatant financial conflicts.

The potential for profit notwithstanding, the ultimate objective of clinical research is to bring something of benefit to society. Through research, knowledge is advanced and cures and treatments are developed and brought to the public. However, research creates a relationship between a scientist and the public built on trust and integrity. The public trusts that investigators are seeking knowledge without compromise and that the treatments and findings presented are based on pure results, untainted by an investigator’s personal bias. Without this bond of trust between the consumer (the public) and the provider (the scientist), the future of science is at risk.

Managing perception is the key to managing COI; even if the COI does not bias the investigator, it should be carefully managed to avoid the perception of influence on the research. 

Lauren Koehler is a Clinical Research Coordinator in the department of Emergency Medicine at Wake Forest Baptist Health. She is currently a graduate student at Emmanuel College in the Masters of Management Science with a specialization in Research Administration program. She can be reached at lekoehle@wakehealth.edu
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At the Region I Spring Meeting, *Research Adventures: Mapping Your Pathway to Success* we mapped our own pathways to a huge success! Held April 29th through May 2nd at the Sheraton Harborside in Portsmouth, NH, the meeting boasted two keynote speakers: Dr. Larry Mayer, University of New Hampshire and Dawn Kaiser, Certified HR professional and author. An abundance of learning was offered over 6 tracks including Pre-Award, Post-Award, Compliance, Hospital/Clinical, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUI), and Leadership: Development & Assessment. In addition, many networking opportunities were provided including Escape Rooms, dining, a scavenger hunt, a newcomer’s reception, Trivia games, and fitness activities. Many thanks to co-chairs Donna Smith and Heather Dominey and the entire program committee for their efforts in planning another amazing spring meeting! I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the many volunteers who helped during the meeting. Whether you were a presenter, a “techie”, or helped at the registration desk, the meeting would not have been the success it was without your help. THANK YOU!

Volunteers are what make our region run. We are always looking for help with sessions, registration, and other special projects. To help us better connect available projects with volunteers, our region is creating a database of members who possess skills or talents they are willing to share when needed to assist with regional events. Skills and talents include: database management, website design, social media savviness, graphic design, artists, program designers, speakers, or just about any other skill you may possess. The goal of this project is to have a source of talented volunteers that we can tap into when the need arises. An email announcement and update on our web page are coming soon with more information about this exciting project!

Looking forward, the Curriculum Committee, chaired by Laurel Donnell-Fink, has been hard at work planning for our workshop and RADG offerings in the fall. If you are new to the field of Research Administration, watch for our Essentials of Research Administration workshop to be offered this fall. Advanced Topics in Research Administration will also be offered for those looking for a more in-depth course. A special Night of Networking is also being planned for the fall.

Nominations for regional leadership roles (Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer) are now open. Please consider volunteering your time and talents to the region by serving in one of these very important roles.

Finally, if you are attending the National Annual meeting in August in Washington, DC, make sure to visit Region I friends in the Netzone. We hope to see you there!

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

The Region II planning committee headed up by Charlene Bohn are actively working on our next regional meeting. Charlene and Adam Greenberg have pulled together a great program committee and we are excited about this upcoming meeting. Just in case you haven’t heard, we are headed to the Ogleby Resort in Wheeling, West Virginia on October 20-23, 2018. I am quite sure that if you want to volunteer at this meeting, Charlene will be glad to work with you on getting a role within this fall meeting. Please contact Charlene Bohn at bohncm@rwjmsshawnee.edu.

The draft program for this meeting should be out on the Region II meeting website, but if not, it will be soon. So get your travel plans together and meet up with us in West Virginia.

Our region is continuing to expand in more ways to provide our regional members with opportunities to learn, network and become involved in our Region. There are two things I would like to bring to your attention. The first is that our Region II Professional Development Committee is working on 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! If you want a workshop to come to your area or are 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!

The second opportunity is our newest initiative in reaching out to our regional members. Charles Bartunek, Chair-elect, has been actively recruiting representative leaders within geographical locales throughout our region. We are hoping that this will bring about networking opportunities such as happy hours, professional development trainings or even creating an ad-hoc mentor listing. Who doesn’t love a happy hour to talk research administration? Please reach out to Charles to find out who your local NCURA Regional II representative is or how you can become involved.

Our Cheryl-Lee Howard Mentor-Me program is going strong and we know that this program not only adds to the mentees professional lives but creates another avenue of volunteering and understanding of what NCURA is all about. We look forward to hearing the presentations given by the mentees at the fall meeting and seeing them grow in NCURA Region II.

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

Dennis Paffrath, MBA, 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@umd.edu
Successful Spring Meeting
Thanks to the work of the Region III Program Committee, more than 70 workshops, concurrent sessions and discussion groups offered an array of information for attendees to add to their research administrator’s toolkit. We appreciate Program Chair Justo Torres as well as the other members of the committee including Tuyen Phan, Laura Letbetter, Kay Gilstrap, Leigh Stephens, Jeanne Hermann-Petrin, Emily Devereux, Laneika Musalini, Tanta Myles, Kathleen Halley-Octa, Tanya Blackwell, and Stacey Wade.

Volunteers are integral to the success of the Regional Spring Meeting, and we thank all the members who contributed their time and talent to the meeting this year. Special thanks to Volunteer Coordinator Bruxanne Hein and team for organizing and recruiting a great team of volunteers.

We would also like to give a special thanks to Kay Gilstrap, whose tenure within the Region III Executive Committee has spanned over five years where she has been a Treasurer, Chair and Immediate Past Chair. Like all of those before her, she did a great job and set the groundwork for those to follow.

Congratulations
Congratulations to Rodney Granec (University of West Alabama) for being selected for the 2018 ARMS-NCURA Global Fellowship! The Fellowship allows Rodney to travel to the University of Western Australia for enhancing global research collaboration and mutual learning.

R3 RAMP
We would also like to recognize our newest committee, R3 RAMP (Research Administrator Mentoring Program), for all the hard work they have put in over the past months to get the program put together, a curriculum developed and implemented. A special thanks to Jaime Petrasek (VCU) and Erin Blackwell (UCF) for working as Co-Coordinators and the rest of the team: Marie Penn (University of Tennessee), Amie Canm (Liberty University), Rashonda Harris (Emory University), Michael Dickman (Duke University), Stacey Ann Wade (University of Tennessee), Heather Lennon (VCU) and Erin Nocon (VCU).

We look forward to seeing everyone in Washington, DC at the Annual Meeting, August 5-8, 2018. Until then, keep up with the latest regional news by connecting with your Region (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and our website) and be on the look-out every third Thursday for your Region III e-blast!

Steve Koogler, MBA, is Chair of Region III and serves as Assistant Director, Office of Research and Commercialization, at the University of Central Florida. He can be reached at Steven.Koogler@ucf.edu
Now that we are in May and June 2018, we have completed our Regional meeting and are looking toward the Annual meeting where we will be celebrating 60 years of NCURA. I have such fond memories of the 50th and I know we are in for something special this year.

Time keeps moving forward and I am so pleased to pass the torch of regional leadership onto Michael Castilleja, who has taken over as Region V chair. He has spent his year focusing on the regional meeting in San Marcos and I want to thank him for all the hard work. Our digital scrapbook should be ready for 2018 soon, so don’t forget to send in your San Marcos photos.

It may not be visible to all of our members, but Michael has worked diligently to help bring Region 5 up to speed with modern technology. Region V members should notice that the website has been updated with the help of Gabe Cavazos (University of Texas at Dallas) and the executive committee for the region have begun to use online forms, surveys and social media in an effective manner to collect guidance and feedback from our users. Let us know your thoughts!

Now that we have our new leaders, I want to thank the nomination committee for this last year. Picking a slate of candidates for NCURA regional leadership is an important task, and one that should not be taken lightly. Thank you for your hard work.

Amanda Boone — UT Dallas
Jill Coronado — Texas Tech University
Roxanne S. Parks — Lamar University
Hollie Schreiber (Ex Officio) — Oklahoma State University
Thomas Spencer — UT Southwestern
Jamie Wilson — UT Southwestern

One final note, Dr. Tonya Pinkerton, our current secretary is leaving Region 5 for Region 2. She is taking the position of Director of Grants Accounting at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY. We wish her the best, and Region 2, you are getting an amazing new member.

As I leave my role as Chair, I remain a proud member of Region 5 and I am looking forward to seeing what Michael can do for us.

Thank you so very much to the members of Region 5. You make NCURA wonderful.

Thomas R. Spencer, PhD, MBA, is the Assistant Vice President for Operations & Compliance for Academic and Administrative Information Resources at UT Southwestern Medical Center. He can be reached at Thomas.Spencer@UTSouthwestern.edu

As an update for our Region's ongoing activities, our professional development and leadership-mentoring program, LeadMe, is well underway for the 2018 year. For those who may not be familiar, the program, now entering its ninth year, pairs each Mentee with a Primary Mentor who serves as the main contact to assist in identifying leadership and professional development goals and objectives, and helps the Mentee formulate their own Leadership and/or Professional Development (L&P) Plan. The L&P Plan also includes the identification of a Personal Best Leadership Project, which typically aligns with some situation or issue that the Mentee, under the program, can come up with a plan to improve, streamline, and/or optimize at their home institution. The project is crafted and executed through the implementation of the five practices and ten commitments of successful leaders, from the book “The Leadership Challenge,” by James Kouzes and Barry Posner. Also, as part of the program, the Mentees read and discuss each chapter of The Leadership Challenge as a group through scheduled conference calls with Program Mentors, Mentors-In-Training, and Program Chairs, as they work to formulate, finalize, and implement their Personal Best Leadership Project.

The LeadMe Program is being chaired this year by Derick Jones, Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute, and Nancy Lewis, University of California, Irvine. Samantha Westcott, California Institute of Technology, a recent Mentor, is conducting program evaluation for the current year. Former LeadMe Program Chair Matthew Kirk, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, has rotated off to serve as Chair of the Region VI Education & Professional Development Committee.

The 2018 LeadMe Program Mentors are Theresa Caban, Kaiser Permanente; Tolise Dailey, University of Colorado – Boulder; Rashonda Harris, Emory University; Manilyn Matum, University of California, Irvine; David Scarbeary-Simmons, University of California, San Francisco; and Randi Wasik, Washington State University.

The 2018 LeadMe Program Mentees are Erika Garcia, California Institute of Technology; Sarah Martonick, University of Idaho; Claire O’Neill, Portland State University; Akilah Pruitt, University of California, Irvine; Saima Qureshi, University of California, San Francisco; and April Walter-Brown, Charles Drew University.

The 2018 MINTs (Mentors-In-Training) are Lisa Anaya, Colorado State University; Brigidann Cooper, Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute; and Grace Park, University of California, Irvine.

The Mentees will present the results of their leadership projects at the Region VI/VII Meeting in Billings, Montana this October.

More information about the LeadMe Program can be found at https://ncuraregionvi.org/leadme.aspx

Kevin Stewart is the Chair of Region VI and serves as Associate Dean, Industry Contracts at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He can be reached at stewart@tia.ucsb.edu
The Region VII leadership, along with our counterparts in Region VI, are stepping up the pace of preparations for the Region VI/VII Regional Conference. The conference will be held October 7-10 at the Billings Doubletree in Billings, Montana.

Billings is billed as Montana’s Trailhead. With a “walkability score” of 84, Billings lays claim to excellent shopping, award-winning dining, Montana’s only walkable brewery district and a variety of historical, art and culturally oriented attractions. Visit a museum or a gallery. Head outdoors on a beautiful bike path. Go horseback riding. Hit the walking trails, take a hike (literally!), pamper yourself with a spa visit, or enjoy a variety of food offerings from local restaurants.

We have a special evening planned at the historic Billings Depot, a compound of restored buildings, including the original passenger depot, within an easy walking distance of the Doubletree (www.billingsdepot.org/history-depot). We have some great activities planned for this event. More about this at a later date…

By the time you read this article, our Call for Proposals will have been released and we will be engaged in the process of setting up the very best educational offerings for the conference. We look forward to seeing you all in Billings!

Deborah Shaver, CRA, is Chair of Region VII and is the Director, Office of Sponsored Programs at University of Idaho. She can be reached at dshaver@uidaho.edu

In this article we would like to highlight the benefits of volunteering with an example from one of our members. Fadia Homeidan is the Volunteer Coordinator of Region VIII and was recently on the program committee for FRA meeting. Along with Eva Bjorndal from the Karolinska Institutet they were responsible for the global track:

Region VIII was strongly represented in the most recent FRA 2018 meeting held in sunny Orlando, Florida between March 5th and 7th. The global track included 16 sessions and discussion groups, relevant to both US participants and our international membership. We are grateful to the discussion group moderators and session presenters who travelled from across the world to share their expertise and experiences. The global track focused on many relevant subjects including: Challenges in International Contracts and International Project Management, Challenges in Projects Implemented in War Zones, Audits, Time & Effort Reporting, Federal Guidelines Applicable to International Recipients, EU vs US Costing Practices, and additionally, a session on Horizon 2020 for US participants.

This meeting provided an opportunity to network with research administration professionals from the US and the rest of the world. Thirty research administration professionals and members of the international Region VIII attended the FRA meeting, all of whom work in institutions of different types and sizes, and who experience a variety of challenges in their day-to-day work. They enriched the sessions with innovative solutions to many of the challenges we regularly face in international research management, offered insight and tricks and tips on how to navigate cultural differences between global collaborators and provided different perspectives to research administration. Discussions of this nature highlight the importance of global partnership and teamwork and underscore the importance of NCURA conferences to advance research administration at the global level.

Preparations for the upcoming NCURA annual meeting in Washington, DC scheduled August 5th-8th, 2018, are already underway. Stay tuned for more information. We hope that a large number of Region VIII members will attend the annual meeting. We look forward to welcoming you in Washington, DC.

Fadia Homeidan is the Volunteer Coordinator of Region VIII and serves as the Director, Office of Grants and Contracts at the American University of Beirut. She can be reached at fh01@aub.edu.lb
Out of their Shells: Researchers’ Turtle Program Helps Shy Kids Connect

By Chris Carroll

Start with a room full of cars, stuffed animals, books, dolls, action figures, robots, building blocks and balloons, and then send in a group of preschoolers.

Everything you might expect—relentless exploration, high-pitched chatter, a chase, maybe a dispute over a coveted electronic dog—is the opposite of what’s happening in a playroom in the Benjamin Building. Like magnets repelling each other, the 4- and 5-year-olds move apart to play solo, periodically glancing warily at the others.

While practically everyone experiences shyness sometimes, it’s so painfully pronounced in these children that they’re at elevated risk of becoming isolated, suffering from low self-esteem and developing anxiety disorders later, according to previous research at the University of Maryland and elsewhere.

That’s why they’re on campus on a Sunday in October participating in the Turtle Program, an eight-week early intervention developed at UMD to help shy children come out of their shells. Its point isn’t to create social butterflies, says Andrea Chronis-Tuscano, a professor of psychology and developer of the program, but children unafraid to join a team, raise their hands in class or participate at show-and-tell.

“With children who are shy, there are many reasons why they might not want to talk to their peers,” she says. “That could be crucial, because parents seem to play such a big role in either deepening children’s inhibitions or helping to overcome them.

“Maybe their parents don’t enroll them in sports … or take them to a birthday party,” says Chronis-Tuscano. “They see others having fun with each other while their child is sitting under the table holding onto their leg. Over time, they step in and protect their children more and more because, naturally, they don’t like seeing them distressed.”

A $3.1 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health is funding a study, led by Chronis-Tuscano and Rubin, comparing the Turtle Program to Cool Little Kids, an early intervention for shyness used worldwide that doesn’t include coaching.

In a preliminary study of the Turtle Program, parents and teachers reported improvement in the children who participated, and parents were observed becoming more positively responsive to their children. If the current, large-scale study establishes its validity, the program would likely become an international standard.

During one session in the fall, the effort to break the cycle of shyness plays out in three rooms:

In the playroom, several University of Maryland students teach social skills and facilitate child-directed group play. In another room, a parent sits with her daughter as the child picks up different toys. The mother wears an earpiece, and a doctoral student therapist observes and provides guidance. “Excellent labeled praise!” she tells the mother, who’s been instructed to avoid commands, criticisms and questions, but to provide plenty of praise and positive commentary on behavior she wants to see more of.

In the final room, other parents watch the pair on closed-circuit TV—they’ll all take turns in the spotlight—and discuss each other’s performances with Christina Danko, an assistant research professor of psychology who’s facilitating today’s session. The point of the training, she says later, is to teach parents how to encourage children to navigate anxiety-producing social situations. Next week, she tells the group, their homework is to praise any interactions their kids have at the store, the playground or elsewhere.

“Any kind of approach behavior from your children you can pay attention to—that’s going to be so powerful for them,” she says. A Germantown father who asked that his name not be used said he might have been misinterpreting his 4-year-old daughter’s behavior around adults she doesn’t know well.

“I guess I thought she was unapologetic if she didn’t have the time for someone she didn’t want to talk to,” he said. “I feel like I’m more cognizant of what’s going on now—that she is uncomfortable and impeded in these interactions. I just want her to be okay.”

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NCURA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NATIONAL TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
Departmental Research Administration Workshop
May 21-23, 2018 ......................................................... Philadelphia, PA
Financial Research Administration Workshop
May 21-23, 2018 ......................................................... Philadelphia, PA
Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
May 21-23, 2018 ......................................................... Philadelphia, PA
Senior Level Workshop: Research Administration – The Practical Side of Leadership
May 22-24, 2018 ......................................................... Hollywood, FL

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

REGIONAL MEETINGS
Region II – Mid-Atlantic
October 20-23, 2018 ......................................................... Wheeling, WV
Regions VI/VII – Rocky Mountain/Western
October 7-10, 2018 ......................................................... Billings, MT

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UPCOMING WEBINAR
NSF Grant Awards and Cash Management Processes and Procedures
May 15, 2018 ......................................................... 2:00-3:30 pm ET

DEADLINES FOR AUGUST 2018
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors ................. June 1, 2018
Submission of Advertisements .................................... June 6, 2018

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