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• Cultural Transition
• Connecting, Learning, and Working Together
• Why Our Staff Matter

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THEORY INTO PRACTICE

IN THIS ISSUE: Research administrators are masters at moving Theory into Practice. Need proof? Then look no further than the contents of this issue of NCURA Magazine. In theory we thought it would be possible to operate offices virtually, to conduct training and personnel appraisals without in-person meetings, to be active participants in meetings and conferences from our own homes, to engage with new kinds of partners, and to collaborate across international borders.

Included in this issue are a few theories that have been moved into practice by NCURA members around the world. It takes a village—maybe large, maybe small—to effectively manage grants and contracts. Joyce Ferland and Susan Zipkin provide some practical advice for post award financial managers while Nicole Tardiff and Kyle Lewis offer the perspective of working in a PUI. Monica Di Meglio; Aradhita Baral; and Nada Messaikeh, Holly Mace and Lily Moinette offer three international perspectives on moving theory to practice at Humanitas University in Milan, CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology in New Delhi, and NYU Abu Dhabi.

Mentorship programs are in place for NCURA members both at the regional and national level. Marcia Millet and Cailla Czaplár, recent participants in R3RAMP, discuss how both the mentee and mentor can come away with valuable insights and important leadership lessons as a result of taking part in these programs.

Speaking of leadership...take a moment to read the article by Tanya Blackwell in which she (re)introduces us to NCURA legend Catherine Taylor-Core and the far-reaching impact of the minority travel award that bears her name. Recipients of the award have become leaders in our organization serving on the magazine, it literally couldn’t have happened without you. I’d like to thank Marc Schiffman in the national office who serves as the managing editor of the magazine and keeps us on track and on time. If you are looking for a volunteer activity, please consider NCURA Magazine.

Sometimes we need to just step away from the theories and take a moment for ourselves. Jennifer Shambrook takes a look at the leisure activities of some of our colleagues in this issue’s “Self Care for the Research Administrator.” Remember, the time spent away from work engaging in a hobby can actually make you more productive, happier and healthier!

On a personal note, I will soon roll off the editorial staff of NCURA Magazine. I’m proud to say that I’ve “hit for the cycle” on the magazine. Over the years I’ve written articles, served as a contributing editor, a co-editor and the senior editor. With each issue, I’ve been amazed by our collective ability to produce a quality publication done almost entirely by volunteers. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers I’ve worked with over my years on the magazine, it literally couldn’t have happened without you. I’d also like to thank Marc Schiffman in the national office who serves as the managing editor of the magazine and keeps us on track and on time. If you are looking for a volunteer activity, please consider NCURA Magazine.

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

By Rosemary Madnick, NCURA President

As this year comes to an end so does my term as your President and it has been in honor to represent and to serve the membership. I want to take this time to look back at this unprecedented year for our organization. It has been a year filled with great conferences starting with the first virtual FRA and PRA meetings in March, the virtual regional meetings and the only in-person regional meeting for Region V and capped off with the hybrid (virtual and in-person) 63rd Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Through it all, enthusiasm, energy, and dedication by all the volunteers and the national office staff was an inspiration.

I would like to share with you some of the exciting initiatives and accomplishments that the Board of Directors was engaged in and achieved this year:

The Nominating & Leadership Development Committee (N&LDC) lead by Denise Moody was charged with integration of the Empowering Members by Engaging Resources and Growing Excellence (EMERGE) Program into N&LDC. 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 welcomes its first cohort in January 2022.

The N&LDC 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 N&LDC the renaming of the “Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award” to the “Robert C. Andresen Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award.” In addition, an award to provide the “Gold Award” posthumously to the Bob during the 63rd Annual Meeting and was accepted by his loving family. The award recognizes “an individual who has made a sustained and distinctive contribution to the vitality and enduring legacy of NCURA.”

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 recommendations were shared with all regional leadership.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Select Committee chaired by Marianne Woods distributed and reviewed the data from NCURA’s Climate Survey. The results of the survey will continue to guide the Board of Directors and regional leadership with initiatives for the membership.

Lastly, we are research administrators who help to provide hope for a better tomorrow, and we are a resilient globally connected community. As a result, NCURA is proud to support the success and growth of research administrators—and is excited to announce the launch of the new Young Professionals Program, which will provide specialized professional development designed for the next generation of research administration leaders. A few focus groups were held in the fall.

In closing, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as President, alongside my colleagues on the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and our various committees and task forces. Special big thanks to the extraordinary NCURA staff led by Kathleen Larmett and Tara Bishop. It has been my pleasure and privilege to have worked together. I look forward to continuing my service on the Executive Committee next year as your Past President. I want to thank all of you who have served and contributed so much of your time and efforts and talent.

It is the people that makes this organization the premier leader in research administration.

In gratitude,

Rosie Madnick

“Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.”

—Voltaire

The 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. Consequently, when the Board met in November, we were able to focus our priorities and actions. We are an organization with a strong track record of pushing the limits and being proactive to ensure that we offer the best opportunities and experiences to our membership when it comes to educational and professional development within research administration.

NCURA Magazine | December 2021
Working in research administration is fraught with challenges at every level. While leaders are constantly seeking new avenues to reduce costs and increase revenues, often times this is at the expense of staff and process. This is especially true when working with nonprofit institutions that do not have the structure of an academic institution or the funding of a hospital or healthcare group. Nonprofits require a special finesse in successful day-to-day business needs to accomplish the simplest of tasks, as well as a deep understanding of processes.

The rules and regulations we apply to our work are the same, however the nonprofit does not necessarily have the established relationships that exist for an academic institution or hospital and those relationships are not easy to establish. In fact, the independent nonprofit may require multi-layered relationships and extensive contracting of those relationships just to conduct clinical research. This can be compounded when your newfound “relationship” is challenged by an “idea” that needs to be put into practice.
As research administrators, we work diligently to resolve complex issues and ideas that often sprout from the notion, “Sounds good in theory, but ….” We are everyday issue warriors who take existing knowledge and stretch it, review it and dive ever deeper to re-apply it to resolve new and more complicated situations, changes, or ideas. We don’t do this alone. We heartily work with subject matter experts, our peers, and fellow warriors to find the best answers and responses. We research ideas and process so that we can work with others to put the best response forward. These skills are an innate part of thriving as a successful research administrator and incredibly important for those at small organizations and nonprofits.

Such was the case when approached by our partner, a contracted hospital, to put together a workflow for clinical research that would be accessible to their staff and controlled by hospital leadership. The expectation was that they did not want to be bothered with clinical research questions or bogged down with clinical research management minutiae. After all, they are a public hospital and patient care is the concern. What to do? Accept the challenge of course!

This was a grand idea, but it would rely heavily on establishing a solid level of understanding of processes to be implemented and maintained. Central to this process development would be effective communication and consistency between the two parties that, at times, had diverging ideals of health care delivery and clinical research. It was known that the hospital would want a process directly correlated to the needs and interests of their physicians. Therefore, we needed to consider the best possible model. We would need to address this by looking at the history and mission, work with subject matter experts, explore the theory to its most important parts and then, key in on those relatively quickly. With multiple ways to approach this type of change, organizations should select the process which is most suited to their abilities and environment (human-centered design, intuitive nature, or ease of understanding).

We used a process where all aspects of the idea/theory/change are measured against those actively engaged in the clinical research process, while ensuring a diversity of perspectives. Not an easy task nor short lived. Bringing any idea to fruition with the anticipation that it will be sustainable, requires investment. Administrators must be willing to push through and see beyond the ideological differences. With clear and diplomatic communication, we worked to see issues from one another’s perspective and to align our vernacular. We took several years to finalize and document our process where we could implement a working, though still growing, model. Persistence was our superpower. Things we considered with this process change included: 1) impact and sustainability, 2) training, 3) support solutions, 4) manpower, and 5) value.

After deciding on our approach, we broke down the concept into parts and spent a significant amount of time explaining to the hospital in lay terms, the reasons for our approach to ensure they understood with real world grasp. We encouraged them to allow us to identify the key players and initiate a “picture” of the workflow. In some ways, their team was actively learning about research administration from us — the experts in this field.

We were thoughtful in our approach because we knew what would be necessary to accomplish this new “arrangement”. All the while, taking into consideration our organizational environment and encouraging them to bring their organizational environment into the process. In essence, we applied Frederick Herzberg’s motivational theory to pinpoint important commonalities of environment while thinking about what hospital and institution staff would need in order respond and engage.

While we were working through this project, the clinical research cycle continued as did internal changes, mistakes, relationships, etc. Leadership has a direct and distinct impact on direction and our ability to stay on task. We also suffered the loss of staff several times that made completing this process seem impossible.

After three years, we produced a checklist, form, and an electronic submission process to accommodate the needs of both parties to enable a successful clinical research engagement. This is not the end of the process, as with any change, it is continuous and ongoing to work out any kinks. Nevertheless, we administrative super heroes leaped into the task and through time, have strengthened our relationship and our ongoing collaboration with the hospital. With dedication to the task at hand and a good understanding of the mission, good change can happen.

As research administrators, we work diligently to resolve complex issues and ideas that often sprout from the notion, “Sounds good in theory.”

Theresa R. Cabañ, MPA, CRA, Director of Clinical Trials and Industry Contracting at The Lundquist Institute in Torrance, California, manages over 200 clinical trials and industry projects with her team. Theresa is an educator and mentor and currently serving as NCURA Region VI’s Chair-Elect. She can be reached at Theresa.Caban@lundquist.org.

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When you talk about post award management, compliance with sponsor and award terms and conditions, and you look at your institutional policies, procedures and guidance, it all sounds good in theory, but how do you actually bring this to practice? In accepting external financial support for research, training, and other activities, your institutions agree to ensure the sound financial management of the resources provided. But as a manager, how do you actually do it? Post award grant administration takes a village, and within the village there must be structure, assigned roles and responsibilities, and hopefully very diligent and organized individuals. No matter how your sponsored programs offices are organized, it is likely that you will have to coordinate the administrative and financial support of research projects with several different areas at your institutions. In the case of PUIs, many or all roles may be held by a single individual, but it is still important to change hats as you consider what actions must happen or what next steps you take to ensure compliance.

Staffing
Make sure you have the right people and the right number on your team. Having appropriate staffing with the right skillset is crucial in grants management. Ensuring that the team in place demonstrates a broad knowledge of research administration principles, practices, and procedures in research accounting, post-award administration, and budgeting is key. When interviewing be sure to ask questions that will demonstrate the applicants critical thinking skills.

- Hire skilled professional research administrators. Having seasoned research administrators is essential for any research organization. Grant management is complicated with the volume of regulations and requirements – particularly with federal grants. Failing to understand and comply with these regulations has resulted in funds being cut and worse – legal restitution of grant funds.
- If you can’t find seasoned research administrators, be sure to hire individuals with strong organizational and problem-solving skills. Other key skills to seek are competency with Excel and general technological aptitude. You may be able to identify individuals from within other areas of your institution who are already familiar with your institutional culture and your systems, who possess these skills.
- Use metrics to get additional staffing if necessary.

Develop, review and update a Sponsored Programs Roles and Responsibilities (R&R) Matrix
It is important to define who has responsibility for the various steps in post award review and processing of expenditures. Make sure that key stakeholders are involved in this process, and that everyone understands the different roles and the hand offs. This is critical to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. As new systems are implemented, be sure to review the R&R Matrix to make sure that it is accurate and up to date. Publish this information on your website.

- Make it easy to know who to contact. Create a “Find My Research Administrator” list with contacts for Pre-Award, Post Award, and general questions related to sponsored projects. Publish this on your website so that principal investigators (PIs) and other administrators can easily determine who to contact for assistance.
- Meet and greet. Set up meetings with research clusters, such as colleges, institutes, departments, and large research labs. Reach out to Deans, Chairs and Directors and offer to attend their regularly scheduled meetings to introduce them to their sponsored program team. Demo your website to help PIs, researchers, and their local administrative support network to learn how to navigate. Explain which group to contact for different types of assistance. Advertise your team’s availability to meet with PIs and administrators. When possible, it is great to get out and introduce yourself personally but Zoom can allow you to reach a wider audience.

Create Reports or Dashboards that are Easy to Read
If you don’t have a fancy system with a dashboard that PIs can easily understand or with the ability to drill down to specific transactions, be sure that you provide monthly reports to PIs and their administrators which enable easy review and reconciliation. When it comes to PIs, sometimes less is more. Try to create reports for your PIs that are not overcomplicated with excess information that may be meaningless to them. Remember, you always have your system of record to go to once the PIs identify any discrepancies. If your reports are too difficult to read, PIs will often ignore them completely, which defeats the purpose! Consider building in burn rates and color-coding grants to draw attention to the projects that are spending too quickly or too slowly as they approach end dates. Request input from PIs on what information is most important to
them, and how they would like to see it displayed. Most importantly offer to meet with them to review the information.

**Establish kick-off meetings, and recurring meetings with PIs and or administrators**

Offer kick-off meetings to new PIs who receive their first grant at your institution. Invite everyone who will play a role in the management of the grant. These meetings are essential to define roles and responsibilities, review project budget, scope of work, deliverables, invoicing, special terms and conditions if any, and reporting requirements. Be sure the PI understands what the expectations are for reviewing expenditures, meeting or communicating with sponsored programs, expense certifications, etc. In addition to meeting with new PIs, it is also helpful to have kick-off meetings when a PI gets an award from a new sponsor or receives a new type of an award, that comes with new or additional post award requirements.

While it is great to have the initial grant kick-off meetings, this should not be the only time you meet with the PI! Ideally it would be great to meet with each PI or review each sponsored project each month, but rarely is that feasible. For some PIs with complex portfolios or larger projects you may need to schedule weekly or monthly check ins, but for most cases a quarterly in person or Zoom meeting can go a long way to ensure success. This only works if you keep the schedules and have an agenda for items that you need to cover.

- Have your staff use a spread sheet to track meeting dates. This is not meant for micromanagement, but rather to be a tool to help staff stay on track if a meeting is cancelled or rescheduled. It is important to meet quarterly to stay within the acceptable range for reconciling accounts, making any necessary adjustments, and avoiding cost transfers over 90-days
- Encourage inviting additional people as necessary. For example, if you are having issues with getting subcontracts set up, invite the responsible administrator to see what issues are impacting the process
- Be prepared. Use a template to help you manage these meetings to ensure you cover all topics for all projects. There is nothing worse than leaving a long-awaited meeting realizing that you forgot to get an updated labor distribution! Take notes and assign action items to the attendees. Follow up in advance of your next scheduled meeting to make sure issues are being addressed. Always start each subsequent meeting with the status of the action items from the previous meeting

**Practice Proactive Grants Management**

Successful grant management starts long before the grant is awarded. Effective grant design, strategic planning, and program development are essential. Implementing best practices is also imperative for successful grants management.

Monitoring sponsored project funds on a regular basis is key. This should include business processes in place to ensure proactive management modeled to:

- Prevent over-expenditures or write-offs
- Prevent or reduce returning unexpended funds whenever possible
- Decrease cost transfers
- Avoid compliance issues

**Strategies to accomplish this include:**

- Setting up advance accounts when possible
- When new awards are set up ensure salaries, purchase orders, and other expenses are set up in a timely manner
- Ensure there are regular meetings (monthly no less than quarterly) set up with PIs to discuss award portfolio
- Ensure projects are reviewed and monitored monthly, reviewing for:
  - Allowability of costs,
  - Make prospective distribution changes as necessary, and
  - Monitor committed effort vs actual effort
- Conduct regular projections and review with PIs
- Implement best practices in award closeouts
- Create tools or handouts for consistency in awards management such as:
  - Deficit monitoring and resolution procedures,
  - PI meeting checklist, and
  - Proactive management of funds procedures

Treat the grants management process as a team effort to ensure staying compliant with the terms of the grant, following through on all the deliverables, and submitting reports according to the funder’s requirements. Grant management includes strategic planning, efficient grant design, and effective tracking. This means there must be sufficient resources to smoothly manage the process. Managing grants is a multifaceted and complex task.

**Keep your entire research administration team engaged and up to date**

New requirements for research administration and changing sponsor requirements occur frequently. Be sure that that you are keeping yourself and your staff up to date and knowledgeable, and also sharing new information in a timely manner with the extended research administration community. There is no better opportunity for professional development than participating in conferences, workshops, or webinars. In these more austere times, there are often opportunities for purchasing bulk registrations, or campus-wide log ins for webinars that come with links, that can then be posted on your website to provide access to all administrators of sponsored programs. Also be sure to have institutional and departmental forum to discuss these changes and how they will be implemented and managed at your institution. These forums are great places for your institutional representatives to who attend COGR, FDP and other conferences to share updates.

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"NCURA’S WAS THE MOST DETAILED AND THOROUGH EXTERNAL REVIEW WE HAVE RECEIVED. IT WAS OBJECTIVE, INCISIVE, AND PROVIDED RECOMMENDATIONS THE UNIVERSITY WILL ACT ON TO IMPROVE OUR RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION."

Vice President for Research

A ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE BASED ON WHERE YOU ARE AND WERE YOU WANT TO GO

NCURA Peer Programs brings expert research administrators to your institution to provide detailed, specific recommendations on how to improve operations at your institution. These research administrators bring to your institution an understanding of best practices in models of operation and environments similar to your own.

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Are all faculty good writers? Are all good writers good proposal writers? Pre-award research administrators answer emphatically, “No.” All proposals can be improved by careful editing—even when the author is an accomplished writer—and many proposals can be improved dramatically.

As research administrators, we frequently correct faculty work on budgets and forms. Is editing their writing any different? Yes. Writing is “…an act of intimacy. You are inviting the reader into your world—into your mind, no less” (Hancock, 2003, p. 1). Our role as editors deserves special attention because of the trust that is both required and inspired when we collaborate with faculty on their writing.

Selling the Need
First of all, we may need to help faculty understand just how important it is to polish a proposal. “Don’t annoy the reviewer” is an implicit scoring criterion for every proposal. Whether consciously or unconsciously, readers’ confidence in the quality of the work being proposed is affected by formatting and writing quality. Also, faculty who are not experienced in proposal writing benefit from coaching on how the style of successful proposals is different from that of academic writing (Porter, 2007).

Faculty may be unaware that we can provide this service or skeptical about how much value we can add. When working with a PI for the first time, you can frame yourself as a fresh set of eyes, someone who can read the proposal for how it sounds to a non-expert. For a PI working on a proposal with multiple authors, an offer to help “one-voice” the writing can be appealing, as they’re sometimes reluctant to criticize their co-authors’ work. You can also highlight your experience. Even those who have been in pre-award for only a short time have read an impressive number of proposals.

Building Relationships
Editing proposals doesn’t just improve the proposals; it can also improve relationships with PIs. As long as you are tactful about it, faculty often gain respect for you when you can improve their work. They see you as part of the proposal team, rather than as a red tape generator. After getting into a proposal up to your elbows, you can express detailed enthusiasm and ask thoughtful questions that show you care about their scholarship. Finally, when you’ve built trust, faculty will come to you more readily with other questions. You’ll have more time to address potential compliance issues and will get future proposal drafts earlier.

Interpersonal Dynamics
We all know that faculty are seen (and see themselves) as outranking staff on the university food chain (Christy, 2010). This power dynamic can make research administrators reluctant to edit faculty writing. Other negative dynamics can also get in the way of productive collaboration.
Here are some emotional reactions you may encounter from PIs, and how you might cope with them:

**Embarrassment:** Use a matter of fact tone; don’t act like you’re revealing a terrible secret when you correct errors. Point out that everyone needs an editor.

**Defensiveness or Irritation:** Pull back and try not to take it personally. Give only low-level edits that no one could disagree with and those that are essential for compliance with the RFP. Remember that ultimately the PI is responsible for their own proposal.

**Insecurity or Defeat:** This is a risk especially with new faculty working on their first proposals. When embarrassment combines with imposter syndrome, even minor edits can tip some PIs into fear that they will never succeed. Give these PIs all the honest praise and encouragement you can. Let them know that proposals from experienced and successful faculty need editing too.

You can’t control a PI’s emotional reactions, but you can influence them by modulating the tone of your editing communications. Here are examples of some techniques for framing your comments.

**Suggest, rather than direct:** “You might want to consider adding an explanation of this term.”

**Refer to the reviewer:** “The reader may wonder…” or “This may not be clear to reviewers.”

**Put it in the form of a question:** “Is there room to add a sentence linking these paragraphs?”

The first time you work with a PI, you might soften your initial set of edits by saying something like, “These are just my suggestions, so please take or leave them as you think best.” As you see how each individual reacts, the tone and extent of your suggestions can evolve to meet their style and needs.

While it’s good to be prepared for negative reactions, they are the exception rather than the rule. Most PIs ultimately feel positive emotions around the editing process—relief that they can rely on you, gratitude, confidence, and trust. And of course, the best feeling for both of you is when the proposal is funded!

**Editing with Intention**

Editing is not a one-size-fits-all process, so before you dive into a proposal, it’s worth giving some thought to how intensively you’re going to edit it (see Table 1).

| Table 1 — Factors to Consider when Determining Editing Intensity |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Factors         | Light Editing   | Intensive Editing |
| Time available  | Less time       | More time       |
| Writing quality | High quality    | Poor quality    |
| Prior relationship with PI | New or conflicted relationship | Strong relationship |
| PI personality  | Touchy          | Welcomes criticism |
| PI English proficiency | Native speaker | Non-native speaker |
| PI desire for assistance | Low desire | High desire |
| PI experience   | More experienced | Less experienced |
| Version shared  | Late draft      | Early draft     |

When you have cultivated an ability to edit at a range of levels, you can negotiate between what the PI wants and what you are able to offer. Before you begin, take a preliminary look at the proposal for a sense of what it needs, then get on the same page with the PI about what type of editing you are going to do (see Table 2 for a basic scheme).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 — Types of Editing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofreading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyediting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive editing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another helpful concept is the editing pass, which is how you move through a proposal as you’re editing. A vertical pass is reading through it sequentially. On a horizontal pass, you skip around to check the same element in different sections, like making sure all the section headings are formatted the same way. Horizontal passes are crucial, especially between proposal documents. When time allows, you may make more than one pass of each type. Which you do first, and whether you edit more intensively on your first or last pass, is up to your own editing style.

**Increasing Your Confidence**

You might be thinking that you are not a good enough writer to be a helpful editor, or that you don’t remember all those grammatical terms. Don’t let those fears hold you back. You are a test reader and don’t need to be an expert in grammatical terms. As for writing and editing, they are related but separate skills. Both of them get better with practice and study, so if you want to become a better editor, you can. There are many books and online resources that can help on your professional development journey toward becoming a skilled editor.

As your editing confidence increases, a few cautions. First, be sensitive to the author’s style—help their voice shine and don’t overwrite it with your own. Be aware that different fields have different writing conventions and citation styles. Finally, don’t overextend yourself. As word of your editing prowess spreads, you may find your skills in high demand and have to say no to editing requests when your workload is at full capacity. Some offices maintain a list of editors for hire, which can be offered to PIs when pre-award staff are overbooked.

Finally, don’t be intimidated by the faculty/staff distinction. Try some of the techniques discussed earlier, and you’ll find that many PIs are thankful for your help. As pre-award research administrators, we want to submit polished proposals so that each project will be judged on its merits. Stake your claim as a key collaborator in making that happen.

**References**


*Rebecca Weaver Rinehart is a Preaward Specialist and the Interim IRB Administrator at the University of Northern Iowa. Rebecca earned her CRA in 2020 and will graduate from CUNI with an M.S. in Research Administration and Compliance in December 2021. She can be reached at rebecca.rinehart@uni.edu.*
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Participating in the 2020-2021 NCURA Region 3 Research Administration Mentoring Program (R3RAMP) elevated and accelerated participants’ leadership trajectory and provided an effective framework and tools for putting leadership theory into practice. The program’s toolbox helps participants learn, share, and apply knowledge in a practical manner. The program experience was empowering and rewarding, and the thoughtful mentor/mentee matching process leads to lifelong positive partnerships. As mentor and mentee, we connected both personally and professionally, and other mentee/mentor pairs echoed this same sentiment. While leadership programming and critical conversations often result in significant lessons learned, we found several of them particularly effective in encouraging real-life application.

1. **Build relationships, and find productive ways to talk about conflict:**

In any relationship, personal or professional, there is the possibility of conflict. People are reflections of their life experiences, both positive and negative. When individuals freely intimidate, humiliate, or place blame, it is a sign of fear—a fear of losing power or not winning. When asked about conflict, Nelson Mandela responded, “Our efforts to counter hatred, intolerance, and indifference must continue simultaneously at individual and structural levels. We must try to influence for good the minds and hearts of individual people through dialogue and confidence building. These efforts must be reinforced by our efforts to create just structures in society to support the ongoing work of negotiations in the human community. Only then will we have a chance to negate the terrible consequences of the
tremendous conflicts facing humankind today.” In giving space for discourse, we can learn to understand and navigate our differences of opinion, belief, and experience. In a leadership capacity, this means we strengthen our ability to interpret the causes of conflict, recognize the potential for different outcomes, receive new information or feedback about our own beliefs, and seek new ways to approach a problem and identify more equitable solutions. Conflict is not inherently bad—we just have to learn how to harness it productively.

2. Trust your team/peers/leadership to do what they should, and utilize individual strengths:

One of the R3RAMP lessons focused on how to “Enable Others to Act.” Dr. Millet took her own leadership style as a case study and assessed how she enables others to act. A confident leader understands that all individuals have strengths, that it is sometimes better to focus on strengths than weaknesses, and encourages and supports others in assuming greater responsibility and leading new initiatives. Success happens when opportunity meets preparation. In Dr. Millet’s previous position, she served as a department chair. From this vantage point, she observed that some faculty had become complacent and were reluctant to fully engage in the life of the department due to unpleasant interactions with prior leadership. She met with faculty individually, encouraged them to participate in meetings, and asked them to bring new ideas. They were stunned but appreciated that she wanted their voices to be heard. They began to reach out about starting new initiatives, writing grants and journal articles, revising graduate programs, reestablishing programs, and establishing new partnerships. With a little bit of trust and encouragement from leadership, her department showed up to engage.

3. Learn how to talk about trauma, empathy, and self-care:

The past year was challenging in all realms—pandemic response, isolation from our in-person communities, personal, professional, and technological challenges of working remotely, and confronting racial injustice. All of this made it abundantly clear that many people are struggling just to survive each day. As professor and organizational psychologist, Adam Grant wrote in April 2021 in the New York Times, many of us have been languishing due to the extreme emotional load and toll of being good people, good employees, good leaders, and good contributors during these times. The R3RAMP program helped us to realize the importance of balancing work and self-care. An effective leader understands and models that balance. As humans, we are often afraid to fail. In a professional setting, our ability to do things well—but how do we become experts?
We learn from Michael Jordan (cut from his high school basketball team), Steve Jobs (forced out of the company he built), and others that we can turn our failures into opportunities to better understand what is needed, process, improve, and develop new ways of doing. Albert Einstein concurred, saying, “a person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.” It is our role as leaders to allow the space for failure, so our teams can learn and create, try a new process, practice, or system, and bring theory to practice in their own growth as well. More importantly, we can use that creation to build upon ideas, course correct from mistakes, and form bolder, more innovative cultures and communities.

We have additionally utilized the following approaches to activate leadership in practice:
- Be real, understanding, and transparent
- Communicate, listen, and listen some more
- Be kind, be kind, be kind
- Share the credit, accept the blame
- Collaborate and work as a team
- Give people the resources needed to be successful and get out of the way
- Let people know that their contributions make a difference
- Think and act strategically
- Do the unpleasant tasks early
- Remember: you didn’t know everything when you first started, either.

R3RAMP helps research administrators to understand the power of “great” leadership and bolsters professional growth and success. While in the program, Dr. Millet was accepted into a competitive leadership program for Higher Education leaders and recently received an administrative promotion at her home institution. Others may find similar opportunities to bring leadership theory into practice in their professional careers. The power of mentorship is one way to bring your leadership goals to fruition. The NCURA R3RAMP program, as well as similar programs in other regions (LeadMe, Mentoring Our Own, and others) will leave participants refreshed, empowered, encouraged, and enlightened.

5. Embrace failure and understand what we learn from it:

As humans, we are often afraid to fail. In a professional setting, our opportunities, visibility, and success are often measured by our ability to do things well—but how do we become experts?

We learn from Michael Jordan (cut from his high school basketball team), Steve Jobs (forced out of the company he built), and others that we can turn our failures into opportunities to better understand what is needed, process, improve, and develop new ways of doing. Albert Einstein concurred, saying, “a person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.” It is our role as leaders to allow the space for failure, so our teams can learn and create, try a new process, practice, or system, and bring theory to practice in their own growth as well. More importantly, we can use that creation to build upon ideas, course correct from mistakes, and form bolder, more innovative cultures and communities.

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Reference


Marcia Millet (mentee) is the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School and Professor at Tennessee State University. She completed post-doctoral work at Harvard University through their Women in Education Leadership Program. Dr. Millet has held many leadership roles including Director of Sponsored Research and Programs. Dr Millet serves on the NCURA Region 3 Philanthropy Committee. She can be reached at mmillet@tnstate.edu.

Csilla M. Csapár (mentor) is the Director, Engineering Research Administration in the School of Engineering at Stanford University. She has been involved in research administration since 2001. Csilla has been an active volunteer for NCURA including service as regional chair, board of directors, PDC Chair, NAfDAC, and teaching workshop faculty. She can be reached at csapar@stanford.edu.
The NCURA Board met in person on November 6th-7th in Phoenix, Arizona. Some board members joined the meeting virtually. The meeting entailed one and a half days of discussion and strategic planning.

The board had a thoughtful discussion on the regional affiliation of remote workers. With the explosion of remote work, several members and regional representatives have asked NCURA to consider clearer administrative policies on the assignment of members to a region. Currently the administrative policies call for assignment to a region based upon geographic location, however it is not clear if the geographic location is the geographic location of the institution or the geographic institution of the member’s home office. The board discussed various approaches and ultimately decided to survey and engage members for their broader perspectives on the matter before making a final determination.

The Board of Directors spent time discussing NCURA’s strategic vision through 2025 and reviewed priorities for the association. There has been some marked progress in key areas for NCURA. The board discussed some top priority areas for the next year, including working with the Department of Labor to have research administration recognized as a profession. The board also discussed in detail the need to further engage Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), non-US institutions, and Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs). Continuing to innovate with virtual programs, offerings, and networking will be vital to NCURA’s organizational health.

The board also took up several action items. These action items include:

- committee appointments for 2022 for standing and select committees
- an administrative policy change—adding a committee description for the recently developed (April 2021) Select Committee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- renewal of some NCURA peer reviewers
- approval of the NCURA 2022 budget

The board praised the NCURA staff for continuing to persevere and adapt and to have a strong financial base, despite the global pandemic.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kris Monahan
NCURA Secretary

Feel free to reach out to any member of the Board of Directors or NCURA staff if you have any questions, concerns, or comments!
When Your Dream is Not the Reality

Functioning in a PUI Environment

By Nicole Tardiff and Kyle Lewis

In theory, institutions supporting research administration provide this enterprise with departmental staff to assist the Principal Investigator (PI), as well as a specific office designated to represent the institution for all matters regarding research. This office is often referred to as the Office for Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) or an equivalent title. The ORSP typically includes support staff for the grant submission process (pre-award), grant management process (post-award), and compliance (contractual services, institutional review board, and animal studies to name a few) and incorporates an internal grant management system for electronic documentation, routing, and management of grant applications and awards.

All of this sounds like a typical day in the office for those working at a larger, more research-focused institution or hospital with dedicated resources supporting these staff members and systems. However, for those working at a predominantly undergraduate institution (PUI), it is more of a dream to have all the above referenced support and system tools for research administration operations. At a smaller PUI, the reality is that most of those resources don’t exist; you may be lucky and have more than one person in your office to run the whole show, or you may be a one-person show.

For anyone working at a PUI in a minimally staffed office as described above (if you are fortunate and funded), you have a team member to work with you and may or may not (more likely not) have some sort of electronic system supporting the process. It often falls to these staff to serve as jacks of all trades, wearing more hats than they can even think of on any given day. Not only do these staff members, typically directors, function on all cylinders with a broad understanding of all aspects of research administration, they are also often expected to assist with areas for which other, larger institutions have devoted full-time staff: proposal development, funding opportunity search, accounting, contract development and negotiation, compliance, IRB, and the list goes on. The term “other duties as assigned” takes on an entirely different meaning.

Let’s discuss some significant examples of differences. In a large, supported office, when asked to help with budget management or respond to a budget inquiry from a PI or sponsor, the sponsored programs accountants or post-award office can typically run a report from their grant management system and send it out within minutes. In a PUI, budget support requires the use and knowledge of tools such as Microsoft Excel to compare the difference between the original awarded budget and the expended funds from grant initiation to a certain time period. Without a grant management system, this process could take hours, or even a full day, in place of the simple report that was run at the larger institution. That being said, even though a PUI office can spend much more time on tasks to be completed manually and have limited tools and resources, they can still get the job done. They also learn the benefit of monitoring each award at set intervals to help speed the process up.

In addition to post-award tasks, a PUI office has the pleasure of working on pre-award and proposal development tasks. A research institution typically has a separate office with staff specialized in their particular areas. However, at a PUI the ORSP office must also master these areas. With a limited number of staff available, it is quite common that a true editor is not housed in the office. A larger institution may have staff to take the time to work with the PI to research funding opportunities, develop the proposal, and create a research plan and summary. Though some PUIs are lucky to have designated personnel for this purpose, in reality most do not.

As if preparing proposals and managing awards weren’t enough, PUI staff are tasked with creating, monitoring, and managing internal processes and procedures. Many of these new processes and procedures are created reactively rather than proactively, often necessitated by a particular situation or issue that has never before arisen at the institution. At a PUI it can be difficult to obtain institutional buy-in for some policies, as the policy may not be broad enough or does not affect any other departments. Building relationships with various individuals and academic departments can open the door necessary for ORSP to explain the necessity for the policies and procedures, and to gain support to enforce them.

In theory, research administration offices are run with high efficacy, and can complete tasks quickly and more efficiently — when provided tools and appropriate personnel. In reality, at a PUI the one-person-show pulls off completing all tasks that come through the office, on a daily basis, with the (limited) tools and resources they have. Sometimes these tools are highly innovative, creative, and home-grown by the individual, developed to help streamline and make their jobs more efficient.

For all those currently who work in or have worked in a PUI office, thank you for all you do on a daily basis to keep research administration moving forward at your institution.

Nicole Tardiff is the Director of Sponsored Programs at Florida Polytechnic University. She is currently the acting chair of the NCURA Collaborate PUI community. She can be reached at ntardiff@floridapoly.edu.

Kyle Lewis is a Senior Research Administrator working as a consultant providing Pre and Post Award expertise to HBCU, PUI as well as R1 Institutions. He has experience working in a departmental office as well as central offices, in both university and hospital settings, working nearly 10 years in research administration. He can be reached at ksclewis1516@gmail.com.
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What’s the Plan for FY 2022?

By Vashti Young

Each fiscal year, our Office of Audits publishes an annual work plan. The plan contains audits mandated by legislation, as well as discretionary, risk-based audits of NSF’s programs, contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants to universities and other institutions. We audit NSF award recipients to detect improper spending or noncompliance with federal and NSF requirements. We tailor each audit depending on an auditee’s unique risks. We also conduct internal audits of NSF’s programs to identify ways to improve systems and operations.

How do you decide which discretionary audits and reviews to include in the annual work plan?
We use a risk-based assessment to determine which audits, inspections, or reviews should be included in the plan. We also align our discretionary audits and reviews with NSF’s top management and performance challenges, which we identify each year per the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 (Pub. L. No. 106-531). Since our discretionary audits and reviews are not mandated by legislation, we have the flexibility to adjust the plan to address any emerging issues or to respond to requests from Congress or other stakeholders.

Are you planning audits of award recipients in FY 2022?
We plan to audit NSF award recipients at various colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations. We will also focus on the grant management capabilities of institutions that have traditionally received smaller portions of NSF funds. Our staff will conduct some of these audits and contracted, independent public accounting firms will conduct the rest.

Our audits are designed to detect improper spending or noncompliance with federal and NSF requirements and include areas such as internal controls, accounting systems, and incurred costs. We also conduct audits to determine if NSF policies are being implemented and are effective. For example, we are conducting an audit to determine whether NSF properly distributes, monitors, and accounts for Graduate Research Fellowship Program funding. As part of this audit, we are reviewing the program’s administration at three institutions to examine recipients’ implementation of program policies.

Additionally, recipients that spend $750,000 or more a year in federal awards are required to obtain an annual independent, financial audit, referred to as a “single audit.” We will review the quality of single audits of NSF award recipients for which NSF is the cognizant or oversight agency (generally defined as the audited entity’s predominant federal funding agency). We will also review other award recipients when we have concerns regarding the NSF-related information contained in their single audit reports. The purpose of our reviews is to determine whether the audits comply with federal requirements and professional audit standards.

How do audits and reviews of NSF’s internal operations impact the recipient community?
Our audits and reviews of NSF’s internal operations help ensure that NSF meets its mission to promote the progress of science and that taxpayer dollars are used appropriately. Even though the audit and review recommendations are written to NSF, the results of potential changes and updates to NSF’s policies and procedures may filter down to recipients. Our planned internal audits and reviews for FY 2022 include audits of mid-scale projects, NSF’s oversight of public-private partnerships, conflicts of interest for merit review panelists, and NSF’s oversight of Industry University Cooperative Research Centers.

Where can I find the Office of Audits’ annual work plans?
Our annual work plans, as well as our other reports and publications, are on our website at oig.nsf.gov.

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Have a question or an idea for NSF OIG’s Corner? Please contact us at OIGPublicAffairs@nsf.gov

Vashti Young is an Audit Manager at NSF OIG. Prior to joining the NSF OIG in 2016, she worked at the Department of Homeland Security OIG. She can be reached at vyoung@nsf.gov.
In theory, we all want to have well-trained staff who are prepared and can step up to the plate to handle those fastballs (last minute proposals), curveballs (unallowable costs), and sliders (compliance issues) that come their way. How do we go from wishful thinking to putting it into practice? What steps will get us from here to there? First, let’s come up with goals of the training program, our game plan.

1. **What do we want this training program to accomplish?**
   - Obtain input from the leadership of the organization.
   - Survey potential participants to determine their needs.

2. **Identify the audience. Who is this training targeted to?**
   - Is this for the central sponsored research staff, new and experienced?
   - Is this for a wider audience? Perhaps for the departmental administrators who support the investigators, our faculty.
   - All of the above.

3. **Set parameters based on available resources**
   - Financial resources – do you have the ability to purchase webinars or other training materials?
   - Skill resources – do you have the needed skills or ability to learn the skills, or can you leverage the skill of others?
   - Staff resources – are you a team of one? Do you have a staff, or can you recruit “volunteers” who are willing to share the work and vision for professional development?

With our game plan prepared, we need to shift our focus to execution. In a game, we do not just take the field (or the ice) and expect to win. We gauge the needs, tailor our approach, and adjust as needed.

**Preparing for the game**

**Communicate.** What is the best way to reach your audience without a jumbotron? In a large university, how can you target your audience across the university? You may need to work with your eRA systems team to identify the individuals serving as PIs on grants. Or you may need to work with your Human Resources to see if there is a way to identify new employees who will be responsible for some aspect of research administration. Identify yell/cheerleaders to generate enthusiasm and promote the program.

**Using multiple pitches**

**Customize.** Just like a pitcher uses a variety of pitches, and your quarterback has a varied playbook, you may need to use a variety of training delivery methods – presentations, newsletters, on demand videos, and other methods – to have effective communication with your audience. Developing tools, such as checklists, guidance documents, and visual one-pagers all assist researchers and administrators remember the most important points of a complex policy or procedure.

**Managing the game**

**Flexibility.** In football you make half-time adjustments to the game plan, in hockey being on a power-play alters your approach, and in baseball players may need to shift positions for strength. Likewise, as conditions for your training program change, or a hot topic appears, you may need to shift your training program topics and method of delivery. Be aware of changes to the rule book by joining listservs for key sponsors, federal updates, etc.

**Keep your eyes up**

**Observe.** Conduct market research by visiting other institutions’ training program websites, and request information on the path they followed to establish their program. Join NCURA’s Collaborate! to communicate with other trainers to share ideas, materials, pointers, and make connections. These connections are invaluable for feedback during the development phase. Explore what resources are available such as webinars and online content and leverage existing training opportunities. Many resources are available at little to no cost and can be downloaded for internal training and future training events.

**Celebrate Success**

**Momentum.** A winning season is built one game at a time, and a winning training program is no different. Building a winning program takes time and effort. Remember to celebrate each win, and each player, along the way to keep up the momentum.

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**Stephanie F. Scott, MS, CRA,** is the Director of Policy and Research Development, Sponsored Projects Administration at Columbia University, responsible for education on policies and procedures impacting the day-to-day management of proposals and awards. She is active in the Federal Demonstration Partnership and served on NCURA’s Professional Development Committee. Stephanie can be reached at sfs2110@columbia.edu.
Research administration is a global profession, nuanced in its terminology, sponsors, regulations, approaches, and people. Successful collaboration relies upon our ability to connect despite our differences in language, culture, customs, business practices, and time zones.

As an association whose membership is comprised of research administration professionals spanning approximately 31 different countries, “…we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others” (Robbins, n.d. as cited within Schwantes, 2019), while recognizing the common themes that aid us in becoming successful research administrators: effective communication, mutual learning, and relationship building.

**Kommunikation - Communication**

Effective communication is one of the most important skills for research administrators to possess. While English is the working language shared among many NCURA members, the terminology is key, especially regarding international collaborations.

To illustrate this importance, U.S. and European partners collaborated on a European-funded project, BILAT USA 4.0, where a **Terminology MediaWiki** was developed to allow researchers and administrators on both sides of the Atlantic to become further conversant with each other’s geographical vernacular. Additionally, having an understanding of communication patterns surrounding **intra-cultural** (i.e., communication exchanges that take place between individuals of similar cultural backgrounds) vs. **inter-cultural** communications (i.e., communication exchanges between individuals from dissimilar cultural backgrounds) can help strengthen relationships with colleagues (DeVoss, Jasken, and Hayden, 2002).

For communication to be most effective in terms of readability and understandability, use plain language, free of jargon. Defining specialized vocabulary and acronyms ensures that everyone is consistently using the same terms.

**COI:** Conflict of Interest or Certificate of Insurance?

**Cost sharing or Matching?**

**IP:** Internal Protocol, Intellectual Property, or Internet Provider?

**Principal Investigator (PI)** (aka faculty, investigator, project director): Individual having the level of authority and responsibility to direct the sponsored project or program.

**The ability to connect and work together effectively is dependent on a shared understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, which aid in relationship building.**
Additional tips for overcoming communication barriers include:

- Engaging an interpreter or translator to convert oral or written correspondence.
- Google Translate—[https://translate.google.com](https://translate.google.com)
- Microsoft Bing Translator—[www.bing.com/translator](http://www.bing.com/translator)
- Speaking formally avoiding idioms, jargon, and slang phrases that are unknown or can be misinterpreted.
- Using visual methods of communication like infographics, charts, and diagrams to convey information, instructions, and tasks.
- Seeking clarification to ensure a shared understanding of what is being communicated.
- Learning the basics of a new language like greetings, work phrases, and polite functions: ¡Bite! ¡Merci! Lo siento, no entiendo.

**Key Tips for Effective Collaborations**

- Let collaborators introduce themselves, including who they are, where they come from, what they think is important (e.g., facts, potential benefits, or past achievements), and how they define their role on the team or project.
- Ask about work routines, work hours, meeting environment (formal, structured vs. informal, open) and preferred methods of communication such as phone, e-mail, Zoom, Brosix or WhatsApp.
- Seek agreement on deadlines, expectations, and responsibilities.
- Ask how collaborators like to receive feedback, including frequency and format.
- Set aside time for socializing around meeting hours to accommodate relationship-building.
- Be open-minded and receptive to understanding how individual differences impact behavior, motivation, tone, and communication.

**Вывод – Conclusion**

The strength of the relationships we forge with colleagues can be enhanced by developing an understanding of intra- and intercultural communication. While the communication style of the regions and cultures we represent may differ, the ability to heighten our communication prowess will provide opportunities to connect with our colleagues at work and around the globe. Aside from understanding new perspectives, we will also be able to expand our lexicon of research administration terminology to further support research...together.

**LAS MENCIONES - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors would like to thank Claire Chen, NCURA Director of Global Initiatives, for providing data for this article and thank NCURA for the opportunity to provide the information in this article during the 2021 Annual Meeting Poster Session. Many thanks to everyone who left comments on our poster. We appreciated your insights, many of which have been shared in this article.
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When DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION are MORE than Just a Statement

A Tribute to Mrs. Catherine Taylor-Core, An NCURA Legend

By Tanya M. Blackwell

In the wake of heightened social unrest following the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020, many companies and organizations went to great lengths making statements against racism and discrimination. Support for the Black Lives Matter movement was woven into mission statements across the country, and initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion erupted like many of us have never seen before in our lifetime. Suddenly, everyone was talking about those three words. But since the Civil Rights Movement, there have been leaders throughout our country that recognized the work was never done and that we still had work to do to ensure our diverse nation is a safe and inclusive space for all. One such leader, Catherine Taylor-Core, is an NCURA legend in her own right. Looking back at the Catherine Core Minority Travel Award, we can see how NCURA has a history of making sure diversity, equity, and inclusion are more than just words in a statement.

It was in 1998 that NCURA’s Membership Committee elected to change the travel award program. The changes included expanding the award criteria to any minority, regardless of their institution, increasing the award amount to $1,000, and renaming it to the Catherine Core Minority Travel Award. This name change was a fitting tribute to the woman who previously led the Minority Outreach Program to increase NCURA membership at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) within her region. Nationally, she served on the HBCU/MI Connections Committee from 1992 to 1994 and committed herself to promoting NCURA and its membership benefits by personally visiting these institutions. From 1994 until her retirement, Catherine Core served on the National Membership Committee. Naming the travel award after Catherine Taylor-Core serves as a reminder of service in action, and theories behind the benefits of diversity and inclusion in practice.

The purpose of the Catherine Core Minority Travel Award is to increase diversity of NCURA’s membership by providing monetary support and an opportunity to attend the Annual Meeting to minorities who would not otherwise be able to attend the meeting. This opportunity continues the work of Mrs. Taylor-Core by showcasing the benefits of membership to minority research administrators. Recipients of the travel award have continued not only as NCURA members, but have also served as leaders that give back to the organization. For example, 2010 recipient Sandra Pena Logue currently serves as the Chair of the Professional Development Committee. She also co-chairs FRA 2022 and has contributed significantly to the Education Scholarship Fund, served on the Professional Development Committee, and served on program committees for the Annual Meeting. Led by 2017 recipient Laneika Musalini, NCURA’s former Presidential Task Force on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, developed NCURA’s new EMERGE Virtual Career Development Program, the 2021 DEI Webinar Series, the DEI Collaborate Community, NCURA’s Volunteer Matrix, NCURA’s Climate Survey, and more. The Task Force has since transitioned to the DEI Select Committee and has enlisted the talent of our diverse membership to gather resources and present information to help make our organization a safe, inclusive place for all members. There are so many more success stories of those who have been Catherine Core Minority Travel Award recipients.

These collaborative efforts highlight what it looks like when diversity, equity, and inclusion are more than just words in a mission statement. The theory that diversity begets diversity, and diversity improves outcomes is demonstrated through the example set by Mrs. Catherine Taylor-Core and continued through the leadership of those who have won the travel award named in her honor.
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When I started thinking about the topic of this article, my first thought was, where can I start? The answer was not obvious, but then after a moment of meditation, I realized that my experience as research manager has deep roots. During my university studies, I learned about theories of management applied to the Italian public institutions sector. I can sum up the mantra of those years of university studies using this expression: “The Italian public sector must evolve and in order to do so, managers must have in mind the successful experiences of the private sector.”

Shortly after obtaining my Master of Science degree, I was hired by the grants office of a major hospital and private biomedical research center in Milan, where research management was carried out following industrial patterns. This approach was completely in line with theories I’ve learned during my university studies. Their mantra was, “the good of the company comes first.”

The management of biomedical research, especially in terms of cost-effectiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, is not an easy job. Despite the fact that over time this complexity became more and more evident to me, the company structure in which I was working did not seem to notice it, continuing to evaluate the economic performance of the scientific departments as the most important aspect.

In my daily interactions with researchers, I was constantly listening to complaints and difficulties from the heads of laboratories down to the post-doctoral fellows. In the early years, I thought that the problem was poor communication between management and the scientific community, but then I realized that the shortcomings were deeper and more structural.

After 6 years there, I was offered the chance to start a new experience as head of the grants office at the newly accredited university for biomedical sciences, founded by the same private industrial group as my previous employer. Here I increased my level of independence and allowed myself to reflect on my work, having a completely new different view about research support activities. I finally matured my own idea about the need to integrate the industrial management theories of the company comes first with one of the most rooted concepts in the traditional Italian university context, which can be summarized as, “the faculty comes first.”

I was aware that both of these theoretical approaches had their basis and their raison d’être, but in the role I was in, I could not ignore one side or the other, unless it meant missing something crucial.

If I had continued to blindly follow the industrial corporate mantra, I would not have been able to listen and serve researchers and their needs. My professional development would have come to a blind spot. If, on the other hand, I had only embraced the mantra of the traditional Italian university sector, faculty comes first, I would have denied all the positive lessons learned from my past experience.

In practice, a research manager has to be able to translate the indications coming from the top management of the institution into concrete actions and messages to the faculty. It is also necessary to never lose sight of the point of view of faculty members. This is an activity that requires a daily effort of tuning in to ensure that frictions are reduced to a minimum.

As a result, I became aware of the need to set up my role in the university in a different way, where I would integrate these two opposing visions. In order to accomplish this objective, I had to overcome a number of obstacles and I had to question myself thoroughly.

One of the main objectives of our work is to identify practical actions to solve a problem. After questioning myself, I would suggest the following steps:

- First, immerse yourself in the study of the functioning of research support offices outside your own institution;
- Second, listen to colleagues from other universities, which includes participating in the meetings offered by the specialist networks of research managers as well as researchers; and
- Third, change the perspective of your daily work.

In my experience, the result has been (and still is) a constant activity, which is still under refinements and improvements. Currently my office provides all-around support to researchers for any issue or request relating...
to research activities, thus acting as a privileged point of contact able to correctly direct them to the other functions or offices in their daily activities even within the university.

It is therefore not a question of providing support only for the core activities of a grants office, such as pre- and post-award, as was the case in the hospital’s grant office, but to overcome these boundaries and provide a comprehensive picture of all the other activities related to doing research in a university. It means being able to advise researchers in their activities and suggest creative solutions.

...a research manager has to be able to translate the indications coming from the top management of the institution into concrete actions and messages to the faculty.

The research manager is seen as a pivot of the university management, able to listen to the faculty, to act to simplify their working life as much as possible and, last but not least, to communicate and convey a sense of belonging and trust in the university management.

In my experience, one of the most critical aspects for a research manager is related to the management of the economics of each scientific department. During the budgeting meetings, in which these economic data are shown to the departmental directors from the top management, misunderstandings and tensions are frequent. In that case, my solution is to adopt a pragmatic approach:

- Communicate the institutional rules to the faculty as clearly and openly as possible,
- Report clearly all instances of change and requests made by the faculty to the top management, and
- If possible, comply with the economic institutional rules, while making sure the results are as beneficial as possible to the faculty.

Using this approach, my role evolved thanks to some important contextual factors such as: the small size of the university, its recent and private background, and the fact that it was focused towards a specific field of scientific application (life sciences).

Nonetheless, even in this particular context, I believe that my experience can be an inspiration to all those colleagues who find themselves in hard times while making a transition similar to the one I had to go through, which was a cultural transition towards a system of research management that is increasingly oriented towards the satisfaction of industrial and corporate logic, often to the detriment of those ideals that have governed our work until recent times. The cultural transition is possible; researchers can and must remain at the center of our working practice even in this transition. In order to achieve results, we must be willing to study, listen, and change.

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Monica Di Meglio serves as Head of Grants Office at Humanitas University in Milan, Italy. She deals with European and Italian planning and management of funding in the biomedical and life sciences fields. She strongly believes in the value of research applied both to biomedical fields and to cultural renewal and in the possible impact on innovation in terms of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. She is a member of several networks at the European level. She can be reached at monica.di_meglio@hunimed.eu.

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THANKS TO OUR OUTGOING VOLUNTEER LEADERS!

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

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Using REDCap Application in Tracking and Evaluation of Occupational Health Questionnaires for Animal Care and Use Program
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Authentic Leadership: A Study of the Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior Among Research Administrators at Research Universities
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We are ready to partner with you.
Just five years ago “foreign influence” was barely known in the lexicon of research administration. Now, it seems there is an audit, trial, federal agency action or one of a multitude of articles concerning this topic issued daily. The evolution of this topic over the past five years is a widely cast and integrated net that continues to rapidly evolve. In addition, as a sounding board behind it all, is a focus on the contest of economic, technology innovation, national security, know-how, and scientific progress between the United States and China.

Initially, there were instances of intellectual property theft in U.S. research labs. Then the uncovering of foreign talent programs where faculty were sharing, participating or conducting research for Chinese government organizations or institutions. These programs often provided personal compensation or other financial incentives to further enhance research and training in China. These were overt and subtle methods sanctioned as a strategy by the Chinese Government to gain access to U.S. scientific knowledge. These types of activities are threats to U.S. funded research and the institutions that employ researchers in a historically open environment.

These examples helped to illuminate a few problems that needed resolution. First that U.S. institutions were susceptible to theft and needed to improve security protocols to protect sensitive data and exchanges with collaborators, including lab personnel. This also raised concerns of foreign nationals / visiting scholars conducting research in U.S. labs. Second, institutions needed to strengthen their conflict of interest and commitment policies not only for matters of foreign influence, but as good business practices for their employees. Institutions have, rightfully so, strengthened controls for research security, lab access, and managing visiting scholars.

In addition, institutions have instituted or enhanced conflict of commitment policies for employees to ensure more complete disclosure of other activities in order to detect possible conflicts with their obligations to their employer.

These are natural responses and good business practices to not only protect research and the institution but to prevent foreign threats to the U.S. research enterprise and prevent industrial espionage from other countries or within the U.S. These adjustments, along with other enhancements, are an efficient and effective means to help curtail the concern of IP theft by a foreign county and needed to occur.

Federal agencies have responded to the foreign influence threat in multiple ways, impacting both faculty and graduate students at institutions and the greater U.S. research enterprise. For example, multiple federal agencies have updated, clarified, and expanded their current, pending and other support disclosure requirements for proposal submissions. The stated intention for these updates is to help institutions prevent foreign influence and to identify and prevent scientific or budgetary overlap in the proposal submitted. However, disclosure requirements for these forms differ among federal agencies and the determination of overlap by federal administrators can be subjective based on the limited contextual information required in the disclosure. Federal audit agencies are now targeting these disclosure requirements and determining fraud occurred in some instances where faculty failed to follow disclosure requirements. This has resulted in institutions returning millions in grant funding of completed research.

In one recent case at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, a tenured faculty member was alleged to have failed to disclose a foreign appointment in a NASA grant under the Department of Justice’s controversial “China Initiative.” The university terminated his employment. In the trial
he was acquitted on all accounts and now the university has offered his job back. The strengthening of disclosure requirements and independent oversight may help deter foreign influence, but there is a cost in terms of lost potential collaborations, hiring of best and most qualified talent, and additional cost and administrative burden to the entire research enterprise.

The White House and Congress have developed numerous programs and initiatives to specifically deter China’s advancement in science and technology through the channel of intellectual property theft from U.S. funding. The FBI has collaborated with institutions to help identify insider threats. This process has provided reasonable training and methodologies institutions should employ as good business practices for lab security.

Although university and federal actions have helped to deter theft of intellectual property and help prevent fraud in grant applications, we need to consider cost, burden, and the overall impact to advancing U.S. research–including potential loss of collaborations with foreign scientists. To consider cost, burden, and the overall impact to advancing U.S. intellectual property and help prevent fraud in grant applications, we need institutions should employ as good business practices for lab security.

Funding. The FBI has collaborated with institutions to help identify insider threats. The strengthening of disclosure requirements and independent oversight may help deter foreign influence, but there is a cost in terms of lost potential collaborations, hiring of best and most qualified talent, and additional cost and administrative burden to the entire research enterprise.

U.S. institutions invest in these future researchers by providing stipends under research grants and tuition assistance. Unfortunately, we have policies and regulations that make it difficult for this know-how to stay within the U.S. to reap the return on these investments upon earning a degree. U.S. research superiority was built in a model of attracting top talent and making R&D investments. As the topic of foreign influence continues to evolve, we need to consider the ultimate goal of our efforts The potential for IP theft, domestic, foreign, or by actions of the Chinese government specifically, is a drop in the bucket of the relatively small number of bad actors compared to the systematic flood of our need to keep our investment in the world’s top talent (and their know-how) within the U.S. We need to balance the burden and cost that foreign influence has on our enterprise and find effective solutions that protect U.S. investments, increase our competitiveness and allow science and our future scientists flourish.

Reference

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Since the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, the US has evacuated at least 65,000 Afghans from the country, and the White House is projecting the resettlement of up to 95,000 Afghans in the US. (Beitsch, September 2021) The allocation of refugees to each state were made under the new Afghan Placement and Assistance Program (APA), and the list of states includes California, Texas, Washington, Oklahoma, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New York, and Virginia. Universities in these states will have the opportunity to assist in this process of relocation and integration, not only through scholarships, student enrollment, and faculty placements, but also through workplace and professional training. One of the biggest challenges in refugee resettlement is matching a new and diverse workforce with roles that suit their experience and expertise, “the priority in the match is likely to be designing a system which maximizes the likelihood that refugees can integrate, join the labor market, and cease to need extensive support as soon as possible.” (Jones & Teytelboym, 2017) This complex and urgent task will add additional administrative burden to our members universities, and meeting this challenge is where NCURA’s expertise can play a crucial role: NCURA will produce pro-bono virtual workshops on the basics of the US university research ecosystem and the role of research administration for universities currently accepting Afghan refugees can offer to potential employers, indicating they have the training and experience necessary to succeed.

NCURA’s Select Committee on Global Affairs has began the coordination with the American University of Beirut (AUB). AUB, as of late November, has provided full scholarships to 42 Afghan students to come to AUB to continue their education. NCURA is in full support to provide workforce trainings to these students on research administration, to provide additional employment opportunities for them to start a new chapter, hopefully in US universities.

“NCURA will produce pro-bono virtual workshops on the basics of the US university research ecosystem and the role of research administration for universities currently accepting Afghan refugees.”

“This is a unique opportunity for AUB’s Afghan students, under the ‘Education for Leadership in Crisis’ program (ELC) to gain knowledge in the field of research administration through trainings from and connections with the highly qualified, supportive, stimulating, and nurturing NCURA members.” – Fadia Homeidan, Director of Grants and Contracts and Technology Transfer, American University of Beirut.

References
Beitsch, R. (2021, September 8). Biden asks for funding to help bring 95,000 Afghans to the US. The Hill. Retrieved from https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/571125-biden-asks-for-funding-to-help-bring-95000-afghans-to-us
Introduction
In terms of demand, opportunity, policy, and activity, India is a frontrunner in scientific research. Indian research has drawn a lot of interest and importance from global investors, thus boosting growth and development in the country. There are multiple government and non-government institutions which undertake pioneering research in the country.

The Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) is one of the constituent laboratories of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which has its base in various Science and Technology (S&T) areas. IGIB was founded in 1977 as the Centre for Biochemical Technology, which later experienced a radical shift in the research into genomics and precision medicine. Thus, the institute transformed to undertaking integrative research and was renamed as Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology. IGIB researchers are working on various communicable and non-communicable diseases using the prowess of genomics, big data, and artificial intelligence to contribute to healthcare and policy development in the country.

To achieve these goals, the institute needs to continuously focus on expanding its scientific, technical and institutional capacity. Based on the successes of underpinning cooperation and collaboration at IGIB, institute leadership could see that focusing on extended collaborations was advantageous for combining experience as well as maximizing resources. Thus, while retaining its independent research mark, IGIB forayed into newer areas of research.

Go Global – The Theory
Some of the early international collaborative projects in IGIB started at the individual level, with our researchers independently forging collaborations. These partnerships were gradually expanded with support from funding agencies across the world. Further, with the advent of newer types of opportunities, interdisciplinary proposals spanning multiple organizations across the world, opportunities of big digit grants, and with prospects of cross border collaborations being enriched, the institute was rearing to go global. International collaborations meant bringing together disciplines and enabling cross-border relations among the scientific community and increasing institutional visibility.

Additional Research Support – The Practice!
Now that an idea was in place, it needed to be implemented. Although IGIB had a strong research support system, this needed to gain momentum to address the added needs. To help researchers maneuver new grant formats and align collaborations with requirements of different countries and systems, additional support was needed. Thus came the idea of a Research Management Unit (RMU) at IGIB. I joined as a research manager in May 2020. I worked with the leadership team to define the mandate of the proposed RMU and how to go about implementing these ideas. To turn ideas into reality, we planned to undertake a phased approach, where a pilot phase unit was created to test the mandate and structure. Lessons learned from the pilot phase would be used to set up the RMU.

We started contemplating the requirements for this unit. How would it function? What would the mandate be? Since we would be dealing with multiple stakeholders—internal and external, national and international—we needed a single clear point of contact for all communication and administrative follow-through. It was like building up an institution-centric approach which was being enabled by the pilot phase RMU (pRMU).

Since IGIB was already well supported by intramural and other government grants, the pRMU was envisaged as additional research support to address the growing needs of diverse grants, digital collaborations, compliance, and information management. The pRMU would handle non-canonical grants and partnerships. International collaborations and grants involve an array of processes and protocols, thereby necessitating continuous communications with the various national and international stakeholders, which would be carried out by the pRMU. The pRMU was mandated to support the institute’s research community on the different opportunities, platforms, grant funding processes, application
The pRMU was mandated to support the institute’s research community on the different opportunities, platforms, grant funding processes, application formats, submission requirements, policies and procedures, and coordination of timely reports to the agencies.

Continuity is the Key
As an enabler for international collaborations in Genomics, the pRMU at IGIB functions by quicker coordination with international institutions, facilitating non-canonical funds and new types of partnerships. Since being put into practice, the RMU has successfully enabled many international collaborations such as those with Indiana University, Emory University, and International Digital Health and AI Collaborative Research. It has successfully enabled grant applications to international funders, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Foundation Botnar, and Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIN Diagnostics), which are all first-time grants for IGIB.

The findings from the initial phase encourage us to connect and collaborate in a harmonized manner within the established processes and inclusive of other functionalities, such that a single point of coordination is achieved with both internal and external stakeholders. It is a concept that will enable the strengthening of researchers and research within the institute.

We feel this is just the beginning of a very interesting chapter towards capacity building within the institute.

Acknowledgements
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If you’re a leader in research administration, you know without a doubt your most invaluable resource is your staff. Great leaders see their staff as human beings. Human beings that show up day in and day out, working tirelessly every year in a high volume, high pressure, fast-paced environment to help researchers find their next research opportunities, submit thousands of proposals, negotiate, and manage millions (or even billions) of dollars in awards, and remain knowledgeable of countless laws, regulations, policies and procedures. They often work overtime to meet hard deadlines, extend a helping hand to a colleague, and ultimately keep the cycle of sponsored projects moving effectively and efficiently. They artfully balance providing high level customer service with maintaining compliance and ensuring a not more than reasonable degree of risk for their institutions. Our staff show up every day just wanting to contribute to a field that has real world impact. They get jazzed to see the fruits of their labor mentioned in news stories and journal articles, or to feel the pride of having collaborated with a researcher whose life’s work is curing a disease, or healing our planet, or otherwise exploring what lies beyond everything we know so that we can know more, help more, be more. These incredible human beings make research administration what it is. Without them, the entire system would fail.

But, the hustle and bustle of this field can blur the lines of what is important. As institutions aim to soar to new heights, it is all too easy to lose sight of these same human beings. They become data points on a report, the source of frustrated complaints, or the hindrance to a goal that must be achieved. It can lead to pushing them too hard too fast, taking advantage, expecting the unreasonable, and causing them to lose their spark, inspiration, and passion. They become disengaged, burnt out, and eventually move on to a better opportunity. Great leaders know what a great loss this would be and thus prioritize cultivating their teams. Their focus is on the staff, as human beings, elevating, nurturing, and motivating them towards success. There is trust, transparency, and empowerment. There is investment of time, energy, and resources. This is essential and worthwhile so that staff are not left questioning if they are undervalued or replaceable. In the time of the Great Resignation, it is important now more than ever to recognize that as leaders of research administration, you have the power to make or break your staff and thus make or break your entire research administration framework. I am lucky to be a part of a team of leaders (at every level) who strive to never lose sight of staff as human beings, who work against the ticking time bomb of burnout that is so inherent in this field, and who are committed to the wellbeing of everyone in their role. Our staff’s level of dedication to the success of each other and our organization inspires me daily. I am thankful for them, and for past and present leaders who guide me on the dos and don’ts of great leadership. I do not claim to know it all or to be perfect, but I am committed to learn and grow and, ultimately, to be a great leader for my staff. Of one thing I am certain: if you’re a leader in research administration, you know without a doubt your most invaluable resource is your staff. If you’re a great leader, your staff know it too.

“Great leaders see their staff as human beings”

References

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The world of research starts with theories, which are then tested and proved to be successful or not. This concept is not just for the bench scientists. Those who work in research administration also experience the scientific method in ways that can be surprising. The changes that came during 2020 were challenging, and 2021 is posing an equal amount of adjustment, whether it is back to campus as usual or some hybrid version of on-/off-campus working. The past year has required research administrators and management to hypothesize and test theories for successful transitions during and after the pandemic, while maintaining awareness of the changes, creating an atmosphere of fairness, and being open to something different. Working in a remote world provides an opportunity to explore new theories of effective communication and to evaluate management techniques long used by leadership.

Many aspects of office culture changed due to the pandemic. Former office norms are being evaluated as people start to determine what work will look like post-pandemic. It is impossible to discuss how the pandemic changed office environments without acknowledging the increased dependence on digital means of communication and alternate platforms of interaction. During 2020, face-to-face meetings and personal interactions were replaced with cell phones calls, online meetings, and chat. New tools and technologies were used to help managers keep their employees informed, as well as for teams to communicate internally and with stakeholders and customers.

As we tested new tools to keep everyone engaged and informed, multiple versions of online conferencing platforms began to emerge. Traditional communication tools such as landline office phones were being replaced with cell phones. Cell phones are with their owners almost 24/7 as we participate in social media and have a continuous connection to family and friends. Does that mean we are connected to work 24/7 also?

During the pandemic, many institutions gave employees options, such as whether they preferred office lines or cell phones. Today, many landlines are being modified to an internet phone system that will only work if your workstation is turned on or if calls are forwarded to a personal cell phone. In some cases, personal cell phone use is being reimbursed by institutions, but new policies concerning personal cell phone use will need to be written to provide guidance on what data belongs to the institution and what data is considered personal. How does one separate personal and professional use in these circumstances?

Social media is also providing new modes of communication in a remote workspace. Employees who are categorized as Millennials (born 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born 1997-2012) are using LinkedIn, Instagram, and other social media tools to communicate with one another. Twitter has become a quick and convenient hub for faculty to share ideas and collaborate internationally. The research world is experiencing greater connections through diverse communication platforms even though our physical selves continue to work independently. Managers are asking if the internet is a sufficient tool to support team development and to motivate employees, and whether employees working remotely have adequate resources to support effective online communication.

With digital communication being prioritized and essential in the remote work environment, and to address the plethora of platforms that support communication, institutions should strive to ensure that every team member has the necessary equipment to accommodate running multiple online platforms and that employees are trained in emerging technologies. Employees may express concerns that their work performance is being affected by outdated computers, and institutions may struggle to provide all employees faster machines with improved performance capabilities and adequate training support. The cost-benefit ratio of an institution-wide hardware upgrade and training program and how this effects performance metrics is still being assessed, but it has become evident that institutions and employees need to be willing to invest in resources to respond effectively to changing and emerging technologies.

"The research world is experiencing greater connections through diverse communication platforms."

One constant from before the pandemic is the importance of frequent and regular contact with your team. The practice of observation to verify how the team is functioning and how they are managing workloads has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, in a remote or hybrid work environment. This change is permanent for numerous institutions that have announced that they are not expecting research administrators to return to the on-campus environment. What metrics were used to make these decisions and what data will be needed to determine if the hypothesized best practices produce reliable results?

In addition to challenges related to communication, managers must also evaluate historical practices and theories of leadership and employee motivation. Many offices are struggling with developing and implementing new norms that also foster an atmosphere of fairness and equity. Published policies around time theft in a remote environment are almost
Whether your role in research administration is in a department, central office, or other configuration, and whether or not your primary duties border on pre-award, post-award, compliance, research development or another area, one topic of conversation that often arises is the relationship between pre-award and post-award. The reality is that if pre-award processes are solid and “done right,” it can make post-award activities much smoother. And if pre-award processes are not managed well – post-award can be a nightmare. It is never fun to delve into a grant file that was developed several months previously only to find that it is incomplete, inaccurate or incomprehensible!

In conducting over 125 reviews at institutions of all shapes and sizes, NCURA Peer Reviewers have found that many successful research administration offices have worked diligently to develop strong working relationships between pre- and post-award processes. Here are some key components to keep in mind:

- **Work to develop good communication between pre- and post-award.**
  - Connect often, don’t let questions go unanswered or issues unaddressed, and try to find the humor in the situations. The more you think and act like a team, the more you will become one.
  - Document, document, document. The more that pre-award activities are documented, back-up materials in files, institutional implications noted and anomalies explained, the fewer questions arise at the post-award stage.
  - Dot the i’s and cross the t’s. Just as important as documentation is accuracy. The more accurate and complete proposals, budgets and files are, the easier it is during the post-award process.
  - Be as consistent as possible. Pre-award and post-award administrators can work together often. If research administrators are consistent in how they approach pre- and post-award activities, they can develop a rhythm that helps processes go smoother and quicker.
  - Clear “pass-off” processes. Whether it is done through email, pass-off meetings, systems or other methods, it is important for both research administrators and principal investigators to have clear communication and processes when moving from the pre- to post-award stage. Not only is it a time to communicate clearly, but also to celebrate achievements!
  - **Periodic check ins.** The communication process should not be finished once a grant has moved into the post-award stage. Both pre- and post-award administrators should check in periodically to make sure everything is running smoothly and to see if there are tweaks to the process that can be made for future improvements.

"Questions are on the rise regarding increasingly blurred lines between personal and professional."

The jury is still out on how successful these methods will be moving forward, and which ones will stand the test of time. Which methods implemented prevent burnout and help workers with their work/life balance? Which methods were nice on paper but decidedly detrimental to the team’s overall success rate? The professional world is currently running the largest experiment and research administrators are the experts at managing experiments to ensure practices with the best success rate are used moving forward. Overall, the transition year of 2021 will provide an opportunity for institutions to challenge current policies and implement tools that increase productivity and communication in a remote or hybrid environment.

**References**


**NOTABLE PRACTICES**

**Pre-award to Post-award Interactions**

Roger Wareham is a member of the Select Committee on Peer Review. He has participated in peer reviews and has more than 20 years of research administration experience. He is currently the Director of Grants and Research at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

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

Please contact NCURA Peer Programs:
NCURA Peer Advisory Services and NCURA Peer Review Program at peerreview@ncura.edu.
Are you new to post-award administration? Do you need to learn about the financial management of sponsored programs? NCURA’s newest publication contains a wealth of information on post-award management.

Topics include:

- Explanation of the framework that governs the management of post-award activities
- Detailed information on the Uniform Guidance
- Guidance on allowable costs
- Key issues of post-award management
- Coordination of roles and responsibilities for monitoring, reporting, cash management, prior approvals, compliance, and other activities

This 80+ page resource is available exclusively as a PDF for immediate download

https://onlinelearning.ncura.edu/read-and-explore
INVITING A VISITOR TO CAMPUS?

3 areas to consider before sending the invitation

By Janet Simons

Visitors come to universities for training, observation, collaboration, or to gain research experience. They may be postdocs, faculty, corporate collaborators, interns, or exchange scholars. Visitors on extended stays usually are given independent access to campus buildings, that is, they do not need to be escorted.

Here are three areas to consider when working with your PI to invite a visitor to campus:

1) Activity
What will the visitor be doing? What activities are proposed during the visit? There are many questions that you can ask related to this issue. Will the visitor be working on a sponsored project? If so, are any approvals needed from the sponsor? Are there any concerns related to COVID-19 protocols and requirements? If your visitor is a foreign national, there may be sponsor restrictions or export control concerns to work through. The visitor may need to take required trainings on campus related to the activities, for example, radiation safety training. In addition, consider what other offices should be involved with the visit (your development office or corporate relations?), and who the visitor should meet, whether for the benefit of the visitor or your university.

2) Protection of data and intellectual property
Many years ago, my university instituted a Visiting Scientist Agreement (VSA) after one of our visitors returned home with project data from the collaboration and submitted a patent application in their country. Our VSA started as an intellectual property agreement that included clauses related to confidentiality, publication, and data ownership. We have since added other provisions, covering liability and training requirements, and the agreement must be signed by all unpaid visitors who will have independent access on our campus. If the visitor is bringing material or data from their institution or company, then a material transfer or data sharing agreement may also be needed.

3) Screening
Who is the visitor? Did they contact your PI out of the blue or is there a connection? Review the curriculum vitae and search the internet. Is the person’s past experience in line with the proposed activities? Is the person associated with any organizations or programs of concern? If they list publications, can you pull up the articles or citations on a Google search? It’s worth being a little skeptical about potential visitors, especially where there is no previous connection between the PI and the individual or their institution.

Screen foreign national visitors (and their home organizations) against restricted party and prohibited persons lists, either with a software tool or through direct website searches. Your institution’s export control office may routinely do this screening, and can assist with any procedures related to restricted organizations.

Once your PI has decided to extend an invitation, be sure to follow the requirements of your department, Dean’s Office, International Services Office, and others involved in such arrangements. Once these requirements are met and compliance mitigations are in place, you can focus on welcoming your visitor for a productive time on campus.

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Translating Theory To Practice:
How NYU Abu Dhabi Used The Kotter Model of Change Management
In The Implementation of a Grants Management System

By Nada Messaikeh, Holly Mace, and Lily Moinette

I
n today's knowledge economy, research plays a vital role in promoting regional and global innovation. Research management is a complex social practice. It encompasses complex processes with constant changes and challenges (Tauginiene, 2009). As the magnitude of sponsored research at universities increases, so does the management, fiscal accountability, and reporting requirements of research projects (Lintz, 2008).

The projects managed by research administrators cut across disciplines, competencies, and subjects; as such, they require a specific set of skills to manage complex and multidimensional relationships. This provides an excellent opportunity to test and apply various organizational theories such as change management, organizational culture, etc. In this article, we explore how Kotter's (1996) change management theory was applied in practice, specifically in the implementation of a grants management system at NYU Abu Dhabi.

THE THEORY: KOTTER 8 STEP MODEL OF CHANGE

John Kotter (1995), a Harvard Business School professor and change management expert, in his article “Leading Change, Why Transformation Efforts Fail,” introduced the 8 Step Model of Change illustrated below. This model is based on research on 100 organizations that were going through a process of change. By offering a process to manage change successfully, this model explains how to avoid the common pitfalls that lead to the failure of change programs.

TRANSLATING THEORY TO PRACTICE

The Challenge

The research funding ecosystem in the Middle East and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region is still growing. Many universities are oftentimes the sponsors and the recipient of research funding; therefore they face significant administrative burdens. For NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), the challenge was to find a system that addresses the university’s unique needs by providing the ability to manage research funds received, and also to act as a funding agency in managing the block funding received from the government. The plan was to build a fully integrated solution that provides a seamless experience to researchers and allows them to access their grant information in one place while ensuring transparency and equity in internal competitive grants.

Creating the Climate for Change

Creating a sense of urgency was one of the most challenging and time-consuming steps. Although it was very obvious for the team that we needed an integrated system to manage all the complex processes, other stakeholders were not fully supportive of this proposition in the initial stages. They focused on the burdens associated with implementing yet another system. Data migration and integration and additional costs were also viewed as important obstacles. The team was instructed to leverage the capabilities of existing systems, even though we knew that the existing system would not address the needs, especially when it came to internal grants.

Although it was a difficult process, this was a very important step in creating alignment on the urgency of this project and justifying the subsequent investment. Organizational readiness for the change was assured through this iterative process.
With alignment finally achieved, the next step was to identify the key stakeholders and change leaders and seek their endorsement and commitment to the project. For the team, it was important to capture all stakeholders who would be impacted by this change. A core team that included representatives from leadership, deans and program heads, faculty, research administrators, finance, IT, and communication was formed. The early involvement of this core team proved to be invaluable to the success of the project. Unlike some system changes that we have all witnessed, stakeholders were not just presented with a solution that was developed in a black box; they were part of developing that solution.

The critical success factors for this project were stakeholders engagement, flexibility and adaptability, frequent and transparent communication, developing a solid partnership with the solution developer and implementer, and identifying and celebrating quick wins.

As a finale for this exciting project, NYUAD was awarded honorable mention the Modernization Award at the 2021 Cayuse Connect conference, a recognition of the change that was achieved, but also the unique way of approaching this project by adapting methods inspired from the change management theory by Kotter (1995). As the university is getting ready to launch the second phase of the grant management system project, which will provide full integration to the financial system, and improved reporting capabilities, we will build on the successes and the lessons learned from the first phase to achieve continuous improvement and improve the experience of faculty and administrators alike.

Enabling and Engaging the Organization

The importance of communication in change management cannot be overstated. According to a recent article by Forbes magazine (Callazo, 2020), argues that communication not only eases the process but also generates a synergy that promotes a better understanding of what organizations are planning to achieve. From the initial phases of this project, a communication strategy was initiated. The strategy involved different levels of communication: from frequent meetings with the advisory board, the steering committee, the core team, and the different working groups to establishing more mass communication to the entire faculty and staff community through a monthly electronic newsletter.

Those communication channels were not only an essential tool to collect feedback from the various stakeholders throughout the implementation process but also as a way to identify and address challenges and obstacles along the way.

Creating and celebrating quick wins was identified as a crucial step to keep stakeholders engaged and to ensure their continuous support, especially when skepticism began to rise and timelines began to shift. One such example is the early implementation of InfoReady for internal competitive grants before the go-live of the project. The quick wins captured through a significant reduction in paperwork and lead times, streamlining of the external review process, and improved transparency in capturing and consolidating the review scores were appreciated by all faculty, external reviewers, and administrators involved in the process. Those wins were also communicated to the wider community through the monthly newsletter.

Implementing and Sustaining the Change

Implementation and training are where theory becomes practice, and can be the fine line between success and failure. Perfect implementation is ideal but a utopian fantasy. In reality, we practice, roll out a system, practice some more, make necessary updates, practice again, and finally have a system that meets the university’s needs, even if it’s not perfect. In the first few months of the implementation, many lessons were learned. The primary lesson was that implementation at the beginning of the academic year is not ideal since this is the time when everyone is adapting to changes in schedules, new classes, new students, sometimes new leadership, and now new systems.

Creating training that allows users to see why the system is useful for them and how it will streamline processes is crucial. Training must be a combination of the “hows” and the “whys,” especially for existing faculty and staff. In an ironic twist, remote working due to COVID-19 actually improved the training for our university. Inviting people to sit in front of their computer and experience the system with the campus experts and ask questions in a virtual environment created a system that worked for everyone. The age of Zoom and Microsoft Teams has allowed us to record sessions and save them for people to refer back to when they encounter issues.

Despite the initial challenges faced in ensuring stakeholders alignment, identifying and developing the optimal system architecture, having to shift the go-live date three times, and having to shift to a remote working environment after less than five months from the go live, we can say that the implementation of the project was successful. The critical success factors for this project were stakeholders engagement, flexibility and adaptability, frequent and transparent communication, developing a solid partnership with the solution developer and implementer, and identifying and celebrating quick wins.

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Leisure activity can be described as an activity in which one freely engages during free time because they want to engage in the activity, want to spend their time and talents in pursuing the activity, and find the activity personally satisfying and fulfilling. It can be anything from binge-watching a television series or playing the oboe to following or playing a sport or volunteering at a food bank.

A recent review article in The Lancet (Fancourt, et al., 2021) summarized articles outlining the benefits of leisure activities on health. Study after study has shown positive effects for people of all ages who engage in leisure activities. Cognitive ability, good mental health, positive self-image, social identity, resilience to stress, and a sense of accomplishment can all come from engaging in leisure activities.

Unfortunately, rather than a complete sense of well-being, some people report feeling guilty if they indulge in leisure activities. The demands on their time by others, or themselves, often leave little time to pursue leisure activities. Remember that you deserve time to yourself and only you can ensure that free time is set aside for your leisure activities. That mental boost from leisure time activity makes you better at everything else you do!

I selectively interviewed some of our NCURA colleagues for this NCURA Magazine article. Each met the following criteria: 1) They have very demanding jobs, which makes them highly vulnerable to work-place stress; and 2) in my own experience of them, they have each demonstrated stress resilience by having a happy, pleasant, even-tempered, and up-beat demeanor.

All eleven respondents revealed that they pursue a leisure activity that helps them refocus away from the stress of work. It is my hope that their stories will inspire you to take the time to engage in some form of leisure activity to build your own resilience to stress and increase your personal well-being.

**Scott Niles, PhD**, recharges by playing and performing music. He grew up around music, as his father was a musician for a period of time and his brother was a DJ in high school and college. He had a friend who had a guitar, and he got his own first guitar at age 11. He went on to minor in Classical Guitar in college. Music is definitely a serious leisure activity with Scott. He has not only recorded several albums of original music, but has also self-funded his music interests by performing. Scott says that playing music brings him joy. It is a stress reliever, it is cathartic, and it has helped him make many wonderful friends.

**Robyn Remotigue** finds that gardening brings her relaxation and makes her feel at peace. She said, “I like the chance to dig in the dirt and just enjoy the results.” She gets a lot of results! In her Texas garden, she grows her own produce, which she enjoys throughout the year. She has expanded her gardening skills recently to cultivating garlic, which takes 240 days to mature. She also recently created a butterfly garden and has plans to grow cantaloupe in the coming year.

Robyn’s son has inherited his mother’s green thumb, and Robyn says she likes to work in his garden, too, when she visits him at his home in Austin. Robyn wants to expand her outdoor activities by getting a pop-up camper and visiting national parks. She has already visited several, but she wants to visit more and enjoy camping inside the parks.

**Kathleen Larnett** also enjoys gardening. Kathleen grew up in the country and she has always enjoyed growing things. When she “grew up,” she had the opportunity to build her first flower garden. Her garden is a favorite enchanted spot for neighborhood children. They love to stop by and see the fairy houses that live between the flowers, and various other decorations that appear in her garden throughout the year.

When asked how her hobby makes her feel, Kathleen said, “Very relaxed, as I totally focus on what I am doing. I also feel joy whenever a plant pops up and blooms.” Kathleen has shared that joy with her family, who like to join her in the garden to trim and dig and water. She also has gotten to know neighbors as they stop and chat while she is putting in new plants or pulling weeds.

Kathleen has also studied martial arts in the past, and plans to revive that leisure activity. I think the fairies and flowers in her garden will be quite secure as she works toward her black belt in martial arts!

**Jill Frazier Tincher**, is another of our colleagues who enjoys the great outdoors while hiking, in the beautiful state of Georgia. Jill became involved in hiking by joining a hiking club that is primarily made up of young women. She feels a sense of great accomplishment as she pushes herself to stay at the “front of the pack” when they are on the trail. Both hiking and the new friendships have made the hiking club a great de-stressor for her.

Jill enjoys hiking as a group activity for both the social and safety aspects of the sport. She wants to expand her skills to camping, as well, as she is contemplating eventually hiking the Appalachian Trail.

**Tara Bishop** is enjoying another outdoor activity by biking. She and her husband enjoy biking together and have made 20-40-mile trips through beautiful areas of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. They will sometimes drive 2-3 hours to find a great trail. A perfect day might also include a stop at a winery after their ride.
Tara loves enjoying the beauty of the countryside with green rolling hills, farms, goats, cows, horses, and mountains. She says she can think of nothing stressful when she is digging deep to go up a steep hill or flying down the other side. One of her favorite memories was when a white horse ran beside them the entire length of a farm. Tara and her husband plan to take a bike trip to Italy in the future.

Jeff Warner enjoys a very popular outdoor sport that helps him manage stress in all areas of his life. His father introduced him to golf when he was a child, and he picked it up again when he was in his early thirties. Jeff plays regularly and is constantly working to improve his skills. He finds golf both challenging and rewarding at the same time. He feels a sense of accomplishment as he works to solve the puzzle of a particular hole or shot.

Jeff loves to play golf with friends and family, but sometimes he finds it very helpful to go out early in the morning and play alone. He is looking forward to when he can follow in his father’s footsteps and introduce his own son to the game. He does not enjoy playing in tournaments but is happy to just continue improving his game. He also enjoys being outdoors while he runs or fishes.

Jeanne Viviani enjoys a primarily indoor sport, weightlifting and bodybuilding. Jeanne has competed in two body building shows. She first became interested as a way to lose weight and improve her overall health, but as she progressed, she decided to pursue competition as a goal. She competed at the ages of 30 and 42, and now she continues in the sport as a way to stay in shape.

Weightlifting and bodybuilding make Jeanne feel both de-stressed and powerful. She enjoys working out with her gym buddy (and partner). She feels good about continuing to build muscle, strength, and bone density and continuing to improve her bone health.

Both Tony Ventimiglia and Tolise Dailey enjoy reading, but in very different ways. Tony enjoys reading fiction. John Grisham, Mary Higgins Clark, and Stephen King are just a few of his favorite authors. Tony reads to relax and he says he is able to “tune out the world and enter into the lives of the characters.”

While Tony says he engages in reading as a solitary activity, Tolise reads as a group activity. In 2017, Tolise began reading to children, which makes her feel “ecstatically happy.” In June 2020, she began reading to children virtually, but she is looking forward to when she can once again read to them face-to-face. Tolise hopes to one day write a book.

Tony wants to continue to enjoy reading, but also likes to cook. He would like to go back to Italy and take cooking classes sometime in the future.

Lisa Mosley shares Tony’s interest in cooking and has enjoyed taking several cooking classes through Master Classes. She says she has learned to cook Thomas Keller’s roasted chicken almost from memory, which makes her feel very accomplished. She has also registered for two classes at the Culinary Institute of America, one on making holiday cookies and one on butchery!

Lisa has always enjoyed cooking, eating, and sharing her creations with friends and family. Taking classes is a great opportunity to be a little more disciplined in her adventure.

Kay Gilstrap also enjoys cooking and sharing with her friends and family, which she says makes her feel both satisfied and happy. She became interested in baking as a small child by helping her grandmother bake brownies, cookies, and cakes. She now enjoys baking with her grandson and trying new recipes. Kay enjoys creating her own recipes and says she always feels a sense of achievement when a recipe she has created becomes a favorite of a friend or family member. She says she would love to learn more about the chemistry behind recipes in the future.

Glenda Bullock also learned her hobby from her grandmother. Glenda told me that she quilts every night during the winter. She has made hand-made quilts for her husband and herself, for each of her children, two of her grandchildren, and for a few close friends. She feels very accomplished when she completes a quilt and gifts it to someone, knowing that the quilt, and the knowledge of the love that was sewn into it, will be around for years after she is gone.

Glenda enjoys quilting as a solitary pursuit because she “gets lost” in the project and leaves the stress of the day behind for a while. Glenda also enjoys making soaps and body butters, and she might do this alone or with others. Glenda even has an Etsy Shop, has sold her soaps and butters at craft fairs, and intends to supplement her income with a small business after she retires from research administration.

I hope these stories have inspired you to pursue a leisure activity of your own. Give yourself the precious gift of time to pursue things that will also make you feel accomplished, happy, joyful, fulfilled, and satisfied. You work hard for others many hours of the day. Be sure you are reaping the benefits of improved health by allowing time for yourself to pursue your leisure time goals and dreams! You deserve it!

"Give yourself the precious gift of time to pursue things that will make you feel accomplished, happy, joyful, fulfilled, and satisfied."

References

Jennifer Shambrook, Ph.D., is the Director of Sponsored Programs and an instructor in the Master of Research Administration program at the University of Central Florida. She is the author of the Research Administrators Stress Perception Survey (2007, 2010, 2015, 2020), a cross sectional longitudinal survey of stress and research administrator demographics. Jennifer can be reached at Jennifer.Shambrook@ucsf.edu.
Kaizen is a Japanese term meaning constant and never-ending improvement. As administrative professionals living in an ever changing and evolving world, we must practice Kaizen continuously to remain productive and to keep ahead of the challenges presented to us from external and internal forces. Catalysts for improvements and change come in many shapes and forms. The global pandemic brought about significant disruption and created numerous opportunities for change.

The Education Scholarship Fund relies on in-person meetings to generate the donations necessary to keep the fund functioning. The COVID-19 pandemic all but eliminated our options for fundraising in calendar year 2020, forcing us to expend vital cash reserves to meet our scholarship goals. Entering 2021, the committee was hopeful that we could resume fundraising at the Annual Meeting. However, concerns about the spread of the delta variant of the coronavirus prompted a shift to a hybrid in-person/remote format for the Annual Meeting. The committee recognized the need to shift our strategy as a way of adapting to what could be the new normal.

Thus, the committee has doubled down on creative ways to raise awareness of the fund and to explore alternative methods of fundraising. The former seeks to increase the awareness of the fund across the NCURA organization and the broader research administration community with the hopes of increasing our donor base. A larger donor base should result in greater donations once in-person meetings become the norm again. The latter seeks to maximize fundraising opportunities with the smaller audiences we will undoubtedly encounter at meetings and workshops. Our strategy: break out into subcommittees whose goals will be to explore specific areas related to the fund’s strategic goals. Subcommittees meet, brainstorm, crystallize ideas, report back to the broader committee, and then take action.

While ideas and theories always appear exciting and positive in their infancy, many times they grow to become unwieldy beasts during execution. The question becomes: how do we put a plan or idea into practice and turn our visions into reality? To implement our ideas, the committee is utilizing the members’ broad range of expertise, skills, and networks to put our theories into practice. Some of our tactics include:

Shared vision. $1 + 1 = 3. No, that isn’t an error, that is a representation of how the potential for impact is multiplied far beyond what each individual is capable of on their own when they are part of a team. Members of the Education Scholarship Fund Select Committee are united in our purpose. We share common goals, visions, and enthusiasm for the fund and its mission. By holding creative sessions that encourage brainstorming and the sharing of ideas, backed with enthusiasm that stems from our shared vision of the fund, we elevate each other’s thinking, build upon ideas, and cultivate positive momentum.

Leverage Existing Relationships. Part of our increased outreach includes building strategic partnerships with institutions of higher education who offer master’s degrees in research administration (MRA). By forming relationships with the administrative contacts and faculty at the universities who work within the MRA programs, we foresee opportunities to connect with current and future students, students who may not have been aware of the scholarship opportunities that the fund offers. Aside from potentially offering financial support to these students via the fund, we hope to raise awareness of the NCURA organization and cultivate new membership. We also hope to gain valuable insights into the MRA programs so that we can proactively identify some of the challenges students face and opportunities to provide guidance and resources to these up-and-coming research administrative professionals.

“...the committee has doubled down on creative ways to raise awareness of the fund and to explore alternative methods of fundraising.”

Creativity. Reduced physical presence at meetings translates into fewer donations for the fund. Varying state regulations on fundraising severely limit our ability to secure donations outside of in-person meetings. As a result, we have had to get creative to identify novel and alternative methods of fundraising. These include organized walks, mixers, and raffles at the meetings that we can attend. We seek out unique prizes to be raffled off and requested these as donations from external parties. We are pursuing any, and all, methods of attracting NCURA members to the Scholarship Fund booths and raising awareness of the fund.

While we have had success in 2021 implementing many of our theories and ideas and netting a respectable $3,175 from fundraising at the 2021 Annual Meeting, much work remains to be done. We are grateful for the wonderful NCURA community and the support they provide, without which the Scholarship Fund would not exist. The global pandemic has forced us to rethink how we do business and forced us to think creatively to find solutions to new challenges. Although our efforts may only produce small gains to the bottom line of the fund this year, incremental progress is still progress, and any progress in the current landscape should be celebrated. Like our mission statement says: even a little makes a difference. Thus, we will continue to seek improvements, however small, to practice kaizen, so that we can continue to provide the much-needed financial support to the next generation of research administrators.

For more information about the Education Scholarship Fund, please visit us at: www.ncura.edu/esf
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Jeremy T. Miner, MA, is now Associate Director of Pre-Award in the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Michael Nichols, EdD, JD, MPA, CRA, is now Associate Attorney-Office of the General Counsel at the Research Foundation of SUNY.

Panda Powell, MBA, is now Director, Office of Sponsored Programs and Research and Scholarship at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler.

Dhanonjoy C. Saha, PhD, a long-time member of NCURA and a member of the Research Management Review Editorial Board has received a US Congressional Achievement Award. The Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Gregory Meeks (NY 05) issued the award on October 11, 2021, and was presented in a ceremony in Queens, NY, attended by New York Governor Kathy Hochul. This recognition is Dr. Saha’s second congressional achievement award; the other was received in 2014 presented by Congresswomen Grace Meng.

Trisha Southergill, MPA, is now Senior Research Administrator at Colorado State University.

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

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

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As another challenging year comes to a close, it’s a great time to look back and reflect upon all of the accomplishments of Region I this year. Region I leaders and members pulled together to deliver meaningful trainings, host panel discussions on a range of topics, and develop creative new offerings for our membership such as the new member orientation and small discussion groups. In addition, Region I undertook the special activity to transition to a new website. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, this transition was successful, and the new site looks great; providing clear and useful information to our members.

By the time you read this, the Region I annual virtual meeting has been held and it is our hope this is the last year of virtual annual meetings! A special thanks to the Planning Committee for working hard on making this year’s virtual annual meeting a success. We are looking forward to hosting the 2022 Region I Annual Meeting in person in Newport, RI, May 2-5, 2022.

Last but certainly not least, I’d like to acknowledge the fabulous Region I Advisory Board: Sonya Stern; Heather Dominey; Danforth Nicholas; Lisa Mosley; Nick Fisher; Jill Mortali; Anjali Pansé; Juliette Pickering; Steve Hoffman; Patricia McNulty; Kiku Ichihara; Geraldine Pierre; Louise Griffin; Denise Rouleau; John Harris; Denise Moody; Rick Alves; and Jessica McDonough, who have been tremendously supportive, constructive, and willing to step into the unknown!

Looking forward to seeing you all in person in 2022!

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.

Season’s Greetings, Region II!

Looking back on 2021, it is amazing how far we have come and how much we have learned, especially about how to navigate a pandemic. While we have permanently shifted some of our activities to a virtual environment, we are looking forward to offering more in-person events in 2022, including the regional meeting in Wilmington, DE.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Steering Committee for their contributions to the region this year: Gabriela Anglon, Berlin Bermudez, Christine Bravo, Sandy Collier, Jaquion Gholston, Adam Greenberg, Ashuantay Houston, Meena Ilyas, Laura Kingsley, Jared Littman, Katie McKeon, and Lamar Oglesby.

Regional Meeting. The Super Regional Meeting with Regions VI (Western) and VII (Rocky Mountain): Navigating the Future was held virtually October 19-21, 2021. More than 600 people attended this year’s meeting, including 215 people from Region II!

Thank you to all of the volunteers, presenters, and attendees for making the first NCURA super regional meeting such a success! I would like to extend a special thanks to the Region II Program Chair, Sandy Collier, for her tireless work on this meeting. Additionally, many thanks go to our wonderful colleagues in Regions VI and VII for their willingness to join forces for this meeting and for sharing all of their experience and best practices for holding a virtual conference! We couldn’t have done this without all of you!

We were pleased to offer 5 virtual travel awards to the Super Regional Meeting. This year’s recipients were: Sarah Kilwein, West Virginia University; Jeffrey Perrine, West Virginia University; Aaron Tobias, University of Maryland; and, Baillie Versfeld, Bucknell University.

Elections. Voting for Chair-Elect, Treasurer-Elect, and Secretary are currently underway. Please be sure to vote for next year’s officers! Visit https://ncuraregionii.org/2021/10/2021-region-ii-officer-candidates for more information about each candidate.

Mentor Me. Nominations have closed for the Cheryl-Lee Howard Mentor Me Program. We will announce the 2022 cohort and mentors in the new year!

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 and Chea Smith at chea.smith@rutgers.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.

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.
Happy holidays to our flamingo family! We hope that all our members and their friends, families, and communities are safe and healthy.

As we enter 2022, we are planning for an in-person spring meeting at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, KY. The meeting will be held April 30 – May 4, 2022. The theme will be “Renewing Our Commitment, Reimagining the Future, Reaching for the Winner’s Circle.” Chair-Elect Natasha Williams (Emory) and meeting co-chair Tanta Myles (University of Alabama) are working to ensure that our first meeting in two years will be a memorable one. The keynote speaker at the meeting will be Conor O’Driscoll, the master distiller at Heaven Hill.

Many thanks go out to this program planning committee: Greg Adams (Broward College); Tamaira Lyons (Emory); Michael Mitchell (Georgia Tech); Stephanie Marione (University of Georgia); Rashonda Harris (University of Connecticut); Lacey Rhea (Duke University); Laneika Musalini (Tri-County Technical College); John Teal (Georgia State University); Jacqueline Rearick (Liberty University); Ashley Whitaker (Nova Southeastern University); and Abby Guillory (North Carolina State University). This group has worked hard to put together an exciting slate of workshops, concurrent sessions and discussion groups and a draft program is available on the Region III website.

To close out 2021, we would like to thank our outgoing secretary, Kathleen Halley-Octa (Georgia State University), for her service. Kathleen’s term ends on December 31st. Our new Secretary, Laney McLean (Boston VA Research Institute) and Treasurer-Elect Jaime Petrasek (Virginia Commonwealth University) will take office January 1st.

As always, you can keep up with Region III by visiting our website at www.ncuraregioniii.com, signing up for the monthly newsletters, joining the Region III Members Collaborate community, and following us on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram).

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.

WOW! I can’t believe 2021 is almost over! It has been another crazy year, but I hope we are headed in the right direction to be together again soon! I am looking forward to getting through the winter season and being together in Minneapolis for our first Spring Regional meeting since 2019! As the holiday season is upon us, I just wanted to let you all know how thankful I am for each and every one of you! You are all special and unique and that is what makes Region IV so amazing!

If you are looking forward to the Spring Regional meeting, you may want to also think about applying for one of the several travel awards the region has to offer!

- Regional/National Travel Award—($1,500/$2,000) to support travel to the Region IV Spring Meeting and the Annual National Meeting.
- John Philipsps Travel Award—($1,500) Mentoring Our Own (MOO) mentees are encouraged to apply for travel support to the Region IV meeting.

We would also like to encourage you to nominate yourself or a colleague for their hard work and dedication to the region and/or the field of research.

- Distinguished Service Award…for those who have shown continuing and long-term contributions to NCURA Region IV and to the field of research administration.
- Kevin Reed Outstanding New Professional Award…for those who have demonstrated willingness to offer their abilities, time, commitment, and enthusiasm to NCURA Region IV.
- Meritorious Contributions Award…for those who have developed and implemented an innovative program which significantly enhanced the research atmosphere on a campus—can include team or office efforts, as well as those of a single individual.
- Special Merit and Distinction…for contributions to NCURA Region IV that are above and beyond “business as usual,” inclusive of unique and invaluable contribution to the vitality and enduring legacy of the organization.

As always, please make sure your calendars are marked for our Region IV Spring Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota from May 8–11, 2022! The meeting will be held at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center. We can’t wait to see you all there! Happy Holidays to you all!

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 kkoops@emich.edu.
Howdy Region V. As we move into the holidays, we take this time to reflect back on 2021. We’ve worked hard to provide educational opportunities through this year virtually to our members. I am proud of the way our membership has stepped up to help us out with these.

We held our annual meeting in November in person. What an exciting time to get back together for the first time in almost 2 years. We had more than 40 sessions, 5 interactive workshops, a great keynote speaker, and a fun filled casino night. Visit our Facebook page for photos.

I have A LOT of thank yous to give for the success of our meeting. First, I want to say THANK YOU to the 2021 program committee members who helped make this a sensational meeting. Secondly, thank you to all who presented, you are the backbone of this meeting. Finally, thank you to our sponsors: American Association of State Colleges and Universities- Grant Resource Center, Sam Houston State University, Southern Methodist University, Texas A&M University- Vice President for Research, Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station, Texas Christian University, Texas State University, Texas Tech University, University of Houston, University of North Texas-Health Science Center, UT at Arlington, and UT at Dallas.

Moving into 2022, we welcome our new board members who were recently voted in. Marilyn Bobbitt (MD Anderson) as agreed to serve as Secretary and Greg Chu (University of Houston) will serve as a chair appointed position. I know I speak for the entire Executive Board when I say, “We look forward to serving our members in 2022.”

We had an outstanding retreat prior to our meeting and the officers have laid out the plans for another productive year. A few goals laid out for the coming year include: review and update our regional by-laws, create a membership database, and work to make sure information is disseminating to our membership in a timely and efficient manner. While we might know exactly how this will unfold at this time, we will keep our membership update of the progress as we work through them.

I want thank Becky Castillo for her leadership as Chair this past year and Rebekah Craig for her service as Secretary since 2020. I wish everyone a happy holiday season and a great new year.

Tribbie Grimm is Region V Chair-elect and serves as Research Services Administrator at Texas A&M University. She can be reached at tgrimm@tamu.edu.

’Tis the eve of the Super Regional and I’m realizing this is the last Regional Corner I have for you all before turning over the Regional Chair role to Theresa Caban! It seems odd—I still have work to do before my term is up, but here I am penning a farewell. I’ve enjoyed collaborating with our wonderful Regional Advisory committee members, as well as working with our counterparts in Regions II and VII to offer the virtual Super Regional for 2021. We’ll host more than 600 attendees—how awesome to bring together so many in the regional meeting context, to collaborate and learn from colleagues from coast to coast!

To recap 2021, we commissioned our region’s first DEI committee members are: Akilah Pruitt, UC Irvine; Anastasia Rutherford, City of Hope; Brigidann Cooper, Lundquist Institute; Cristi Williams, Lundquist Institute; Emily Yu, UC Irvine; Kartik Yadav, UC Irvine; Matthew Michener, Washington State University; and, Patrick Lennon, University of Washington as the RAC Liaison. Our committee reflects the talent, leadership, and diversity of Region VI, and I’m really excited about the impact their contributions will have on our region’s offerings and opportunities.

Also relaunched this year is the Marketing and Communications committee to ensure that our messaging to you is on point and always accessible. This committee, as I write, is in the process of recruiting new members for a variety of volunteer opportunities—Kevin Stewart, UC Santa Barbara, is the chair of this revamped committee and I’m sure he’d love to hear from you if you’d like to pitch in!

Finally, we held a successful election for incoming officers for 2022. A warm welcome to Jennifer Cory, Stanford University, as Chair-Elect, Zach Gill, Oregon State University, as Secretary-Elect, and Cara Winnewisser, UC Santa Barbara, as RAC At-Large Member! I also want to thank our current and outgoing officers, RAC members, committee chairs and volunteers—without your dedication and support, the opportunities to connect and grow in our region would be severely diminished.

Next up: Save the Date—RM2022 is planned for October 29–November 2, 2022 in Tucson, Arizona! Won’t it be great to get together again?

Be safe and well, and I wish you all the very best as we move from 2021 to 2022!

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.
Happy winter fellow Jackalopes! It is hard to believe that 2021 is almost over. I hope you all are doing well! This year Region VII has had some awesome activities and offerings for us all.

Thank you to all attendees and volunteers at RM2021! This virtual regional meeting was a success with 635 attendees (181 from Region 7), 47 sessions, 2 social events, and more volunteers than one can quantify. Thank you to the planning committee Region 7 members: Natalie Buys, Liz Grinstead, and Alexa Van Dalsem. We could not have held such a great regional meeting without this team effort in collaboration with Regions 2 and 6. Thank you all!

Congratulations to Judy Fredenberg as the inaugural recipient of the Distinguished Volunteer Award. This regional award recognizes an individual who has provided outstanding volunteer service to the region (and beyond). Throughout Judy’s career she’s given her time and talent to Region VII and NCURA on the national level. I believe we all can agree that she is an excellent recipient for the Distinguished Volunteer Award.

This is my last regional corner as Region VII chair. Thank you all for such a great year—we offered 3 PEDC sessions, updated the region bylaws and administrative policies, established the 1st regional award, and held an amazing regional meeting. I hope you all are excited for 2022 and what our region will offer!

Start planning now for RM2022—WE WILL BE IN PERSON (yes, you read that correctly—IN PERSON!) in Tucson, AZ! Mark your calendars! October 29–November 2, 2022. Be on the lookout in early 2022 for the call for presenters and presentations.

Stay connected to the Region: Join our Facebook page and the Region VII community on NCURA Collaborate.

Want to volunteer? Contact volunteer coordinator Alexa Van Dalsem, alexa.vandalsem@colorado.edu.

Do you have an idea for a PEDC workshop or want to present a webinar? Contact PEDC chair Kathryn O’Hayre, kathryn.ohayre@colostate.edu

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

Trisha Southergill, CRA, MPA, is the Chair of Region VII and serves a Senior Research Administrator at Colorado State University. She can be reached at Trisha.Southergill@colostate.edu.

Glocal Solutions to Global Challenges ahead

Dear Region VIII Global Members,

This is my final article as chair for Region VIII. It was a privilege to have had the opportunity together with my fellow Executive Committee members and other contributors to navigate our rather large, diverse, and dispersed community around the globe. We all have tried to keep our networks up and running, connect to support researchers, and manage to provide linkages for our members. The new means of communicating and exchanging have become our almost daily normal.

Nevertheless, we are all looking forward to connecting again in the new normal, finding ways to make our living and working conditions a personal experience once again. In a more and more connected world, it is our utmost challenge to make those global challenges our local topics and to find individual solutions. Hence, over the months we have created means for members to connect in various ways, through chat fora and coffee meetings amongst others.

We look forward to continuing those gatherings for knowledge exchange, to discuss and to chat to keep our connections alive until the upcoming new face-to-face-meetings that we are all enjoying so much. Until this is possible, and on a more onward looking aspect of our members’ institutions, we are constantly trying to provide the tools for growth, create sharing platforms, and collaborate to tackle common and specific obstacles we constantly face. Exactly for that matter as traveling for most of us is still out of the question we have taken action to offer you the local exchange platforms. Please see the information coming up on Collaborate and through the newsletters from R-VIII or feel free to get in touch with us. Let us hope we do not have to wait too much longer to see everyone again, fingers crossed be it ASAP.

I am certain the new R-VIII Executive Team, with Makram Halawani as our incoming chair, that will start operating as of January, will continue in this path to provide the necessary means for your professional development. STAY SAFE, HEALTHY, distant but TOGETHER in our efforts to get through this new normal in our glocal community! Meanwhile, I wish you all well for the year to come and hope to see you all soon. Liebe Gruesse aus Salzburg, Austria!

Bruno Woeran is the Chair of Region VIII and serves as Head, Research Management & Technology Transfer, at PMU Private Medical University in Salzburg, Austria. He can be reached at Bruno.Woeran@pmu.ac.at.

Trisha Southergill, CRA, MPA, is the Chair of Region VII and serves a Senior Research Administrator at Colorado State University. She can be reached at Trisha.Southergill@colostate.edu.
MISSOULA

In bear country, it's normal to find bruins munching down on temptations left out by humans—from a backyard apple tree to leftovers in the trash bin—but these encounters can cause trouble for humans and bears alike. One method to reduce human-bear conflicts is to secure attractants like garbage and livestock feed.

While effective when implemented, this approach requires people to change their behavior, and that makes things a little more complicated.

University of Montana's (UM) researchers recently published a new study in the Journal of Wildlife Management analyzing why landowners do or don’t secure attractants in bear country. The results suggest that collective or socially motivated factors may be a missing and important piece of the puzzle for encouraging voluntary steps to secure attractants and improve wildlife-human coexistence. The researchers also offer suggestions for how wildlife managers might help increase these behaviors through improved messaging and outreach.

Social scientists in UM’s Human Dimensions Lab, housed in UM’s W. A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, classify human-wildlife interactions as a public-good, collective-action problem—a problem where solutions require contributions from many people and where people’s actions affect others. For the study, they applied this theory in Montana’s black bear and grizzly bear ranges to investigate how individual and collective factors work together to influence whether landowners secure bear attractants on their land.

“A collective-action problem requires the efforts of two or more individuals to solve,” said Holly Nesbitt, a doctoral candidate in the College of Forestry and Conservation and the study’s lead author. “We’re arguing that securing bear attractants—that coexistence with wildlife—is a collective-action problem because you need multiple people—land owners specifically—to pull it off. Their actions protect themselves and their neighbors.”

Nesbitt and her coauthors analyzed data from a 2018 survey of Montana landowners meant to understand their attitudes and behaviors related to bears. Among other questions, the survey asked people about their willingness to secure different attractants, like using bear-resistant garbage bins and removing bird feeders.

Researchers found that the most important factor in determining if a landowner would secure attractants was whether that landowner had talked to a wildlife professional.

“We think that landowners who have talked to a wildlife professional have received information more easily than those who haven’t,” Nesbitt said. “In theory, they have reduced the time costs of securing attractants, so we think that’s why they are more likely to use bear-proof garbage cans, for example.”

Other collective factors, like whether their neighbors secure attractants, and the existence of discussion networks (for example, how much social influence an individual has) were equally as important as individual factors like beliefs, age or gender.

“The fact that this is a collective-action problem—that we’re in it together, that it needs all of us to solve it, that our behavior has impact on our neighbors, too—leads us to the conclusion that what people are doing around us matters and influences our own behavior,” says UM Assistant Professor Alex Metcalf, a coauthor on the study.

The researchers hope the results help wildlife managers reimage how they communicate with landowners.

For example, wildlife managers and outreach coordinators could potentially increase attractant securing behavior by emphasizing collective factors in addition to individual factors.

“With any sort of outreach or messaging to landowners, there’s maybe another opportunity to lean on these other collective factors and include more normative messaging. It might be more effective,” Nesbitt said. “Instead of saying, ‘Bears are dangerous. Secure your attractants,’ say, ‘It’s really important to your neighbors that you secure your attractants. Your neighbor is doing it, too.’ Our data suggests that kind of messaging is likely to be more effective at promoting voluntary behaviors.”

The researchers also say, based on the findings, that wildlife agencies would be justified in increasing their efforts to connect with landowners in person, as well as with members of the public who play an important role in discussion networks.

“Our wildlife professionals are critical in connecting with the public, playing an integral role in educating, listening and empowering landowners,” said co-author Libby Metcalf, UM’s Joel Meier Distinguished Professor of Wildland Management.

While large carnivore populations are decreasing across most of the globe, grizzly and black bear populations are increasing in Montana, offering a unique locale to study how humans and wildlife interact. Nesbitt and her co-authors say understanding how to manage conflict with large carnivores has never been more pressing.

“We need a more comprehensive understanding of how people behave in these situations, and it’s often not as simple as we think,” Alex Metcalf said.

For more information visit www.umt.edu/news/2021/05/052721bear.php
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NCURA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LIVE VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS
• Financial Research Administration Workshop
  January 18-21, 2022
  1:00-5:00 pm ET
• Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop
  February 7-10, 2022
  1:00-5:00 pm ET
• Departmental Research Administration Workshop
  February 15-18, 2022
  1:00-5:00 pm ET
• Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop
  April 25-28, 2022
  1:00-5:00 pm ET

IN-PERSON TRAVELING WORKSHOPS
• An Auditor’s Guide to Research Administration Workshop
  December 13-15, 2021
  Austin, TX
• Contract Negotiation & Administration Workshop
  December 13-15, 2021
  Austin, TX
• Departmental Research Administration Workshop
  December 13-15, 2021
  Austin, TX

WEBINARS
• Developing Compelling Budget Justifications
  On-Demand
• In-N-Out: Here’s What PI Transfers Are All About
  On-Demand
• Participant Support Costs: An Overview of Dos and Don’ts
  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
• Financial Research Administration Conference
  March 14-15, 2022
  New Orleans, LA
• Pre-Award Research Administration Conference
  March 17-18, 2022
  New Orleans, LA
• Annual Meeting
  August 7-10, 2022
  Washington, DC

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