Adapting to a Changing Environment

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The theme for this month’s NCURA Magazine is “Adapting to a Changing Environment.” Adapting is one of our greatest strengths as professionals. Adapting with the input of others gives us a sense of inclusion, connection and community. Within our profession of research administration, our work, ideas and actions have the ability to affect our departments, institutions and the world around us in profound ways. There is no community where this is truer than in the research community.

This past year has been one of change both personally and professionally so the need to adapt and to reinvent has been paramount. Many institutions are in the process of preparing and shaping what the “new normal” is going to look like. My hope is that we all will emerge stronger because we are not simply returning to the old ways of doing business but we are creating an opportunity to reconnect, rethink, reengage and reimagine our workplace and our priorities.

There have been several Presidential charges on a number of initiatives:

- Regional Assessment of Professional Development Offerings (RAPID) was chaired by Michelle Vazin with representation from each of our regions. The task force was charged with reviewing and assessing that NCURA’s regions are aligned with the National PDC and FMC in relation to the recruitment, selection and remuneration of trainers/faculty. The task force had several recommendations and the recommendation will be shared with each of the region’s leadership.

- The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (NLDC) led by Denise Moody was charged with integration of the Empowering Members by Engaging Resources and Growing Excellence (EMERGE) Program into NLDC. The purpose of the EMERGE program is to provide a conduit for NCURA volunteers to have equitable access to develop as inclusive leaders within NCURA. Equitable transparency and access to opportunities within NCURA are the foundation of the program, which is built upon NCURA’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. The EMERGE pilot program will take place January through June 2022.

- The NLDC was charged with bringing forward to the Board of Directors an NCURA award in the name of our late president Robert C. Andresen and considering either a new award or renaming an existing NCURA award in Bob’s name. As a result of the hard work of the NLDC the renaming of the “Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award” to the “Robert C. Andresen Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award.” In addition, the “Gold Award” will be bestowed posthumously to Bob during the 63rd Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The award recognizes “an individual who has made a sustained and distinctive contribution to the vitality and enduring legacy of NCURA.” Bob’s family will be there to accept in person.

- Strategic Plan Task Force was chaired by Shannon Sutton with representation from the Board of Directors. Their charge was to perform a preliminary assessment of high priorities within the plan and identify appropriate topics for next steps.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Standing Committee chaired by Marianne Rinaldo Woods is currently reviewing the data from NCURA’s Climate Survey. There will be an update on the results at the 63rd Annual Meeting during the business meeting and in the next issue of NCURA Magazine.

In the meantime, I’m looking forward to reconnecting with many of you at the annual meeting later this month.

In gratitude,
Rosie

Rosemary Madnick is the 2021 NCURA President and serves as Executive Director, Office of Grants and Contracts Administration at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She can be reached at rmadnick@alaska.edu.
Academia is filled with buzzwords and research is no exception. The pandemic brought on a string of popular phrases, but one that stands out, is flexible. Be flexible.

At first, it was unclear what flexible meant in the pandemic context, not in terms of the definition, but how the word was applicable to work. The world learned it had a different meaning to different people. It could mean flexible hours for caregivers, taking time off to help children with e-learning in the morning, and responding to e-mails well into the evening. For some, it meant performing work several states and time zones away so they could quarantine with family. For supervisors, it meant balancing the different availabilities of employees while respecting their work-life balance. The interpretation of the word flexible... is well, flexible.

As society continues to adapt to a post-pandemic world, flexibility is here to stay (Starner, 2020). The benefits of a flexible culture can blend into all aspects of a job, including compliance. Research compliance is filled with due dates, complex regulations, and specific laws. How can compliance professionals be flexible when there are specific standards in place?

In some cases, we cannot. If the federal regulators are not flexible with due dates or requirements, we must follow their timelines and policies. However, anyone who has attended a session on the responsible conduct of research (RCR) will tell you that not everything is black and white. There is some for flexibility and it is in our best interest to embrace it.

At Northern Illinois University (NIU) we offer an RCR forum series. This is a voluntary program where students must attend seven of the ten sessions offered during a two-year period. After each session, they must interact with the presenter on a message board about the topic. If they complete these two requirements, their transcript will be notated “RCR Certified” upon graduation.

Because of the pandemic, like everyone else, we switched from in-person to virtual sessions. We were prepared because pre-pandemic it was a hybrid model but we were still worried about attendance. To our surprise, we saw an increase of 37% (NIU – ORCIS, 2021).

Our delivery method was not the only way we were able to show flexibility. A graduate student attendee of the RCR forum was one session shy and finishing their degree. The student reached out to ask for assistance, and we offered them resources on the missed topic. The student read the materials and returned them with a paper demonstrating gained knowledge. The flexibility we have built into our policy allows us to make these decisions on a case-by-case basis that benefit students directly and will lead to a stronger researcher.

Beyond this, we have had to think more flexibly about promoting the RCR certification and other training opportunities across campus. Posting a paper announcement on a bulletin board is no longer a strong advertising campaign. Likewise, students do not check e-mails as often as one would hope. We needed to think of innovative ways to advertise the forum series and a graduate student course we offer on laboratory safety. Word of mouth is not going to cut it in a digital world.

In addressing recruitment concerns during the pandemic, we were flexible and open to all ideas. Our graduate school invited us to record a podcast promoting the series and course. After the recording, we learned that students enjoy the short format of podcasts and listen frequently. This resulted in our office agreeing to record on other topics, including research misconduct and foreign influence. Being flexible about advertising led to new avenues of educating the research community. We are excited to use what we have learned to expand the educational content that we provide. Compliance professionals are probably more familiar with flexibility than they realize. When the government changes a regulation, we are quick to act - attending webinars, voicing concerns, and understanding the new law. Five years ago, most people had never heard the term foreign influence, and now it is common vernacular in compliance circles. The same could be said about controlled unclassified information, 117 reporting, or the New Common Rule. We have flexed with the changes and will continue to do so when the need arises. We should embrace that flexibility and apply it wherever we are able.

References


Shannon Stoker, JD, serves as the director of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at Northern Illinois University. She is responsible for export control regulations, conflicts of interests, responsible conduct of research, research misconduct, and data management. Her office oversees the IRB, IACUC, IBC, and laboratory safety. She is a member of the Association of Research Integrity Officers (ARIO) and the Association of University Export Control Officers. She can be reached at SStoker@niu.edu.
n the world of research, change is constant. As managers, with an objective to do more with less, we are urged to find and create efficiencies. We empathize with colleagues as they update policies and change software systems, and we watch closely to learn from others’ experiences. The onset of COVID generated global change, impacting everything. As universities begin to open back up, we are faced with the reality that life, and work, won’t necessarily return to the prior norm.

In the field of clinical research, changes during the pandemic generated a spectrum of outcomes. Telehealth and virtual visits enabled patients to receive healthcare from their home; however, it also limited the physician’s ability to perform the same diagnostic services. In research areas, virtual visits, online surveys, and direct-to-patient pharmaceutical couriers (as opposed to in-person drug trial distribution) led to an increase in research participation; while other research avenues requiring in-person participation struggled with recruitment (Fiore, 2021; Santhian et al., 2020; Tuttle, 2020; Weiner et al., 2020). Now the challenge is to identify improvements and integrate them into clinical research best practices moving forward.

Once an area for change and the key stakeholders have been identified, we can create an improvement plan. The plan should include several key items: identifying steps required to make the change, the training and resources required, identifying individuals responsible for performing related tasks, and how to address questions that will arise during the planning and implementation processes. The plan needs to be vetted by the necessary stakeholders prior to implementation. Implementation should include multiple training opportunities and tools (training sessions, job aids, FAQs), a mechanism for obtaining feedback, the ability for personnel to easily access resources, and a method for addressing questions. Change never goes exactly as planned, so it’s crucial to consider how to address roadblocks and make adjustments throughout the process.

After changes have been implemented, it’s important to debrief stakeholders and those involved in the process. This is an opportunity to discuss challenges faced during the implementation process, areas of concern that may have been overlooked, and lessons learned. It’s also an opportunity to celebrate the successes and recognize the important contributions made by all during the change. Finally, a mechanism for continuous review of the process needs to be established in order to identify further opportunities for improvement.

**The Process of Acceptance**

The process of change and the techniques for accepting change have been widely discussed. Some of the most commonly referenced research models on the topic include the “Change Curve” proposed by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and the “Transition Model” by Dr. William Bridges. The key components for accepting change are: denial, anger/fear, gradual acceptance, committing to change, and celebrating success. Dr. Kubler-Ross considered these processes to be “coping mechanisms that we need to move through in order to manage change” (Connelly, 2020).

As managers, when we inform others that a process or system will change, we frequently get mixed feedback. Some are eager for change and others will resist. Previous complainants may quickly reverse their position and insist the system works fine. Recognizing that some individuals will need time to adjust to the idea of change is the first step in guiding them toward acceptance.

When people realize that change is real and will happen, denial can often transition into frustration or anger. It’s important to recognize that many fear the unknown and forcing individuals to move away from a process they are comfortable with, even one they don’t like, can create an emotional response. This will likely require patience and open communication in order to help them navigate through this stage.

“When people realize that fighting the change is not going to make it go away they move into a stage of acceptance” (Connelly, 2020). While they may not be happy and may appear resigned to the idea, moving into this stage allows the individual to start thinking about one’s options, experimenting with ideas related to improvement, and providing constructive feedback. Acceptance will make committing to the change
easier. Once committed, individuals are more eager to learn how to navigate and work within the new system and their outlook regarding the change is more positive. Those who were originally reticent about the idea will likely begin to demonstrate excitement or eagerness for the change at this stage.

The final step is celebrating the success of managing the change. Keep in mind, the process of accepting change is not linear. Individuals may shift between the denial, anger and acceptance stages many times before finally committing to the change concept. Given this, it's important to recognize the successes and challenges that were faced during the processes, both in implementation and in attitude. Change is not easy for many people and “it’s always good to acknowledge the bravery that acceptance takes” (Connelly, 2020).

References
Fiore, M. (2021, May 7). NCI’s COVID EHR Cohort at UW (CEC-UW) Examining EHR Data from 625,000 COVID Patients: Trials, Tribulations and Results. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Medicine. www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxEZ0OEQE6s

DON’T RESIST CHANGE, EMBRACE IT.

Change Management
With a better understanding of identifying change and how to process it, we can consider successful strategies for managing organizational change. The primary components for change management are: communication, transparency, education, and support.

While each of the components of change management are vital to the process, communication serves as the foundation for each step. When introducing change, it’s important to make people aware that a process will end and give them the opportunity to provide feedback. We also need to recognize and empathize with expressed concerns before we address the expectation of participation in moving the organization forward.

Transparency about changes is vital. We need to listen to the perspective of others, answer questions honestly and completely, and be open about the process. Withholding or providing inaccurate information will create doubt and decrease the buy-in needed to successfully implement change.

Education related to the change must be ongoing throughout the process. We need to make faculty and personnel aware of the original problem and the benefits realized by making the change. This will provide context and generate buy-in. Training and resources associated with the change are also key. Providing training sessions and job aids to help personnel successfully navigate the new process or system is a critical component to change management. Proper training and the opportunity to see the new process will allow individuals to visualize the benefits as well as become more comfortable with the change. The last part of education is providing a feedback mechanism. We need to give individuals the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns, and indicate where challenges are occurring. This informs managers and system administrators about and provides guidance for further improvements.

Lastly, be sure to provide support throughout the change process. This can be achieved through training, resources, and active communication. Much like research, change takes a village and requires teamwork. Managers can offer support by listening, understanding the perspective of others, admitting when mistakes are made, and addressing corrections as needed.

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**NCURA Magazine Seeks Co-Editor**

*NCURA Magazine* is seeking applicants for the position of Co-Editor. The volunteer position is a three-year term, beginning January 1, 2022. The Co-Editors work with the Senior Editor, Managing Editor, and Contributing Editors in ensuring the timely release of six issues per year.

Each Co-Editor works closely with 3-4 Contributing Editors. Applicants should have excellent writing and editing skills and a strong network of connections within NCURA and associated professional organizations (such as COGR, FDP, NORDP, UIDP, etc.). We expect to have a candidate selected by the early fall so that the new Co-Editor can work with the Managing Editor and Senior Editor in ensuring an orderly transition.

If you have questions review the position description or contact Managing Editor Marc Schiffman at schiffman@ncura.edu.

NCURA is committed to achieving diversity of all kinds in its appointments, including experience, geographic area, institutional type, gender, and ethnicity. We encourage ALL interested members to become involved in NCURA.
The NCURA Board of Directors met virtually on June 24, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm by NCURA President Rosemary Madnick. During the meeting, the Board approved the following actions:

- **Actions put forward by the Distinguished Educator Review Committee**
  - Heather Offhaus to receive NCURA Distinguished Educator designation
  - Jeff Silber to receive NCURA Distinguished Educator designation

- **Actions put forward by the Education Scholarship Fund Select Committee**
  - $2,500 scholarship to Jill Francisco for master’s degree in Research Administration program
  - $2,500 scholarship to Kylia Teixeira for master’s degree in Research Administration program

- **Actions put forward by the Financial Management Committee**
  - Revisions to the investment policy

- **Actions put forward by the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee**
  - The Empowering Members by Engaging Resources and Growing Excellence (EMERGE) pilot program to take place January – June 2022
  - $4,000 to cover costs of speakers for the EMERGE pilot program
  - Renaming the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration to the Robert C. Andresen Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award
  - The NCURA Gold Award bestowed posthumously to Bob Andresen

- **Actions put forward by the Professional Development Committee**
  - Approval of Angela Wishon as Senior Editor of NCURA Magazine
  - Approval of a new publication “Crafting Fully Compliant Budgets”
  - Approval of the following Traveling Workshop faculty:
    - Approval of Danielle Brown, Fundamentals Workshop Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024
    - Approval of Tricia Callahan, Fundamentals Workshop Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024
    - Approval of Tolise Dailey, Sponsored Research Administration Level II Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024
    - Approval of Abby Guilford, Fundamentals Workshop Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024
    - Approval of Rashonda Harris, Departmental Research Administration Workshop Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024
    - Approval of David Scarbeary-Simmons, Fundamentals Workshop Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024
    - Approval of Jennifer Shambrook, Fundamentals Workshop Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024
    - Approval of A. Chea Smith, Financial Research Administration Workshop Faculty, January 2022 – December 2024

- **Actions put forward by the Select Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
  - Approval of Sean Rubino to fill the vacant Region V committee seat

- **Actions put forward by the Select Committee on Peer Review**
  - Approval of Joyce Freedman as a Peer Reviewer for a two-year term
  - Approval of Josie Jimenez as a Peer Reviewer for a two-year term
  - Approval of Robyn Remotigue as a Peer Reviewer for a five-year term

Submitted by Kathleen Larmett, NCURA Executive Director
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As research administrators we strive to bring order to chaos. So what do the data tell us about the future of the remote work environment for our field? We conducted a survey at nine months after the start of what most of us were told would be a few weeks at home.

The COVID pandemic in March of 2020 forced abrupt changes to our lives and work environments. There was not much time to plan and adjust to the new situation. By February of 2021 the COVID pandemic was still ongoing and the goal of NCURA Electronic Research Administration (ERA) survey Working during COVID Ten Months and Counting was to collect data on the current situation and how prolonged COVID pandemic recommendations have affected the research administration work environment. To get a better understanding of what to expect in the future we looked into other surveys on planning for a post pandemic work environment from Simmons University (New England) and University of Colorado.

Results from the ERA Working during COVID survey showed that the majority of respondents were from pre- and post-award central administration offices from public or state institutions (56%), private universities (29%) and other types of research entities (15%).

The ERA survey showed that productivity was not impacted (60%) by remote work as long as access to a stable shared drive and reliable internet was present.

Seventy percent of respondents reported burnout and mental health issues due to experiencing drastic changes to their daily routines since the start of the pandemic (Figure 2). Non-monetary methods of recognition such as written letters of thanks and praise, and additional leave/time off were mostly used by institutions. Less than 30% of respondents received small monetary rewards (Figure 3).

The most significant concerns reported in the ERA Working during COVID survey are adaptation and safety, focused around the following questions:

- What will the return to the office look like?
- Will vaccination be required for all employees?
- Will working from home be permanently extended or taken away?
- What is a reasonable timeline to return to the office?
- Salary freezes, budget and benefits cuts - will they be reinstated?
- What is the impact on future promotions and job security?
- How to effectively address staff reluctance to return to work?

Working Remotely: Pros, Cons and Other Considerations

**Pros:**

- Schedule flexibility; increased availability to working at home (73.33% of all the survey respondents ranked this as the highest positive outcome)
- Well-being, including cooking more healthy food and eating better, family time
- Shared office spaces; potential savings to the organization; office assignment changes
- Transportation and safety: no rush hour traffic; no driving on snow days; children’s safety; limited use of public transportation
- Financial savings on transportation: gas, car maintenance, public transportation passes
- Child and elder care flexibility
- Expanded job opportunities: new job postings noting remote work availability
- Recruiting diverse staff: expansion of potential candidates pool
- Equity: addressing the difference in compensation rates across the country and the world
- Successful work/life balance in a home office setting; 62.67% reevaluated work-life balance
- Online training: affordability, improved accessibility, broader and more diverse pool of participants, new collaboration opportunities.
Cons:
- Taking less vacation time
- Taking less sick time, working from home while sick
- No snow days off
- Some work 50-60+ hours per week
- No in-office camaraderie.

Other Considerations:
- Building trust; how to measure productivity and accountability in the hybrid or fully remote environment
- Employee success: do employees have access to reliable internet, appropriate computer/laptop, cell or landline phone, desk, webcam, ergonomic office chair, etc. Also, ensuring that employees are able to work within the time zone of the campus regardless of where they are telecommuting from.
- Concerns and best practices for new staff onboarding and training remotely.

Planning for Return & Remote Engagement Processes and Best Practices:
Simmons University performed a Faculty and Staff Return to Campus Survey. The survey results will be used to develop communications and to inform policy decisions at Simmons University.

Survey Respondents:
- Separate surveys were sent to faculty and staff
- Staff: 262 respondents ~73% response rate
- Faculty: 182 respondents ~62% response rate among FT faculty (139 respondents).

Transportation:
- 52% of faculty and 37% of staff plan to drive to campus in the fall
- While public transportation was the most popular means of transportation for staff, many shared the concerns about safety and service cuts in public transportation, also some may not have access to a vehicle to commute
- Under a hybrid model, monthly public transportation passes may not make financial sense if employees are only in office a few days a week, this may lead more employees to drive.

Return to Campus:
- 2/3 of staff prefer a hybrid working arrangement in the fall, only 8% prefer a full return to campus, and 27% prefer remote work full time; faculty were not asked about their preferred working arrangement
- Faculty were much more likely than staff to report they were looking forward to a return to campus (57% agree or strongly agree compared to 39%).
Importance of Return to Campus Policies:

- Vaccination rate and clear policies for self-isolation were among the most important items to faculty in making them feel safe to return to campus.
- Staff shared concerns around social distance and capacity in office spaces.
- Hygiene and cleaning items were also important to both faculty and staff; there were several inquiries around impact to unit budgets vs. the central budget to cover such expenses.
- Although not asked explicitly, the concerns around ventilation was the most common theme in open responses; this included access to windows, updated ventilation, air purifiers, and plexi-glass barriers.

The Office of Contracts and Grants at the University of Colorado Boulder developed a hybrid office plan, advocating for remote work for staff (Table 1).

Building trust was an intentional effort that started in the Office of Contracts and Grants at the University of Colorado Boulder, by implementing a training program with Franklin Covey’s Leading at the Speed of Trust that all staff were required to attend, and adopted the language and behaviors intentionally and organically in their work at all staff levels with leadership support and continued focus on trust topics.

There are numerous factors to consider, thus we have shared helpful information to inform the process. We believe this will be the new norm going forward as staff, faculty and leadership realize the significant benefits to this paradigm. We hope that the data provided in this article is helpful for those of you who have these conversations at your institutions.

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All the co-authors are the members of the Electronic Research Administration (ERA) Collaborate Committee Working Group.
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The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about changes in the way we experience work, home, and life in general. In many cases, people have transitioned to working from home to minimize exposure to coronavirus. Changes in the work location, environment, workstation design, setup and interface, tools, and equipment have resulted in unusual stresses to their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. You can take charge to improve your workstation interface, productivity, efficiency, quality, and wellbeing with ergonomics.

Ergonomics may be defined as, “the study of people at work.” Work is anything done with intention. Regardless of your actual location or whether you are getting paid or not, most of our activities can be described as work. We work at a job; however, we also work at home to meet the needs of our families and other interests. Ergonomics is about the intersection or interface of a person doing a job in an environment (Figure 1).

The work system includes in-put, through-put, and output. Each of us plays a vital role in our work systems and contributes to the overall success of our organizations. From the organizational standpoint, ergonomics must address productivity, efficiency, quality, and safety and health. Work and home life intertwine to remind us that health and wellbeing is about optimization and balance of the physical, intellectual, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental domains of our existence (Figure 2). Your health may be impacted when you are “out of balance” in domains of living. Ergonomics strives to optimize our experience in each of the areas of wellbeing, helps us to recognize stresses come from all aspects of our lives, and helps us to identify when we need to take action to be healthy and happy. In the office environment, emphasis is placed on risk factors associated with musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) or injury. Common MSDs include tendonitis, back and neck strain, eyestrain, headaches, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Core Principles of Ergonomics

Core principles of ergonomics include three concepts: Human Variability, Homeostasis, and Systems Approach (Figure 3). Human variability is the uniqueness of each one of us. Humans vary on millions of parameters; no two people are exactly alike, even identical twins. Homeostasis is about the balance of our many variables such as mental, emotional, physical and biochemical systems. We experience stress from many external and/or internal factors that result in physical, biochemical, mental, and emotional reactions. Recovery is our return to homeostasis or balance.

Humans can do amazing things but need time to recover. Work systems must respect and compliment the capacities and limits of people; they may break down just like a machine that is worked too fast or too hard. Systems thinking is important. We are all part of a system and contribute to the overall organization product or service. Remember that the chain or system is only as strong as the weakest link. Ergonomics concerns itself with optimizing the...
system and individuals within it for the best productivity, efficiency, quality, safety, health and wellbeing. So, how you design the work system should be shaped by the characteristic features and capacities of participants, employees or users within it, as well as customers that seek the products and/or services.

**Workstation Ergonomics**

When organizing or adjusting the workstation, ergonomics offers a list of priorities: **Adjustability, User Preference, Comfort, and Ease of Use.** Adjustability allows for optimization for worker preference, comfort, and ease of use. Whether at home or in the office, make sure that your workstation is fully adjustable to your liking. If it is not, consider creative adjustment (low-tech, low-cost) first before you spend money.

When setting up the workstation at home or in the office, avoid common risk factors of repetitive motions, fixed working postures, excessive forces, psychological stress, and static loading. Consider the following diagrams in Figure 4 as guidelines for setting up your workstation at home or at the office.

Designing the workstation interface so that the body is as close to neutral positioning as possible results in less stress. Note the plumb line indicates good spinal posture with the head in line over the shoulders, over the hips and in the standing posture, and over the knees and ankles. The eyes should be at the top of the monitor; humans normally gaze downward at about 30 degrees. The forearm is at right angles to the arm that is relaxed at the side in line with the spine. These postures require less energy to maintain and maximize strength and ease of movement.

Choosing a chair is very important. The chair is the most frequently used piece of office equipment. Chairs are not ergonomics but may have ergonomic features. Chairs are designed to support the thighs, buttocks, and back. They may include armrests to support the arms as well. The optimal chair is the one that fits you the best and offers support and comfort. To achieve this, the chair must have adjustable features. The seat pan should be a size that allows and extra 1.5” on both sides and deep enough to fully support the buttocks and thighs to within 2” of the posterior knee (Figure 4). The front of the chair should have a waterfall edge. It is important to avoid compression of the blood vessels behind the knee. The height of the chair should be at least 10” high and fit well into the small of the back for support. Many sizes of backrests are available and should be evaluated for user preference.

The keyboard should be placed in a keyboard tray that is adjustable. The optimal keyboard and mouse location are where the forearm is at a right angle to the arm or slightly below. The mouse platform should be next to the keyboard and not require that the user reach forward. Computer mice come in a variety of designs, so be sure to find one that works well for you. The arms should remain relaxed at the side, and arm movement should be minimal when keying or using the mouse.

It is best to avoid wrist rests that cause compression to the wrists. The forearms should hover above the keyboard while you type. If the user prefers a wrist rest, use the gel-filled type, as it reduces compression of delicate wrist tissues. Compressive forces as low as 1 lb per square inch may reduce blood flow to tissues and can lead to impaired circulation and put you on the road to an MSD. If your desk is not adjustable and you are short, causing you to adjust your chair too high, get a footrest so that your legs and feet are supported. Footrests are inexpensive and may be adjustable in height and angle.

Organizing your workspace is important. Have a set of priorities that guide your organization such as frequency of use, reach, importance, movement, and ease of use (Figure 6). The workspace envelope, as noted in Figure 6, can help guide your organizational needs. The area closest to you is the most active workspace and is where you should place items used most frequently.

Environmental conditions include lighting, ambient noise, and temperature. Diffused lighting is best as it reduces or eliminates screen glare. Position your workstation at right angles to windows or sources of bright light. Low-level
We can all agree that our lives will never be the same as they were pre-COVID and one of our biggest challenges will be to rethink how we work. Successful remote work has required creativity, flexibility, and empathy. Our greatest assets, our people, have demonstrated the resiliency to forge ahead to bring us to exciting new frontiers in an ever-changed workplace.

In reflection, the most substantial thing we rediscovered through this experience is the art of thoughtful engagement. There have been many positive changes to workplace efficiency and how we interact with each other.

**Exciting Changes**

- Shorter, more productive meetings are being held virtually. Virtual meetings continue to be the preferred method for the majority of faculty and staff after returning to the workplace.
- Increased collaboration among departments that previously worked in silos or through a lengthy communication process.
- Greater efficiency in setting up virtual, multi-disciplinary meetings with individuals from across the university system.
- Strengthening of the overall bond between central offices and those we serve. Virtual meetings have allowed a personal connection with faculty and staff that previously would have communicated through email or telephone calls.
- Increased staff confidence and independence. Instead of popping into the office next door to get a quick answer, staff were more likely to attempt to find the solution themselves before reaching out to a coworker or supervisor.
- Increased efficiency in internal processes. Implementation of a paperless system has decreased costs and created efficiencies.
- Enhanced faculty and staff technology and presentation skills using new virtual systems.
- Expedited technology enhancements to internal systems for pre and post award actions.
- Purposeful socialization such as focusing on employee wellness and short activities such as virtual coffee breaks, sharing of pet selfies, and more.

It is vital that we continue to look for ways to make work compelling and engaging regardless of where we are physically. Embracing this experience and using it to catapult us into reflection, re-evaluation, and change makes for an exciting time to be a research administrator.

It is not just the physical setup of our workstation. Feeling motivated, inspired, rewarded and fulfilled by your work is important. Experts have reported that only two out of ten people are doing the work they love, so be one of them! Knowledge workers are unique and motivated by purpose, mastery, and autonomy. Aligning individual values with the organization’s values is good for us. Being excellent at what you do is also good for us, and having time to be creative and work on projects that interest you is inspirational and motivating. These three factors are the formula for successful, happy, and highly motivated knowledge workers that contribute to building a positive organization climate and culture.

Being happy at work is good for the organization and good for the employees. Dr. Shawn Achor has researched the positive effects for happiness in the workplace. Dr. Achor reports that happy employees are 70% more productive, experience 70% less turnover, and work 78% safer than unhappy workers. Improving the bottom line by 44%. Happy people enjoy better lives, work experiences, overall health, expanded social networks, interactions, improved creativity, higher energy, greater social influence, and life and career success.

(Achor, S. 2010).

**Reference**


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Over the last fourteen months, we adapted to what became a new normal for us. We adjusted to new ways of living and working, different routines, and changes that required us to vacate our comfort zone at times for perhaps significant periods depending on our geographical location. While impacted both personally and professionally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our innate strength as research administrators allowed us to demonstrate our ability to adapt and evolve during a time that caused much distress. We expeditiously transitioned to a telework environment with little time to excogitate what our new normal would require of us. We had to quickly develop novel ways of doing things to ensure business continuity within our institutions and our new virtual environment. The burgeoning evolution of a new normal served as an impetus to rethink and devise how we shop, work, evaluate staff and ourselves, as well as meet, educate, and onboard new staff.
As research administrators, how have our professional purchasing behaviors changed in the way we shop?

Given the massive number of individuals and businesses that transitioned to a telework environment, our purchasing behaviors were altered. This may have been in response to some shuttered businesses or limited quantities of items or materials from a pre-pandemic preferred vendor who may not have been able to keep pace with a rapid demand. Therefore, institutions may have purchased supplies or items from online vendors that offered free shipping with additional challenges to ensure items could be sent directly to an employee’s chosen address. Delays due to COVID were also something that may have influenced specific purchases. Perhaps institutions needed to determine if there were monthly deliveries on a purchase order and if so, was a respite in delivery required? In turn, departments developed an internal process for requesting supplies or other items that would allow employees to acclimate to their home working environment productively.

How we meet, where we work, and evaluating our work.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) as cited within Desliver (2020), before COVID-19, only 7% of workers in the U.S. had access to a “flexible workplace” benefit or telework. If an employee was granted permission to work from home (WFH) it could have been because an employee cultivated a strong relationship built on trust and a high level of productivity, or because one’s role could be easily evaluated and productivity verified through metrics. In March 2020, all this changed when employees quickly transitioned to WFH environments. With this change came a different way to evaluate how job duties were performed, collaboration occurred across teams, and staff navigated through the workday. At that time, the duration of our alternative working arrangement was unknown, and the success of our new normal was likely recognized day-by-day as we determined what worked best for us individually and as a team.

Employers were also challenged to ensure a transition to a telework environment would garner the same level of productivity to sustain business operations. There were uncertainties about whether individuals had home environments to support a WFH mandate or what distractions would be encountered. Homes that were once a place of privacy and relaxation now became intermingled with work. For many, kitchen tables became workstations and disruptions became common. Knowing when the workday started and ended became more of a challenge to conceptualize. During these challenging times, it was incumbent upon employees to figure out how to balance work and life at home while remaining productive in their roles.

While working from home opened the door for flexibility, it also created impediments. Supervisors accustomed to engaging with staff to assess and reward workplace productivity changed from in person discussions to virtual evaluations and check-ins. Changing to a WFH model altered our views of productivity by seeing a person at work in the office to defining productivity measures that could be monitored with metrics. Supervisors had to trust a staff member could be productive when working independently at home while they measured output from afar. From self-evaluation, the WFH model worked as employees were productive and capable of handling flexible hours while dealing with interruptions that otherwise would not be encountered in the workplace.

As we continue with WFH models or transition into hybrid work situations, the realization is that some of these changes may stay. Staying connected with your employees while giving them independence will help maintain a keen awareness of individual responsibilities and office morale. Also, tailor meetings to individuals when possible. While some employees welcome a weekly scheduled meeting, others may prefer a more staggered check-in. However, consider establishing recurring meetings to avoid any surprises, whether individually or as a team.

Additionally, managers should continue to assess their management techniques and have designated points of contact. Self-reflection to evaluate flexibility for staff, schedules, and challenges that arise in WFH models will better enable research administrators to meet customer needs (i.e., PI’s, sponsors, etc...) throughout standard business hours to ensure business continuity.

Be creative, versatile, and innovative with this new office environment. Use metrics to prove productivity. If, for example, more grants were submitted than before the pandemic, recognize this and evaluate the workload across the team to ensure an equitable distribution where possible. Additionally, be sure to raise concerns to supervisors so they trust the team while continuing to demonstrate productivity regardless of where job-related tasks are executed. As the evaluation process nears, be understanding, forgiving, and keep an open mind since the “open door” practice has had to change. Look for a variety of ways to reward staff other than financial.

Reflecting on the past fourteen months and the WFH environment, be it at the kitchen table or a coffee table, research administrators continued to be productive in their roles, met deadlines, and collaborated on pre- and post-award processes. We learned there are many ways employees can work remotely and continue to accomplish even the most complex tasks, perhaps even better than before.

How we meet

Over the past year, we have all been participants in videoconferencing. The usage of Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, or other video conferencing platforms has now become a workday norm. While having the ability to use technology to engage the workforce was a way to foster a collaborative work environment, it also came with its own concerns. What was once a casual water cooler chat, or a brief phone call, has become a thirty-minute Zoom meeting. With the ongoing use of videoconferencing, many employees began to struggle with “Zoom fatigue” due to constant attendance at virtual meetings (McConnon, 2021). To offset “Zoom fatigue,” some institutions have implemented “no video conference days” or have carved dedicated hours for phone calls.

As video conferencing continues, things to be mindful of are:

1. Take a break. Walk away from your computer for fifteen minutes.
2. When asked by a colleague to schedule a video conference, ask if it is a topic that can be discussed via a phone call.

“[O]ur innate strength as research administrators allowed us to demonstrate our ability to adapt and evolve during a time that caused much distress.”
3. Respect an individual’s privacy while on a video conference. Video conferencing allows co-workers to know more about an employee’s home life than they would share in the workplace. Do not ask a question about something you see on a video call.

4. If the video conference is necessary, have a time limit to discuss the topics on the agenda. Know when to conclude the meeting.

We have learned video conferencing has its pros and cons. Using video conferencing for meetings or working on projects reduces time to drive (or walk) to meet face-to-face. Some have found it a more productive way to hold meetings, or work on documents while sharing information in real time. Love it or hate it, video conferencing has proved to be an integral part of the work environment and will continue to be around well after we return to the office.

How we educate
The skills for working remotely require training. As a supervisor, provide staff with the necessary tools to ensure they can effectively execute processes and meet individual and departmental goals. For example, provide practice Zoom runs and give tips to be confident in presentations. Demonstrate how to use the chat, share the screen, and submit a survey. Seek constructive feedback. If there was any time in the workplace to be patient and show empathy, it is now.

Even as the pandemic is continuing, the work environment has not remained static. Staff still require continuous training given the updates and changes within research administration. Take advantage of NCURA webinars and learning modules, and training offered by your institution. Attend a virtual meeting or consider leading a virtual presentation. Some universities offer free access to LinkedIn Learning, for example. This will keep staff connected and maintain skill sets.

How we interacted with HR
Human Resources (HR) was another area that needed to quickly adapt during remote work. It was essential to have a system in place for interviewing, hiring, and onboarding. Moving into WHF models required those responsible for hiring and onboarding to connect with their institution’s HR office to obtain guidance regarding the institution’s practices to ensure a successful onboarding process. Along with this came best practices and guidelines to follow as a supervisor monitoring staff.

As a manager, partner with your HR office to understand how one can better support staff. Take advantage of NCURA member-benefits and contact institutional colleagues and friends. All of us likely went through similar processes adapting to fully remote work. This was not unique to any one office. Colleagues may have more advanced remote work experience and processes adapting to fully remote work. This was not unique to any one institutional colleagues and friends. All of us likely went through similar processes adapting to fully remote work. This was not unique to any one

Hiring
When hiring during remote work, have business processes in place for pre- and post-hire. During the pre-hire process, make sure the applicant feels comfortable during the interview. Handle the interview the same way one would in the office but recognize how you adapt to interviewing via a virtual platform (i.e., do not have sidebar conversations, make sure technology is working, plan the interview, and be prepared). Be aware that behaviors one would exhibit during a face-to-face interview should mirror what occurs in a virtual interview. If there happen to be distractions, turn the camera off or place the microphone on mute to avoid disruption.

Onboarding
New employee orientations may have taken place virtually. Have processes in place for the new employee to receive a badge, computers, parking information, and other supplies needed to carry out one’s job duties. Supervisors should have a plan in place to train employees. The faster the employee can be assimilated, the quicker he or she can be productive.

It should also be noted that organizations may need to replace staff more frequently, or one may get an offer for a job that further aligns with his or her career goals due to expanded opportunities permanent remote work may have extended.

In conclusion, do not let this new normal derail one’s career goals. Stay focused and learn from the experience — even though it may seem tumultuous at times. Please take advantage of the NCURA network and contact someone who has a great deal of experience working remotely and ask about their experiences. Realize that since the professional landscape has changed, there may be some added flexibility to help subdue any potential challenges. Remember...we are all in this together!

References
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Erin Bailey, MS, CRA, is Chief Financial Officer for the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) at the University at Buffalo. She is the recipient of the University at Buffalo Chancellor’s Award, one of the highest honors at the University given for Professional Service to the University and commitment to deliver excellence in the profession. She has been in research administration for 24 years and is an active member of the NCURA. Erin has held officer positions of Chair and Treasurer of Region II, and currently serves as an at-large member of the NCURA Board of Directors and is traveling faculty for the Financial Research Administration workshop. She is a graduate of the NCURA Leadership Development Institute and the Executive Leadership Program. She can be reached at ecd@buffalo.edu.

Timothy Schailey, MS, Director, Research Administration at Thomas Jefferson University (TU) in Philadelphia, PA. He is a graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program, a former member of its Board of Directors and served in a variety of NCURA roles both regionally and nationally. Tim’s responsibilities at TU require him to oversee pre-award, non-financial post-award, contracting, outreach and education, and export control activities. He can be reached at timothy.schailey@jefferson.edu.

Sue Kelch, CRA, is a Research Administrator at the University of Michigan’s Medicine Office of Research. She has been in research administration for 35 years. She has been active with NCURA since joining in 2007 and is a graduate of the Executive Leadership Program, served on the NCURA Magazine, and the Select Committee on Global Affairs. Sue has also served as the regionally elected member of the NCURA Board, Region IV Chair and currently on NCURA’s Financial Management Committee. She has received Region IV’s Special Merit & Distinction and Meritorious Contribution Awards. In 2021 she received NCURA’s Julia Jacobson Distinguished Service Award. She can be reached at suckelch@med.umich.edu.
Thursday morning, 8:57 AM: I am still in the kitchen making coffee, hoping the machine could run just a little faster so I can be right on time for the weekly team meeting – a meeting with the entire research administration team at NYUAD. In the new normal, we have found a way to bring together all members of the team, from pre-award to post-award, research ethics, and undergraduate research to discuss progress. This particular meeting has had a transformative impact on the work we do. Given the interconnectedness of the grant life cycle, it has enabled us to put all constituents together, understand research from all angles, and devise solutions that would have otherwise taken weeks to create in one single meeting. On a more personal level, this meeting also created a space where one could feel they are still part of a community at work. We always left enough time in the meeting to have casual chats we would otherwise have around the coffee machine at the office: about the weather, the recent elections, the vaccine, and failed travel plans.

When the entire workplace shifted online, our lives changed overnight. The steady foundations over which our processes were built were completely shaken up, and what we took for granted was taken away from us in a glimpse of an eye. Surprisingly, amidst this disruption were silver linings: we witnessed an increase in productivity and a significant improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness in our communication. Fortunately, NYUAD has fostered a culture of trust and provided the autonomy and supportive tools needed for its research administrators to excel whilst working remotely. This empowerment has not only ensured business continuity, but has seen research activity thrive during the past year.

However, painting this transition as a smooth success story is misleading. The pandemic has come with significant challenges which we are yet to overcome, most notably the well-being of employees and providing improved access to support programs. In addition, the loss of spontaneity and human connection has made innovation more difficult. What used to be an organic, human-driven process now requires more careful coordination and planning. Navigating innovation in the virtual world is of key importance when considering the sustainability of this new model of work.

Impact on Productivity
Since the work-from-home mandate was implemented by governments across the world, many organizations were apprehensive about transitioning their employees to fully remote working arrangements. This was largely due to their worry that productivity would drop. Yet despite those initial concerns, a recent study, *Building resilience & maintaining innovation in a hybrid world*, commissioned by Microsoft across 15 European markets in August 2020, has shown that productivity has remained constant and even increased across sectors (Microsoft, 2020). This is because remote working has provided the opportunity for many employees to craft a working environment that better suits their personal preferences and working styles.

Research administrators reported increased productivity and more efficient use of their time. They created an environment where they could seamlessly transition from working out to attending a Zoom meeting. They also reported being “more focused” as a result of the reduced social interferences one usually experiences in the workplace. The flexibility of working remotely also made it possible for some staff to reunite with their families. Being physically there to support their families in a time of crisis, while at the same time having the ability to continue to work from home,
has helped maintain productivity that would otherwise have been lost. On the flip side, we do see a number of challenges with working remotely, especially for staff with younger children who have to juggle between Zoom meetings and supporting their children through online teaching. Additionally, given that our workspaces and our homes have become one, delineating a dedicated space to relax, unwind, and be with loved ones has become all the more challenging.

**Work-Life Balance**
The blurring of lines between personal and professional life has had a significant impact on many. This has led organizations to actively promote a healthy “work-life” balance for their employees. Whilst working from home poses its challenges, the enhanced focus on actively separating professional from personal life has made us better research administrators by encouraging us to create a balance between the two. Whether this means going for a walk, working out, or pursuing a long-lost hobby, this cultural shift has forced us to implement recharging mechanisms that ensures we have the adequate work-life balance to drive productivity and innovation.

**Streamlined Procedures**
As research administrators, we have always had to be flexible and adaptive in how we approach research administration and balancing the needs of our researchers. The digital shift brought about by the pandemic has provided us with a great opportunity to review and reinvent existing policies and procedures. It has altered the way we work and motivated us to actively address key challenges in our process, making us more effective and efficient research administrators. For instance, we have optimized the use of our existing systems, streamlined processes, and eliminated unnecessary paperwork.

This shift has enabled us to stay one-step ahead and ensure that we are continually reinventing and improving our work to deliver the best results.

**Enhanced communication with various stakeholders**
The pandemic has expanded possibilities when it comes to communication. Meetings that were previously impossible to hold due to barriers, such as logistical or time constraints, now happen on a daily basis. Virtual meetings have given individuals the opportunity to attend, participate and contribute to any meeting from anywhere in the world without having to worry about constraints that would ordinarily make their attendance impossible. This has driven a positive change for us at NYUAD and for most organizations worldwide. Remote working has also led to greater accessibility. Whether it is organizing an online conference or arranging a stakeholder meeting, the acceptability to meet “virtually” has provided greater opportunity for people to engage with one another.

Maintaining good team spirit, the key ingredient to successful teamwork, is often challenging when working remotely. We found that the space we created through those weekly Zoom team meetings which we religiously maintained from the beginning of the remote working environment enabled us to maintain and even improve team spirit. Teams have created stronger bonds and solid foundations for true collaborative work.

**Focus on Mental Health**
It is no surprise that mental wellbeing plays a crucial role in employee productivity. The pandemic has had a significant impact on staff’s physical and mental well-being. A recent survey conducted by the Centers for Disease and Prevention found that 53% of the respondents reported an adverse mental or behavioral condition and expressed worries about how COVID-19 has impacted their mental health (Czeisler, MÉ, Lane RI, Petrosky E, at al, 2020). This has driven a positive change within organizations in how they address and support the mental wellbeing of their employees. Although it took a pandemic to bring this matter to the forefront, the majority of organizations understand that whilst the pandemic may have accelerated mental health issues, this issue has always been present and is not merely a consequence of the current Covid climate. Thus, organizations should continue to implement robust employee well-being programs, online emotional support, mental health policies and procedures that will ensure a consistent and systematic consideration of the mental wellbeing of their employees. Whilst long overdue, this is a positive change that will benefit both the employees and the organization as a whole.

**Negative Impact on Innovation**
Given the drastic nature of the pandemic, many organizations have been forced to “pare back to the very basics” rather than worry about innovation or experimentation. This is something that was felt in NYUAD. In the past year, we focused primarily on making sure that operations were not impacted, keeping up with the increased number of research contracts and subawards, and adapting to the changed requests from researchers. New projects were slowed and had to be put on hold to focus on operational priorities. However, more recently, we created a specific stream to deal with new projects and put them back on track. We acknowledge the importance of innovation in ensuring the continuity of our work, and we have taken action to encourage it amongst our people. For instance, we recently started scheduling brainstorming sessions through Zoom which we found to be an effective way to adapt innovation to the virtual workplace.

Finally, while we have all become more effective communicators and are now experienced with juggling Zoom presentations with cats and children in the background, the virtual shift came with many challenges. Most importantly, it has made innovation more challenging, taking away invaluable, spontaneous and fruitful human interactions that can lead to great ideas. Yet, the pandemic has also given us a unique opportunity to re-mold how research is administered. It is up to organizations to empower their people to take on the challenges at hand and use this opportunity to become better administrators. Failure to do so will not only stifle creativity, but will hold back research as a whole. As a global community of research administrators, let’s continue to embrace change and use it to keep driving our work forward.

References

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Ann Holmes, Assistant Dean, Finance and Administration, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Maryland is the 2021 recipient of the NCURA Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award. This award recognizes a current or past NCURA member who has made 1) noteworthy contributions to NCURA, and 2) significant contributions to the profession of research administration. First awarded in 1994, this award is NCURA’s highest honor.

During Ann’s 25 years of NCURA membership, she has made countless contributions to NCURA and the research administration profession. Ann was instrumental in creating the Financial Research Administration Workshop and served as a faculty member for that workshop as well as the Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop. Ann has also presented countless workshops, concurrent sessions, and discussion groups at NCURA conferences. Ann served as the Region II Treasurer, has been on many program committees, and served as the Co-Chair of NCURA’s 50th Annual Meeting. Ann authored the “Regulatory Environment” chapter in NCURA’s Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Recommended Practices. Ann received the Region II Distinguished Service Award in 2006, the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award in 2007, and the NCURA Distinguished Educator Designation in 2016.

Denise Clark, University of Maryland, College Park, NCURA Distinguished Educator; shared

She needs no introduction, nor do I need to itemize her accomplishments because they all live in each of us who have worked with her, been mentored by her, or been taught by her. She is highly regarded as one of the best presenters and always delivers with an unbelievable high level of energy and enthusiasm, coupled with her own unique sense of humor. She is a known entity to much of the research administration community because she has touched the majority of those involved in this occupation.

Ann’s colleague, Gregory Ball, University of Maryland, College Park, says Ann brings to our college a breadth of understanding of research administration that is unparalleled at our campus, probably most campuses nationwide, and certainly makes me the envy of many deans. Due to her expertise, she has literally travelled the globe giving talks about the relationships between US institutions of higher education and federal agencies with regard to grants and contracts. In this role, she is a fantastic ambassador for the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and for the University of Maryland.

Tim Reuter, Stanford University, adds Ann encourages her staff, conference attendees and those that she has mentored over the years to become active in NCURA. Ann is the ultimate ambassador of research administration. She is committed to provide relevant interesting, current professional development to research administrators across the globe.

Richard Seligman, Emeritus, California Institute of Technology, NCURA Distinguished Educator; contributed Ann is one of the finest teachers in this field. Her teaching has been recognized by NCURA as a recipient of the Distinguished Educator designation. I have had the pleasure of teaching with her at various NCURA programs. She is a very lively and interactive instructor who quickly and easily creates an incredibly positive learning environment.

Erin Bailey, University at Buffalo, says Since becoming a member of NCURA, Ann has continuously demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to NCURA at both the national and regional levels and is a firm believer in the mission and goals of NCURA. Ann can present the most complex research administration topics entertainingly, with attendees walking away wanting more. She can take on any challenge or difficult task assigned to her and move forward with a smile.

On receiving the award, Ann states, I am honored to be recognized with this prestigious award. My work in research administration is one of the highlights of my career at the University of Maryland. The opportunity to share this knowledge on the campus and around the globe would not have been possible without the support of my colleagues and the leadership team I have had the opportunity to work with. I am especially grateful to my long-time presentation partner and friend, Associate Vice President for Research Administration Denise Clark, who spearheaded my nomination.

Ann Holmes will receive the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, during the 63rd Annual Meeting Award Ceremony.
This year the NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected five veteran NCURA members to receive the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes members who have made sustained and distinctive contributions to the organization.

Each recipient has contributed to NCURA’s success in numerous ways and for many years. The following summaries provide a snapshot of their service and contributions in addition to the many presentations they have made at regional and national meetings and conferences over the years. The 2021 Award recipients are:

**Mary Louise Healy**, Assistant Dean, Research Administration, Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, Johns Hopkins University. During her 27 years of NCURA membership, Mary Louise has served on the Board of Directors, as Chair of Region II, as Co-Chair for the 2014 Pre-Award Research Administration Conference, and on many regional committees. She has served as a mentor for the Region II Cheryl-Lee Howard Mentor Me Program and served as Chair of that committee. Mary Louise is a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute as well as NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program. She currently serves as a Peer Reviewer, as a Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop presenter; and as a member on the Select Committee on Peer Review. As a recipient of this award, Mary Louise shares, “When I learned of the award, I was immediately humbled. Everyone says that, but it’s true: we’re in the company of awesome people who’ve made huge contributions to NCURA and the profession. I also thought, right away (and even put this in an email when I learned of the award) that we volunteers should be giving NCURA an award for allowing us to do the thing we love to do: advance the profession by serving the professionals. Help people be their best. Honestly, I hope my contributions have helped my colleagues throughout the years, but I get so much out of volunteering, it’s a joy for me. Then I said I will spend the duration trying to live up to this great honor. And that is the truth.”

**Derick Jones**, Program Manager, Translational Genomics and Population Services, Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. In Derick’s nearly 15 years of NCURA membership, he has served on the Board of Directors, as Chair of Region VI, and Secretary of Region VI. Derick has served as Co-Chair of the Region VI & VII LeadMe Program, on NCURA’s Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, and on several Collaborate Working Groups. Derick is a graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program. Derick shares, “I’ve dedicated my career to developing future leaders of our industry embracing the richness of their diversity while promoting equity and inclusion. To be honored by my peers for these efforts has been a humbling experience that has truly motivated me to stay on my leadership journey.”

**Sue Kelch**, Research Senior Financial Specialist, Otolaryngology, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. During her nearly 15 years of NCURA membership, Sue has served on the Board of Directors, as Chair of Region IV, and as a member of the Select Committee on Global Affairs. Sue served on the 2017 Pre-Award Research Administration Conference Program Committee, has written articles for NCURA Magazine, and has served on several regional committees. Sue is a graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program and was a recipient of the 2019 Region IV Meritorious Award. As a recipient of this award, Sue shares, “I see this award not as a pinnacle but a pivotal point in my career. Looking back, I see all of the opportunities that NCURA offers, which transform a job in research administration to a rewarding career. Truly, NCURA has allowed me opportunities like none other: to practice and polish skills like professionalism and dedication, which have translated not only to the workplace but to my daily life. In addition, being involved with NCURA offers a valuable network of skilled and giving colleagues. These colleagues have been there for me, they have encouraged and guided me. I see their faces, and I hear the whispered words of encouragement and their cheers with success. Looking forward, I see my path clearly. It is now my turn to become the mentor and sponsor, and to experience the joy of giving back. To inspire, and pave the way for others in our profession. And to quote one of my mentors, Bob Andresen – to promote the profession we fondly call ‘The Best Job of All,’ – research administration.”

**Stacy Riseman**, Program Manager, Research Administration, Loma Linda University. Stacy has served on the Board of Directors, as Chair of Region I, as Co-Chair of the Region I Mentor Me Program, and as Co-Chair of the Region I & II LeadMe Program. Stacy is a graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program. Stacy shares, “NCURA has allowed me opportunities to grow as a professional and a leader. It has given me a platform to collaborate with peers and mentors, and to share my experience and knowledge. I have learned so much from my colleagues and mentors, and I have been able to give back to the organization by serving in leadership roles and on committees. The NCURA community is made up of talented and committed professionals who are passionate about advancing the field of research administration. It is an honor to be recognized by my peers with this award, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the organization and to the field of research administration.”

**Lori Ann Schultz**, Program Manager, Grants Administration, University of Iowa. Lori Ann has served on the Board of Directors, as Chair of Region II, and as a member of the Select Committee on Peer Review. Lori Ann is a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute. Lori Ann shares, “I have been a part of NCURA for nearly 20 years, and have served in many leadership roles. It is an honor to be recognized by my peers with this award. NCURA has provided me with opportunities to grow as a professional and a leader. I have learned so much from my colleagues and mentors, and I have been able to give back to the organization by serving in leadership roles and on committees. The NCURA community is made up of talented and committed professionals who are passionate about advancing the field of research administration. It is an honor to be recognized by my peers with this award, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the organization and to the field of research administration.”
**2021 Awards**

**Stacy Riseman**, Director of Sponsored Research, College of the Holy Cross. As a member of NCURA for nearly 25 years, Stacy has served on the national Board of Directors, as Secretary of Region I, and on the Professional Development Committee. She has served numerous times as Co-Chair of Region I Annual Meetings, as a mentor for Region I’s Executive Shadow Program, and on several other regional committees, as well as written articles for NCURA Magazine. Stacy is a graduate of NCURA’s Leadership Development Institute and served on the 58th Annual Meeting Program Committee. Stacy is currently serving on the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee and the 63rd Annual Meeting Program Committee. In reaction to the award, Stacy says, “I am extremely proud and honored to be receiving the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. I credit NCURA for the many years of strong educational opportunities, reliable network of colleagues, and being the foundation for connections with amazing individuals I can now call friends. NCURA has provided a sustainable and esteemed support system in which we can all trust and rely upon to provide a high level of programming within research administration. I’m very lucky to be part of an organization that has helped and enriched my career for many years. I’m also grateful for the numerous opportunities I have been given to volunteer to help others. Thank you NCURA!”

**Lori Ann Schultz**, Assistant Vice President, Research Intelligence, University of Arizona. Over Lori’s nearly 25 years of membership, she has served as a Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop presenter and as an NCURA Magazine Contributing Editor. Lori has served on several national and regional program committees. She is also currently an NCURA Peer Reviewer. Lori shares, “I am grateful to be part of a profession where service is what we do: to our faculty, our institutions, and to our colleagues. I’ve learned so much from so many of you, including the people who nominated me. To anyone new to research administration – when we say to email us if you have a question, we mean it!”

The Distinguished Service Award recipients will be recognized during the upcoming 63rd Annual Meeting Award Ceremony on Tuesday, August 31, 2021. Please join us in thanking them for their service and their contributions!

**Joseph F. Carrabino Award**

The Joseph F. Carrabino Award, established in 2003 by the NCURA Board of Directors, is named after the late Joe Carrabino, NSF Grants Officer. This award recognizes a current or former Federal partner who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either by a single project, activity, or innovation, or by a lifetime of service. The NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected **Maria Koszalka** as the recipient of the 2021 Joseph F. Carrabino Award.

**Maria Koszalka** serves as Staff Associate, Research.gov, Division of Institution and Award Support, (DIAS), Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management (BFA), at the National Science Foundation. Maria is a member of the Executive Committee of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) and is also co-chair of both their Membership Committee and Federal Engagement Working Group. Maria also manages periodic Electronic Research Administration (eRA) Forum programs and led the administration of the NSF Principal Investigator/Sponsored Research Office Survey in 2019.

Dick Seligman, Emeritus, California Institute of Technology, NCURA Distinguished Educator, shares:

*During her time at NSF, Maria has worked as a particularly effective partner with the grantee community... To be effective, research administrators need to be able to work closely with their counterparts in the Federal research agencies. Throughout her career, Maria has worked to continuously improve that partnership for the benefit both of the grantors and the grantees.*

Alexandra Albinak, Associate Vice Provost for Research Administration, Johns Hopkins University, adds:

*Holding decades of experience working at multiple agencies, she is able to provide a valuable perspective to institutions on the inner workings of our sponsors and relays to her federal counterparts how federal policy impacts researchers doing research. She truly understands the institutional perspective and has a genuine interest in promoting and improving the research enterprise.*

James Luther, Associate Vice President, Research Costing Compliance and Federal Reimbursement, Duke University, contributes:

*Maria has been a true partner, in every part, in support of the critical role that NSF plays in the Federal Demonstration Partnership. Personally, I have partnered with her on a number of initiatives, most recently as the co-chair of the “Federal Engagement Working Group” for FDP. Federal engagement is the most critical aspect and unique characteristics of FDP and Maria has demonstrated significant passion in all aspects of pre-planning and execution for this. She engenders and models the engaged, active, and supportive role that are so important in the relationship between research institutions and federal partners.*

In her own words, Maria says,

*I am extremely appreciative and honored to receive the Joseph F. Carrabino Award for my contributions and lifetime work in research administration. Achieving success during these challenging times requires creativity, partnership, and a passion for excellence. I am very proud and humbled to have worked with innovative university and federal partners to advance our Nation’s scientific research enterprise.*
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Lessons Learned from Auditing NSF’s EPSCoR Program

By Kelly Stefanko, Elizabeth Kearns, Philip Emswiler

NSF’s Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) supports projects in states, territories, and commonwealths that have historically received a small share of NSF grant dollars. EPSCoR’s goal is to enhance the research competitiveness of targeted jurisdictions by strengthening their STEM capacity and capability.

For the past 2 years, we have been auditing how NSF is ensuring compliance with federal requirements in administering awards through EPSCoR. We focused on high-risk areas at selected EPSCoR recipients, as well as NSF’s oversight and administration of the awards. Our findings involved subrecipient monitoring, K-12 summer research programs, and issues caused by accounting system changes, as described below.

Subrecipient Performance
We noticed a large disparity in resources and expertise needed to administer federal awards between subrecipients that have a single audit and those that do not meet the single audit threshold. We found the latter group likely needed additional oversight because they may not have the accounting systems, policies, and procedures needed for adequate federal award administration. EPSCoR projects are expected to be inclusive and to broaden participation, so it is common — and encouraged — for awardees to include such subrecipients. Programs that promote the participation of inexperienced subrecipients often need more robust risk assessments by prime recipients. Traditional checklists for assessing subrecipient risk may not be enough to identify a higher risk subrecipient and plan appropriate oversight. These subrecipients may need training, on-site reviews, and other technical assistance to understand and comply with the unique requirements of federal awards.

K-12 Summer Research Programs
EPSCoR projects often include outreach programs to promote STEM interest in K-12 students. We found EPSCoR recipients regularly charged their NSF awards for supplies, promotional items, and the costs of activities for the students; however, federal guidance is not clear and consistent regarding the allowability of these costs on EPSCoR awards. Our audit highlighted the need for consistency and clarity in cost allowability associated with summer research programs so that NSF and its EPSCoR recipients can make informed decisions before problems arise.

Accounting System Changes
Implementing a new accounting system increases the risk of accounting errors that can adversely impact multiple awards. This issue affects not only EPSCoR recipients, but all recipients of federal awards. We found significant questioned costs at multiple EPSCoR recipients tied directly to improper coding of transactions during a change in the recipients’ accounting systems.

Our goal in highlighting these findings for NSF and its recipients is to make both groups aware of the additional risks associated with accounting system changes and to take necessary precautions to reduce those risks.

Based on our findings at the selected recipients, we alerted NSF of potential trouble spots across its portfolio of EPSCoR awards. For more information, please see our EPSCoR reports on our website at oig.nsf.gov.

To report research misconduct or other forms of fraud, waste, abuse, or whistleblower reprisal, please contact us by:

- Web: www.nsf.gov/oig/report-fraud/form.jsp
- Anonymous Hotline: 1-800-428-2189
- Email: oig@nsf.gov
- Mail: 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314
  ATTN: OIG HOTLINE

Kelly Stefanko has been an NSF OIG Audit Manager since 2012 after previously serving at two other federal OIGs and in a city auditor’s office. She can be reached at kstefank@nsf.gov.

Elizabeth Kearns has been with the NSF OIG for 18 years and is currently the Director of Audit Execution at the NSF OIG. She can be reached at ekearns@nsf.gov.

Philip Emswiler is a Senior Program Analyst at NSF OIG. He started his federal career in 2011 at the Department of Homeland Security OIG and joined NSF in 2017. He can be reached at pemswile@nsf.gov.
Having spent about a decade at the research bench, I had viewed research administration as a predictable role to take up. I was naïve. In India, the role of a research administrator at an institute level is inchoate. Dedicated, process-based research development offices/roles are largely absent. This calls for adaptation at various levels for a research administrator at entry, mid and senior levels. Defining responsibilities and tasks suited to a research administrative position takes around four to five years for a budding institution. This is not on a somber note. In fact, this is a healthy process of building the support structure of research administration at an institute. Shaping the role involves the administrator, researchers and leadership. Establishing effective communication and feedback from the beginning helps the administrator to adapt efficiently to a changing environment.

My role as a grants and ethics coordinator evolved in parallel with the growth of my place of work. My current place of work is 10 years old. I was one of the first to take up a “defined” administrative role with an understanding of the research work happening at our institute. Over the years, we worked together and graduated from funding support from few funding agencies to engaging with a larger portfolio of agencies including international funders. We additionally adapted to the emerging rules concerning ethics reviews and clinical trials in India. When I started, the new regulations placed a lot of responsibility on the ethics committees for reviewing and monitoring of clinical trials. Reporting and monitoring required rigor on the part of the committees. The dedicated ethics secretariat and the role of the ethics coordinator at an institute level thus evolved to become a part of research management and contributory to meeting regulatory compliance requirements.

I believe the pandemic brought out a hidden efficiency in most of the administrative systems and processes. It made us re-think operations at all levels. At this difficult juncture, the role of a strategist was to “Get it done.” Thus, operations evolved around ‘process completion.’ Timely release of various updated guidelines allowed our administrative systems to change operations without worrying about breaking existing regulations. In particular, less time spent on travel, availability of experts for reviews, expedited operations in approval processes, efficiency of online grant/regulatory submission systems all contributed to this efficiency. The Indian funding and regulatory agencies have worked on developing online submission systems for grant/regulatory applications over the years, and the pandemic brought out the usefulness of these paperless submission systems. On the regulatory front, timely guidelines in response to the challenges of the pandemic released by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) and others allowed research administrative systems to adapt and adhere to the regulatory norms.

Looking back at the past year, a number of application submissions, reviews, post-award processes and navigation of repeated requests from companies were facilitated and accomplished for our institution in the shortest possible time. The research administrator grew to be the point of contact for advice and help in adhering to evolving systems for grants and ethics. Knowledge about submission portals, working with international funding agencies, knowledge about past and present regulations on ethics review processes and import regulations were all called in for quick action. There was a frenzy of operations relating to grant submissions, ethics reviews, import-related administrative processes, and unprecedented academic-industry collaborations because of the pandemic. I was gratified to play a key role supporting this response, which required me to work along with various scientists when they were hard pressed for time.
To add to this experience, I have been fortunate to be part of the organizing committee for the first conference of the India Research Management Initiative (IRMI Annual Conference 2021). The conference planning started well before the pandemic and shifted gears because of the pandemic. What would have been an in-person gathering was subsequently adapted as a virtual event. Our anxieties about the loss of in-person communication were set aside and replaced with anticipation of the participation and the interaction we could achieve through web-based platforms. The time we would have spent planning a venue-based event was used instead to address the new agenda, with less hassle. I was also able to participate in the event and give my complete attention to what the research administration community had to share. As the chair of the sessions on “Ethics and biosafety in research and the crosstalk with funded programs” and “Developing the successful research manager,” I was able to communicate with scientists, regulators, and research administrators and get feedback. We, as organizers, could paint the scope for research administrators in India. Through the conference, we were happy to have an identity set for the research managers/administrators in India. Adapting to change emerged as one of the crucial assets for a research administrator. Smooth adaptation is possible only when there is an active engagement with and embracement of the role of a research administrator. I put forth the following as measures for research administrative offices/administrators for ease of adaptation to their institutions:

1. **Identity**: There should be an identity for the research administration office and the roles within an institute. This crucial first step creates the necessary presence of defined research administrative systems.

2. **Validation**: The role of research administrators needs constant validation for improvement of the processes. This is possible only with constant feedback and engagement from the scientists and leadership.

3. **Training**: There should be opportunities to train and interact to further refine dedicated roles and approaches.

4. **Performance Indicators**: The institutional infrastructure should care enough to put in place effective performance indicators for the roles and offices. This will create a positive trend for contributing to the growth of the institute.

Research administration at institutes is not yet defined as a career in India. I dare to hope that sustained engagement, contribution, and recognition from the research community will transition these profiles from jobs to careers. The pandemic was one such opportunity to recognize the importance and presence of a trained research management profile. When we finally move beyond this pandemic, I hope to retain the “touch the finish line” drive in both strategy and operations and wish that research administrators become a foundational part of research in the institutional infrastructure in India.

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**Vidhya Krishnamoorthy** is currently the Technical Manager (Grants Coordinator) at the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, an autonomous institute at the NCR Biotech Science cluster of the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. For more than a decade, she was “at the bench” researcher in various academic research institutions of India and the United States. In 2012, she took the role as a research administrator. In her current role, she manages pre-award processes for scientific grants and coordinates regulatory submissions for ethical approvals. She can be reached at vidhya.krishnamoorthy@thsti.res.in.

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2021 NCURA Election Results

Bryony Wakefield, Director, Research Support & Evaluation, Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, Research Office, University of Melbourne, has been elected to the position of Vice President/President-Elect of NCURA. As an involved member for nearly 15 years, Bryony has served as the Chair of Region VIII, as a member on the National Board of Directors, and as a member of the Education Scholarship Fund Select Committee. Bryony has also served as Region VIII Volunteer Coordinator, as host for the NCURA Fellowship Program, and on the NCURA Delegation to Cuba. In addition, Bryony co-authored NCURA's International Research Collaborations publication and several NCURA Magazine articles. On being elected as Vice President/President-Elect, Bryony says, “It is a great honor to be elected to the position of Vice-President/President Elect – thank you! NCURA provides a framework that individuals and institutions can look to for guidance as we collectively navigate our ‘new normal’ for research administration in the future. I am very much looking forward to working with the NCURA community to fulfil our mission, values and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Robyn Remotigue, Director, Office of Research Services, School of Public Health, University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth, has been elected to the position of Secretary. Since becoming a member nearly 20 years ago, Robyn has served on the Board of Directors, as Co-Chair for the 60th Annual Meeting and the 2016 Pre-Award Research Administration Conference, on several national conference program committees, as a member of the Education Scholarship Fund Select Committee, member of the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee, and on many regional committees. Robyn received the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award in 2018 and is a graduate of both NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program and Leadership Development Institute. Robyn is currently serving as an NCURA Magazine Co-Editor, NCURA Peer Reviewer, and faculty member for the Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop. On being elected as Secretary, Robyn says, “It is with deep appreciation that I accept the position as Secretary of NCURA. I would like to thank the NCURA membership for their support and confidence in me. It is truly an honor to represent this outstanding professional organization, and I look forward to serving the membership.”

Timothy Schailey, Director, Research Administration & Interim, Export Control Officer, Office of Research Administration, Thomas Jefferson University, has been elected to the position of Treasurer-Elect. Since joining NCURA in 2008, Tim has served on the Board of Directors, as both Chair and Treasurer of Region II, as Co-Chair of the 2021 Financial Research Administration Conference, as track lead on other national meeting program committees, and on several regional committees. Tim is a graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program. He currently serves as a member of the Financial Management Committee and a faculty member for the Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop. On being elected as Treasurer-Elect, Tim shares, “I am so honored and appreciative to have been elected to this important role and value the opportunity to give back to NCURA especially given everything the organization does for its membership and to advance our profession.”

Tolise Dailey, Research and Training Manager, Research Development Team, Johns Hopkins University, has been elected to the position of At-Large Board Member. Since Tolise joined NCURA in 1999, she has served as a member on the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee, the Professional Development Committee, and the Education Scholarship Fund Select Committee, as well as on national meeting program committees. Tolise has also served as a Financial Research Administration Workshop Faculty member, Region VII Member-At-Large, Chair of the Region II Professional Development Committee, and Mentor in the Region VI LeadMe Program. In addition, Tolise has coordinated online CRA, CPRA, and CFRA Study Groups. Tolise currently serves on the Select Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and is on the 63rd Annual Meeting Program Committee. On being elected to this position, Tolise shared one of her favorite quotes from Shirley Chisholm, “Service is the rent that you pay for room on this earth.”

Hollie Schreiber, Director, Sponsored Programs, Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, University of Tennessee, has been elected to the position of At-Large Board Member. As an involved member for nearly 15 years, Hollie has served as Chair and Secretary of Region V, as a member of several national conference program committees, and on several regional committees. Hollie is a recipient of the 2018 Region V Distinguished Service Award and a graduate of NCURA’s Executive Leadership Program. Hollie is currently serving as a member on the Professional Development Committee and as a Departmental Research Administration Workshop faculty member. On being elected to this position, Hollie shares, “I’m thrilled that my colleagues gave me their vote of confidence and this opportunity to be a part of the leadership and future of NCURA. We have a long history of exceptional leaders, and I’m honored to be among them.”

Both Dailey and Schreiber will begin serving January 1, 2022 for a two-year term. Wakefield will take office January 1, 2022 for one year after which she will succeed to a one-year term as President of NCURA. Schailey will become Treasurer-Elect on January 1, 2022 and will serve for one year after which he will succeed to a two-year term as Treasurer. Remotigue will take office on January 1, 2022 and will serve a two-year term.
During my years as a trainer, I’ve heard too often that research administration training is either “sink or swim” or like “drinking from a fire hose.” “Sink or swim” implies providing no instruction or resources. “Drinking from a fire hose” implies giving too much information without the appropriate context or opportunity to practice applying concepts. Both types of training leave staff feeling lost. An astounding 70% of workplace instruction happens on the job. So how do we effectively train research administrators when the most common forms of training — “sink or swim” or “drinking from a fire hose” — lack the critical components of on-the-job training? This article will show you how to design an experience that provides practice and feedback, which are the essential components of on-the-job training for research administrators.

When considering on-the-job training ask yourself the following questions:

1. How do I plan to introduce the new workload and job tasks? For example, does it make more sense for someone new to start by reviewing expenditures first or purchasing supplies first?

2. What competencies or skills would my staff need to demonstrate for me to feel confident that they could perform the task effectively?

3. How do I provide the instruction to teach that skill?

4. How do I provide opportunities to practice that skill?

5. What information or resources do staff need to practice effectively?

6. How do I maintain accountability and create opportunities for corrective and constructive feedback?

Often in research administration, we get bogged down in rules and regulations, and so we make that content the focus of our training. The content is usually excellent and valuable; however, there is so much content introduced with little to no practice. Such “drinking from a fire hose” is a common experience for formal training programs. Considering this, it’s no surprise that only 10% of learning comes from formal training programs (indeed.com).

The best way to leverage your institutional training programs is to personalize the experience as much as possible. If there is a designated trainer, schedule a meeting for introductions and discuss job tasks, prior experience, and training goals. Also, do not send new team members to training alone. The leaders I’ve seen master employee training always send new hires to training with senior team members to provide greater insight and context about the specifics of job tasks.

If you plan to leverage your institutional training programs in this way, then follow-up training content with practice exercises. For instance, if your team member just attended training on proposal preparation, plan an activity to prepare proposal elements by following a specific funding opportunity. Other practice exercises can include mocking up documents for review, performing expenditure reviews, or preparing a report. When designing practice activities, you can do anything you can imagine.

What is also great about practice activities is that team members can work independently, freeing you up to complete other tasks. It is essential to set your team members up for success by providing them any resources or information necessary to complete the practice task. Also, be sure to schedule a time to meet with your team member for discussion and feedback. I recommend setting aside a designated one- to two-hour block several times during the week for new hires.

If you and your team will be providing instruction yourselves, you can still leverage the knowledge of your institution’s training professionals. Institutional trainers are great resources for train-the-trainer tips to hone your skills. Many on-the-job training experiences involve one-on-one instruction or shadowing activities. Given the current office environment, managers may ask how to get the most out of on-the-job training without in-person office interactions. Most have been relying on video teleconferencing tools like Zoom, WebEx, and Microsoft Teams.

Video teleconferencing technology can sometime complicate matters. For example, in the middle of training our newest addition remotely, I struggled to clarify how to calculate indirect costs. I had prepared several diagrams to show step-by-step progression through the formula, but I was still not effective in helping our new hire make the connection. In our physical training room, I had access to a whiteboard where I could write out equations and I found myself wishing I had one available in my home. I then remembered that when my first grader started learning from home, the school sent him home with a small whiteboard and dry erase markers. I laughed at first but soon found myself racing to his room to recover it. It worked beautifully.

Tools like Microsoft Teams and WebEx Learning come with whiteboard applications. If you do not have something as fancy, a small whiteboard
from an office supply store or the home office section of your local department store will work nicely. It is important to remember the most helpful tool is one that allows learners to practice and for you to provide feedback. The moral of this story is that sometimes analog tools are the most effective.

Another excellent opportunity for feedback is during team meetings. I truly believe in teachable moments, and they will always appear on the job. I always encourage leaders to have conversations with the entire team to discuss best practices for working with faculty members, managing their workloads, and using critical thinking to actively solve work-related issues.

Since we have discussed instruction, practice, and feedback in more depth, let’s examine how on-the-job may look when you put all the elements together. The following is an example involving Joe, an employee, his supervisor, Meg, and a supporting team member, Tracy:

**TASK:** Expenditure Review

**SKILLS:** Peoplesoft System Knowledge, 2 CFR 200 Subpart E Policy Knowledge, Institutional Policy Knowledge, Critical Thinking

**INSTRUCTION:** Virtual shadowing with Tracy through Zoom; attend the OSP Allowable Costs Webinar with Meg; attend Peoplesoft training with Tracy

**PRACTICE:** Have Joe run a drill-down report on PROJID01 and review the May 2021 expenses for accuracy

**RESOURCES:** Agreement Terms and Conditions, link to 2 CFR 200, Peoplesoft system guidance document, purchasing documentation for May 2021

**FEEDBACK:** Meet tomorrow with Meg and Tracy at 3 pm to review work and provide clarity or confirmation

When I meet with managers to discuss practical on-the-job training, the most common objection I hear is, “I do not have time for that!” Think of the time spent developing on-the-job training as an investment in your team. Think of the personnel hours spent providing clean-up, putting out fires, or worse, recruiting and training someone else because an employee was dissatisfied with the position and moved on. It is an initial investment. However, once your training plan is in place, it will only require slight updates and revisions as processes and systems change. Leaders who create a culture of learning within their teams find that on-the-job training is done with little effort and can take on a life of its own.

To create a culture of learning within your team, encourage all your staff to do the following:

- Look for opportunities
- Assess their skills
- Practice
- Learn from others
- Ask for feedback
- Share their progress

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**Notable Practices**

As Peer Reviews occur at institutions across the country, a frequent theme emerges — the importance of a robust and effective training program. An institution’s compliance is directly attributable to the number and caliber of faculty, central and departmental research administrators who are actively engaged in research administration oversight. For these individuals to remain current and compliant in this ever-changing and dynamic climate of sponsored research, education in regulatory areas, responsible conduct, and research administration is critical for research faculty and staff across the university. For an educational program to be successful, the program must cover institutional policies and procedures, technology systems and tools, compliance issues, special risk areas, and other research resources.

Not only is education needed to remain compliant, it is also a vital resource to maintain and grow our team members. Research shows that 40% of employees who don’t receive the necessary job training to become effective will leave their positions within the first year. In a recent national survey of over 400 employees spanning three generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials), 70% of the respondents indicated that job-related training and development opportunities influenced their decision to stay at their job. Millennials had the most significant results with 87% citing access to professional development or career growth opportunities as being very important to their decision of whether to stay or go.

Having a robust and effective training program is a valuable Notable Practice. Once you build it, your job does not end there. You must continue to expand the program to ensure it remains relevant for the institutional community.

- Frequently revisit topical areas to ensure programming exists on compliance issues, special risk areas and new systems.
- Consider the topical area and identify the applicable audience. When conflict of interest and foreign influence emerged as a high-risk area, most institutions recognized this area directly related to our faculty, in addition to unit/central research administrators.
- Consider varying training modalities. If the training program was primarily live instructor-led prior to the pandemic, programming likely ceased and a shift to elearning, webinar or virtual training was needed. Lastly, do not limit yourself to one modality if the topic and audience would benefit from a combination of modalities.

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Jill Frazier Tincher, MBA, CRA, is the Vice Chair of the Select Committee on Peer Review. She has participated in peer reviews and has more than 25 years of research administration experience, spanning pre-award, post-award, central and departmental administration, as well as education and training. She is the Executive Director of Pre and Post Award at The University of Georgia.

Candice Ferguson has been a passionate trainer and research administrator for more than 10 years. She currently works as the Assistant Director of Research Training at Georgia State University. Outside of her work, Candice enjoys serving through NCURA, gardening, hiking, camping, and spending time with family and friends. She can be reached at cferguson1@gsu.edu.
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response to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, many universities worldwide have been forced since March 2020 to ask their staff to work from home while continuing to be productive and ensure the efficiency and functionality expected by their organizations. As research managers and administrators, because of the global nature of our work, we were used to dealing with international research funding and participating in transnational partnerships and alliances. Still, we were not fully prepared to perform all of our services remotely, and some of us even lacked the digital technologies, tools, infrastructures, and platforms to support the work-from-home transition.

Aalto University (Aalto), Finland, and the Technical University of Denmark (DTU), Denmark, are part of the Nordic5Tech Alliance, a strategic education, research, and innovation alliance of five leading technical universities in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. They had the same approach to deal with the emergency situation. The leaders of our institutions reacted quickly with a set of instructions to adapt our traditional structures and practices to address the need for rapid change. For instance, DTU’s and Aalto’s Crisis Management Teams published and constantly updated detailed guidelines on the effects of the pandemic on all activities at the university. They even provided information on employees’ well-being and ergonomics when working from home, remote access to IT’s systems, and how to deal with sickness and contact tracing.

Aalto’s and DTU’s employees were not new to working from home. Before the pandemic, the research managers of both universities enjoyed flexible working conditions that supported the work-from-home transition. Despite our relatively advantageous starting position with remote working, maintaining a good work-life balance was a struggle. The amount of work dramatically increased when we had to adapt all our planned activities, such as training sessions, meetings, or workshops, to the remote format, especially since several of such activities required a concept remake. In addition, the number of calls for funding proposals increased, supported by the investment in research connected with the COVID-19 crisis by national governments and the EU. For instance, both the Finnish and the Danish governments provided additional short-term...
competitive research funding for COVID-19 research, strengthening research infrastructure and networking.

When working remotely, with a home office set-up and an increasing work burden due to the need to adapt to an entirely new situation, it felt natural to work longer days and disregard the traditional structure of the workday. It requires self-drive, self-motivation, and discipline to work independently for many hours, days, and eventually months. At Aalto and DTU, our leadership takes every occasion to encourage employees to value the importance of family and free time. Aalto’s Human Resources Department collects information on employees’ well-being with a “pulse survey” used for recommendations and corrective measures every two to three weeks. In addition, recording our working time is an excellent way to keep track of overtime and ensure that we take the free time we need and deserve.

Digital technologies played a significant role in the transition to remote working. Fortunately, Aalto and DTU provided IT support as well as computers, mobile devices, and other equipment and software to their employees. In both universities, video conferences, webinars, and online meetings have become part of our daily working life. However, despite our previous experience working remotely, we had to upscale to such a degree that required the use and knowledge of a multitude of platforms and tools. Moreover, we faced the challenge of learning how to make online activities more engaging, dynamic, and fruitful for all the participants.

After a couple of days working remotely, Aalto’s IT services organized several hands-on training sessions on Zoom and MS Teams to support the acquisition of these skills. We were offered courses with trained professionals in online events and teaching. This support was fundamental for transferring our research funding training seminars to fully digital.

We noticed that the number of participants at our events increased considerably and that we could exploit the digital format to intensify the collaboration with partner institutions. This collaboration rationalizes resources and offers the researchers a broader portfolio of seminars and training sessions on research funding. For instance, with our colleagues from the Nordic5Tech universities, we organized events on Horizon Europe open to all researchers in the alliance. Aalto offered a seminar on grant writing to researchers from most Finnish universities that hosted more than 300 participants. Based on these successful outcomes, we concluded that we would continue to propose online sessions to researchers in the future. However, in-person sessions serve the vital purpose of supporting networking among researchers and between the researchers and the research administrators and will not be replaced entirely by online events in the future.

Overall, we realized that online meetings are more effective than in-person meetings as people are unlikely to talk about anything outside the meeting agenda. However, we miss the social connection with colleagues and customers. We noticed how new colleagues struggled to integrate into the team when we all are working remotely. At Aalto, in the Pre-award team, we reworked the concept of onboarding buddy: an experienced teammate carried the responsibility of supporting the integration of our new additions using weekly meetings and daily tutoring. This practice worked effectively, but it required a significant time investment.

Both Aalto and DTU offered remote social events, but they did not give the benefits and connections that in-person social gatherings bring. DTU’s Office for Research had to say goodbye to a few colleagues during the pandemic, and it was not possible to celebrate them as they deserved, with a reception and speeches. We also found it was not easy to identify suitable social activities that would work well online. Waiting better times, this is probably just something that we need to accept.

We can all agree that today’s workplace has changed. The recognition, collaboration, and sense of community have taken different shapes and forms when working from home. The COVID pandemic has provided us with an unprecedented view of the benefits and obstacles of working from home. Still, it has also pushed us to find solutions to those challenges. We learned that even if habits and routines can disappear overnight, workplaces are more flexible than we expected.

As research managers and administrators, we are used to dealing with a broad landscape of requirements, rules, and expectations and working with colleagues from all over the world. We feel that we have adapted to a changing environment and continue to offer high-level support to our researchers and colleagues. The role of our institutions in supporting these changes has been crucial, but the flexibility that is part of our qualifications has made it possible.

Dr. Claudia Dell’Era is a Senior Grant Writer at the Aalto University Research Services, helping the researchers of the Aalto School of Engineering. Her responsibilities include commenting and co-writing research funding proposals in cooperation with the applicants. She also contributes to the development and implementation of the Aalto pre-award training programme. She can be reached at claudia.dellera@aalto.fi.

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Last summer, NCURA launched an online salary survey, designed to collect salary information for specific research administration positions. Over 1,175 NCURA members contributed to the inaugural salary survey. The information collected in this salary survey has been aggregated and made available to NCURA’s members as a resource for selecting job titles, potential job families, and determining salaries based on years of experience, position type, institution type and geographic location.

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In 2015, I found myself looking to make a career change. Having conducted several research studies while I was in college, I knew that I loved the research world, but like many in the field of research administration I was not aware of the profession before I joined it. In the course of searching for a job in higher education I was lucky enough to be hired as an entry-level pre-award research administrator (RA) at Arizona State University, working within central administration supporting a variety of departments with administrative proposal details and budget development. I quickly took to the role of research administrator and found myself enjoying my work, especially helping faculty make a difference in the world through their research.

Despite my enjoyment of my role, initially, I found it hard to see myself staying in the research administration profession. I thought that my time in research administration could be more of a stepping stone to other opportunities at the university. When asked by my manager to write a five-year plan, I thought I might transition back to the technical side of research or become a research project manager. The more I worked on developing and submitting proposals however, the more I enjoyed research administration. I was able to learn something new every day and enjoyed tackling the challenges that came with working with new sponsors. Making research and project ideas come to life in ways that both worked administratively and helped achieve the scope of work was something I found rewarding. As I advanced in my role, I started to work with larger proposals and more challenging sponsors, which made the idea of a career in research administration seem more rewarding than I had expected. I started to attend workshops and conferences to learn more about the field and network with fellow RAs outside of the university where I worked. I met people from all over the world who, like me, enjoyed the administrative work of the pre-award phase of sponsored projects and took pride in helping faculty achieve their research goals.

I began thinking about professional development beyond conferences in the third year of my research administration career. If I really wanted to make research administration my career moving forward, it started to be clear to me that becoming a Certified Research Administrator (CRA) would be very helpful. After all, “Obtaining a Certified Research Administrator (CRA) certificate is a clear way to show that you have demonstrated achievement of an advanced level of knowledge and understanding of the principles, concepts, and regulations for administering research,” (Kelch, Ratcliffe, & Smith, 2016, p. 36). I began to research the requirements of the exam. I initially found the amount of information covered on the test overwhelming, especially since I was a pre-award RA with very little implementation and post-award experience. Like many others, my journey of preparing for and taking the CRA test was not linear and had several starts and stops.

In 2020, I was five years into my research administration career and while I was still hesitant about my knowledge base for the exam, I decided the time was right to get serious about studying for and taking the test. This meant I needed to find a way to study that would boost my weak areas while refreshing some of the more basic pre-award topics within the context of the test. After talking with several colleagues, I decided to join the Virginia Tech CRA study group, which was highly beneficial. I used the materials presented in the study group sessions along with my own review of the body of knowledge. I quickly noticed that while some topics were easy for me to understand, others were more challenging. Because the pre-award questions targeted things I did daily during my working hours, doing my regular work was helping me “study” those topics. Other topics, like human subjects and intellectual property, were more difficult to understand because I did not handle them on a daily basis. The topics related to sponsored project implementation and post-award required the most attention in studying, as they were not a part of my regular work. These were topics where I usually relied on colleagues at my institution to answer questions when they came up at the pre-award stage. I knew that now I was in a position where I could not rely on those institutional experts to help, so I devoted extra time studying those topics. I watched and re-watched the sessions from the CRA study group, reviewed articles, and searched online to find information that would enhance my understanding of each area with which I was less familiar.

As I studied, I found a variety of resources that enhanced my understanding in areas where I needed more knowledge to feel confident for the test. The Council on Government Relations (OGR) has a comprehensive guide that was beneficial in helping me understand all aspects of robust sponsored project administration that were non-institution specific. Through my university, I was able to access training from the CITI program on conflict of interest and human subjects, which gave me extra reinforcement of the information. I also found guides and videos on intellectual property from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office that helped me learn the basics.

In total, I spent about 60 hours studying, with most of that time focused on the topics where I felt less comfortable. I finally took the CRA test in November 2020 and passed. The combination of studying and practical experience helped me feel confident in my knowledge of research administration going into the test. If you are considering taking the CRA test, try not to let yourself be overwhelmed by the amount of information you need to know. The test gives you a chance to develop yourself beyond your day-to-day duties so that you can be an even better research administrator. Remember to take it one small step at a time and you won’t be overwhelmed by the scope of the material. Just like research is a gradual process, so too is becoming a certified research administrator and you will find the time well spent and the effort worthwhile.

Reference

Melinda Marino, M.Ed., CRA, Research Advancement Administrator Senior at the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, has been a research administrator for 5 years. In her current role, she assists faculty with funding searches, administrative proposal and budget development, and some post-award activities. She is a graduate of Texas Christian University. She can be reached at Melinda.Marino@asu.edu.
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The NCURA Education Scholarship Fund Committee, like many other committees and work groups in and outside of NCURA, learned to make do while continuing to meet many of our aims and even spent some time looking at how we can improve our outreach, organization, and relationship building.

While we were unable to raise scholarship funds at the 2020 Annual Conference, we had enough funds to continue issuing scholarships to NCURA members who are pursuing a Master’s Degree in Research Administration (MRA). We were able to issue four awards in 2020 and two awards in the Spring of 2021 — congratulations to Jill Francisco and Kylia Teixeira! We are looking forward to awarding two more scholarships this fall. Keep an eye out for our fall 2021 scholarship call for applications coming this September.

With the Annual NCURA Conference being a hybrid format this year, we will once again be able to be in-person at the event. Please keep an eye out for our table at the 63rd Annual Meeting, where we will have handouts about the scholarship fund. Whether you’re interested in helping your peers grow in their careers or if you’re in an MRA program and looking for some scholarship assistance, please do stop by and learn more about the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund. We will have a committee member at the table to answer your questions.

We didn’t forget about you virtual attendees! Please visit our online booth during the conference to learn more about the NCURA Education Scholarship Fund.

Though 2020 wasn’t what any of us expected, and 2021 is still a bit of a quirky year in its own right, it hasn’t prevented our committee from thinking about what we can do to build relationships with the institutions that offer MRA programs, better inform NCURA members of our scholarship opportunity ($2,500 to help cover the cost of tuition), and consider new ways to raise funds so that we may continue to offer this educational scholarship opportunity in an effort to nurture and grow our world-changing profession (yes, being a research administrator is the best job of all!).
Self-Care Practices are Key to Making Us Hold Tight to Our Professional Goals

By Helene Brazier Mitouart and Melanie Hebl

mid the 2020 global pandemic, research administrators from all over the world were supporting faculty members and doctors with an enhanced sense of urgency and commitment. In addition, we had to pivot to new working arrangements and technology, all while managing increased levels of responsibility at home and in our communities.

For most of us, 2020 was not the time to craft and pursue elaborate professional goals. Instead, we spent the year simply hanging on and doing our best, under immense pressure and stress. Burned out? Perhaps. Tired? Sure. Ready for change? Absolutely.

While our office arrangements may not be resolved yet and our workloads are not decreasing, the forecast for 2021 looks promising. Children are returning to school and adults are returning to the office. Things are looking closer to “normal,” and it is a great time for us to re-engage and re-evaluate our professional goals.

Much of what happened since the beginning of the pandemic felt imposed upon us; we did not have control at all. A great way to adapt and rebound is to take command of something new, exciting, and inspiring that propels us back into the driver’s seat. Now is the time to look again at our professional development. Let us re-assess where we are and where we want to go.

Career objectives look so good when listed on a nice piece of paper with bullet points. Writing down goals is a good start, but sometimes we find ourselves lacking the discipline to stick with them. External distractions and internal resistance inevitably come our way. What we need is to increase the traction power. Tony Robbins, self-help author and speaker, says: “Where focus goes, energy flows.” Here are six tips for self-care that will support you to keep your career development goals within reach:

1- Share your goal with someone you trust: That person can be a family member, a friend, a dear colleague in your institution, a mentor, or that great fellow NCURA member you met at a conference. Tell that person what you want to achieve and why it is important to you. Verbalize and be honest about why reaching that objective or completing that project is key for your professional growth. Sharing your goals with your confidants and asking them to check in with you periodically on your progress makes you accountable, increasing the likelihood of your success.

2- Visualize yourself after reaching your goal: Spend time thinking about your future self. Perhaps you want to complete a graduate program in research administration, get promoted to that dream position, implement a new strategic plan, or join a professional network at your institution. Whatever your professional goal is, take time to imagine yourself after you have crossed the finish line. What does your office look like? What are you wearing? What are you talking about? How poised do you feel? Be specific in the details you are capturing from that scene. Your brain will not be able to tell the difference between your current reality and that visualization. Imagine the sights, the sounds, the emotions you have after reaching your goals. Spend some time in the skin of your future-self to create a deep connection.

3- Set-up a positive routine for your body and mind: We all know the benefits of exercise and positive affirmations. When practiced each morning, they can make a tremendous difference for your body and mind. Moving, breathing, and thinking positive are essential to your body, heart, and brain. Regular stretching helps increase blood circulation and posture while reducing stress and releasing tension (Nazish, 2020). This allows you to show up refreshed, attentive and energized to meet your career goals. While moving your body, tell yourself “I can do it! Yes, my work has a great impact in my department! I do present clear and impactful financial reports. People want to work with me because I am an amazing colleague!” Positive affirmation has been demonstrated to lower stress and increase resilience, (Scott, 2020) which will set yourself up for more success.

4- Give yourself permission to be in the present moment: Thanks to Tip 2, you have that goal in mind and you have visualized yourself there but if you obsess about it, negative emotions about your current situation may increase. Find the right balance between being driven to reach your goal and being present to enjoy all the good things available today. Being stuck in the future all the time will steal joy from the present moment, which can reduce your energy and slow your progress forward. Recognize all the great achievements you have already made in your career. There is still room for growth, and you have come a long way and have much to be grateful for.

5- Allow yourself to be non-productive: From time to time, take a real break and go out for a walk, forget your phone, and stop tracking time. Listen to music you love, dance, laugh, or cook a dish you like without thinking about work. Your brain needs that unfocused time to do its best work. These moments are like a phase of cleaning, shuffling, and reorganization that your brain can only do when you give it the opportunity to (Whitten, 2020). When you allow your brain to get some rest, creative solutions and optimized ideas will follow. You can then return to work to focus on what you want to improve (productivity and clarity) and what you want to rid yourself of (stress and miscommunications). You probably already noticed how often you had great ideas while walking your dog, looking at the sky, or smelling blooming flowers. So be intentional in giving yourself and your brain a much-needed break. Your work and professional goals will be there when you get back, reset and refreshed.

6- Celebrate the small wins: Big goals are met with many small steps. Each time you hit a milestone on your journey, indulge and reward yourself. One effective strategy is to put a sticky note on your wall to celebrate your accomplishments: “Today, I am proud of myself because…” or “I deserve a gold star for completing that project!” You can also reward yourself with a trip to your favorite coffee shop, a new blazer that will make you feel even more confident at work or a long lunch to celebrate the
milestone. Do not skip this step. If you don’t celebrate your small wins, who will?

In our ever-changing world, it can seem that everything is being imposed upon us, leaving us feeling as if we have little control over each day. Choosing to focus on and pursue professional goals is an effective strategy to adapt to our evolving environment, putting ourselves in control again with exciting career projects in mind. Sticking to career development objectives in the current pandemic can be achieved with the support of well-chosen self-care practices. After the year we have had, we absolutely owe that to ourselves.

References

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Melanie Hebl is Education Coordinator in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She currently serves as Vice-Chair of the NCURA Professional Development Committee and serves the UW-Madison campus by designing and developing learning opportunities and educational resources for research administrators. She can be reached at Melanie.Hebl@wisc.edu.
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F
cilities and Administrative (F&A) costs not only matter in sustaining U.S. research, but also serve as a critical component of the successful partnership between universities and the government. After World War II, government investment in academic research grew and institutions, who were once able to absorb facilities and other “indirect” costs, recognized difficulties with the financial model. Unlike corporations that profit from research performed, the university mission includes teaching, public service, and research that is freely published and shared with no financial gain. Without the financial support of facilities and administration, universities anticipated their inability to support cutting-edge research. Research labs and instruments used would become outdated. Additionally, the administrative component of F&A, which funds salaries and other administrative costs, is essential for research compliance. As a result of concerns raised by research institutions, the federal government created F&A reimbursement rules so that they absorb their fair share and enable a sustainable financial model.

A review of a typical research project is helpful to illustrate differences between direct costs, facilities costs, and administrative costs and illustrate the necessity of support of F&A costs. Costs associated directly with research include salaries, materials and supplies, and project-specific equipment. Although this appears to be sufficient, there are other costs incurred that are not easily budgeted. The direct cost budget may provide funding for the chemicals used in a lab, but F&A funds the waste disposal of those chemicals. F&A costs can include operation and maintenance expenses, library expenses, and equipment depreciation costs. Although some grants may budget for specific administrative costs, many other expenses are not included in the budget. One can calculate the administrative cost of a lab administrator, but not the direct costs from departmental administration such as the academic dean’s office. The dean’s work supports the policies and procedures the research lab must adhere to, but they cannot provide direct calculations. Other administrative costs could be sponsored-project administration or student administration and services. To ensure these costs are included, an F&A base calculation is negotiated between federal agencies and universities.

As part of the rate agreement, the F&A “base” or method of calculating the direct costs to apply the rate is defined and can vary among grantees. A common misconception is that the F&A rate negotiated by research institutions and the government is a percentage of the total grant or reduces the funds available for direct costs. However, it is just the percentage of the direct costs. For example, an overhead rate of 50% on a grant providing 150,000 will get 100,000 for direct costs and 50,000 for overhead. Please note, not all federal agency programs provide full F&A reimbursement and have their own limits. These costs are only a third of the actual expenses which will allow the university to run smoothly. When negotiating this rate, the university provides the government with various information about the facilities and employees that serve indirect costs. Usually, the larger the university, the higher the F&A cost percentage.

In summary, the funding of facility and administrative costs have greatly contributed to the success of the U.S. academic and government partnership in performing research. Without the early adoption and continual support for the U.S. government model for funding F&A associated with research grants and contracts, universities would not be able to conduct research in the robust way that it has since the early days after World War II. Without F&A reimbursement, research would be performed in unkept facilities, with researchers using outdated equipment in poorly designed and antiquated labs and service centers. Inadequate facilities and services would result in substandard research and research results. Without F&A reimbursement, universities would not be able to properly fund research administrator salaries and staffing levels, thus eroding compliance with regulations and policies. Without F&A reimbursement, world class researchers would find performing research in the US to be significantly less appealing by lack of access to cutting edge and properly maintained facilities. Finally, F&A matters because research in the United States cannot thrive without the reimbursement to universities for costs that are vital to conducting research.

“F&A costs can include operation and maintenance expenses, library expenses, and equipment depreciation costs.”

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Kylia Teixeira, Research Compliance Analyst at Harvard University, supports departments from a central level on post award finances and financial compliance. She is also enrolled in a master’s program in Research Administration at Emmanuel College. She can be reached at kyliateixeira@fas.harvard.edu.
It’s 18 months into a worldwide pandemic and things have changed and continue to change. Nothing speaks louder to big change than a worldwide pandemic. A situation that requires people to readjust, reexamine, and re-enter the world with a new and shifted perspective. Much like the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918, COVID-19 has forced change on so many crucial levels including the view of government, the need for expert opinions, clear and documented societal inequities, the need for universal technologies, and mostly our response to others in the midst of crisis and change.

Thinking about change, you can see how it really is just about life. The ebb and flow of living requires constant decision making which is change itself. After all, there is birth, loss, movement, stalling, and the pursuit of knowledge and innovations. How do we get to the place of acceptance in these changes? We trust that those making decisions are capable, knowledgeable and, most importantly, responding to the change on behalf of the common good. In order to create and respond to change, one must be living in the moment, aware that life is happening around them and their role in it, acknowledging what the needs are at the time. It’s important to move forward within the change such that it becomes part of the culture and allows for new initiatives to take root; this is especially true as we review our own personal prejudices and flaws that impact our decisions and choices.

“It is not the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.”

— Charles Darwin

In business, we notice the shifting sands of change and use those moments as opportunities to adjust and create best practices, reduce waste, and figure out ways to work smarter. For example, Ezekiel Emanuel (2020) of the University of Pennsylvania, predicted telemedicine or remote office visits could skyrocket in popularity as traditional care systems are overwhelmed; staying home for a video call keeps you out of the transit system, out of the waiting room, and most importantly, away from patients who need critical care. This indicated a major shift in how people with access may seek and continue to seek medical care. Many of our organizations may have used this time to invest in new technologies such as virtual meeting platforms or document management systems. Others have discovered the liberation of work from home options. Did your organization allow for new hires as work may have expanded in unexpected ways? Or was your institution impacted by the pandemic that it had research stoppages and study closures? Certainly clinical trials or clinical research have been impacted by increased workloads over these last 18 months. For many, the speed at which clinical research can be conducted will likely maintain footing and will have direct and long-lasting impact on how we do work. Hopefully the virtual “monitoring visit” will remain a common option going forward. This was a great modification during the pandemic that greatly reduced costs for both study staff and sponsors.

Perhaps your organization has decided to pivot its business model. As people become vaccinated and masks come off, the desire to re-inhabit the office is at the forefront of executive conversations. If you had not already had a formal telework option, perhaps this change is now on the table and organizations are figuring out how best to support this new model or some hybrid. If your organization is like ours, reviewing and updating procedures and policies has become increasingly important, if nothing else than to include variations on processes for those working from home and utilizing new technologies.

Have ideas been floating around about how best to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, and mental health as part of daily decision-making in your workplace? How about initiating a check-in or state-of-the-organization event where leadership enables an open forum to listen to staff ideas, encouraging innovation? Perhaps someone on campus has an
open Zoom every morning that anyone on campus or anyone within your department can attend for a 30-minute mindfulness session? Maybe you have made a personal decision to not go to the same folks for support as you usually do, but instead, reach beyond the expected and let someone else, be your go to? The more perspectives you have to a question, motivation, or change, the better and longer lasting that decision will be.

“The key to success is often the ability to adapt.”

— Confucius

Throw the rules out the window—if we have not learned anything over the last 18 months, we have learned that rules can be changed quickly and quite easily if necessary. Use this moment to create, to build, to broaden your reach, to include different faces and more perspectives in decision making. Allow change, do not waste your time fighting it—embrace it, develop it, communicate it honestly, inspire innovation.

Before you know it, your institution will be providing course work in pandemic management, improved forecasting models, and real innovations in treatment and diagnosis of diseases unlike any seen in decades. COVID-19 has changed how we see the world, the environment, its people, and ourselves.

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These are the usual questions we hear throughout the day from new employees learning the ropes of their new positions. However, we usually hear these questions when we are physically in the office. Popping into the supervisor’s office with a question or going a few steps away to ask a friendly office colleague was the norm. These informal collaborations were not a substitute for formal onboarding, but they complemented it. They helped build rapport and trust, and it was a way to learn office culture.

Now that we are well into the COVID-19 pandemic, some research administration offices are returning to the office fully, partially, or not at all. Some institutions have had their hiring freezes recently lifted, while others have been hiring and onboarding new employees all along. No matter what, we are adapting to a new culture of training and onboarding. What has the last year taught us about orienting new employees into the complex world of research administration? This article examines the new culture of onboarding.

Certainly, a goal of onboarding is to make sure new employees know how to do their jobs; another goal of onboarding is to acclimate employees to our office environments and their colleagues. In many ways, onboarding is much more difficult in hybrid and remote working environments, but especially in this task of building community. How do we make new employees comfortable in their new office environments when there is no in-person office environment? How do we usher new employees into our office communities, when they rarely experience those communities firsthand? Senior Manager of Global Education Relationships at the Institute of Management Accountants, Neha Lagoo Ratnakar (2021), tells us that we can start by orienting new employees into the complex world of research administration? This article examines the new culture of onboarding.

Certainly, a goal of onboarding is to make sure new employees know how to do their jobs; another goal of onboarding is to acclimate employees to our office environments and their colleagues. In many ways, onboarding is much more difficult in hybrid and remote working environments, but especially in this task of building community. How do we make new employees comfortable in their new office environment, when there is no in-person office environment? How do we usher new employees into our office communities, when they rarely experience those communities firsthand? Senior Manager of Global Education Relationships at the Institute of Management Accountants, Neha Lagoo Ratnakar (2021), tells us that we can start by making this part of onboarding an engaging process and by making it fun. We can do so by turning some of our on-boarding activities into an interactive process. For instance, instead of telling new employees all the roles and responsibilities in the office, give them an assignment to do themselves. Better yet, turn the activity into a scavenger hunt to find the answers. Ask: Who is the Director of the office? Who handles audits? Who manages the website? To increase choice and challenge, assign points for different levels of engagement: One point if the new hire finds the correct answers; two points if the new hire reaches out to those people with a call/zoom to meet them; three points if the new hire meets them in person (with a fun selfie to prove it). Give new staff members several weeks or a month to accomplish this onboarding task. By increasing this level of engagement, we give new employees permission to take time to meet their new colleagues – remote, hybrid, or in person. When everyone in the office is aware of this onboarding activity, they should not be surprised to get an email/meeting request periodically from new colleagues. Everyone is in on it – even the Director.

Ongoing continuous engagement throughout the employee’s onboarding process is a critical component to helping them understand what is expected of them in their new role. They should be meeting every day with the person assigned to them with a minimum of two check-ins per day to ensure that the meetings are productive. It is very important to bring clarity to their work assignments; establish what needs to be done now (urgency), happens daily (day-to-day), and can happen later (parking lot). Lay the ground rules, and walk them through the expectations of what they have to accomplish. This goes a long way in helping new hires adjust to the office’s remote work process.

Simple tools, such as job aids, checklists, and guidance documents that reference the more detailed standard operations procedures (SOPs) or policies are important in assisting the new employee with how to conduct their job responsibilities, in the absence of walking into the supervisor’s office or to a colleague for training. As a way to provide opportunities for professional development, ask colleagues to create or contribute to these supplementary materials, and have them walk through them with the new employee to boost collaborations and familiarize the employee with aspects of office culture.

Many universities have adapted a hybrid remote/in-person schedule – 2 or 3 days each week working remotely or in person. Some research
administration offices have allowed departments, units, or teams to work remotely full time, in areas such as pre-award, regulatory compliance, contracting and subcontracting, and post-award. In assessing the impacts of the pandemic, some universities are in the process of developing new policies around working from home arrangements. We have even begun to see some universities willing to hire new employees fully remote from other states (imagine working for a university in New York while living near the beach in California, or living in a large space in Arizona rather than a New York City apartment). However, not all institutions may have the ability to allow for this, as there may be implications on a variety of legal and financial issues, such as workers compensation, taxes, and state laws. They may need to hire individuals within commuting distance of the university, or only allow for fully remote employees in other states on an individual, case-by-case basis. Reach out to your supervisor or human resources department if you have questions about your institution’s policies in this area.

It is important that organizations do not sidestep the onboarding process, regardless of where the employees are located. There are ways to do this in the current environment. However, it will be interesting to see how onboarding advances in the next few years, considering the lessons we have learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part of what makes us feel connected is our ability to feel we are being heard and understood. Creating a learning environment that fosters our ability to connect will keep us associated and allow us to re-connect as we forge ahead.

Reference

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We are emerging from one of the most devastating events in this century. Most institutions told students, faculty, and staff to stay home or isolate from others, knowing it was best for everyone’s health and safety. Over time, we began to understand the many complexities of such a sweeping decision. In the world of sponsored programs, funded projects continued, proposals were submitted, contracts negotiated, grants activated, subawards issued, invoices sent, payments received, and projects closed. We adapted. We leaned on each other for support – technical, policy interpretations, even emotional support. Research administrative and financial staff stayed at their work from home (WFH) desks, doing all that was necessary to maintain sponsored activities. Sponsors also felt similar pressures, relaxing certain requirements; institutional leaders facilitated a reliable, sound remote working environment; and recruitment into open positions continued. Despite our collective best efforts, everything required and still requires more time – especially when trying to fill open positions. Individuals can leave after two-weeks’ notice but the hiring process can take months. Interim staffing has become a viable option.

Uses and Benefits
Whether one needs a temporary fill at the analyst level, mid-level management or director leadership, academic research institutions may find solutions through interim staffing. It is important to consider the qualifications of the person that left the position, assess current needs, and identify someone who can transition into the role quickly and effectively. Mid-level management is a common need. The interim manager can immediately assume routine team management responsibilities and provide quality review and oversight of staff work products. They can be used to fill critical pre- and post-award staffing needs, manage a special project, address backlogged areas, and work in many different roles. Interim staff can quickly adapt to institutional practices and systems, or pivot when expertise is needed in emerging situations. What may start as a three- to six-month assignment to hire and train a permanent replacement, can sometimes extend much longer as new, unplanned needs emerge.

Interim staff will need to be onboarded, provided access to institutional systems, and pass required compliance training. Interim staff will also need to be trained in key responsibilities of the job role. Experienced interim staff will already know the fundamentals of sponsored programs administration, including the grants cycle, clinical trials process, regulatory requirements, and most elements of our field. Imparting this knowledge to others is essential. The new perspective will be shared and spread organically with others, through the process of understanding questions and knowing where to find the answer.

Institutional Perspective
Staff retention and turnover is a constant struggle. Experiences of institutional leaders have shown that:

- Any change in the day-to-day operations can, and often will, lead to turnover when not planned for properly
- When one leaves, others will follow
- Although they may intend to, not everyone returns from parental leave
- Notice of staff departures happens with 2 weeks’ notice or less
- Remaining staff know that workload will be redistributed (how unfair for loyal staff but it’s a reality faced by every work unit)

System conversions, upgrades and implementations have a direct impact on staff, and coverage and support need to be planned for as well. Work units will need to keep up with existing workload while learning a new system. Significant change will increase stressors among staff, and some will choose to move elsewhere or become less productive, and job roles and responsibilities will need to be reevaluated.

Factors for a recent successful interim staffing engagement from the institutional perspective start with anticipating what is to come and engaging the leader’s network for staff resources. It is important to start this process early and overstaff by 2-3 full-time employees (FTE) before a planned system conversion started. That way, interim staff could be trained on the old system, attend testing and training in the new system, and assist in the creation of documentation and training so all are up to speed and comfortable by the scheduled cutover.

By Grace Cashman, Dave Lynch and Jon Teuber
As with any system conversion or implementation, there will be setbacks and intangible disturbances which directly impact staff. Having additional FTE on hand will help absorb the additional impacts on workload and maintain staff morale during challenging times. Any new system work is already in addition to their current day job. It is also important to have staff resources close at hand so that vacancies can be filled quickly. Executive and institutional leadership support was critical in this example to maintain overstaff levels throughout the conversion until a steady state was reached. At that time, the institution agreed to complete a staffing-to-workload analysis afterwards and right-size the staff accordingly. In some instances, job descriptions were reviewed and staff were realigned to new roles that they were now better suited for.

“When used effectively, interim staff can provide needed stability, continuity, and consistency to an institution operating through staff transitions; it can also alleviate burnout and support team morale.”

Leadership team vacancies create a need for someone who can step into the situation, immediately manage the assigned team and report back to the leadership group. The transition often needs to be invisible to research faculty and chairs. The interim manager is there to maintain operations, assist with recruitment of their replacement and extend beyond to ensure a smooth transition and solid start for the new manager. They can also assist with recruitment of their replacement and extend beyond to ensure a smooth transition and solid start for the new manager. They can also assist with recruitment of their replacement and extend beyond to ensure a smooth transition and solid start for the new manager. They can also provide immediate value. Change is omnipresent in sponsored programs administration. Interim staff can also prevent further backlogs or over-extending existing team members, while allowing institutions the time needed to make effective hiring decisions. It can be most effective when institutional leaders establish clear plans and expectations. Interim staff can quickly leverage experience and perspectives gained in other roles and provide a calm, adaptable approach in support of sponsored programs.

Whether one has an institutional perspective or the interim staff viewpoint, utility players can provide immediate value. Change is omnipresent in sponsored programs administration. Interim staff can quickly assess and manage a given situation in a way that is best for the institution, while preserving professional relationships. Providing service when compliance and risk underlie just about everything that we do presents the immediate challenge. Temporary overstaff can allow the executive leader to take on a new project or facilitate a high-profile grant off to a good start. Start the process early, and readiness to learn quickly, but it is also important for the interim staff member to also provide that level of assurance starting quickly. They will need to establish a calm, organized approach to onboarding. Leaning on experiences gained from working through staff shortages brings an important perspective. Recognize that systems, processes, and portfolios differ, and it takes time to learn the nuances of a new environment quickly; knowing the questions to ask and seeking out information will pay dividends. A readiness to jump in where needed, recognizing that the expressed employer needs may shift quickly, is an asset to the institution and a reality.

With that intention in place, interim staff members can lead behind the scenes even when not in formal management roles. Supporting a team manager or director as a sounding board and competent, adaptable team player is an unwritten benefit to the institution. Ensuring an understanding of where institutional authorized official roles and decision-making responsibilities are held is equally important, as is using judgment on when to alert leadership of potential challenges. Patience goes far in these roles, as records, project updates, and workflows may not be as in-place as an institutional leader would prefer; clear communication becomes critical to avoid assumptions but also effectively address work at hand.

Lessons learned, advice to others
When utilized effectively, interim staff can provide needed stability, continuity, and consistency to an institution operating through staff transitions; it can also alleviate burnout and support team morale. Interim staff can also prevent further backlogs or over-extending existing team members, while allowing institutions the time needed to make effective hiring decisions. It can be most effective when institutional leaders establish clear plans and expectations. Interim staff can quickly leverage experience and perspectives gained in other roles and provide a calm, adaptable approach in support of sponsored programs.

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The Changing Future of Data and Research

By Dawn Underwood

In April 2021, a coalition of researchers, administrators, librarians, IT professionals, and students met for the fifth annual CADRE conference entitled, “The Changing Future of Data and Research: Cross-Disciplinary Problem Solving.” Formed at Oklahoma State University in 2016, the Coalition for Advancing Digital Research and Education (CADRE) aims to “help computational and data-driven researchers connect with the resources, training and people that can help them produce better, faster, and more thorough research than ever before.” (CADRE, 2017) This year, the coalition turned its attention to the challenges of research in a post-COVID world, a world changed by loss and political turmoil, a world in which many understand the importance of research and public trust in science. Discussions about data collection, storage, analysis, collaboration, and presentation broadened to include healthy research cultures, diversity, undue foreign influence, and avoiding research misconduct.

Indeed, the last couple of years have been full of change. American researchers at Harvard and MIT were arrested for failing to disclose relationships with foreign talent programs. The COVID pandemic closed campuses and laboratories. Academic research paused while institutions figured out how to proceed safely. Resources that were designed for research were shifted to assist with pandemic response. At the same time, people called out for social justice. From their homes, people saw the social injustice of police brutality and responded. On June 6, 2020, more than half a million participated in Black Lives Matter protests. (Buchanan, Bui & Patel, 2020) Another voice arose as well. The Stop Asian Hate movement grew in early 2021, in response to race-related, but attributed to COVID, violence toward Asian Americans.

How does the CADRE conference relate to our work as research administrators? As research administrators, we support researchers through change. We help scientists identify funding sources, get the award, manage accounts, navigate federal, state, and local regulations. We facilitate research and set the stage for success. Some themes emerged at the CADRE conference that are worth consideration by research administration leaders. Below are some of the conference highlights, with relevant questions for research leadership.

Jared Taylor, an epidemiologist for the state of Oklahoma, shared how technology and systems must evolve to provide timely data. What can we do to ensure researchers have tools that adapt to changing environments?

CK Gunsalus, Director of the National Center for Professional and Research Ethics (NCPRE), shared tools and ideas for building healthy research cultures within our institutions. Are we assessing and promoting diversity, understanding, and communication in the lab and field?

Dewayne Dickens, Director of Culturally Responsive Practices at Tulsa Community College, hosted a panel of experts to share the story of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Diverse voices matter. How can we truly value and listen to others?

We also discussed financial and non-financial conflict of interest disclosures. How can we promote effective research partnerships with international partners in an age of heightened concern about research security?

In many ways, these themes may seem disconnected. They are wide-ranging and hard to get our minds around. Yet, they reflect changes that will affect research for years to come. Now, more than ever, solid, collaborative, global science is essential to survival. At this writing, it feels that we are emerging and rebuilding the research enterprise, the college experience, and our relationships with others. Take a minute to consider the new challenges being faced by researchers today and how we, as research administrators, can continue to help research thrive. The CADRE conference offers some insight into key issues facing academic research in a post-COVID world. What we do with this information remains to be seen. As research administrators, we should use our new knowledge to encourage, support, and grow research, research that matters in a changing world. For more information about the CADRE conference and a link to the CADRE YouTube Channel, visit https://cadre.okstate.edu.

References
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- Webinars: New in 2021, NCURA is holding six Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webinars for our members!

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In 2018, it was announced that Tennessee State University (TSU), a land-grant Historically Black College/University (HBCU) located in Nashville, achieved R2 status (Tennessee State Upgraded, 2019). In doing so, it became one of eleven among 102 HBCUs to rise to this level in the Carnegie rankings, evidence that the university’s slogan, “Excellence is our Habit!” is more than words—it is a reality. This accomplishment, approximately 50 years in the making, marked TSU as an institution that achieved a high-level research activity and signaled that TSU is well on the way to R1 status. The achievement of a Carnegie research designation is a triumph for any university. It is especially notable for HBCUs, institutions with a history of underfunding since their inception to the present day. As recently as April 2021, a report compiled by the Tennessee Office of Legislative Budget Analysis reveals that the state of Tennessee has shorted TSU as much as $554 million in legislatively mandated state match for federal land-grant funds (Weissman, 2021).

So how did TSU achieve R2 status? It was not by accident. It took decades of strategic planning, financial investments in talent and infrastructure, and consistent focus and implementation to progress from a Carnegie Master’s university in the mid-20th century to R2 status in 2018. This article briefly chronicles TSU’s rise through the Carnegie rankings and lays out a roadmap for HBCUs and other resource-challenged universities to accomplish this stretch goal by relentlessly converting challenges into opportunities.

**Challenge:** Academic Program Duplication

**Opportunity:** Advocacy

When you hear that a university has been awarded R2 status, the first thing that comes to mind is its level of research activity. So why is the first challenge discussed in this article academic program duplication? The fact is that a university must be considered a doctoral university to qualify for R2 status. Awarding at least 20 research or scholarly doctorates qualifies a university as being doctoral level (Carnegie Classification, 2018). Given the finite number of graduate students pursuing research or scholarly doctorates, uniqueness in the marketplace is essential to produce 20 or more graduates on an annual basis. Therefore, the duplication of academic programs that took place in Tennessee’s state-funded post-secondary education system had to be addressed.

Academic program duplication became a focal point for TSU alumni and other supporters to focus their advocacy to help the institution thrive. Program duplication was one of the major grievances of litigation aimed at rectifying the inequities TSU suffered since it was established 1912. Geier v. Tennessee resulted in the 1979 merger between TSU and a predominantly white institution (PWI), the University of Tennessee-Nashville (UTN), established in the 1950s. TSU absorbed UTN and all its assets were subsumed under the TSU banner (Geier v. Tennessee, 1979). Rid of intra-city state-funded competition, this landmark legal decision helped to set TSU on a path to grow its graduate programs and established a precedent for legal victories for other HBCUs, including Coalition v. Maryland, with a $577 million settlement for Maryland’s four public HBCUs which was finalized in March 2021 (Seltzer, 2021).

**Challenge:** Transitioning from Teaching Institution to Research Institution

**Opportunity:** Research Enterprise Leadership

Established in 1912 as the Agricultural and Industrial Normal School, the early emphasis for the institution was instruction. In the mid-20th century, TSU began awarding master’s degrees in teacher education and was granted...
full land-grant university status. This led to an increased emphasis on research, especially in agriculture, life sciences, engineering, and other STEM disciplines (Tennessee State University, n.d.).

By the 1960s, senior leadership was appointed to provide direction and strategy for the growing research enterprise. A series of senior leaders served as chief research officer (CRO) in the 1970s and 1980s. They ensured that research was embedded in institutional strategic planning and resource allocations. The establishment of an annual research day in 1979, which is now a weeklong symposium, further strengthened the research culture on campus by recognizing and rewarding research and creative scholarship of faculty, staff, and students. Although the CRO would shift from a direct report to the president to a dotted line report through academic affairs as changes in university administration took place in the late 20th century, growing the research enterprise remained an important goal for the university (Tennessee State University, 2012).

In addition to a university level CRO, the College of Agriculture and the College and Engineering invested in associate deans of research to marshal the collective talents in their respective units. These investments paid dividends in the form of millions of dollars of research funding and the creation of cutting-edge graduate programs. The establishment of research centers (listed below) also bolstered TSU’s research productivity. Under the leadership of energetic and savvy research directors, TSU gained international recognition for research conducted in these centers, including the discovery of the first extra-solar planet (Wilford, 1999):

- Center for Aging: Education and Research Services
- Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development
- Center for Prevention Research
- Center of Excellent in Learning Sciences
- Center of Excellence in Information Systems
- Center of Excellence for Battlefield Sensor Fusion
- Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Research
- Otis L. Floyd Nursery Research Center at McMinnville
- Nanoscience and Biotechnology Core Facility
- Tennessee State University Interdisciplinary Graduate Engineering Research (TIGER) Institute
- Otis L. Floyd Nursery Research Center at McMinnville
- Center of Excellence for Battlefield Sensor Fusion
- National Nanotechnology Coordinating Facility
- Center for Learning Sciences
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The present-day Division of Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP), led by associate vice president Dr. Frances Williams, is the result of an NIH Research Centers for Minority Institutions (RCMI) grant in 1990 (Tennessee State University, 2012). Initiatives led or championed by RSP to build momentum to achieve R2 status include the following:

- RSP Building
- Research faculty positions
- Reduced teaching loads
- Research Enhancement Award
- Writing Den/ Writing Club
- Faculty Summer Writing Retreat
- Multiple Submit Strategy
- Revise and Resubmit Strategy
- Federal Demonstration Partnership Phase VII

**Challenge:** Limited Financial Resources  
**Opportunity:** Strategic Use of Seed Funds

Committed to be a major player in university research, the determined faculty, staff, and administrators of TSU were undeterred by the challenges created by limited financial resources. Adequate funds to establish doctoral programs, build and upgrade research facilities, and underwrite research infrastructure were not always available in the university budget. Therefore, TSU made strategic use of seed funds from state and federal funding agencies to invest in initiatives that would create upward movement in the Carnegie rankings. Buttressed by the research activity in the Center for Learning Sciences, the university began granting doctorates in education in the 1990s. It was soon followed by doctoral programs in the disciplines of engineering, supported by state and federally funded research conducted in the Center of Information Systems, and biological sciences, supported by funds from NIH, Title III, and USDA funded research. Today, TSU offers 7 doctoral programs aided by the momentum of these earlier successes.

In 2007, TSU opened a new facility dedicated to research. The university provided funding for the completion of administrative offices for RSP while the balance of the building was a shell that was completed by executing an aggressive and strategic proposal writing plan to fund research facilities. The building’s laboratory spaces were completed in 2012 after receiving several million dollars in federal grant funding for scientific facilities. Although under-funded by the state, leadership in the College of Agriculture has been able to optimize limited resources to create state-of-the-art Agricultural Research and Education Centers on multiple sites in middle Tennessee.

**Conclusion**

TSU has come a long way from a normal school in the early 20th century to a major university with an international reputation for excellence in research. Under the leadership of President Glenda Glover, the university is not resting on its laurels—the achievement of R1 status is just a matter of time given the intentional approach to strategic planning and financial investments in research talent and infrastructure. The purpose of this article is to give a brief glimpse into how TSU achieved R2 status and provide signposts for HBCUs and other resource-challenged universities, to develop a roadmap to rise in the Carnegie rankings. It is also an opportunity to say congratulations, TSU!

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It’s been a while since I’ve provided an update on RAAAP. For various reasons the analysis of the RAAAP-2 survey is taking longer than anticipated. As a disclaimer, the information presented here is still draft, as the data have not yet been signed off, but at this stage any changes are sure to be minor.

Just a quick reprise for anyone not up to speed with the behemoth that is RAAAP. In 2015 Stephanie Scott (from Columbia University) and I were awarded a grant from the NCURA Research Program to run a global survey of research managers and administrators – Research Administration as a Profession – RAAAP. The survey ran in 2016 and elicited 2,691 responses. We wrote about this (Kerridge & Scott, 2018a) and have released all of the anonymised data (Kerridge & Scott, 2018b). An extended group of us then ran a follow-on RAAAP-2 survey in 2019, sponsored by the International Network of Research Management Societies - INORMS, and we received 4,325 responses to that second survey. You can keep up to date with progress and information on the INORMS (2021) website.

So, with the huge amount of data collected in RAAAP-2 and the small matter of harmonising the data collected from the Chinese version of the questionnaire, things have taken somewhat longer than initially planned. With that in mind, we were awarded another project from the NCURA Research Program, but due to the global pandemic, we are now working within a no-cost extension (well we are research administrators!).

One of the main aims of the second tranche of funding is to undertake RAAAP analysis, looking at changes between the 2016 and 2019 datasets, and also bringing in other related datasets such as RASPerS (Shambrook et al, 2020). But let’s not get ahead of ourselves. What is presented here is some preliminary analysis of the RAAAP-1 and RAAAP-2 datasets based on responses from the U.S.—and even this has revealed some potential changes over the three years between the surveys.

The overall composition of the two surveys was roughly the same in terms of data such as seniority, gender, and age. In 2016 the percentage of U.S. leaders, managers, and operational staff that completed the survey was 28, 38, and 32, respectively; in 2019 it changed slightly to 26, 28, and 35. Looking just at the binary genders, we had 16% male and 84% female in 2016, and 16% and 82% in 2019. The age-profile was also fairly similar – however, as noted in Figure 1, there were fewer younger respondents in 2016. Overall though, these similarities give confidence that the data sets are comparable.

When we look at the experience in terms of years as a research administrator, for the most recent survey, we see a higher proportion of research administrators with fewer than 5 years of experience, but this is balanced by a lower proportion with between 5 and 9 years of experience. But overall the age profiles are rather similar.

But where have these new research administrators come from? How do they find their way into the profession? There are hardly any under 25 years of age, so they are not coming straight from college. If we look at those who perhaps started off as researchers and then moved into research administration, we see a negligible difference over the years. Almost 80% in both surveys cited this as a low importance (that is to say, they have not previously been researchers). And only just over 10% gave this as this as high importance (that is to say they did indeed move from research into research administration). But this proportion has if anything dropped slightly (from 12% to 11%) – research administrators in the U.S. tend not to have moved from research.

So was it a job that they had always wanted? Well the 2016 data shows that just over 80% of U.S. research administrators did not move into the profession because they were interested in it – that is to say 80% had probably not heard of the profession before joining. In the second survey this reduced to around 68%, so a higher proportion of research administrators in 2019 had heard of the profession (and been interested in it) before joining. Indeed for all of the other importance levels, there has been an increase.

The proportion of respondents who selected the top of the importance scale (5) doubled, albeit from 2% to only 4%.

But one of the most important reasons for people choosing to become a research administrator (and staying as one) is that the role matches the skill set that individuals bring. And this seems to be increasingly true. In 2016 the top two responses (4s & 5s) accounted for 62% of the
respondents, rising to 69% in 2019. With the lowest two options (1s & 2s) accounting for 23% in 2016, falling to 16% in 2019. So it seems that research administrators are in general finding the right role for their skills and increasingly so. Clearly though, there is further work that we as a profession need to do to raise our profile and attract staff, rather than them finding us, often it seems by chance. We also need to make sure that we are as open and inclusive as we can be. As Shambrook et al (2020) showed, ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the U.S. research administration workforce.

Looking ahead, the next iteration of RAAAP is already being formulated. We aim to keep the three-year periodicity and run the survey in 2022. After the first survey which focused on skills, and the second on research impact and engagement, RAAAP-3 will have a focus on “How I Became a Research Manager and Administrator” – HIBARMA. So in addition to extending the longitudinal dataset, we hope to come out with some really interesting life stories as exemplars of the multitude of different ways that we have come to the wonderful profession that is research administration. Please do keep a look out for the RAAAP-3 survey coming your way in 2022, as we really could not do it without your amazing support!

In addition to the guest section, we will continue to refine the core question set too — and as always, we are keen to hear from the community on how to improve the survey. For example, in RAAAP-2, we added a non-binary option for the gender question, and for RAAAP-3 we will add a question on ethnicity, which was sadly missing from the first two iterations. So please do get in touch if you have any suggestions or indeed criticisms!

We will of course continue to work on these analyses; there are many more data points to explore — RAAAP will be back! But in particular, in the next tranche of work we hope to shine more of a light onto how people find research administration - in order to help us and our professional bodies raise the profile of this amazing profession, and importantly, do this in a way that the message reaches those most suited to being research administrators, regardless of their background.

The RAAAP Team Projects
- **RAAAP-1**: Simon Kerridge and Stephanie Scott were the Co-PIs on the RAAAP-1 Project (Kerridge & Scott, 2018a) with Patrice Ajai-Ajagbe, Jan Andersen, Janice Besch, Cindy Kiel, Susi Poli, and Deborah Zornes as advisors.
- **RAAAP-2**: The INORMS RAAAP (RAAAP-2) project has Simon Kerridge, Patrice Ajai-Ajagbe, Cindy Kiel, Jennifer Shambrook,
and Bryony Wakefield as Co-PIs, with Stephanie Scott and Deborah Zornes as advisors.

- **RAAAP**: The RAAAPA project has Simon Kerridge, Cindy Kiel, Jennifer Shambrook, and Deborah Zornes as Co-PIs, with Patrice Ajai-Ajagbe, Stephanie Scott, and Bryony Wakefield as advisors.

- **RAAAP-3**: The HIBARMA team comprises Simon Kerridge, Madhuri Dutta, Melinda Fischer, and Cristina Oliveira.

These four interrelated projects have been running for more than five years, collecting and analysing data about our profession of research management and administration. For more information on the RAAAP projects and links to the various publications and datasets, visit the website: [https://inorms.net/activities/raaap-taskforce](https://inorms.net/activities/raaap-taskforce).

Simon Kerridge, BSc, DProf, is Director of Research Policy and Support, University of Kent. Simon is a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Collaborate Community Working Group, an EARMA board member, a past chair of ARMA, an adjunct lecturer on the Johns Hopkins University’s Master of Science in Research Administration, an editor of the Journal of Research Management and Administration, and Leader of the various RAAAP projects. He can be reached at s.r.kerridge@kent.ac.uk or on Twitter @SimonRKerridge.

**References**

INORMS (2021) INORMS RAAAP Taskforce (webpages) [https://inorms.net/activities/raaap-taskforce](https://inorms.net/activities/raaap-taskforce)


**Figure 5**: U.S. respondents in the two RAAAP surveys – rationale for becoming a research administrator was due the role matching their skills.

Became an RA because "matched my skills"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>RAAAP-1 (n=941)</th>
<th>RAAAP-2 (n=1415)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (low)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>5 (high)</td>
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Was this a strong reason for becoming a Research Administrator?

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The pandemic has caused unprecedented upheaval in all sectors of industry throughout the world. Higher education and related sectors were no exception among industries, suddenly having to redefine operations while minimizing disruption to services. As a result, research administrators were faced with sustaining operations while managing teams unaccustomed to working remotely. Many research administrators also experienced an even heavier volume of work as researchers sought funding for COVID-related research, a goal that we all supported with passion to move the country beyond the public health emergency. Budget constraints compounded the many challenges facing research administrators across the globe.

In May of 2020, in the early stages of the pandemic, NCURA Region I hosted a virtual discussion group led by a panel of research administrators to explore and anticipate the challenges ahead. The panel represented a cross-section of institutions with varying sizes and focus including: Andrew Chase, Vice President, Research Management & Research Finance, Mass General Brigham; Louise Griffin, Senior Director, Research & Sponsored Programs, University of New Hampshire; Kris Monahan, Director of Sponsored Projects & Research Compliance, Providence College; and Ara Tahmassian, Chief Research Compliance Officer, Harvard University. The panel was moderated by Jill Mortali, Director of Sponsored Research at Dartmouth College.

As with many in the field during this time of unexpected change, the group shared experiences and strategies for keeping their teams and institutions on track. Sharing and building upon best practices, the group emphasized the importance of having a plan for disruptive events - “planning for the unexpected.” As a direct result of their shared experiences and challenges, the group produced A Primer on Business Continuity in Research Administration, published by NCURA. The primer provides a comprehensive set of considerations and principles for planning for any disruption and includes a template for preparing a business continuity plan for research administration. The downloadable resource is available on the NCURA website at https://onlinelearning.ncura.edu/read-and-explore

A year later, the group reconvened with Region I members to lead another virtual discussion. This time, the group was able to take a step back to reflect on the disruption caused by the global pandemic, review our current state as we emerge from the pandemic, and, finally, look to the post-pandemic future. Participants provided comments in advance on key questions such as challenges with remote work, plans for the next six months, and plans for the long term. To be expected, many responded that working remotely has presented challenges in communication, management, work-life balance, and technology. As far as planning for the next six months or farther in the future, research administration is not unique among other professions of the service economy in considering long-term opportunities around remote work.

What would you have done differently?

On the topic of business continuity and lessons learned, Ara Tahmassian started the discussion with “What a difference a year makes!” Further reflecting on the May 2020 discussion, he continued, “I remember somebody saying what would you have done differently, and I couldn’t think of anything because it was so quick and ongoing. Now I think about this and, boy, are there things we would have done differently. We really weren’t ready; we did a tremendous job, but like most of our colleagues had to come very quickly up to speed.” About where they are now, he added, “I think we are much better prepared.” Reflecting on the question of preparedness, institutions such as Mass General Brigham had a jump on managing through disruption due to prior unfortunate circumstances that tested their teams. As Andrew Chase
commented, “Our office was near ground zero during the Boston Marathon bombing. We had to physically stay away from the office for several days as we were within the security parameter for the investigation. That was a very strong wake up to say we needed to make sure that we put in place robust business continuity planning.” He added, “I do think, though, that what COVID presented was a very different challenge because this isn’t a single point in time. This has now extended well over a year, and I think that part of it is, regardless of the technology solutions to enable continuity, it’s really about the people.” He raised an important question “Did we invest enough time with each individual on the team? Because, ultimately, this has been a journey, and it’s been a journey for each one of us.”

**Defining the Future**
Feedback from the audience and the panel indicated that all of our institutions and all of us are talking about what the near- and long-term future holds. Many plans are still being developed with varying levels of input from staff. Some institutions such as Providence College have already announced plans for staff to be on-campus and fully operational, effective July 6, 2021. Other institutions are discussing hybrid models that offer more remote work and flexibility while still having consistent operations on-campus. For many institutions, a several questions remain: How will space be used? Who decides if a team or team member is remote? What protective measures will be required?

In polling the audience regarding a date for research administrators to return to campus, many will start transitioning back over the summer with a large uptick of institutions returning in September. Having said that, some are contemplating long-term options for being fully remote. Louise Griffin explained that the University of New Hampshire will “have a soft rollout starting July 1, where staff will be encouraged to come back to campus.” She further explained that each “unit is basically allowed to determine what type of remote work situation will work.”

On the topic of remote versus on-campus, Kris Monahan highlighted a key issue at Providence is “diversity and inclusion across campus, not with research administration specifically, but the conversation centered on whether those who are allowed to work remotely or hybrid are typically in higher-paying jobs, creating disparities in which types of positions are allowed to have these flexibilities.”

In reflection of different concerns for urban and rural areas with commuting and competition for skilled staff, Chase offered a prediction, “I think that we’re going to be much more of a national employer.” He offered that candidates might have more job opportunities and “you’re no longer limited to only have one or two employers in your region.” He speculated that candidates “might be getting offers from all around the country because it’s such a niche market and it’s such a high demand for this skill set.”

The future of research administration will also be impacted by financial trends in higher education. Louise Griffin raised the point that finances in higher education have been on a trajectory of change. Griffin believes that COVID “exasperated a situation that was only going to come to roost sooner or later” with “fewer students enrolling, there are a lot of challenges” will drive efficiency.

To end the discussion, Monahan reflected, “I do feel some camaraderie and solidarity with all of you that we’re working through these things together and sharing responses and approaches.”

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To see the full recording of the May RADG virtual discussion visit [http://ncuraregion.org/radg-meetings.html](http://ncuraregion.org/radg-meetings.html).
F&A Cost Rates and Reimbursement Pressures Under COVID-19:
Maintaining a Fair and Reliable System

By Cathy Snyder, David Kennedy, and Toni Russo

The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating and the worldwide effects continue to this point. The loss of life, ongoing public health concerns, and economic disruptions require our continuous attention—and it is fair to say we may never return to what we previously considered our normal way of life. Through it all, the research community, led by so many incredible individuals from our institutions—investigators and academic professionals, dedicated administrators and leaders, government officials at all levels, and many, many others—has been at the forefront in addressing the challenges created by the pandemic, doing breakthrough research to develop COVID-19 vaccines, ensuring workplace safety and good health practices, and preparing for the short-term and long-term challenges that await.

Beginning with the early days of the pandemic, the Council on Government Relations (COGR) quickly mobilized to: 1) provide information and resources to the community; 2) present COVID-19 specific webinars open to members and non-members, alike; and 3) write to and advocate for policies and practices, recognizing the pivotal role research institutions would play (and continue to play) in the U.S. and global recovery from the pandemic. Part of COGR’s advocacy has been on the topic of Facilities & Administrative (F&A) cost reimbursement and corresponding F&A cost rates. As we all appreciate, F&A cost reimbursement plays a niche, albeit important and necessary role, in the research ecosystem.
In April, COGR released a paper, F&A Cost Rates and Reimbursement Pressures Under COVID-19: Maintaining a Fair and Reliable System. We made this paper available to the broad research community with the intent that a wide breadth of stakeholders will engage in the issues and advocacy raised in the paper. Collaboration is the hallmark of the longstanding Federal Government–Research Institution Partnership, and whenever we are in a space of uncertainty and change, relying on healthy partnerships is crucial to the sustainability of any system, and in the case of the F&A cost reimbursement process, ensuring the system remains fair and equitable for research institutions and the federal government.

A reliable F&A reimbursement process – which both the federal government and research institutions can trust – will help to minimize disruptions to the research enterprise caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like so many facets of the research enterprise, processes relevant to F&A have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While F&A cost reimbursement has held relatively steady throughout the pandemic, the process of developing an F&A cost rate proposal has been significantly impacted. Consequently, this has affected: 1) how to approach a possible request for an F&A cost rate extension, 2) developing projections for long-term F&A cost rates under new circumstances created by the pandemic, and 3) other strategic decisions that may impact future F&A cost reimbursements.

In order to maximize effective institutional strategic decision-making, the COGR paper highlighted these key points and strategies:

- Institutions must be savvy in understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on FY21 or FY22 F&A cost rate calculations. In fact, completion of a F&A cost rate proposal trial run may be the most important step in assessing how these impacts will affect an institution’s F&A cost rates.

- Separate the issues specific to an FY21 or FY22 cost rate calculation from prospective considerations, to the extent possible, during negotiations. An FY21 or FY22 calculation is a “point-in-time” metric used to determine F&A cost rates for FY23, FY24, FY25, and beyond. Prospective considerations are complicated by the many unknowns. When engaging in F&A cost rate negotiations, experts at the institution who are the most knowledgeable about the prospective considerations should be leveraged when engaging with F&A cost rate negotiators from the cognizant agency.

- Be aware of faculty considerations. Institutions may feel pressure to more widely use lower, off-campus F&A cost rates; however, doing so may not be appropriate when lab space remains functional and assigned to a PI. Unless a PI has officially relinquished research space and the research is being conducted in a remote location, use of the full on-campus F&A cost rate is most appropriate. The paper devotes a full appendix to discussing issues around space utilization metrics and space sharing.

- Continue advocacy for a fair and equitable F&A reimbursement process. Research institutions should do the hard work necessary to understand all factors that drive and could potentially impact F&A cost reimbursement – e.g., cost structure, space usage, technology infrastructure, library costs, interest rates, new compliance regulations, and other factors – and formulate transparent and equitable institutional policies to ensure F&A cost reimbursement appropriately supports the costs of the institution’s research enterprise.

- Maintain and nurture good relationships with your cognizant agency (e.g., Cost Allocation Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Naval Research). As institutions move forward with strategic decisions on potential F&A cost rate extensions, use of provisional F&A cost rates, or other related decisions, it is imperative to be in regular communication with your cognizant agency.

As new variants of COVID-19 emerge and vaccine implementation remains inconsistent, we cannot be certain as to what lies ahead on both the U.S. and global stages. And of course, what happens domestically and abroad will impact all research issues, including the F&A process. COGR will continue to encourage all stakeholders—senior leadership at research institutions, those responsible for developing and negotiating F&A cost rates, cognizant agency leadership, and other key federal government leader – to stay engaged in important discussions about F&A cost rates and F&A cost reimbursement. Commitment to collaboration will help ensure the system remains fair and equitable for research institutions and the federal government.

A special thank you goes to the COGR Workgroup who researched and wrote this paper.

The Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), established in 1948, is an association of 190 leading universities and research institutions and is nationally recognized as the technical expert on a wide range of research policy issues, including how the research funding model works in the United States. Member institutions conduct more than $70 billion in research and development activities each year and play a major role in performing basic research on behalf of the federal government. COGR brings a unique perspective to research regulatory issues and focuses on the influence of federal regulations, policies, and practices on the performance of research and other sponsored activities.

Cathy Snyder is Director of Data and Cost Analysis within Research Finance at Vanderbilt University responsible for various costing activities (F&A, fringe rates, service centers, etc.), effort reporting, award setup, and reporting. She currently serves as NCURA’s Treasurer and on the Council of Governmental Relations (COGR) Board of Directors. She can be reached at cathy.snyder@vanderbilt.edu.

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Toni J. Russo is an Administrative Officer and Policy Analyst at the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR) in Washington, D.C. Toni’s responsibilities include supporting COGR’s policy and advocacy work, as well as overseeing the administrative and financial functions of the organization. She can be reached at trusso@cogr.edu.
Most research managers would not think that there is a commonality between the field of research management and the guiding management principles of U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who served as the 34th president between 1953 – 61. But there is such a commonality – the concept of balance.

One of the more intriguing definitions of balance found in the online version of the Merriam–Webster Dictionary is “equipoise between contrasting, opposing, or interacting elements.” Using this definition, what does balance mean to research managers? And how is balance achieved at the global level? For many, the essential balance is between facilitating faculty research while complying with sponsor terms and conditions. Another such balance is between research and teaching. Another is research integrity compared to financial growth.

The question of balance in research management came to mind when I recently watched the farewell address of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, given to the American people on January 17, 1961. While his address is most famous for his warning regarding the influence of the “military–industrial complex” in the halls of government, he also had the following to say about U.S. Government and corporate support of basic and applied research:

“Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. A huge increase in newer elements of our defense; development of unrealistic programs to cure every ill in agriculture; a dramatic expansion in basic and applied research - these and many other possibilities, each possibly promising in itself, may be suggested as the only way to the road we which to travel.

But each proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs - balance between the private and the public economy, balance between cost and hoped for advantage - balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable; balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between action of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration.”

Later in the address he states:
“Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial - military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades.
In this revolution, research has become central; it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly. A steadily increasing share is conducted for, by, or at the direction of, the Federal Government.

Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been over-shadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.

The prospect of domination of the nation’s scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present and is gravely to be regarded.

Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system - ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.”

Though that speech was given to the American people 60 years ago, President Eisenhower’s comments then, and the national research and research management enterprise now, remain in lockstep today. While the challenges in the field of research management today are significant and constantly changing, it seems that faculty, staff and administrators at universities, colleges, and research entities should take a closer look at the concept of balance. In fact, the concept of balance could be considered a sibling of another significant research management concept – administrative burden. Administrative burden, in the field of research management, may be considered a lack of balance between forces and agendas in the research enterprise.

Not only has the U.S. research enterprise – and research management – changed dramatically since President Eisenhower’s time, but the global nature of it has lent to complications barely foreseen in 1961. The global nature of research management immediately leads to dimensions of culture and differences in political structure, some of which has dramatically changed while others have remained basically the same. We all know that the especially fluid nature of global research management is now complicated even more by the pandemic and what the post-pandemic world will look like. It seems, then, that research managers and leaders globally should be even more cognizant of the concept of balance than before. That remains a challenge for us today.

James Casey, Esq., CPP, is a data protection attorney and Adjunct Associate Professor in the CUNY Research Administration and Compliance Program. His present-day passions are contracting, data protection / GDPR, and the intersection of law + science. He is a Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and the Wisconsin Law Foundation and received the NCURA Distinguished Service Award in 2009. He may be reached at jcasey@caseyprivacycontracting.com.
The global pandemic changed how we work, engage, facilitate, and learn in our careers, lives, and activities.

Research administration is a constantly (and sometimes rapidly) changing field, with the ability to pivot based on the needs of the institution, the faculty, and the guidelines/regulations dictating how we do what we do. The pandemic has also provided opportunities to review how and where we work, how we communicate, and how we can adapt these moments of change to begin or invigorate the culture of research on our campuses. There are some things about 2020 we’d rather forget, but there are also some things we learned about adapting to our changing environment that we can and should carry forward. Below are a few creative steps to respond to disruptions and expand your research culture.
Develop a flexible research infrastructure to facilitate, support, grow, and sustain research and scholarly activity across the campus

Take this opportunity to consider, with your staff, stakeholders, and leadership, what the current environment looks like in your day-to-day operation. Ask these questions to assist with assessment and improvement for operations:
- What modifications have happened in the research administration process on your campus?
- Have duties changed?
- Do staffing levels need to be modified or workloads adjusted?
- Does having remote-working staff make sense, or allow for a more balanced staff?
- What are the communication practices that have gone well during the pandemic and what flopped?

Work with the colleges and academic units during this process to refine and improve research administration processes. Identify and analyze current and future research infrastructure, needs of the institution, and activities to strengthen, expand, and accommodate growth of the research enterprise.

Ensure sustainability through a culture of engagement in research

The last thing anyone wanted during the pandemic was optional virtual training and professional development. Institutions that thrived during the pandemic were places that had already created a culture of supporting faculty and student research.

Transitioning an existing, strong, visible culture to a virtual environment is much easier than trying to build a culture as the virtual plane was flying. Work in advance to build a culture by identifying current research, activities, interests, capacity, and facilities across campus. Support participation at research conferences and symposia, provide internal funding opportunities, and support research events. Engage faculty in an internal peer review process. Ask faculty to return from their events and celebrate them internally. Having a strong culture ensures sustainability through the disrupted times.

Engage leaders at the institutional level

Engagement in the culture depends heavily on the leadership of the institution. Ideally, having a university administrator at the AVP or VP level solely dedicated to the research enterprise is going to ensure the culture thrives. However, especially at PUIs, this is not always possible. In these circumstances, having a regular line of communication with university leadership who have a stake in research, often a provost or similar position, will be necessary to have a healthy research culture. If a dedicated leadership position isn’t possible, consider creating a Research Advisory Council (RAC) within the sponsored programs office. A RAC acts as an official faculty body to discuss research related concerns and ideas, but doesn’t create institutional administrative bloat.

Implementation of cultural change requires the administration to allocate resources based upon faculty members’ current motivation and ability, with regular examination and evaluation of needs

Some ideas to consider:
- Invite external experts from federal agencies to present to faculty on specific programs, such as NSF, NIH, NEH in virtual meetings
- Offer internal/external training in grant writing, budget development, responsible conduct of research, human and animal subjects, etc.
- Offer workshops/training on demand, upon request, online, and tailored to the needs of the college/unit/department.

Creating a culture of research should include consideration of student involvement at the graduate and undergraduate levels. You might:
- Celebrate a Research Month or set up research symposia activities
- Create and disseminate student research and mentoring opportunities
- Encourage faculty to involve students in funded research applications
- Provide opportunities and assistance for students to apply for external research funding for their own projects

COMMIT, AT AN INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL, TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT RESEARCH ENDEAVORS.

A strong research culture may take years to develop, and requires maintenance once established.

Don’t expect institutional efforts to yield immediate fruit. Even large moves like expanding the organizational structure and adding staff to accommodate a future increased research enterprise is an investment that may not result in an immediate surge in research expenditures for the institution. Commit, at an institutional level, to encourage and support research endeavors, scholarly activities and collaborative partnerships in the college and across disciplines. Stay the course and the expectations of the institution will eventually change. Before too long, the expectation to produce research will be part of the institutional fabric. Be flexible and patient, and always keep an eye toward future opportunities to grow.

While we hope not to endure another global pandemic in our lifetimes, we recognize that work disruptions, small or large, will always happen. We can’t control everything about the environment, but we can choose how we respond. Flex your creative muscles and choose to see disruptions as growth opportunities!

Bruxanne Hein is the Director, Research Services at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro and Savannah, GA. She has a BA in English from the University of South Carolina, a M.Ed., Educational Administration from the University of South Carolina, and an Ed.S., Educational Leadership from Walden University. She has also served as the Executive Director for the Georgia Southern Research and Service Foundation for more than 5 years. Her experience includes pre- and post-award (non-financial) research administration, project management, troubleshooting, policy development, and non-profit organizational management. She can be reached at bhein@georgiasouthern.edu.

Linnea Minnema has been the Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs at Samford University in Birmingham, AL since August 2016. Prior to that, she served as a Research Contracts Program Manager at the University of Notre Dame, and in multiple research administration roles at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She holds a Masters in Management with a Certification in Research Administration from Emmanuel College and a BA in Political Science from Calvin College. She can be reached at lminnema@samford.edu.
Rashonda Harris, MBA, CRA, is now the Director of Award Management and Post Award Services at the University of Connecticut.

Kevin J. McHugh has joined Maximus as Vice President of their Higher Education Consulting Practice. Kevin currently serves as a Task Force Member/Technical Advisor to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) and is a frequent speaker on various valuation/property management topics for numerous professional organizations throughout the US.

Simon Kerridge, Director of Research Policy & Support at the University of Kent recently retired after more than 25 years in research management and administration. While only an NCURA member since 2014 he has been active in the UK and European associations, having spent 15 years on the UK ARMA Board, including 3 years as chair; and is currently a board member of EARMA. For NCURA, Simon has served on the Select Committee for Global Affairs, a Presidential Task Force, as conference track co-chair, collaborate D&I working group, global travelling faculty, and presented and written widely. He has been honoured with a Global Fellowship and two Research Program awards. After “retirement” Simon plans to continue to do what he enjoys most - research administration.

Holly Schreiber, MBA, CRA, is now the Director of Sponsored Programs at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture.

Tony Ventimiglia has been named the Assistant Vice President for Research Administration at Auburn University.

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

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MORE INFO: ASK.KR@KUALI.CO
It’s hard to believe that another academic year is just around the corner! With the new academic year comes increased activity not only in our “day jobs,” but also in opportunities to connect with colleagues by way of NCURA Region I’s offerings. This fall, Region I is planning to hold a virtual orientation for new members, which will provide an overview of the Region’s structure, approach to professional development, volunteering, and paths for future leadership opportunities. In addition, Region I is planning to host virtual networking events with a focus on discussing emerging issues and best practices in the functional areas of research administration.

As many of you are experiencing, this fall is also a time of transition—some back to the office, for others, adjusting to a hybrid schedule or permanently settling into a fully remote workplace. Over the past fifteen or more months, we have all had to develop approaches to remaining agile under changing and challenging circumstances, and being patient with ourselves and each other. We’ve made it this far! Let’s keep going! With that in mind, the Region I Advisory Board and Annual Meeting Planning Committee has put together a fantastic schedule of educational, networking, and collaborative events for our upcoming Annual Regional Meeting with a theme of Together Toward Tomorrow Focusing on What Matters. This meeting is scheduled for November 7-9, 2021 in Newport, Rhode Island, and will held in-person.

Eva Pasadas, JD, is the Chair of Region I and serves as Director, Grants & Contracts at Northeastern University. She can be reached at e.pasadas@northeastern.edu.

NCURA Regional Corner

Happy Summer Region II! I hope you have been enjoying the weather and the gradual return to pre-pandemic activities.

We have been hard at work with our colleagues in Regions VI (Western) and VII (Rocky Mountain) planning the first virtual Super Regional Meeting for October 19 - 21, 2021. We are excited to bring together all of the wonderful people, resources, and knowledge from across our three regions and hope you can join us!

- Do you want to attend? Register here: www.ncura.edu/Education/MeetingsConferences/EventInfo.aspx?sessionaltcd=2021REGION267
- Are you interested in volunteering for the meeting? Contact Region II Chair-Elect Adam Greenberg at Adam.Greenberg@asrc.cuny.edu.

We are also looking forward to the 63rd Annual Meeting online and in Washington, DC. Look out for announcements from Region II about events during the meeting. We hope to see you there!

Region II plans to offer travel awards for both the Annual Meeting and the Super Regional Meeting. For more information, please visit our website (https://ncuraregionii.org) and our Facebook page.

We have good news to report regarding the 2022 Fall Regional Meeting. We have secured the dates of November 6-9, 2022, at the Dupont Hotel in Wilmington, Delaware.

Lastly, the Region is working on its on-going initiatives, including a new website that will launch by Fall 2021; the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force; and, virtual and in-person PDC webinars and workshops.

Reminders:
- If you are interested in hosting a PDC workshop for your institution or would like to present a webinar, please contact Jaquion Gholston at jgholsto@stevens.edu.
- Stay connected to the Region: Join our Facebook page and the Region II community on NCURA Collaborate.
- Want to volunteer? Please reach out to Chair-Elect, Adam Greenberg, Adam.Greenberg@asrc.cuny.edu.

Best wishes for the start of the academic year!

Catherine Parker is the Chair of Region II and serves as a Contract Administrator in the Office of Research Administration at the University of Maryland, College Park. She can be reached at caparker@umd.edu.
While we were sad to cancel our 2021 spring meeting, Region III was able to come together and successfully host a virtual business meeting on April 27th. We recognized members of the 2021 program and planning team for their efforts, and we were pleased to announce our regional award winners:

- Laney McLean (Florida State University) - Sandy Barber Volunteer Award
- Erika Clark (University of Louisiana, Lafayette) - Pam Whitlock Rising Star Award
- Rashonda Harris (Emory University) - Distinguished Service Award

Congratulations to our amazing awardees! They all work hard for Region III and we appreciate their contributions.

We ended our online meeting with the traditional Region III Executive Committee leadership transition: Emily Devereux (University of South Carolina) completed her term as Immediate Past Chair, Laura Lebeter (Georgia State University) became Immediate Past Chair, Scott Niles (Georgia Institute of Technology) became Chair, and Natasha Williams (Emory) became Chair-Elect.

We are also excited to welcome a number of new committee coordinators to our flock:

- Social Media: Jessica Lambda (Florida State University)
- Honors & Awards: Angela Garvin (Emory University)
- New Members: Kendra Ellis (Duke University)
- Philanthropy: Melissa Freudenberger (Clemson University)
- Sponsorship: Melissa Freudenberger (Clemson University)

We are grateful for their commitment and look forward to seeing what they accomplish this year.

Finally, we are excited to announce that Region III’s 2022 Spring Meeting will take place in Louisville, KY at the Galt House Hotel from May 1-4, 2022 with pre-conference workshops on April 30th. Planning is underway, led by our Chair-Elect, Natasha Williams.

Don’t forget to keep up with the latest regional news by connecting on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, the RIII Collaborate Community, and our website (ncuraregioniii.com).

Kathleen Halley-Octa is Region III Secretary and serves as Director, Office of Research & Sponsored Projects in the College of Education and Human Development at Georgia State University. She can be reached at khalley1@gsu.edu.

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has totally changed our way of thinking and how we handle our processes! It has challenged us to think outside the box and forced us to adjust how we look at the typical way we handle our regional and national duties. We have had to cancel regional meetings, held Board and Business meetings over Zoom, had virtual or hybrid annual meetings and so many other changes. Looking forward to our first hybrid annual meeting brings on a whole new perspective. While we are excited to get back to a sense of normal, we are faced with still more new challenges since we can’t ALL be together. Throughout it all, NCURA and its members have shown our strength, adaptability, patience (with ourselves and others), flexibility, and above all our resilience! While the pandemic was full of negatives, I hope that each and all of you can focus on the positive aspects and bring those into this new normal that we are facing TOGETHER! As we head into our first hybrid Annual Meeting, I hope each of you are able to reconnect with treasured colleagues, as well as meet some new people.

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who has worked on the AM63 program this year, but especially our Region IV members. I am sure your work to make AM63 a success was not an easy task. Thank you for your time and effort to make this year a fantastic one!

Jennifer Ponting - University of Chicago
Dave Richardson - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Over the next several months, we will be holding some Learning Opportunities paired with a Hospitality Hour. The Learning Opportunity will be in a discussion group format followed by the Hospitality Hour. Please join us for either (or both) sessions. The details of each meeting will be sent, via email, to members shortly before each gathering, but feel free to share this with any of your coworkers (not just members). Please mark your calendars for September 23rd, December 15th, and February 8th!

Make sure you don’t forget to celebrate yourself and your colleagues on Research Administrator Day, September 25th. Remember that Region IV is always here to support you as a member, Research Administrator, and as a friend. We have a great year planned and look forward to getting together again in Minneapolis, Minnesota (May 8-11, 2022).

Katie Schortgen, CRA, MA, is the Chair of Region IV and serves as the Manager/Director of Grants Accounting at Eastern Michigan University. She can be reached at khoops@emich.edu.
Greetings, Region V! It has been an exciting year. We launched our Lunch & Learn series, graduated our first Mustang Mentoring Program cohort and planned our first Region V Annual Meeting since the pandemic.

The planning for our 2021 Fall Region V Meeting is underway! It will be held November 7-10, 2021 at the Marriott Hotel & Golf Club in Fort Worth, Texas. The theme is “Celebrating YOU - Research Rock Stars.” You all held the research world together during COVID-19 and now it’s time to celebrate all of your hard work and accomplishments during this challenging time. Please refer to our Region V website and eBlasts for details including registration information. The meeting will be an in-person meeting, but will have a virtual component. Our site selection committee is already busy at work for our Fall 2022 Region V Meeting location and dates.

We launched our Lunch & Learn series this year. So far, we have presented seven (7) and on track to offer another five (5) topics by December 2021. The topics have ranged from informative updates to advanced post-award topics such as managing audits and investigations. A big thank you to our past presenters.

- Jason Whisenant, Texas A&M University
- Dianne Valdez, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Rick Valdez, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Robyn Remotigue, University of North Texas Health Science Center- Fort Worth
- Su Cole, University of North Texas Health Science Center- Fort Worth
- Jennifer Husmo, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Anne Roberts, Oklahoma City University
- Hollie Schreiber, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture
- Abby Guillory, North Carolina State University
- Marilyn Bobbitt, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Kristi Mercer, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center

Lunch & Learn topics are offered the second Wednesday of every month to members of Region V. Our presenters are volunteers who graciously devote their time to develop and present important topics in research administration and contribute to NCURA’s mission.

Congratulations to Hollie Schreiber on her new position at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture! Hollie has been a long-standing member of NCURA. She has served in various roles for Region V as well as on the national level. Thanks so much for your leadership and contributions to Region V. We wish you the best in your new role.

As we head into summer, I find myself super eager to get registered for NCURA AM63 – I cannot wait to see colleagues after the long stretch of virtual-only interactions. While it’s great that we’ve all found a way to keep going and keep learning, I do miss seeing people in person, hearing voices and laughter that are not cut off or overrun by audio duplexing or Zoom-freeze! If you’re coming to Washington, DC this year, shoot me an email – I’d love to make your acquaintance as well!

On that note, be sure to keep an eye out for regional calls for travel and registration awards – if we can help get you there, either in person or via virtual means, our Region VI Awards committee would be glad to see your application.

One of the things I’m looking forward to most at NCURA AM63 will be watching our very own Derick Jones from the Lundquist Institute receive the 2021 NCURA Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award! Many of you know Derick as an incredibly active Region VI member – he’s a frequent presenter at meetings and in other offerings, he’s been incredibly active and a driving force for LeadMe and our professional development offerings, and he’s represented our region on a number of national committees throughout the years. Derick can always be counted on to pitch in, to help others grow and succeed. We are so fortunate to count him as one of our own, and I can think of no more worthy a recipient of this honor than Derick. Congratulations, Derick!

And, reminder: Save the Date – RM2021 is planned for October 19-21, and this year will be EXTRA – we have the great fortune to bring three regions together, Region 2, Region 6 and Region 7! Calls for opportunities to volunteer, present, and get involved with our FIRST SUPER REGIONAL have been issued — we look forward to hosting you all later this year!

In the meantime, be safe and well and keep in touch!

Lisa Wottrich, CRA, is the Chair of Region VI and serves as Manager for Contracts at SRI International. She can be reached at lisa.wottrich@sri.com.
Hello Jackalopes! By the time you read this summer will be winding down and many of our campuses will be reopening and welcoming back faculty, staff, and students. I wish you a happy and healthy transition to fall 2021!

RM2021 update: The Regional Meeting 2021 planning committee is working hard to bring an amazing experience for all members. This 3 region virtual meeting will have a wide range of topics and levels of expertise—not a meeting to miss! Mark your calendar for October 19-21, 2021! Registration is open — early bird registration ends 8/31 and last day to register is 10/8.

The communications committee welcomes its new member and newsletter editor, Noelle Strom of University of Denver. Be on the lookout for our Region VII newsletters. If you have a topic or item for newsletter spotlight, contact me.

Stay up to date with the latest from our region on our website www.ncuraregionvii.org.

Trisha Southergill is the Chair of Region VII and serves as Grant Support manager at Montana Technological University. She can be reached at psouthergill@mtech.edu.

Hello from Region VII International – hoping there comes a day when we can join you for the Annual Meeting in DC. Here in Australia, there is virtually no international travel which I can assure you is an unnatural condition for Australians. On the plus side the pandemic has had relatively little impact with less than 1000 deaths throughout the country and the economy is robust.

In the meantime, we can still engage through NCURA and through our research collaborations. The complexity of these collaborations has required significant allocation of resources to manage and respond appropriately. National security risks posed by the transfer of intellectual property have become increasingly topical in geo-politics.

Legislative requirements to protect intellectual property are hardly new. In 2018 the US Congress passed a law that bars colleges that host Confucius Institutes from receiving Defense Department funding. As in the US most Confucius Institutes in Australia are based in universities. There are 14 Confucius Institutes in Australia – all but one is based at a university. By its very nature, much of the Department of Defense’s research is sensitive and related to national security so the decision was made to exclude research funding at universities hosting Confucius Institutes. The impact of this decision is now being felt across the world including in Australia.

In Australia the Government recently introduced legislation to protect Australian interests in the exchange of intellectual property. What does this mean for research administrators as we manage this within our own institutions and with our global collaborators? The Oct/Nov edition of NCURA Magazine will include tips and strategies which we have used to navigate the terrain with US universities.

Lisa Kennedy is the Secretary of Region VIII and is the Director of Research Partnerships at The University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. She can be reached at lkennedy@uq.edu.au.
A team of scientists, backed by a $10 million grant from Schmidt Futures, will work to enhance climate-change projections by improving climate simulations using artificial intelligence (AI).

Led by Laure Zanna, a professor at New York University’s Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences and NYU’s Center for Data Science, the international team will leverage advances in machine learning and the availability of big data to improve our understanding and representation in existing climate models of vital atmospheric, oceanic, and ice processes, such as turbulence or clouds. The deeper understanding and improved representations of these processes will help deliver more reliable climate projections, the scientists say.

“Despite drastic improvements in climate model development, current simulations have difficulty capturing the interactions among different processes in the atmosphere, oceans, and ice and how they affect the Earth’s climate; this can hinder projections of temperature, rainfall, and sea level,” explains Zanna, part of the Courant Institute’s Center for Atmosphere Ocean Science and a visiting professor at Oxford University. “AI and machine-learning tools excel at extracting complex information from data and will help bolster the accuracy of our climate simulations and predictions to better inform the work of policymakers and scientists.”

The team, which will include researchers from Columbia and Princeton universities, MIT, the National Center for Atmospheric Research, the Geophysical Fluid Laboratory, and France’s Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), incorporates expertise in climate science as well as in scientific machine learning and in the development of climate models.

Schmidt Futures, a philanthropic initiative founded by Wendy and Eric Schmidt, former CEO and executive chairman of Google and chair of the Pentagon’s Defense Innovation Advisory Board, backs ideas in science and technology with the aim of raising awareness of the issues they address.

The five-year project, M²LInES, is part of Schmidt Futures’ recently launched Virtual Earth System Research Institute.

“We are excited by the possibilities of this ambitious international project, which could contribute strongly to the goal of achieving long-term global climate models that can be trusted and used,” says Stuart Feldman, chief scientist at Schmidt Futures.

The project also includes Joan Bruna and Carlos Fernandez-Granda, assistant professors at NYU’s Courant Institute and Center for Data Science, who are experts in Machine Learning and signal processing. To handle the massive amount of data involved in this research, the team will rely on open-source software and infrastructure developed by the Pangeo Project, a community platform for big data geoscience led by team member Ryan Abernathey, an associate professor at Columbia University.

Due to the complexity of the atmosphere, ocean, and ice systems, scientists rely on computer simulations, or climate models, to describe their evolution. These models divide up the climate system into a series of grid boxes, or grid cells, to mimic how the ocean, atmosphere, and ice are changing and interacting with one another. However, the number of grid boxes chosen is limited by computer power; currently, climate models for multi-decade projections use grid box sizes measuring approximately 50 km to 100 km (roughly 30 to 60 miles). Consequently, processes that happen on scales that are smaller than the grid cell—clouds, turbulence, and ocean mixing—are not well captured.

“These processes and their interactions are critical for climate,” notes Zanna. “Clouds impact local precipitations and global mean temperatures while ocean mixing influences how much heat and carbon the oceans will absorb.

“As a result, existing model shortcomings undermine our ability to make accurate forecasts of weather and climate, on both regional and global scales.”

The researchers on the Schmidt Futures-backed project seek to reduce the imprecision of existing models developed by modeling centers by using machine learning to more holistically capture physical ocean, ice, and atmosphere processes. The team will rely on a wealth of datasets from a range of existing idealized and global high-resolution simulations and observational products that capture processes, such as mixing and clouds. Machine learning will guide the development of innovative, physics-guided, and interpretable representations of these complex processes directly from data for use in global climate simulations.
A visionary SRO has an unique opportunity to implement changes that could transform their institution’s research enterprise for generations. However, the SRO also has an immense responsibility for ensuring that the research conducted at their institution is compliant with all legal and regulatory requirements.

This three-part series from NCURA should be required viewing for all SROs, whether new to the role or a bit more seasoned, to help them fully understand how, and the degree to which, their vision for excellence in research depends upon excellence in research administration.

Craig A. Reynolds
Assistant Vice President for Research – Sponsored Projects
Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) | University of Michigan

FACULTY

Judy Fredenberg
Assistant Vice President for Research (emeritus), University of Montana

Dan Nordquist
Associate Vice President for Research and Deputy Vice President for Operations, Washington State University

David Richardson
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Ara Tahmassian
Chief Research Compliance Officer, Harvard University

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LIVE VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS
- Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
  September 21-24, 2021
  1:00-5:00 pm ET

- An Auditor’s Guide to Research Administration
  September 28 – October 1, 2021
  1:00-5:00 pm ET

- Departmental Research Administration Workshop
  October 12-15, 2021
  1:00-5:00 pm ET

- Contract Negotiation & Administration Workshop
  October 12-15, 2021
  1:00-5:00 pm ET

IN-PERSON TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
- Financial Research Administration Workshop
  October 6-8, 2021
  Providence, RI

- Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
  October 6-8, 2021
  Providence, RI

- Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop
  October 6-8, 2021
  Providence, RI

WEBINARS
- Developing Compelling Budget Justifications
  August 16, 2021
  2:00-3:30 pm ET

- Participant Support Costs: An Overview of Dos and Don’ts
  On-Demand

- Navigating “It Depends…”
  On-Demand

- Audits: What’s Hot
  On-Demand

- Excel for the Research Administrator
  On-Demand

- Data Security in a Remote Environment
  On-Demand

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

NATIONAL CONFERENCES
- 63rd Annual Meeting – Hybrid Experience
  August 30 – September 2, 2021
  Washington, DC

- Financial Research Administration Conference
  March 14-15, 2022
  New Orleans, LA

- Pre-Award Research Administration Conference
  March 17-18, 2022
  New Orleans, LA

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