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ON THE COVER: One of the enjoyable things about being a co-editor is the opportunity to see each edition of the magazine before it goes to print; one of the difficult things is that sometimes I am responsible for writing “On the Cover.” My initial plan this month was to say “this edition has great stuff in it . . . read it all.” Unfortunately, the senior editors told me my initial draft was just slightly under the required word count and suggested I beef it up a bit. I sat down to do that and hit a writer’s block. After a couple of walks down the hall, some rearranging of desk drawers, answering a few emails, screening one or two incoming phone calls, and neatly lining up all the papers on my desk I was ready to give it another try.

Beyond reading the magazine cover to cover, it is worth taking a step back from individual articles to think about this edition’s theme, “Partnersing to Propel Research.” It first conjured up thoughts of old prop airplanes (with research administrators at the controls) flying in formation towing research behind them, but I realized the partnerships are much more administrators and researchers working to get projects from proposal to clean award close-out. It may even be possible to think about partnering as a day at the beach after reading Linnea Minnema and Jennifer Webster’s article about central and departmental administrators working together within an organization. Peg Atkisson, Deborah Mathews and Barbara Pearson explore partnering with our communities to conduct meaningful projects that produce wins for both partners. Terri Hall points out that we must effectively partner with vendors to conduct meaningful projects that produce wins for both partners. Terri Hall points out that we must effectively partner with vendors to conduct meaningful projects that produce wins for both partners. Terri Hall points out that we must effectively partner with vendors to conduct meaningful projects that produce wins for both partners.

If you only have a couple of free minutes to read, be sure to check out “What I Found on Twitter” or “Research Administration . . . By the Numbers.” And sometimes it is important to take a little “me time.” Katie Porter’s article “Smile for the Sake of Your Career!” invites us to work on the skill of being joyful. Turns out it may make us better partners.

We can’t end the year without talking about The Major Development in research administration—Uniform Guidance. Talk about partnering! Deborah Smith, Meredith Perry and Carol Malkemus provide insight into how one university system formed partnerships to prepare to implement the UG.

Speaking of partnering, be sure to catch up on the plans for NCURA’s partnered PRA and FRA meetings to be held in Orlando, Florida in March. Both meetings have lined up impressive keynote speakers, an amazing line-up of workshops, awesome concurrent sessions, and leisure-time activities sure to please attendees.

The more I think about it, the more I think I’ll go with my first draft. There is great stuff in this edition… read it all.

Toni Shaklee, PhD, CRA, CPRA, Co-Editor

Toni Shaklee is the Assistant Vice President for Research at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK. Her desk is very tidy now and she can be reached at toni.shaklee@okstate.edu

The NCURA Magazine accepts advertisements for products and services pertinent to university research administration. In addition, display advertisements (including those for position openings) will also be published. The minimum rate is $500. Advertisements and articles should not be construed as official endorsements by NCURA.
Looking Back…

Upon joining NCURA in 1993 I could not have imagined the NCURA of today let alone that I would have the honor and privilege to represent us. There have been so many experiences, tasks, events, and outstanding moments. For each, there has been a team of mentors, partners, colleagues, and friends. I will take this unique opportunity to reflect on my term as Vice President and President to send out a few thank-you’s to some who carried the weight right alongside me.

I do want to give a big shout out to the federal government, OMB in particular, for choosing 2014 to deliver an update to eight circulars that had not been changed since we dialed rotary phones. The Uniform Guidance has bonded our community and inspired a burst of training and education.

I’ll bet there were Vegas odds on whether an NCURA Annual Meeting held in August would be a success. If so, we’re all winners. AM55, “the first” was a booming success, ask anyone who attended and thank Bruce Morgan, Susan Zipkin and a fantastic Program Committee for everything including the weather.

2014 FRA and PRA brought us to San Francisco where Program Chairs Mary Louise Healy, Tricia Callahan, Dave Lynch, and Lisa Mosely hit it out of the park, like Giants!!

NCURA’s International Region 8 convened in Washington, DC for their first Annual Regional Meeting. At the rate Region 8 is growing, I know this will be an historic meeting to recall. “Danke” to Agatha Keller and Annika Glauner.

Dave Richardson embarked on an INORMS adventure representing NCURA partnered with CAURA and SRA to host the 2014 INORMS Meeting in DC. Past President Richardson always makes us look so good, thank you Dave!

It was awesome to attend my Region 1 meeting as President and they were so good to me. A great meeting, Michelle Auerbach, and thank you, Jeff Seo. I had never attended a Region 2/3 joint meeting but I did this year and attended excellent sessions however I did not learn to wobble or cupid. Thank you Region 2 for the cruise and Region 3 for my pink t-shirt. The first Regions to have a “spring meeting” in the fall, Regions 6/7 – thank you to Sam Westcott and Leslie Schmidt for welcoming me to your great workshops and discussion groups.

As part of our global initiatives, I attended Annual Meetings of other organizations and learned a great deal about our counterparts abroad who face familiar challenges. Evidently, last minute proposals are universal.

As NCURA is a grantee of BILAT USA 2.0, a project funded by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme to enhance and develop scientific partnerships between the EU and the US, I had the opportunity to present on the topic of strengthening European institutions’ expertise in US Funding for Foreign Institutions. Partnered with Past President Pat Hawk and colleagues Eva Bjornadal and Regina Notz, we ran three day-long workshops in five days in three different countries. Someday, I’ll go back to those cities to actually see where I was. It was hectic but rewarding in every way. Thank you, Jesse Szeto and Vera Kammann!

NCURA’s Board of Directors continues to strategize for the future on behalf of all of our members. Our Board has a range of talent and dedication to the organization. This group truly has a vision for NCURA that will serve us well into the future. I want to thank each member of NCURA’s 2014 Board of Directors for being excellent colleagues and friends.

During these terms as Vice President and President, I have been extraordinarily supported by our national office and I am grateful for the support and the friendship you’ve extended to me.

Although I cannot list each mentor NCURA has provided me, in this role, Past Presidents have helped guide me and offered encouragement. My sincere thanks to Jane, Kim, Bob, Dick, Pat, John, Dan, Pam, Jerry, Denise, David, Judy, and Steve.

I am happy to offer my total support to Michelle Vazin as she begins her term as President, and to Bob Andresen as President-elect. I wish you the very best, my friends.
Introduction

The authors presented a session on the subject of this article at the 2014 International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS). We were struck that government, industry and universities around the world are keen to encourage research and development through new discoveries, innovation and exploitation, and yet administrative and operational functions dealing with the management of collective international research can be cumbersome and obstructive. We set out to offer a fresh perspective on accelerating international research management by introducing cooperation as craft and collaboration as a leadership skill, then applying both as an expediting strategy.

First, we contextualize research management by applying a theoretical framework based on social theory. Next we introduce cooperation and collaboration as working hypotheses. Then we explore relationships among research managers and stakeholders in multi-party research projects for the potential benefits and drawbacks of practicing cooperation and collaboration, such as reinforcing the mutual understanding across the different cultures (in higher education and others). Finally we put theory into practice by combining the craft of cooperation with the leadership skills of collaboration to show how research managers can make progress resolving issues with artful compromise, build trust and cohesiveness, satisfy key internal and external stakeholders, and then establish an environment for successful post-award administration.

Rationale And Background

The rationale for investigating research management and the interaction of multiple players within the research arena comes, on the one hand, from Susi Poli’s experience as a research manager in several Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Europe coupled more recently with being a researcher herself in a professional doctorate program. On the other hand, Jeff Newman’s experience stems from a different perspective on research management that comes not only from the US culture but also from the perspective of working in industry and in acade-
and central offices who interact internally with investigators and legal/compliance, finance/budget and knowledge/technology transfer offices and externally with grant and contract officers, managers, legal and compliance offices. This presents a conundrum. Each participant in a research project brings something valuable to the table, which may be tangible or intangible. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, but key participants must agree to participate or a critical mass will not be achieved and the project will fail to come into being.

We contend that RMAs can play a specific professional role in bringing projects to fruition. In fact the professionalism of research management has rapidly developed over the last twenty years with RMAs’ numbers on the rise throughout Europe (Bushaway, 2003) and in the U.S. Consequently, research management has emerged as a new field of scholarly investigation including studies on the changing roles of RMAs in the UK universities and how they have evolved to the extent of removing some field boundaries (Whitchurch, 2008; Shelley, 2009); the choice to pursue research administration and management as a career option for scientifically trained students, even if such positions still look like second choices (Schuetzenmeister, 2010); relationships between RMAs and academics, and then issues of identification or ‘moral exclusion’, including negative labeling (Allen-Collinson, 2009); but also the advantages of entering the function of research management coming from different career paths, from academia or from management (Bertero et al., 2012), and then how much RMAs are ‘blended’ in comparison with other university staff (Whitchurch, 2008; Newman and Poli, 2014 under review).

Concerning the body of literature on research management and the gaps that have been only marginally investigated, we have noticed how there has been some emphasis on the working spaces that RMAs share with researchers. These working spaces have tried to shed light on the research arena as a place of collaboration, on the one hand, and as a space of tension, on the other, therefore they may be seen as the two sides of the same coin. The two spaces are described thusly: the first as ‘third spaces of collaboration’, as labelled by Whitchurch (2008), and the second ‘the shifting arenas’, drawn by Shelley’s works (2009). By the former, we mean the research arena as that space populated by multi or hybrid professionals – i.e. professionals with blended credentials, of academia and management or who come from sectors other than higher education - who interact in multi-professional teams, made up of RMAs and researchers. While for the latter, we intend the research arena as a shared space of tension, so to stress the side of the coin where research management crosses into the academic domain.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of our analysis relies on a past conceptualization of social capital, which draws on Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam’s views, then combined with two related theories, where the first deals with communities of practice (CoP) and the second with collaborative network organizations (CNO). The overarching theory of social capital needs to be coupled with these additional theories in order to fully explore the kind of relationships that are in place within the research arena either in institutional working spaces or in the external ones. But, first and foremost, we need to define what we mean for the three.

Firstly, social capital theory draws attention to the importance of relationships within social networks, therefore of individual connections and interpersonal relationships that make more likely for members to achieve their ends. Social capital is that intangible resource primarily focused on relationships that matter and make the difference for the attainment of individual and collective goals (Dasgupta and Serageldin, 2000; Lin, 2001; Field, 2008). Hence, social capital focuses on relationships, mutual support and reciprocities, trust within the social network, norms shared among members and also cooperation.

Secondly, communities of practice are groups of people who do not essentially work together every day but who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). That is what RMAs...
do for instance within their professional networks, nationally and internationally, to tackle the same set of issues within the same complex research environment.

Lastly, a CNO “is a form of emerging organisational setting that involves mutual engagement of participants to solve a problem together, which implies mutual trust and therefore takes time, effort and dedication” (Macke et al, 2013: 117). We compare a CNO favorably to the dynamics in an international research project, where cooperation among RMAs is essential to success.

Cooperation with Collaboration as a Strategy in Research Management

Cooperation and collaboration, together can shape research management strategy by acknowledging the differences that can be found within the international community of RMAs along with common values and a strong sense of identity also found within this inner community of peers just like within a community of practice; then, by valorizing such differences out of this inner space, into the extended research arena; and finally, by building on these differences just as CNOs do when participants are called upon to solve a problem together.

Research administration may be seen as a mixture of working spaces where RMAs interact with peers or with multiple players: inner, external and virtual working spaces are the norm. In addition, research administration may be envisaged as an interconnected enterprise. Cooperation acts as glue on the social capital within the familiar working spaces where RMAs interact with peers, even though RMAs come from different research settings and are accustomed to different working practices. Collaboration is the leadership skill urges participants in a research enterprise to work alongside each other despite different cultures, polices, rules and regulations.

In conclusion, research managers and administrators skilled at the craft of cooperation can connect all the key players and stakeholders in all facets of research administration. Deftly using the skill of collaboration in research management, a leader can steer the group to embrace common purpose (a new call/bid, for example) and deal with inevitable conflict. Cooperation and collaboration can foster trust and raise morale among staff and colleagues. Practicing cooperation together with collaboration-driven research management and strategies can advance the administration of research and promote innovation globally while respecting individual and institutional values and culture.

References


Newman, J. and Poli, S. (2014), How much blended are today’s research managers? paper under review


Over the past 70 years, research has transformed from a solitary operation into an endeavor characterized by ever-increasing team size. There are fewer opportunities for researchers to conduct independent research, marking the end of the solo-discoverer era. The changing nature of science has also been complemented by the increasing dominance of public funding in multidisciplinary programs and collaborative research projects, both small and large. Public funding comes with ambitious goals, stressful term limits and requirements for broad inclusion and dissemination. The new face of research mandates the need for collaborative research efforts with the establishment of Institutes and Centers. Institutes and Centers (ICs) serve as cores for collaboration in diverse areas and provide substantial support for interdisciplinary research at Universities. As the demand for cutting-edge interdisciplinary opportunities for innovative ideas increases, ICs create the environment where faculty can work across traditional departmental and college lines to develop innovative contributions to science. ICs
also play an instrumental role in bringing together varied professionals to a common realm. Faculty, administrators, research and technical staff, and students at all levels play a critical role in creating and fostering relationships and sharing knowledge.

The establishment of Research ICs is a sign of entrepreneurial activities of faculty and academic units. ICs are established for different reasons and bring different benefits. These organizations serve as a focus of scholarly activity and intellectual creativity, focal points for interaction with research sponsors, and serve to amplify an institution’s competitiveness in obtaining research funding in designated areas. Most importantly they create highly valued venues for faculty to come together to reach common goals and focus university-level attention on the specific interdisciplinary priorities. Through this interaction, additional opportunities for joint projects and funding are created.

Though often spoken of in similar terms, Institutes and Centers serve different purposes. The differences between the two are defined as: A Center is a unit that normally has a focused mission and a clearly defined objective. It may involve a group of faculty from one or more departments from a single school/college or from different schools/colleges. An Institute is a unit that normally is larger, has a broader mission and a more complex interdisciplinary focus than a center. It is expected that most institutes would involve faculty from multiple departments and schools/colleges.

Based on their mission, ICs may be classified as:

- Academic ICs: These are established to promote scholarly activity in research, teaching or outreach. Scholarship is defined as “creative, intellectual work that is validated by peers and communicated” (Weiser, 1997). Some of these ICs may be established as a component of extramural funding (e.g. Latino Health Disparities Center) or as a result of a federal initiative (e.g. Food Marketing Policy Center).
- Academic Support ICs: The primary function of these units is to support the teaching, research, or outreach mission of the institution. Generally a programmatic effort associated with departments/units or colleges to facilitate the study and dissemination of information in a scholarly area. Frequently, the center is viewed as multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature, bringing together various faculty members with an interest in an area of study. Examples include the Human Development Center, which involves faculty from three colleges on campus or the Institute for Teaching and Learning.
- Cultural Center: The primary mission of these is to support diversity in the university community and promote an understanding and appreciation of diversity through co-curricular programming and other cultural and social activities. An example is the African American Cultural Center.
- Research Center: A smaller, collaborative effort, centered on a specific research or educational activity, often with participants from more than one Department or School. A Center is administered by a Director that may report to a Department Chair or School Dean or a higher ranking individual in the central administration.
- Research Institute: A larger, integrative unit, usually with participants from more than one College or School. An Institute may contain one or more Centers within its administrative structure. An Institute is administered by a Director that reports to a Dean or higher ranking individual in the central administration.

Both Institutes and Centers are focused on externally supported research or educational activities. By definition, ICs are collaborative efforts and not the product of single individuals. Directors of ICs are normally tenured faculty within a Department or School. ICs normally do not contain faculty lines outside of academic Departments or Schools. It is not necessary for every IC to be identical; the governance structure of each should reflect the unique needs and characteristics of that IC.

Institutes and Centers are the major organizational entities for research and educational activities across campuses and, serving as a central location of specialized expertise, have a number of benefits to offer:

- Engage faculty and staff to create a critical mass of intellectual capital for continued growth and productivity including knowledge transfer
- Provide research that impacts environment and societies because of the specialization
- Source for information, teaching and research for faculty and staff
- Build linkages between the community and the university (Partnerships among academics, government, industry and community)
- Opportunities for extramural funding
- Access to the other academic ecosystems on campus
- Interdisciplinary opportunities to collaborate in transferring science into practice
- Create a mentoring environment for faculty that supplements and extends beyond that provided by individual departments

Propelling research into the future will continue to depend on the strengths of Institutes and Centers as the hub for research and the exchange of information and ideas. As the funding landscape continues to change, faculty and those that support faculty will need to leverage and to explore untraditional resources for research funding.

Reference

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It is axiomatic that research is becoming an increasingly global endeavour. As such, two professional development organizations, NCURA and SARIMA (Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association), partnered on an International Fellows program designed to propel research through mutual learning and knowledge exchange.

In March 2014, Tembeka Mpako-Ntusi, former National President of SARIMA and director of the research directorate at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), hosted Jeremy Miner, NCURA Region IV Chair and director of grants and contracts at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC), for two weeks at the campuses in Cape Town and Bellville, South Africa. CPUT and UWEC are primarily undergraduate institutions, with 95% of their respective student bodies pursuing baccalaureate degrees, and have education at the

“The future depends on man’s being able to transcend the limits of individual cultures.”

– Edward T. Hall
core of their academic missions. Though CPUT has nearly three times the total number of students as UWEC, it has less than twice the number of faculty.

CPUT and UWEC share common origins and trajectories: both were historically teaching institutions that are becoming more research focused universities. Accordingly, the fellowship explored barriers that limit research and scholarship and considered additional support that would help advance research and scholarship activities. Individual and small group meetings occurred with researchers, staff, graduate students, and more than two dozen administrators, ranging from the vice chancellor, deputy vice chancellor for research, technology and innovation, engineering dean, and research coordinator for education and social sciences to members of the technology transfer office and international affairs office to directors of research centers and units.

In these discussions, there was wide acknowledgement that CPUT’s vision for research, technology and innovation is grounded in its 10 year blueprint: “To unlock the potential of staff, students and partners to excel in research, technology and innovation that offer solutions to the needs of society.”

Two additional themes emerged, identifying a barrier and a support, respectively, that would be of value to researchers: time and capacity development in grants.

From North America to South Africa, universal agreement exists that “time” is a precious commodity, one that always seems to be in short supply. Tembeka serves on a committee called “Faculty Workload Model Task Team” whose charge it is to identify ways to create protected time for research and scholarship and some initial approaches were shared. In essence, opportunities for more effective time management exist at two levels:

- **Individual:** set priorities daily, recall long-term goals while doing small tasks, block schedule self-identified “most productive times of the day,” find places away from interruptions to work, organize work environments for success, chunk up researching and writing processes into manageable units, and find a mentor.

- **Institutional:** redesign courses to be less lecture driven, revise course assignments to be less grading-intensive, consider class project due dates in relationship to research and scholarship activities and deadlines, examine course sizes to redistribute work-
loads, reduce committee activity and graduate student supervision, and establish an internal program that supports course reassignments.

To promote capacity development of researchers and graduate students, Jeremy presented two 2-hour workshops on persuasive proposal writing. One workshop was offered on the Cape Town campus and was attended by 30 individuals who were currently supported by internal grant funding. The other workshop was held on the Bellville campus and was attended by 30 individuals in the engineering faculty. These priority audiences were targeted because the grants information being presented was directly relevant and held great potential for immediate application, internally and externally.

The workshops explored common reasons why grant applications fail as well as insider secrets for grant success. Ensuing discussions examined ways to identify partners for collaborative grant-seeking endeavors and even considered how the implementation of electronic routing systems would ease the administrative burden on researchers, thus allowing more time for research and scholarship writing. The workshops made an impact: In the words of one researcher, “Thank you for the insightful presentation of writing persuasive grant applications. It was fascinating to see how transparent the US system was with respect to access to information. I believe there is a lot we can learn from this side of the world.”

Celebrating success was identified as a critical strategy for promoting research and scholarly activity and Tembeka and Jeremy shared their respective approaches. The annual CPUT “Research Day” occurs in November and showcases research activities of researchers and graduate students through poster displays and oral presentations. External adjudicators select the top three from approximately 80 posters for prizes. Additional research awards are given in the areas of research publications, graduate supervision, and industry funding; each award includes a financial incentive that can be used to stimulate future research. The annual UWEC “Celebration of Excellence in Research and Creative Activity” event occurs over two days in May and showcases the scholarly work of undergraduate-student faculty collaborations through posters, presentations, displays and performances. A closing reception acknowledges the intellectual contributions of all 380 collaborative research projects and recognizes undergraduate students who received prominent national and institutional scholarships.

It’s impossible to visit the “Mother City,” as Cape Town is called, without savoring some of the culture it has to offer. In addition to appearing at CPUT in the historic District Six area, the NCURA Region IV cow mascot was seen at Table Mountain, scaling one of the new seven wonders of nature, and at Robben Island, following in the footsteps of Nelson Mandela’s long walk to freedom. More broadly, by taking a world view, understanding grant-seeking behaviors through appropriate cultural lenses and contexts, research administrators together can contribute to advances in research activity and awards.

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Hokkaido — the northernmost major island in the Japanese archipelago — is renowned for many things: abundant agriculture, excellent seafood, cold winters, and numerous hot springs.

And in recent years, the prefecture has also come to be known as a hotbed for research administration. This past September over 500 URAs from 125 institutions across Japan gathered in Sapporo, on the campus of Hokkaido University, for a record-breaking two-day national symposium. 20 breakout sessions were held and 81 posters presented, and a supplemental workshop for sustainable collaboration among URAs, organized by members of Hokkaido University, was held on the afternoon of the last day. Even this meeting drew over 200 participants, who engaged in discussions about the state of URAs in Japan.

Research Administration in Japan

500 and Counting: Japanese URAs Gather for Annual Symposium

By David H. Kornhauser and Shingo Ebata

URAs head north

URA-like positions have evolved rapidly and grown quickly in number and variety since the first such national meeting was held in 2009, with just 48 participants. In Hokkaido this time, each of the many breakout sessions (most standing-room-only) had nearly that many participants, with the hallways bustling during the breaks, the poster area noisy with activity, and the main banquet (at the end of the first day) a grand event held in one of the city’s famed beer and mutton barbecue halls.

Host Hokkaido University’s president kicked off the meeting, followed by a speaker from the education and science ministry MEXT, who gave participants an overview of what the government sees in URAs. As it turns out, this is quite a lot: URAs are being expected to play a key role in fostering science and technology innovation, thereby helping maintain Japan’s economic position in the world, as well as promote scientific integrity and ethics, all while laboring under university administrative systems that haven’t quite yet caught up with how to effectively manage positions bridging the lab to office gap.

A storm of parallel sessions followed in half-a-dozen breakout rooms, including investigations into increasing institutional competitiveness, dealing with Horizon 2020, challenges facing research support for the humanities, working with international media to broadcast research news, effectively supporting research teams crossing national boundaries, and making effective use of analytical tools. An update was also presented on efforts to establish an accredited training curriculum for future URAs.

Behind the smiles and polite bows

This being Japan, not a lot of handshakes took place. Instead, mountains of business cards were exchanged, and as in any such meeting, networking was one of the main purposes of the gathering.
All of the politeness and friendly greetings belied, however, that in many ways URAs are still something of a new entity in Japan’s academic world. The number of solutions to the question of what URAs should do (and how they might relate to the larger organization) almost seems to match the number of hosting institutions. And universities across the country struggling with tight budgets are scrambling to find relatively reliable budget mechanisms for URA programs.

The government’s various education and research funding initiatives have helped (at least temporarily) ease monetary burdens for many universities, but truly long term financial security for URAs remains elusive, with many later choosing to return to research, where greater support exists at least for those fortunate enough to secure tenured positions.

And there are larger issues at play as well, resulting from differing groups of universities having received certain differing ministerial block grants, creating institutional clusters that sometimes (but not always) work together. This presented something of a challenge for symposium organizers, who were required to juggle the needs of separate groupings vying for session rooms and speaker slots.

But luckily a certain degree of harmony returned by the end of the conference, with Shinshu University, in centrally-located Nagano Prefecture, stepping forward at the last minute to offer to host the next symposium in 2015, and plans taking shape for a preliminary meeting of an actual national research administration organization, to begin deliberations in coming months.

Teething pains— but a bright outlook

All in all this is an active and exciting time for URAs in Japan, and this feeling was reflected in the lively participation at the Hokkaido symposium. Universities are feeling squeezed by declining budgets and (for many at any rate) gradually declining enrollment, but these circumstances only serve to highlight the sort of innovative funding and outreach solutions that URAs can bring to the research community.

And as their numbers grow, Japan’s URAs will diversify further, increasingly looking beyond the country’s shores to contribute more to international efforts, and find partners to creatively expand the frontiers of research.

There’s no telling just yet how many research administrators will attend the 2015 Nagano symposium, but it is certain to be at least as vibrant and boisterous as this past Hokkaido meeting, which will certainly be fondly remembered by all who attended.

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Training Programs for Middle/Senior Level University Research Administrators (URAs) in Japan

By Keiko Okano

In order to further develop our URA system, MEXT aims to train middle (5 to 10 years experience) and senior (more than 10 years experience) level URAs, so that they can take the lead in advancing their operations and organizations. MEXT chose two universities to build such training programs - Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology (TUAT) and Kanazawa University. In the Annual Symposium, we got to have a sneak peek of the still-in-the-making programs.

TUAT program concentrates on management of RA organization (within an institute) and of highly specialized RA operations (IP, tech transfer, and international). Having already implemented some URA training courses in one of their graduate courses, they seem to have established their own style and value the differences between URA systems in Japan and those in other countries.

Kanazawa U. also has management as one of the main pillar of their program. However, their management encompasses university as well as research projects. In addition, they will work on planning research strategy and research projects.

Both programs involve discussions and exercises/working groups. My impression is that TUAT gears toward more practical knowledge and skills, and Kanazawa U. uses lots of conceptual or sometimes even philosophical discussions. Although I am too early at my URA career, either of them are important and appealing to me, and I am looking forward to hearing from them about how the programs went.

NCURA at its Annual Meeting and at the PRA/FRA conferences also have senior-level discussion groups and concurrent sessions and discussion groups that are aimed at advanced level research administrators. There may be possibilities in the future for NCURA’s offerings to complement the Japanese training programs, and the faculty of the TUAT and Kanazawa U. programs may potentially be a welcome addition to NCURA’s future programs.

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Overflow crowd at a breakout session.
As a member-staff driven organization, the success of NCURA is a result of the time and commitment provided by our member volunteers. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize those who have dedicated countless hours to support their colleagues and our professional staff by taking a leading role in furthering the goals and the values of the organization. Thank you to the following volunteer leaders, who are completing their service terms in 2014:

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NCURA would also like to thank ALL of our volunteers, who have dedicated time to plan, present and assist in the execution of our conferences; contribute to the educational resources provided to our members; foster professional networking and knowledge exchange; and enhance the NCURA community. If you are interested in becoming more involved with your professional association, visit NCURA’s Volunteer Central to learn more about available volunteer opportunities. Please contact Emily Ainsworth, Coordinator of Membership Services for more information at ainsworth@ncura.edu or by calling 202.466.3894.
When a client chooses Evisions as their vendor, they enter a partnership,” says Cindy Bellas, Executive Director of Evisions Research Suite. “Evisions takes the time to listen to their clients’ needs, wants, challenges and end goals. We encourage detailed collaboration and assess it internally to ensure a smooth process from sales, to implementation, to support.”

Joel Dehlin, CEO of KualiCo, begins with social media. It allows him to “get to know clients and their needs before we even meet. And they can do the same with me. Transparency is key.” He adds: “When vendors are open and make it easy for clients to find information, communications are more effective. It’s my responsibility to check out the clients before we meet, so I’m not wasting time asking questions about information they’ve already got out in public.”

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“Start with Clear Communication”

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“Ideas with Clear Communication”

Once the contract is signed, there is generally a hand-off from the vendor’s sales team to the project team. After implementation, there may be another hand-off from the project team to customer support. Each transition leads to new relationships.

Trust is one of the main ingredients in building successful, long-term relationships. Nathan Haines, Managing Director of the Huron Consulting Group feels “it is important and necessary to invest the time in understanding your client’s mindset and goals. From there we collaboratively define our mutual expectations. I am sincerely interested in my clients’ success.”

Simonds uses several things to cultivate and uphold positive relationships with the user community, including “the ability to establish and maintain trust, communicate openly and sincerely, and ensure that our commitment to the vendor/client relationship is evident through our interactions.”

Respecting the vendor’s knowledge and skills will show in the work that is done for you. Like any of us, their motivation to exceed your expectations increases when they feel they are treated as equals rather than servants.

“Start with Clear Communication”

Start with Clear Communication

“You’ve done your homework on eRA systems, seen the demo, selected a vendor with a proven track record, heard about the vendor’s reliability and high-quality customer service from references you called, and the contract has been signed. Now what? How can you get this new relationship off on the right foot?

Or you may already have an eRA system and are looking for ways to improve your relationship with the vendor for long-term success. This article outlines some suggestions on building and maintaining the vendor-customer relationship. It is a key to your success because it ensures that your institution receives the best possible service and value for your investment of time, money and resources to propel your research.

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Share all pertinent information with vendors to help them understand your current and future goals and objectives. The vendor can then offer the best solution for your situation. In other words, you provide the “what” and the vendor provides the “how”. Become familiar with the full range of services and software offered by the vendor so that you can ask intelligent questions. The vendor may also share other products/services that are in the works. Be careful, however, in understanding what is already available and what is only on the drawing board.

“Establish Trust Through Honest Communication”

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“We’re here to help clients fulfill their missions,” says Dehlin. “To do that, we need to look beyond feature requests and figure out what problem they’re actually trying to solve. The relationship can’t just be based on a checklist of features. The only way to do this is to work together to build trust. Sometimes that means listening to problems our products can’t solve, but understanding
those gaps helps us know what to fix or what to tell our customers that we won’t do well.”

Keep Your Word and Respond Quickly

If you say you’ll do something, do it. If you cannot do it within the proposed timeline, say that as well. This builds trust. Stringing people along only slows down your project. “Our clients can count on us to follow through on what we’ve promised through a clear, documented implementation process,” adds Bellas. “We enlist the guidance and support of our clients through frequent surveys and work closely with them as development partners to drive product releases. By allowing our clients to play a part in our planning, they see that we’re in it for them.”

Treat the vendor as any other colleague and answer requests for information as soon as you can. Holding off not only frustrates the vendor, who needs a decision or “green light”, it can also delay progress on your project. Quick responses keep project momentum moving forward.

“Customers have told us that they appreciate our willingness to listen,” says Dehlin, “but also that we check back with them to get their impressions on solutions we’ve provided. Often these quick conversations have led to small product changes that have made a big impact. I often bring developers with me to customer visits. Once, we were meeting with some faculty members who didn’t like something about how our product worked. They were super upset. It was an easy fix so the developer opened up his laptop and made the fix right then and there. We can’t always make changes that quickly, but it’s important to continuously ask for honest feedback from the people who spend the most time using your product and then to act on it.”

When Things go Wrong, Manage Disagreements Effectively

Recognize that it’s unrealistic to think that the vendor can meet all of your needs. In talking with colleagues using the same software, it’s amazing to see the different business processes we use.

The vendor is not only interested in meeting your needs, but must also keep in mind the needs of all other customers using the product. Bellas acknowledges that “Sometimes things get lost in translation and issues arise. We turn these into opportunities to collaborate with our clients to discover a new solution.”

Most challenges can be overcome if the lines of communication (and minds) remain open. Talking it out can often lead to a resolution rather than a riot. If you can present your idea in terms of how it helps all customers, you have a better chance of seeing it developed in the product. And sometimes, the vendor must say “no” or “not right now”.

Other times, there’s an impasse. To address it, Simonds engages everyone involved to “review the foundation of the issue, identify factors that contributed to the misunderstanding, gain a full account of the effects of the misunderstanding, and put measures in place through process reengineering, or enhancement in training, documentation, validation, or other areas to address the situation and minimize risk of recurrence.”

Haines agrees that “It is important for clients to have open and direct communication with their vendors. The bottom line is that collaboration is key when we team up with a client.”

Honesty is also important. “I have great respect for clients who give honest feedback and share stories about the impact of our products and services,” says Dehlin. “There’s a general negativity toward vendors in higher education, which is sad, but I get it. I know people have been burned.”

Become Trusted Advisors to Each Other

Once a system is in use on your campus, it doesn’t mean the end of the client-vendor relationship. It merely transitions into its next phase. Ideally, each becomes a trusted advisor to the other. You will likely want new features and functionality and the vendor will be interested in your feedback on their own ideas.

“What I wish most is that clients would see us as partners and share not just the features they’d like, but the problems that lead them to ask for those features,” says Dehlin. “In general, vendors in Higher Ed need to be more engaged in authentic ways so that we can better meet customer needs.”

Give Recognition When it’s Due

Often, the vendor is able to meet your needs and you may be asked to be a reference for their potential customers. Do it. It’s another way of saying “Thank you” to the vendor for the hard work that’s been done to get you where you are. In addition, these references can be your way of paying it forward to your colleagues in research administration. Remember those references you contacted prior to your purchase? Now you can help others with their decision.

Your experience with the vendor is more credible than any marketing material the vendor may distribute. You can attest to the quality of work provided by the vendor and the reference can be your way of showing that you appreciate the hard work that went into your implementation and ongoing support.

The Effort is Worth it

The potential benefits of a good relationship far outweigh the extra time and effort it takes to build and maintain it. The vendor becomes a part of your team which can lead to new opportunities, savings for your institution, or perhaps a voice in the next release of the product. You grow from being strangers to operating in the best interest of the other. Now that’s win-win!

References:

Evisions: www.evisions.com/research
Huron Consulting Group: www.huronconsultinggroup.com
InfoEd Global: www.infoedglobal.com
KualiCo: www.kuali.co

Terri Hall has fifteen years’ experience in research administration, and is currently the Director of Research Business Intelligence at the University of Notre Dame. In her current role, she oversees eRA systems, data governance and research activity reporting to assist with strategic planning, workload management and award stewardship. Her background includes funding opportunities, pre-award, and electronic research administration. Contact Terri via email: thall2@nd.edu or call (574) 631-7378.
Countdown to December 26th

Almost a year has passed since the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued the final regulations that consolidate and streamline eight OMB Circulars on Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

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Focus: Subawards

By Pamela Webb

The Uniform Guidance contains a myriad of changes relative to subawards, and many of the changes are embedded or referenced in sections that go beyond the main subaward sections of the Uniform Guidance (200.330, 200.331, and 200.332). This compendium highlights some of the most significant changes and applicable sections pertinent to this topic.

Subrecipient F&A Rates (200.331, 200.414). A major change in the Uniform Guidance (UG) is related to payment of subrecipient’s F&A rates. Except if the awarding federal program is subject to a reduced F&A rate (e.g., statutory or regulatory F&A reduction or exception granted by the federal agency head per 200.414), a pass-through entity is now obligated to pay a subrecipient’s federally negotiated F&A rate, or, if the subrecipient has never had a federally negotiated rate, to either give them a de minimus F&A rate of 10% MTDC or to negotiate an F&A rate with the subrecipient.

A subrecipient can voluntarily opt to forego F&A, but a pass-through entity cannot force or entice a subrecipient to give up the 10% MTDC to which they are entitled (see OMB FAQ .331-6). To avoid downstream disagreements, pass-through entities may wish to take steps to document that their subrecipients, choosing to forego their de minimus 10% F&A do so voluntarily.

A challenging issue will be what to do about already-submitted proposals priced under the current rules but awarded under the UG. Will the pass-through entity be obligated to use their own direct costs to pay the subrecipient’s F&A, or will the subrecipient’s approved proposal budget be considered proof that the subrecipient already voluntarily agreed to a lower rate? Watch for additional clarification from OMB or in agency implementation plans about the best way to handle this potentially contentious situation. An odd new wrinkle is OMB FAQ .331-2, which indicates that a federal award could impose a limit of the number of layers (tiers) beyond which the requirement to pay indirect costs is no longer applicable.

Fixed Amount / Fixed Price Subawards (200.45, 200.201, 200.332). The UG uses a new term of “fixed amount” award that includes fixed-price or fixed-rate awards and subawards. Four major changes include:

- a total cost limit per fixed-amount subaward of $150,000 (the simplified acquisition threshold)
- the need to obtain prior written agency approval to enter into fixed amount subawards
- a restriction that a fixed amount subaward may not be used if it involves mandatory cost-sharing (salary “over the cap” is not considered cost-sharing)
- a requirement to certify to the pass-through entity at the end of the federal award that the project or activity was completed or the level of effort was expended

This last requirement also indicates that the price must be adjusted if the work was not completed or the effort was not expended. In the absence of other instructions from an agency, the certification process should occur as a part of the closeout process. The OMB FAQs (.201-3) and Section 200.308 specify when a cost adjustment may be needed and the mechanisms for its calculation. Interestingly, the OMB FAQ .332-1 specifies that more than one fixed amount subaward with the same subrecipient is allowable if needed to complete the work contemplated under the Federal award, provided that each subaward has its own distinct statement of work, price, and deliverables.

Updated Risk Assessment Guidelines (200.331). Section 331 makes it clear that a pass-through entity is obligated to evaluate a subrecipient’s risk of non-compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and conditions of the subaward for the express purpose of defining appropriate monitoring activities. Although there is an obligation to evaluate risk, the pass-through entity may decide how it wishes to go about that risk assessment. The UG suggests certain factors be included in the assessment:

- the subrecipient’s prior experience with the same or similar subawards
- the results of previous audits (including whether or not the subrecipient receives a Single Audit)
whether the subrecipient has new personnel or new or substantially changed systems
✓ the extent and results of federal awarding-agency monitoring

Note that the increase in the threshold for an entity to need a Single Audit (from $500,000 of federal funds expended to a new threshold of $750,000) will likely increase the risk assessment/monitoring burden on pass-through entities, since fewer entities will have a Single Audit available for review. FDP is working on a risk assessment template that is expected to be available for general use within the next few months. At the present time, management decisions issued by federal agencies are not available to pass-through entities; OMB has recognized that this is an area that still needs to be addressed in order to adequately streamline subrecipient risk assessment and monitoring. Risk-assessment works in close connection with the subrecipient monitoring obligations outlined below.

Updated Subrecipient Monitoring Guidelines (200.331). Section 331(d) specifies both mandatory and as-needed subrecipient monitoring obligations. This section is helpful in that it is clearer about subrecipient monitoring expectations, but also serves to emphasize the importance that the federal government is placing on subrecipient monitoring.

Mandatory monitoring obligations include:
✓ the pass-through entity’s review of subrecipient technical and financial reports
✓ following up and ensuring that the subrecipient takes timely and appropriate action on deficiencies detected through audits/on-site reviews, and other means
✓ issuing a management decision for audit findings as required in Section 200.521
✓ verifying that a subrecipient received its mandatory Single Audit if the entity exceeded the $750,000 threshold (increased from $500,000) for federal funds expended in the previous fiscal year
✓ considering whether monitoring findings require the pass-through entity’s records to be adjusted
✓ determining whether enforcement action is needed against noncompliant subrecipients (See 200.338)

Optional (dependent upon risk) monitoring tools include providing subrecipients with training and technical assistance on program-related matters; performing on-site reviews, and ranging for agreed-upon procedures for engagements (see 200.425).

See the companion article by Mary Lee Brown on UG audit provisions to learn more about the changes in timing for audit review and its impact on subrecipient monitoring.

Mandatory New Data Elements Required in the Subaward (200.331). This section spells out data elements that pass-through entities are obligated to include in their subawards. In addition to perennial favorites like the CFDA number and title (okay, we weren’t always good about including CFDA title, but the requirement was there all along!), we now have new requirements, such as:
✓ the subrecipient’s DUNS number
✓ the subrecipient’s name on the subaward will be required to match their registered DUNS name
✓ the Federal Award ID Number (FAIN)
✓ the total amount and award date of the parent Federal award
✓ the federal award project description (read: title) for FFATA reporting purposes
✓ the name of the federal awarding agency
✓ an indication of whether the award is R&D (the federal agency will specify this in our parent award)

The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) is updating its subaward templates to include these new data elements, and those templates will be available for general use on the FDP website thefdp.org by the time the UG goes into effect.

Contractor versus Subrecipient Determinations (200.92, 200.93, 200.23, 200.331). Although the characteristics of a vendor and a subrecipient have remained essentially the same, the terminology has changed and the roles/responsibilities clarified. The UG adds clarity by specifying that the pass-through entity holds the responsibility for deciding whether any given arrangement constitutes a subaward (carrying out a portion of the federal award, creating a federal assistance relationship) or a contractor agreement (obtaining goods and services for the pass-through entity’s own use, creating a procurement relationship). The term “contractor” has replaced the term “vendor” and the terms “contract” and “subaward” are defined clearly as the legal instruments received by contractors and subrecipients, respectively.

Continued on page 59
Focus: Audit Requirements

By Mary Lee Brown

The Uniform Guidance (UG) reforms pertaining to audit requirements merge and align Circulars A-133 (Single Audit) and Circular A-50 (Audit Follow Up). The relevant portions within the UG are Subpart F sections 200.500 – 200.521; Appendix X- Data Collection Form (Form SF-SAC); and Appendix XI – Compliance Supplement.

If you have been following this series of articles since the March/April issue, by now you are all too aware that the objective of the reform is to reduce both administrative burden and risk of waste, fraud, and abuse. Consistent with that objective the Audit Requirements contain several changes that ostensibly allow federal agency oversight and resolution resources to focus on higher-dollar, higher-risk awards and improper-payments thereby mitigating overall risk of waste, fraud, and abuse across the government. According to COFAR, the audit requirements guidance also serve to improve transparency and accountability by making the single audit reports available to the public online, and encourages federal agencies to take a more collaborative approach to audit resolution in order to better resolve underlying weaknesses in internal control. The following is a discussion of the more-significant changes in the sections comprising Subpart F.

Audit Threshold (200.501) The dollar threshold that triggers the requirement for a Single Audit is increased from $500,000 to $750,000 in federal award spending in a fiscal year. The increased threshold eliminates the audit requirement for approximately 5,000 entities and targets federal oversight resources where most federal dollars are at risk by maintaining audit coverage for over 99% of the dollars and 87% of the entities that are currently subject to the Single Audit. It should be noted, however, that the elimination of the 5,000 entities previously subject to the Single Audit will increase the sub-recipient risk assessment and monitoring burden on pass-through entities that can no longer rely on the Single Audit report in the monitoring process.

Relation to other audit requirements (200.503) In instances where a federal agency conducts audits, in addition to the Single Audit, this section contains explicit language requiring federal agencies or pass-through entities to review the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC) for existing audits and to rely on and use those to the extent possible prior to commencing an additional audit. Any additional audits must be planned and performed in such a way as to build upon work performed by other auditors and not be duplicative of other audits of federal awards. Importantly, this language does not limit the authority of federal agencies or Inspector General to conduct additional audits.

Auditees:

Financial Statements (200.510) The Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA) now requires auditees to include the total amount provided to sub-recipients from each federal program. Under the A-133 guidance this was a “to the extent practical” requirement.

Report Submission (200.512) This includes language making it explicit that the FAC is the repository of record and authoritative source for Single Audit reporting packages and anyone interested in the reporting package including all federal agencies, pass-through entities and any others, must obtain it via the FAC. With this distinction, subrecipients are relieved of the burdens of having to submit Single Audit reporting packages to each pass-through entity, and pass-through entities are relieved of the three-year retention requirement for subrecipient reports. However, an unintended consequence of this change is the impact on the timing requirements associated with management decisions, discussed later in this article.

A new requirement states that auditees and auditors must make sure that the reporting package does not
include any protected personally-identifiable-information. Additionally, among the many certifications included in the statement signed by the senior level representative of the auditee, as part of the data collection form (SF-FAC), are two new items: a certification that the package does not include any protected personally-identifiable-information; and the FAC is authorized to make the reporting package and the form publicly available on a Web site. Whereas previously electronic submissions of reporting packages were not precluded, the UG now requires electronic submission to the FAC and the FAC must make the reporting packages available to the public, and is responsible for follow-up with auditees that have not submitted the required reporting packages.

Federal Agencies:
Responsibilities (200.513) In this section, responsibilities of the Cognizant Audit Agency, Oversight Agency for Audit and the Federal Awarding Agency are articulated. Pass-through entities’ responsibilities previously included in the A-133 are now covered in the Subpart D-Post Federal Award Requirements section 200.331. A new Single Audit Liaison is to be named by each federal agency to serve as the point of contact for the single audit process, and accountable for promoting interagency coordination relating to audit resolution and utility of the FAC. The UG dropped language from the A-133 which allowed the Cognizant Audit agency to consider and grant requests for extensions to the Single Audit report submission due date.

Audit Findings (200.516) The threshold for known questioned-costs was raised from $10,000 to $25,000 resulting in some burden relief by eliminating reportable audit findings that fall below the new threshold.

Major Program determination (200.518) The major program determination has changed by increasing the minimum threshold for a Type A program to $750,000 to be consistent with the Single Audit threshold.

Management Decisions (200.521) There is no real change in the responsibilities among the Cognizant Agency for Audit, the federal awarding agency, and the pass-through entity; each is responsible for issuing management decisions on audit findings that relate to federal awards it makes or in the case of the cognizant coordinating a decision among multiple federal agencies. However, a new burden occurs for pass-through entities in meeting the time requirements (Section .521(d)) for issuing the management decision “within six months of acceptance of the audit report by the FAC”. Meeting the six-month deadline becomes a challenge as there is no longer a trigger to notify the pass-through entity when a subrecipient Single Audit reporting package has been posted. Previously, the receipt of a subrecipient reporting package by the pass-through would trigger the review and determination of whether a management decision was called for; and simultaneously trigger the timing requirements for issuing a management decision. Consequently, a pass-through entity will need to implement a potentially labor-intensive manual task of regularly checking the FAC for the Single Audit reports of all its subrecipients.

Appendix XI - Compliance Supplement COFAR has indicated that it is engaging in public outreach prior to making structural changes to the Supplement format. The FY2015 Compliance Supplement will be the first to have instructions and guidance that take into account the changes effected by the UG. That supplement is currently being drafted and is anticipated to be released sometime around April 2015. There is speculation regarding whether some number of the current 14 compliance requirements will be eliminated.

In summary, the changes incorporated in UG Audit Requirements result in a reduced pool of audited entities and focus audit oversight and attention on highest areas of risk for waste, fraud, and abuse of federal program (i.e. taxpayer) dollars.

Mary Lee Brown is the Associate Vice President for Audit, Compliance and Privacy (OACP) at the University of Pennsylvania and PENN Medicine (Health System) where she has worked for 17 years. Prior to working at Penn she spent 18 years at the Johns Hopkins University in several leadership roles including administrative computing, internal audit and controller functions. She currently serves as chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee for the Association of College and University Auditors (ACUA) and liaison to the Council on Governmental Relations as a member of the Costing Policies Committee. She can be reached at marylb@upenn.edu

Reference
2 C.F.R. 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards

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Greetings NCURA Colleagues,

The 9th Pre-Award Research Administration Conference on March 2-4, 2015 fast approaches. Have you registered yet? Made your hotel reservations? Booked a flight? Bought a swimsuit? Don’t wait until the last minute, folks! You want to set a good example for your PI’s, don’t you?

Regardless of how far along you are in your trip planning, we are excited to share with you the latest news coming out of the PRA Command and Control Center from a secret location on the grounds of Walt Disney World.

Keynote Speaker C. McNair Wilson

First, we are delighted to share that our keynote speaker will be the creativity coach and former Disney Imagineer C. McNair Wilson. McNair’s keynote will focus on “recapturing your creative spirit,” and we are sure it will be both an engaging and entertaining presentation. In addition, he will also be leading an afternoon session on The 7 agreements of brainstorming (brainstorming secrets of a theme park designer) that will guide attendees on a journey outside the “always-done-it-that-way” box.

Equally important for those Disneyphiles out there (yes, that is a word), we are pleased to announce that McNair will also be leading a “Behind the Dreams” pre-conference tour on Sunday, March 1, 2015. So be sure to check out the PRA website for details and registration information if you are interested in spending an informative day in the Magic Kingdom with someone who can provide valuable insider’s tips and tricks to enjoying the park, as well as some quirky facts such as why there were no “Pirates” when the Magic Kingdom first opened in Florida. We can guarantee that it will be a “magical” day!

Mr. Wilson’s clients range from Apple Computer to the Salvation Army, from NASA engineers and medical workers to educators and media execs from London to LA. He believes everyone has a creative spirit—factory installed—that just needs re-activating, and he is determined to get everyone on the active list.

In the world of theme parks, McNair was a Concept Designer, responsible for “thinking up” entirely new parks and major attractions for existing parks (a la Disney-MGM Studios, Pleasure Island, and Animal Kingdom). He was lead Imagineer for the concept and design team that dreamt up the legendary “Tower of Terror”—now with four locations to scare you. McNair has also worked on projects at Universal Studios, Warner Bros., and Sony Entertainment.

As a published author, McNair has written five books and scores of articles and napkin notes. His most recent book is HATCH! Brainstorming Secrets of a Theme Park Designer. As a cartoonist, his work has appeared in Rolling Stone and numerous other magazines and is framed on the walls of some of the world’s great restaurants.

Track Highlights

In this edition, we are highlighting Workshops and the Compliance, Departmental and Federal tracks. Stay tuned for more updates from the PUI, Medical, Funding Opportunities and Human Capital tracks in the January/February issue of NCURA Magazine.

The workshop co-chairs have assembled a variety of workshops and senior forums that include a focus on pre-award issues and current topics in research administration. In addition to a pre-award basics all-day workshop, the department administrator’s all day boot camp will make a repeat appearance. Two workshops on the Uniform Guidance will also be presented, offering further insight into how universities have addressed the newly implemented regulations. Pre-award workshop topics include working with faculty and funding opportunities,
What's on my Desk

Eva Björndal’s Desk

A big sponsor audit just landed on my desk – the EU is coming for the second time this year. It was three projects last time and five this time. In between, we have also been audited by our National Audit agency on how we handle our coordinated EU-projects. Three big audits in one year, that’s a lot for a relatively small university like us (big in research though, LOL!). So far no one has ended up in an orange suit, so that’s at least good! Whatever the results will be, we’ll make sure to use them as a tool for Research Administration to push new policies, get messages across, learn and to develop. The audits demand a lot of time in coordination, preparation and execution so I’d better get to it…

Happy Christmas to you all!
Eva Björndal
Chair of Region VIII (International region)
Team-Leader Post-Contract Office,
Grants Office
Karolinska Institutet

compliance (IRB, IACUC, IBC), NIH training and Career Development awards, and understanding pre-award requirements. Workshops on FAR and federal contracting, subaward and subrecipient monitoring, and basics of contract drafting and negotiation will round out the field. In addition, senior forums (led by some of NCURA’s most experienced research administrators) will include discussions of research metrics, pre-award and audits, current trends in pre-award research administration, and other issues beyond the Uniform Guidance we need to be concerned about.

The compliance track will offer eight (8) concurrent sessions and four (4) discussion groups. While the topics themselves aren’t novel, they will feature a pre-award administrator’s perspective on the typical compliance areas such as conflict of interest, audit preparation, IRB/IAUC/IBC, and financial compliance. One session will provide guidance on how to develop a research compliance training program, while another session will focus on a risk-based approach to subrecipient monitoring as required under the new Uniform Guidance. Finally, the compliance track will also offer a pairing of a concurrent session and follow-up discussion group on what to do when something has already gone wrong at your institution.

The departmental track is flush with rich offerings for both beginner and seasoned administrators. Do you have new PIs who need comprehensive guidance, or rogue PIs with oddball situations to navigate? How about confusing contract terms or complex subawards that you are now managing? The departmental track will provide expert guidance in these areas, along with other sessions and discussions on budget basics, tips for effective proposal development, audit-proofing your budgets, central and department coordination, and more.

The federal track has a variety of informative concurrent sessions and discussion groups: New Federal-Wide Research Terms and Conditions, NIH Pre-Award 101, The Perils and Pitfalls of Startup Relationships, Best Practices for Avoiding NIH Commons Errors, and National Studies of Administrative Burden are just a glimpse as to what to expect in the federal track. And, of course, it wouldn’t be a proper NCURA conference without our perennial favorites: The NIH and NSF updates.

As you can see, the 9th PRA Conference is shaping up to be a real humdinger. You would have to be crazy not to attend. So please do! Learn something new. Have a few laughs. Network. Connect with old friends; make some new ones. And then come home refreshed, re-energized and ready to unleash your new knowledge and recaptured creative powers on an unsuspecting world. The path from theory to practice has never been so much fun!

Yours in supporting research…together,
Craig and Tony

DECEMBER 2014
UT Austin Joins $17 Million National Initiative to Combat Traumatic Brain Injury

By Jessica Sinn

AUSTIN, Texas — The Department of Defense has awarded $17 million to 11 U.S. public and private institutions — including The University of Texas at Austin — to support advances in traumatic brain injury research.

This unprecedented public-private partnership aims to drive the development of better-run clinical trials, with the goal of developing the first successful treatments for traumatic brain injury. The condition affects athletes and combat veterans, as well as millions of other people.

The five-year award, officially launched Oct. 1, brings together leading academic clinician-scientists with innovative industry leaders in biotechnology and imaging technology, with patient advocacy organizations, and with philanthropies.

UT Austin psychology professors Alex Valadka and David Schnyer will join the national team of researchers in collecting a broad range of long-term data from existing studies and databases, and integrating these into a dataset that can be analyzed for traumatic brain injury associations and causes in a way that has never before been possible. The principal investigator overseeing the project is Dr. Geoffrey Manley, chief of neurosurgery at San Francisco General Hospital.

The funding will support Valadka and Schnyer’s participation in a multisite longitudinal study (TRACK-TBI) designed to collect clinical, advanced imaging, genetic, proteomic and neuropsychological data on traumatic brain injury. The collaboration demonstrates the ground-breaking research partnerships that UT Austin frequently develops with the private sector.

“It is an honor to be a part of this critical endeavor lead by Dr. Geoffrey Manley and his team at UCSF and supported by the Defense Department, National institutes of Health, General Electric and Seattle’s One Mind,” says Schnyer.

The research collaborators will work directly with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to come up with better methods for selecting patients for clinical trials and better ways to measure patient outcomes that may lead to the identification of effective traumatic brain injury treatments.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 2 percent of the U.S. population lives with disabilities caused by traumatic brain injuries, at an annual cost of about $77 billion. No treatment has proved to be effective.

The new research initiative, called the TBI Endpoints Development (TED) Award, is designed to overcome the difficulty in demonstrating the effectiveness of drugs and medical devices by actively involving the FDA in clinical-trial design from the outset.

The original story can be found at: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/public-affairs/news/8403

If you want to share a “cool” project idea, please email Kellie Klein at kellie.klein@wsu.edu

Get to know Kevin as he describes the research and development of prosthetics and the life-changing impact they have made on humans and animals alike. Become inspired by Kevin’s story of taking a concept from theory to practice. For over 30 years as a practicing prosthetist Kevin has used humor, compassion and ingenuity. As Vice President of Prosthetics for Hanger Clinic, Kevin travels both nationally and internationally to take on patients of all ages who have unique or challenging cases. He has appeared on television for such programs as Dateline, 20/20, CBS Early Show, NBC Nightly News, ABC’s Good Morning America, and the Discovery Channel and been mentioned in well-known publications like Publisher’s Weekly, USA Today, People Magazine and Time Magazine.

Kevin’s practice began in his native country of Ireland in 1978 at the National Medical Rehabilitation Center in Dublin. In 1984, he moved to the United States, and worked for Nova Care Sabolich, before joining Hanger Clinic. Kevin is an American Board Certified Prosthetist and was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthotics and Prosthetics, one of the highest honors of the profession.

According to Hanger Clinic’s website “Carroll’s commitment to improving prosthetics has placed him at the forefront of numerous prosthetic breakthroughs. He is co-developer of the Hanger ComfortFlex™ Socket System; a bone and muscle contoured socket that revolutionized socket design and comfort. He is also engaged in the development of the Sense of Feel and Hot and Cold Sensory Systems and the Neuropathic Foot Protection System for diabetic patients.”

During Kevin’s Keynote, he will be sharing the amazing story of his work with a dolphin named Winter, the star of “A Dolphin Tale” and “A Dolphin Tale 2.”

**We are part of a select group!**

Kevin accepts only a few select speaking engagements each year and donates all of the proceeds to Camp No Limits. Camp No Limits hails as the only camp for young people with limb loss to attend with their families. Their mission is to educate and empower young people with limb loss to discover and develop a healthy, happy and independent lifestyle.

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**Conference co-chairs Charlene Blevens** (Director, Post Award Operations, University of Miami) and **Jeffrey Silber** (Senior Director, Sponsored Financial Services, Cornell University) invite you to be inspired as Kevin kicks off the 16th Annual Financial Research Administration Conference!
The classic image of the humanities scholar remains monastic—toil ing away in isolation, occasionally emerging from her or his cloister/library with a new tome that adds to the world’s knowledge. That image holds true for many of us, but increasing numbers of scholars in the humanities are working together, developing new models for collaborating with each other and with various publics. The Collaborative Research program at the National Endowment for the Humanities is eager to support these collaborations.

The NEH has supported a variety of creative collaborative projects pursuing interpretive work in recent years. An international team is analyzing voting in two mid-nineteenth century American cities, tracing links to residential patterns and membership in community organizations, using GIS and data-mining techniques. A group of historians from the US and Europe will hold a series of conferences on sport in the Cold War. Archeologists are working on sites in Turkey, Virginia, Mexico, and elsewhere. All of these projects involve multiple scholars, usually from different institutions and crossing disciplinary boundaries.

Scholarly Editions and Translations are a specialized form of collaboration. In these projects the scholarly teams create critical editions and/or translations of important materials not otherwise available to scholars. Some of these projects involve a large corpus and have been running for decades, like the papers of George Washington or the correspondence of Robert and Elizabeth Browning. Others involve smaller but important texts, such as a new edition of Franz Boas’ pioneering ethnography.

Collaboration has many benefits for scholars and their projects. It brings a variety of disciplinary skills and approaches to bear on large and complex topics. It is particularly useful in dealing with international issues. It helps projects connect with different audiences, both scholarly and public. A number of the projects supported by these grants are using innovative digital means to communicate the process and results of their work.

Despite these advantages, collaborative research is also difficult. Humanities scholars who are used to working alone have to find ways to plan and carry out their research with colleagues. Large projects with multiple participants and large budgets require different management skills. Dissemination through new media involves working with library and IT partners while thinking about the interests of various audiences. The applications for these projects are often bigger and more complex than those for individual fellowships.

All of these challenges show the importance of another kind of collaboration—working with institutional grant administrators. Research administrators can help scholars put together the often more complex, applications and create budgets that adhere to institutional and funders’ policies. Their help is also important post-award, especially in coordinating wide-spread collaborators and dispersing funds locally and internationally. When prospective applicants ask about collaborative projects I usually advise them to start with their campus research administrators.

The next application deadline for the NEH’s Collaborative Research and Scholarly Editions programs is December 9, 2014; decisions will be made in July 2015 and awards can begin as early as October 1, 2015. Applicants can request up to $100,000/year for up to three years. Successful applications make a strong case for the project’s intellectual significance and its potential impact on the work of other scholars. They demonstrate the project’s connections to previous and current humanities scholarship. They show the project’s interpretive goals, ask clear research questions, and describe how the proposed methods will answer those questions. They discuss the project staff’s qualifications for the project and how the research results will be disseminated to its target audiences.

REFERENCE
More information on the Collaborative Research program is available at: http://www.neh.gov/grants/research/collaborative-research-grants.
There you will find guidelines that outline what an application should include and the criteria that reviewers will use in evaluating applications. NEH staff will read drafts if received by October 20. You can send questions to collaborative@neh.gov or editions@neh.gov.

Daniel Sack is a program officer in the Division of Research Programs for the National Endowment for the Humanities.
Collaborative research. This is a familiar theme heard at conferences, workshops, and when meeting with faculty researchers. Particularly, over the last several years, faculty members faced an increasingly competitive atmosphere for obtaining funding for their research endeavors. As the pressure to obtain external funding for research activities continues to increase and as the number of faculty seeking such support also expands, it is imperative that faculty are provided with assistance in obtaining external research funding. At the same time, funding agencies looked more favorably on collaborative research proposals. In this environment, the challenge then for both faculty members and research administrators is to develop collaborative research. As research administrators, how do we facilitate collaboration to propel research activity at our respective institutions?

When we consider collaborative solutions, two approaches seem readily apparent: external and internal. Consider the external relationship, as Research Administrators we may have strong relationships with other institutions. However, the keys to collaborative research between institutions are faculty members. Anecdotally, it has been my observation that faculty researchers collaborate externally with mentors, most likely their former advisors; and to a lesser extent with individuals who were their professors or fellow students at their previous institutions. Where these pre-existing external faculty relationships do not exist it is more complicated for the research administrator to facilitate partnerships between institutions, even when strong administrative relations exist. Therefore, I hypothesize that research administrators have diminished influence over faculty researchers’ external collaboration.

Recognizing the complexity of the external relationship, research administrators can work internally to promote faculty collaboration. This is typically not the venue for Central Research Administration which tends to be functionally removed from proposal development. Thus, it is at the department level that we find a natural liaison between faculty and research administration. In this environment, research administrators work very closely with faculty members to uncover funding opportunities, prepare proposal narraties, and the corresponding budgets.

Within this setting, it seems natural for the department level research administrator to foster internal collaboration amongst faculty members. Drawing upon this synergy, over the past several years the research administration team within a college office of research (OoR) in a large southeastern university implemented a series of programs and services designed to facilitate internal faculty collaboration. Below are listed the collaborative programs that the college supported and these may easily adapt across academic disciplines and research foci.

The first step in collaborative program development was meeting with individual faculty members to get a clear picture of their research interests and expertise. From these meetings, interests and expertise were posted to a faculty research interests database, browser accessible, and developed in-house. This database provides a central repository of information for faculty queries. Here faculty members may conduct keyword searches on various topics and discover colleagues with similar interests.

Next, a supporting database was created for tracking funding opportunities. During the academic year, research staff update the database on a weekly basis. Stemming from the earlier research interest and expertise meetings, opportunities are listed that are likely to be of interest to faculty. The grant opportunities are organized by research interest area and funding agency. In addition to browser accessibility, faculty members receive a monthly grant bulletin (email) generated from the database that lists current grant opportunities.

Building on this foundation, each semester the OoR offers at least one grant-related workshop (e.g. IES, NSF, NIH, etc.). Panel members are selected based on their success with obtaining grants. Other workshops may cover seminar topics such as tips on how to search for grant opportunities, obtain IRB approval, and prepare successful grant proposals to particular federal agencies. These informal settings foster peer communication amongst faculty.

On a larger scale, the OoR coordinated a multi-college research collaboration symposium. Recently, research administrators from the College of Education, College of Communication and College of Medicine joined forces to plan such an event. During the event, faculty from all three colleges delivered poster presentations, participated in roundtable discussions concerning their DECEMBER 2014

Partnering to Propel Research – One College’s Strategy

By Russell Walker
research interests, and formed collaborative networks for future research projects.

One of the newest OoR programs is the voluntary Research Collaborator initiative. Under this program, faculty members currently serving as principal investigators (PIs) on funded projects agree to serve as mentors to junior faculty who have not previously served in that role. The junior faculty who volunteer to participate in this program are paired with mentors who have similar research interests and, in exchange for being mentored, agree to get involved in the funded project in some mutually agreeable fashion. As a result, the junior faculty members get insights into the types of activities PIs often engage in. Moreover, on occasion the mentor-mentee relationship has resulted in the two individuals working together on new grant proposals.

Lastly, during the past year the OoR implemented two internally funded grant programs—one for individual faculty and a second one for faculty working together as an interdisciplinary team. Under these programs, faculty are invited to submit a brief proposal describing a research project likely to attract external funding from a specific funding agency. Faculty whose proposals are deemed meritorious receive seed money to help them undertake promising new research projects. At the end of the internal funding period, faculty are required to submit a grant proposal to the external funding agency they had identified.

So, were these collaborative initiatives successful? To answer this question the OoR uses metrics to measure performance. Given that the majority of the aforementioned programs and services were implemented over the last three years, the long-term effects of these efforts on the number and dollar amount of external grants received is still to be determined. However, preliminary data is quite encouraging. For example, during 2013-2014, college faculty submitted 52 external grant proposals, which represents more than a 50% increase in the number of proposals submitted during the entire 2009-2010 academic year, the year prior to which the first of the new programs and services described in this article were instituted. In addition, whereas 22 grants were awarded to faculty in 2009-2010, 37 grants were awarded in 2013-2014, representing a 70% increase. Moreover, the amount of grant money received has increased greatly; whereas $2,670,000 in grants was received in 2009-2010, in 2013-2014 that amount more than doubled, increasing to $6,761,000. While the aforementioned increases cannot be directly attributed to the collaborative programs and services noted above it seems reasonable to assume that some portion of these improvements have occurred as a result of these new efforts.

Russell Walker, is the Managing Director for the College of Education – Office of Research at Florida State University where he has worked for the past five years. Prior to this he did corporate work for fifteen years, facilitating the business operations for private colleges and universities nationwide. Russ is currently working on a PhD in Education Policy and Evaluation. In his spare time, he enjoys mission work in Cuba and can be reached at rwalker4@admin.fsu.edu
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✓ OMB Circular A-21 Mini Guide
✓ OMB Circular A-110 Mini Guide
✓ OMB Circular A-133 Mini Guide
NCURA is a partner in the BILAT USA 2.0 project, which is an international consortium funded by a grant from the European Union’s Framework Programme 7 (FP7) in order to foster greater research collaboration between U.S. and European researchers. Since September 2014, NCURA has broadened its global role by becoming a U.S. National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon 2020, which is the European Union’s €80 billion (~$100 billion) grant program for 2014-2020. This is a pilot designation that will be in effect for the duration of the BILAT USA 2.0 project and will enable NCURA to serve its members and all research administrators interested in participating in Horizon 2020 grants.

In addition, as part of its role in the BILAT USA 2.0 project, NCURA recently provided all four speakers for training workshops in Brussels, Oslo, and Berlin on U.S. funding. On the sidelines, NCURA met with a number of its European NCP counterparts in Germany and Austria. Watch for more information on this program in the January/February edition of *NCURA Magazine*.

(L-R) Jesse Szeto (Senior Manager, NCURA Global); Wolfgang Wittke (European Commission); Heino Nau (European Commission and project officer for BILAT USA 2.0 project); Kathleen Larmett (NCURA Executive Director); Vera Kammann (Project Coordinator for BILAT USA 2.0 project); Olaf Heilmayer (BILAT USA 2.0 Principal Investigator).
Phase VI of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) officially began on October 1, 2014 but much of the groundwork was in place long before that date. In fact, Phase VI hit the ground running with a complete strategic plan, a new Chair, a re-elected Co-Chair, and an institutional membership exceeding 150 research institutions, up from approximately 120 participating institutions in Phase V, including a dozen new Emerging Research Institutions.

During the next six years, called Phase VI, the FDP will apply the lessons learned through the successes of the past, recognizing that the greatest achievements were the result of true collaboration between the organization’s federal and institutional partners. If you are not familiar with the FDP:

*The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) is an association of federal agencies, academic research institutions with administrative, faculty and technical representation, and research policy organizations that work to streamline the administration of federally sponsored research. FDP members of all sectors cooperate in identifying, testing, and implementing new, more effective ways of managing the more than $15 Billion in federal research grants. The goal of improving the productivity of research without compromising its stewardship has benefits for the entire nation.*

The FDP uniquely offers a forum for individuals from universities and nonprofits to work collaboratively with federal agency officials to improve the national research enterprise. At its regular meetings, faculty and administrators talk face-to-face with decision-makers from agencies that sponsor and regulate research. They hold spirited, frank discussions, identify problems, and develop action plans for change. Then – again working jointly – they test the new ways of doing things in the real world before putting them into effect.

Phase VI of the FDP will continue to operate with the vision of leveraging the Partnership to support “Researchers doing science, not administration”. In support of this vision, the first theme for Phase VI is “Maximize the time available for Principal Investigators and scientific staff to focus on research while reducing unnecessary administrative burdens.” The second theme, “Increase the efficiency of administrative and compliance practices while reducing inefficient or redundant agency requirements and institutional procedures and practices” is, of course, important enough to stand on its own but it can also be viewed as a means of addressing the first theme. The FDP is interested in reducing inefficiencies, even when they do not impact Principal Investigators and other researchers, but targeting faculty burden provides a focus for identifying and implementing initiatives that are likely to reduce burden for us all and, very importantly, allow more time for science.

Fortunately, the FDP has a great resource available for identifying areas of prominent faculty-administrative-burden. The results of the 2012 FDP Faculty Workload Survey provide information that allows general categories of administrative workload to be viewed in different ways, such as by the type of research, the type of institution, and the source of funding. This can lead to the identification of particular policies and processes that result in the most work for the least value, providing direction for where the partnership’s attention is most needed. Of course the FDP is immersed in the changes brought about by the Uniform Guidance but, even in addressing those, the focus is on implementing the new requirements in ways that achieve effective controls without creating inefficient processes.

In 2016, the FDP will be celebrating 30 years since the organization’s inception as the Florida Demonstration Project. It is timely to note that while we can see so many challenges ahead, the organization has a history of successfully addressing the issues of the day through its strong partnership. As the Chair for the first three years of Phase VI, my goal is to ensure that the organization carries out its mission by continuing to strengthen relationships between our institutional and federal partners and by further engaging our faculty representatives to identify areas of valueless administrative burden.

**Putting a Premium on Partnership**

*By Cynthia Hope*

Cynthia Hope is the Assistant Vice President for Research and the Director of the Office for Sponsored Programs at The University of Alabama. She is the Chair of the Federal Demonstration Partnership www.theFDP.org and a member of the Board of Directors for the Council on Governmental Relations. She can be reached at chope@research.ua.edu
Vincent “Bo” Bogdanski
Senior Research Administrator, Colorado State University

Colorado and Washington states face an interesting challenge, as both have legalized the sale of marijuana and hemp in recent years. Federal and State governments have also become more interested in research associated with its legalization and use. Colorado and Washington universities have a research interest, and other institutions now think that the subject is ready for their research portfolios also. To become involved, quite a few things need to be considered such as facilities, security, DEA licenses, institutional policy, publicity, insurance, and more. How about a “drug-free workplace” certification? Before institutions jump into the competition, it would be prudent to think through the issues in order to be responsive and responsible, to funding opportunities. This is more than just an institutional change in focus, there is a lot more involved.

Denise Wallen
Research Officer and Senior Fellow, University of New Mexico

As the research administration environment globalizes, administrators face issues, as well as opportunities across geographic boundaries. Through global research administration collaborations we can better address these demands. Furthermore, by providing resources and experiences we can reduce barriers in our individual administrative environments. The NCURA Global Fellowship Program is one such mechanism that provides members the opportunity to visit, learn and share best practices. Training at our conferences has targeted global issues and does Global Fundamentals Training. I believe that professional global relationships allow us to support our institutions and researchers and enrich global collaborations. As is often the case, it is the relationships amongst research administrators that allow us to problem solve and identify solutions. And now with a global geographic membership we are better able to do so.

Dan Nordquist
AVP/Director, Washington State University

Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) news abounds and yet widespread confusion persists about the legalities of UAS activity, particularly surrounding our research programs. Two recent Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) memos have us, at research universities, scratching our heads. The first memo dramatically narrowed the scope of allowable UAS activities. Immediately, several research universities, APLU, and AAU began to work together to formulate a way to approach FAA with our concerns. In the midst of this, the FAA issued a second memo that sought to clarify the intent and scope of the first memo. Nevertheless, our group pressed on and engaged with the FAA and the meeting went . . . okay. We confirmed that the current UAS operations approval process is still the appropriate mechanism to use but questions linger regarding the allowable scope.
Responding to the Uniform Guidance:

How UT Got its “R” On

By Deborah L. Smith, Meredith G. Perry and Carol Malkemus
Initially, 20 policies or topics were to be reviewed/discussed:

- Subrecipient Monitoring
- Direct Charging
- Sponsored Projects
- Code of Business Ethics
- Pre-Award
- Fixed Amount Subawards
- Purchasing
- Effort Certification
- Conflict of Interest
- Facilities and Administrative Costs
- Equipment
- Audit
- Subrecipient/Contract Determination
- Cost Sharing
- Terminal Leave,
- Cost Transfers
- Unused Supplies
- Extra Pay
- Program Income
- Disclosure Statement.

Some of the groups merged and some others broke into further sub-groups (e.g., pre-award/post-award). Our analysis covered the range of institutional policies related to sponsored programs. Ultimately, six policies were revised and one new policy was created to align with the UG.

Each subcommittee set its own schedule, with some meeting weekly, others meeting monthly, and others postponing meetings pending additional information on the UG and/or agency responses. Since most groups were composed of members from multiple locations, meetings were held via teleconference, with some also including “join.me” connections to enable simultaneous viewing and editing of documents. The groups also utilized Outlook calendar invitations and shared documents via e-mail.

**We outline the challenges and benefits of our approach.**

**Challenges**

Meetings, meetings, meetings—With a small cohort of people taking on a wide-reaching task, many of us were members and/or chairs of multiple subcommittees. It was challenging to keep track of which meeting was being held, who was participating (*am I chairing this one?*), who was taking minutes, and what “homework” was due. Some groups kept detailed minutes; others shared a summary with the larger Group monthly.

Maintaining focus on UG issues—Since our approach focused on the detailed review of policies to ensure compliance with the UG, the discussions often veered towards non-UG policy issues also. The subcommittees asked for guidance from the Group about whether they should be looking only for UG compliance issues or whether they should update other areas identified. It was decided that subcommittees would identify any issues they uncovered and make recommendations (e.g., to make outdated policies consistent with current practice) for changes in all areas.

Scheduling and coordinating the subcommittees—The frequency and number of meetings and overlapping membership made scheduling a challenge but most subcommittees set regular meeting times. Because some of the policies were under simultaneous review by multiple subcommittees, some groups had to work together and sometimes hold joint meetings to discuss issues of concern to both groups. Even for joint meetings, we were able to get most of the members of both subcommittees together at a mutu-
ally agreeable time. But, we did sometimes forget which group was meeting!

Staying abreast of information coming out of COGR, NCURA, FDP, federal agencies, etc.—It was challenging to keep up with latest information coming from various sources. UT started early in the year on its process, but because the agency deadline for response was not until mid-year, some groups had to postpone action pending directives from the agencies. Our leader did an excellent job of providing information coming in from COGR, FDP, NCURA, and the various agencies; and members of the Group shared information they obtained via list-servs, professional meetings, etc.

Benefits
Current review and update of many fiscal policies—The Group initially identified 20 policies or topics to be reviewed. During that review, members identified other related policies that needed to be reviewed and some new policies that needed to be drafted. In all, six policies were updated and one new policy was drafted during the process. While we were all familiar with UT policies, reading them in this new light enabled group members to spot redundancies and inconsistencies within and among policies, outdated examples, and references to processes that had changed over time. The process also enabled us to get a better understanding of the rationale underlying some of the policies and the regulations that undergird them.

Group interaction—Since most of the groups included members from across the state, participants had the opportunity to catch up with their old friends and to (virtually) meet new colleagues. These interactions made the process interesting and fun. The networking opportunities that originated around the UG will continue to yield dividends in terms of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and aligning best practices across the campuses and institutes in the UT System.

Better understanding of the UG—Many Group members found it much easier to read the UG carefully in the context of comparing it with existing policies than it would have been to try to digest it as a stand-alone document. Because the review groups were composed of pre-award, post-award, auditing, controller’s office, and other personnel, each person brought a unique perspective which helped everyone to understand the nuances of the UG.

Ensuring UT compliance with UG—Obviously, ensuring UT compliance with the UG was our primary consideration and ultimate goal. We believe that our success toward this goal was strengthened by taking this deliberate approach and starting early. We are confident that this inclusive process will ensure that UT policies will continue to be in compliance with federal regulations even as OMB and agency implementation of the UG remains a dynamic process. A better understanding of the policies and regulations will aid us in responding to faculty questions about why they are required to do (or not do) certain things related to sponsored projects.

Keeping the UT community informed—Many people are reluctant to embrace change and most people do not like to be blindsided when change does occur. To keep the faculty and UT community informed, the Group felt that transparency was the best approach and various members of the Group engaged the university community in discussions of possible changes that will result from the UG. This engagement varied by campus. It included presentations at research deans’ meetings, campus fiscal officers’ meetings, faculty senate meetings, the UT Audit committee, and various college business managers’ meetings, as well as newsletter articles and web pages. While each UT campus and institute will be responsible for implementation of the UG for its unit, the Group provided valuable thoughts and ideas so that each campus does not have to reinvent to wheel.

Summary
Preparing for the implementation of the UG seemed like a daunting task when we first approached it in early 2014 but having subcommittees look at the various issues in light of UT policies made the task much easier. While it sometimes did seem overwhelming, we were all in it together. And, contrary to the data on conference calls presented by Thompson (2014), most of our participants seemed to be engaged during the calls. Our inside joke about “getting our R on” initially referred to establishing sponsored program “restricted” accounts that are in full compliance with the UG. During the process we realized that the “R” stood for so much more including the Relationships we established and strengthened with colleagues, the Resources we shared to accomplish the task, and the Realization that we are stronger and better when we’re working together!

References
The Research Administration Trainee Program at Johns Hopkins University

By Anne Albinak

Background

Hiring staff that are qualified to work as research administrators in central, divisional, and departmental offices has always been somewhat of a struggle at Johns Hopkins University (JHU). While the general staff training supplied is quite good, online training is no substitute for hands-on learning. JHU is decentralized, so each division may have different rules and processes that prevent an employee who has research administration experience in one division from fully applying that knowledge within another division. When the federal government enacted the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2008 (ARRA), several financial and research administration leaders at JHU thought that developing a full-time research administration training program using F&A recovery funds from ARRA grants and contracts would serve the university well. A committee was formed to create a program and produce a guide that outlines the process of hiring, the program expectations (both from the trainees and the departments training them) and the curriculum. Soon after the guide was made, the first RAT Pack cohort was hired and as of now JHU is currently rotating its sixth cohort.

What is the RAT Pack?

The Research Administration Training Program (RAT Pack) is a two-year, full-time program that rotates trainees through six-month assignments, in departments related to research administration. Each of the main research divisions at JHU (School of Medicine, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering) sponsor one or two trainees each year and are responsible for paying the trainee’s salary, fringe, travel expenses (the trainees are required to go to one conference per year, they all usually attend the NCURA annual meeting), and a laptop that they take from assignment to assignment.

The program is overseen by an Executive Committee consisting of senior leaders from divisional research administration offices, divisional business offices, Sponsored Projects Shared Services (i.e. central finance) and academic departments. The Executive Committee interviews all of the candidates for the program, does the hiring, assigns the trainees to a division and appoints a mentor for each trainee. They are also responsible for maintaining the curriculum, advising trainees on possible job placements, overseeing the performance review process and setting rotation changes.

Applicants apply at the JHU Jobs site jobs.jhu.edu as all prospective JHU employees would. The Executive Committee manages the search and hires trainees based on their employment and educational backgrounds. Each trainee is assigned their own mentor: a JHU staff member that works directly with research administration in some capacity. Mentors monitor the trainee’s progress to ensure that the trainee’s learning goals are met, evaluate the trainees, manage the rotation process, advise trainees on administrative issues, and help with job placement. The mentor also makes sure that the access for the various JHU online systems is correct for each rotation.

During each of the trainee’s rotations they also have a supervisor from the department to which they are assigned. The supervisor trains, oversees and evaluates the trainee’s work, and communicates that evaluation to the mentors.

In the past, the day-to-day tasks of the program were taken care of by the Chair of the Executive Committee and his Administrative Coordinator, but this fall permission was sought and gained to hire a full-time coordinator to ease the administrative burden. This hire should enable the program to continue to grow in an organized manner while maintaining the high quality of the training.

What do trainees learn?

Each cohort of trainees begins their first rotation on the same day by reporting to the business office
of the division that is supporting them, where they complete the majority of their online training, some of their applicable in-person training and generally learning the way things are done at JHU. The second half of the first rotation is completed in JHU’s Sponsored Projects Shared Services (SPSS), where trainees learn the basics of new-award set-up, financial reporting, billing and compliance. Following the rotation in SPSS, each trainee is assigned to a different academic department or research center/institute to learn proposal development, payroll, effort-reporting, and general departmental administration. These departmental assignments are often based on the interests of the trainees. For example, a recent trainee was very interested in public-health issues so her rotation consisted of working in Uganda for three months to help close out a satellite office, then spending the next three months in the Public Health department that ran the Ugandan office. The third rotation is in a divisional research administration office where they concentrate on proposal submission, contract negotiation, and subcontract set-up.

At this point in a trainee’s rotation schedule, many of the trainees will have made connections throughout JHU and may already have someone interested in hiring them, but some do a fourth rotation in a department that they have interest in, but was not on their original rotation, for example JHU’s Export Controls Office.

In addition to each rotation, trainees are required to attend online and in-person training courses that are available to JHU staff; the required curriculum is mapped out in the RAT Pack guide. They are also required to attend a special set of seminars held exclusively each month for the trainees and taught by JHU experts, and include subjects such as IRB, Contracts, Internal Audits, Effort Reporting, and Global Compliance.

What are the benefits to the trainee? If the trainee completes a minimum of 18 months of the program they will receive an extra year of service towards their tenure at JHU. Trainees can accept a permanent job after two rotations but the job would stay on the trainee until they reach 18 months in tenure at JHU, and they are expected to finish any training classes not yet completed. The full Executive Committee meets with each of the trainees before their third rotation in order to start them thinking about what type of permanent position they may be interested in and what might be available throughout the university. No trainee is guaranteed a job after completion of the program, but most have found full-time positions in administrative and/or financial positions.

What types of people are hired as trainees? The usual hire is a college graduate with some experience in a workplace, though the experience may not necessarily be in an office. Most of the hires have a business or accounting degree; however there is nothing preventing graduates with other types of degrees from applying or being accepted. The program has also accepted staff currently employed at JHU that are looking for career changes.

Is this a successful program? There have been 25 people hired into the RAT Pack since its inception; of those, 8 are currently 14 and have successfully finished the program. Out of that 14, 11 are still employed at JHU. The Executive Committee believes this is a very good outcome on their divisions’ investments and the program has received support from our Provost and Sr. Vice President for Administration. The trainees who have completed the program keep in touch through social events and a SharePoint site and often serve as the unofficial ambassadors for the program throughout the University. This summer, one of the trainees from the second cohort became a mentor to a new trainee in cohort five.

What about current employees? The RAT Pack created much interest in staff at JHU who expressed a strong interest in participating in the same type of in-depth training as was being offered to the RAT Pack trainees. In response, the Research Administration Training Certificate Program for JHU Staff was formed in 2012 and started off with an initial cohort of 4. This is a modified program that includes the required monthly seminars and specific University training, but has shadowing days (4-6 during a 6-month period) instead of 6-month rotations. The trainees must have at least 2 years of experience and approval from their supervisor to join. The staff program uses the participants’ current supervisors as the mentors. The participants, whose full-time positions range from Budget Analyst to Contracts Associate, work with the Program Coordinator, the Steering Committee, and their supervisors to develop their own training and rotation schedules that take into consideration their professional interests. A second cohort was started last fall with 7 employees, and a third cohort of 14 started this spring. The first cohort completed their requirements this summer.

What have we learned? One phrase that is used very often in the program is “you have to be flexible.” With the first and even second cohort, the program was still in development and the Steering Committee, mentors and supervisors were learning just as much as the trainees were. Now that several cohorts have been through the program, the mentors and the Steering Committee are always conscious that the program should work for the trainees, so sometimes adapting the program to the person is necessary. The trainees need to keep in mind that not much at JHU (or in research administration in general) is set in stone, so they need to get used to hearing “it depends” and “I’m not sure, let’s see what happens if we do this.” They also need to remember that the program is here to help them succeed at JHU so if they do not feel that they are being put in a position to succeed, or if they have ideas for a change, they should speak up.

How can you learn more? In the past we have received inquiries from a number of institution, both national and international, who are interested in forming their own Rat Pack. If you or someone at your institution is interested in speaking to us about the program, we would be more than willing to answer any of your questions so feel free to contact us.
I’d like to offer a huge “Thank You!” to all our members who made contributions to the Education Scholarship Fund during the annual meeting this past August. Because of your generosity, the milestone of reaching $35,000 was met. In addition, every one of our Board of Directors made a contribution. This 100% participation reflects the commitment of NCURA leadership to the mission of the Fund – paying forward to support professional development of our membership and future leaders. Many thanks to our leadership for generously helping to meet this Annual Meeting goal.

For the first time, pledges were accepted for those who wished to utilize yet another way of donating. In addition, funds were raised through regional competition in the Hospitality Suites, through t-shirt sales, and even a scavenger hunt at AM56. Region III won the inaugural “Fife Cup”, a traveling award to recognize the region raising the most money for the Education Scholarship Fund each year. At their recent joint October meeting, Regions VI and VII utilized their “sand buckets” from the Annual Meeting to collect donations.

As you make decisions for year-end and memorial charitable contributions, please consider including NCURA’s Education Scholarship Fund. Gifts are tax deductible and help lay the groundwork for supporting fellow members in their future professional development. Through your generosity you can help develop the next generation of research administrators.

Remember, even a little makes a difference!

**NCURA Education Scholarship Fund**
1015 18th Street, NW, Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036

Contributions can be made online at:
http://www.ncura.edu/Education/
EducationScholarshipFund.aspx

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**Thank you to the contributors who donated during AM56:**

**NCURA President’s Circle ($1000 - $4,999)**
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Jilda Garton, David Ngo, Cheryl Williams
Kay Gilstrap, Heather Offhaus, Rumira Xhaferaj
Justine Gordon, Sanaz Okhovat, Paula Yarbrough
Louise Griffin, William Paja, Pam Whitlock

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John Case, Morehouse School of Medicine
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Kim Moreland, University of Wisconsin – Madison
Lisa Mosley, Arizona State University
Suzanne Rivera, Case Western Reserve University
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Project Ideas:

The ability to articulate concepts concisely, clearly, and precisely is a necessary skill when providing guidance to others. To aid research administrators in achieving this level of communication when discussing project concepts and to fill an existing gap in the literature, the authors have constructed a table which contrasts the elements of a worthy undertaking (“a good idea”) with the corresponding characteristics of an approach which might receive funding (“a fundable idea”). The descriptive clauses in Table 1 are intended to illustrate differences between concepts that have general merit and those that would be worth pursuing as the basis of a grant application in the humanities, social sciences, education, and for intervention, outreach, or service projects.

Propositions that people find appealing often include improving upon something or providing someone needed-assistance. However, enabling improvement or helping people is not enough to render a grant concept fundable (Karsh & Fox, 2009). While advancement and assistance are certainly desirable and essential elements of a proposal, one of the critical concerns of a funder is meeting the needs of the population they target (Bauer, 2009). Often, very little creativity is required to transform a good idea that advocates a helpful practice into one that also addresses the funder’s target audience. Investigating whether the proposed focus can address a concern

### Table 1: A Good versus Fundable Idea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Good Idea…</th>
<th>A Fundable Idea…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…helps someone, enables improvement</td>
<td>…addresses the funder’s target audience/group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…advances an important agenda</td>
<td>…advances the funder’s agenda and builds on the funder’s giving history or portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…serves a wise/substantial purpose.</td>
<td>…serves a wise/substantial purpose while doing something innovative like answering a question or addressing a problem in a new and unique way, proving a concept, or demonstrating scalability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…aligns with personal/professional interest and experience</td>
<td>…aligns with funder priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…creates/maintains something of value</td>
<td>…builds or expands on something of value and has potential for impact beyond a single organization or group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…involves learning, growth, or progress</td>
<td>…measures/analyzes/advances learning, growth and movement toward a goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…can have undefined steps/processes</td>
<td>…has a clear path from A to B to C and has specific, timed, measurable steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…can be of any scale</td>
<td>…is scaled by prior experience, expertise, and to a defined cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…can be a unique effort</td>
<td>…should be replicable and sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…can be an untested concept</td>
<td>…has substantiated promise to catalyze positive change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…can be a first time endeavor</td>
<td>…should be in line with the proposer’s professional credentials and demonstrated skill-set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with respect to a funder’s preferred target population, such as Hispanic students, students at risk of attrition, low-income students, and students in STEM disciplines, is a helpful first step.

Grant-making organizations analyze national or regional issues and trends to identify their funding priorities (Ford, 2011) and consider the impact of their investments based on an agenda they have formulated, rather than a myriad of local contexts and interests (Bauer, 2009; Karsh & Fox, 2009). They wish to see an ever-expanding set of outputs and outcomes from their portfolio that cumulatively advance the knowledge-generating, social, humanitarian, or other objectives they have established. Return-on-investment for grant makers equates to building the level of evidence for their specific grant making agenda. When formulating and refining a project concept in hopes of submission to an agency or foundation, it is prudent to consider the funding priorities expressed by and the giving history of each potential funder in an effort to delineate what types of activity each sees as advancing their agenda. It is possible that a concern considered important in one’s immediate environment may not, in fact, align with the funders’ priorities and preferences.

The authors have frequently heard that there once was a time when a wise and substantial purpose was sufficient to garner funding. If this was ever really the case, that period is long past. Among the many other requirements for a project idea to be fundable is the extension of the wise or substantial purpose construct to include innovation. Innovation, in this sense, can include unique approaches, extension of understanding, application within new contexts, extension of scope or acuity, or combining known and effective methods to increase breadth, depth, or impact.
Perhaps the most obvious pattern found among “good ideas” is that the proposed undertaking aligns with the personal or professional interests and experience of the proponent. While this is certainly an important characteristic to have in place (e.g., this is one of the purposes behind submission of biosketches), it is an inadequate basis for appealing to a sponsor. Agencies and foundations are interested in supporting people with the capability to complete projects and who have demonstrated experience or expertise but they also desire that the projects address a set of priorities they have established (Bauer, 2009; Karsh & Fox, 2009). The professional expertise and demonstrated involvement through the scholarly activity of the Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD) must fall within the expressed preferences of the funder for them to add merit to the proposal.

Humanists and artists often encounter a “value” issue when seeking grants and fellowships. Their focus is on creating something that is beautiful, thought provoking, innovative, or which provides new insights. Accomplishing one or more of these purposes is, in their context, creating something of value. Yet even major funders of the arts have shifted their focus to include extended impact or community involvement emphases (NEA, 2014). As noted in the table, a general principle of a fundable project in the present context is its potential for replication and scale; its ability to build or expand on something of value; and its impact beyond a single organization or group of people.

A part of the inherent value of the areas of emphasis just noted for humanists and artists—beauty, provocation, innovation, and insight—is their ability to facilitate or even embody learning, growth, and progress. Demonstrating these three characteristics is foundational to a grant application. However, sponsor interest in advancing an agenda through the combined outcomes of the endeavors they fund means grantees must also be able to measure the learning, growth, or progress achieved. Incorporating assessment of impact, rate of change, or degree of advancement in the project plans is necessary to fulfill this interest on the part of the sponsor.

An idea can be a “good idea” without being immediately attainable, having identified steps, or even being time bound. For example, providing all children a safe and effective educational experience, seeing that everyone in the world has reliable access to clean drinking water, and eliminating deaths from curable disease are all good ideas. Yet as just expressed, none of them are immediately attainable, include identified steps, or have time-to-completion estimates. A characteristic that sets a potentially fundable idea apart from descriptions of worthy undertakings is having a clear progression through specific, timed, and measurable steps (Bauer, 2009; Karsh & Fox, 2009). Asking questions about sequencing and
intended outcomes early in the project planning will usually result in a simple but sufficient ordering of operational steps, reasonable estimations of the time required for each step, and the desired outcome or output for each part of process.

The list of good ideas in the preceding paragraph are all expressed on a national or international scale illustrating that the scope of what may be considered a good idea can be very broad. Early-career grant applicants often make project scope/scale mistakes. They see the broad potential impact of their proposal but don’t understand the sliding-scale nature of sponsored projects. Some of the things that limit the scope possible for a proposal are the prior experience of the investigator(s), the demonstrated expertise of the investigator(s), the project cost, and the funding available. These factors combine to establish a funding ladder. An investigator must have some experience and junior-faculty level expertise to request funding in the $25,000 to $75,000 range. Experience that includes prior grant funding and expertise demonstrated through publications from funded activity are necessary to approach the $100,000 to $200,000 funding range, and so on. Sponsors seek demonstrated experience and expertise as well as evidence of success at the preceding level for each step up the funding ladder.

The final three characteristics on the table are related. Concepts that have appeal can be a one-time or unique undertaking, include untested approaches, and be first-time endeavors. But, each of these characteristics is a potential flaw in a grant concept. A unique endeavor, something that will done once without concern for future iterations, does not match funder interest in ability to replicate efficacious practices in other contexts or interest in extended return on investment by establishing a process that can be sustained over time. Untested approaches, unless requested or allowed by the funder, present a challenge to the effectiveness of funder investment. The funding agency intends to catalyze positive change, in an identified arena or discipline, in line with a predetermined set of priorities. Untested approaches do not offer assurance of positive change resulting or successful demonstration of an ability to impact an identified characteristic. There is simply no objectively demonstrable evidence of potential for success. While proof-of-concept funding is available from some organizations, even these proposals should be based, at a minimum, on pilot study data. The experience level of the PI/PD is an important concern in respect to the scale of the project. It is also an important concern in respect to the appropriateness of the proposal. While faculty and staff have many skills and abilities outside those demonstrable through academic credentials, it is the academic credentials and demonstrated skill set (e.g., prior grant leadership experience, experience supervising postdoc researchers, experience leading a project/research team) that marks a request as an appropriate submission from a PI/PD, shows a team member’s ability to contribute to the project, or designates a subcontractor as being an appropriate provider of project support or services.

This advice is based on several decades of experience with grants and a familiarity with the literature of research administration. It is offered here as a potential tool for use with institutional faculty and staff when discussions of the difference between a “good idea” and a “fundable idea” arise. ⬨

References

Michael Preuss, Ed. D., is a grants consultant/thought leader for Hanover Research who works with institutions of higher education and healthcare organizations across the United States. He is broadly experienced in research administration and proposal development, is a member of NCURA, SRA, NORDP, and NGMA and serves as an external evaluator. He can be reached at mpreuss@hanoverresearch.com

Susan Perri, MPA is a grants consultant for Hanover Research specializing in education and health care funding. Susan has served on grant review panels for the U.S. Departments of Education and Health & Human Services. She is a member of the Grant Professionals Association (GPA) and is Acquisitions Manager for its peer-reviewed journal. She can be reached at sperri@hanoverresearch.com.
Jamie Caldwell, formerly the Director of Research Services for the Health Sciences at Loyola University Chicago, has been named the new Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) and Executive Director, University of Kansas Medical Center Research Institute, Inc. (KUMC RI).

Christine Marquez is now a Senior Sponsored Projects Officer in the Office of Sponsored Projects at the University of New Mexico. She is returning to UNM after working three years in research administration in the private sector in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Suzanne Rivera is the new Vice President for Research and Technology Management at Case Western Reserve University, having previously served as Associate Vice President for Research at CWRU since 2010. Suzanne is a graduate of the NCURA Leadership Development Institute and a frequent conference presenter on research ethics and compliance. She completes a two-year term on the NCURA Board in December 2014.

Beth Seaton is now the Director of Sponsored Projects at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She assumed this role on November 10, 2014. Previously, she served as the Director of Research Administration for the McCormick School of Engineering at Northwestern University.
Being joyful is a skill and one that we shouldn’t discount in our career planning and development! Happy, engaged people are more energetic, productive and creative, are more likely to contribute over and above the responsibilities of their job, and have much better attendance and punctuality than grumps. They are also better to be around since happiness is contagious!

One of the hallmarks of great leadership is strong emotional intelligence, including self-awareness. At times, our attitudes may become a habit and we lose insight into how we appear to others. Take some time today to reflect on increasing your happiness — if not for yourself, then for your career. While consciously cultivating happiness at work can sound un-businesslike, remember that emotional intelligence can help you build and manage relationships — a key component of professional success. Since it has also been proven that colleagues are more willing to engage with happy people, invest in their growth, and give them more undivided attention; nurturing happiness has a direct impact on your advancement.

As research administrators, we have the ability to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, supporting research and our research communities to make groundbreaking discoveries that can change the world. Keeping this in mind is one key to finding greater meaning in our day to day professional lives.
Remember that happy people have energy, and that happiness generates energy. Having flexibility, friends at work, a short commute and a tidy workspace all contribute to happiness, but these things are not always in our control. Here are some lesser known ideas that have worked for me:

**Realistic thinking:** This is so hard when we are bombarded by media and workplace information that may not be realistic! Realistic thinking means understanding the limitations of the world and of yourself — striving for improvement, but also accepting how some things are.

**Dressing up:** Looking polished and professional makes us more confident, which in turn leads to other benefits — we are more likely to interact with others, show up in person to meet with others, speak with authority, etc. Unfortunately the opposite is also true.

**Getting to work on time and getting right to work** gives you quiet time at the beginning of the day to organize and prioritize. Time affluence — having the uninterrupted time you need to get things done — is a big predictor of work happiness.

**Anticipate something positive!** Break up the monotony, and be intentional about job joy! If there is nothing you are looking forward to today, **create something:** schedule a call with your mentor, call a former colleague to say hello, ask a friend to meet you for lunch, ask a co-worker to meet you at the concert or museum at lunch, arrange to bike into work tomorrow, organize a staff picnic for Friday, or look at the meeting later as a chance to connect and move the project forward. Why not visit your campus bookstore or library?

**Try something new.** Have you ever given a webinar or written an article or been an NCURA volunteer? These are great opportunities to challenge yourself and focus your efforts on improving your professional brand, which can enhance your professional happiness too.

**Schedule more happy times in your calendar.** Identify some simple things you like and make sure there is at least one of that in your calendar each day.

**Take the time to explore exercise options.** Are there some lunch-hour exercise classes on campus, or can you bike or walk to work? There are so many more types of classes and exercises available now — from Barre classes to Zumba — that it can fun to try a few new ones on a drop-in basis even once a week.

**Take a break.** Too often those that don’t take vacation or limit their work hours are not the energetic, engaged employees, but rather the ones who are apathetic about life in general. They are not passionate and determined at work, perhaps because they haven’t taken the opportunity to re-charge their batteries and return to work re-energized.

If you feel as if do nothing but serve others, try stepping away from your desk to serve in different ways that can brighten your day. Hold the door for someone, give directions, or be a mentor.

**Thank a researcher, colleague, or mentor for their help.** Expressing gratitude reminds you of the happiness their help brings and strengthens the relationship too.

**Ask your clients** (researchers, granting agencies, sponsors, etc.) if there is anything else you can do for them and how you could make their lives easier. Asking them for feedback will empower you to make changes in small things that you may not have thought of, and it allows them to realize that you value them and your own performance. It also allows them to express positive comments that they may not otherwise have had the opportunity to volunteer.

**Watch your words.** Refuse to be dragged into negative conversations. Consider distancing yourself from people if they want to dredge up old wounds such as a mistake you made yesterday — or years ago!

Happiness gives credibility to your ideas and increases your professional opportunities. The presence of happiness changes the landscape wherever you are and in whatever you do. Your work and relationships improve, your joy and energy ignite enthusiasm and resilience in yourself and those around you! I wish you much joy!

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**References**


In today’s global society, organizations that fund research in both Europe and the US are opening up their calls to foreign applicants. The NIH and EU are two prominent examples, especially with the recent Horizon 2020 program fully underway. The opportunity for international collaboration is now greater than ever. However, joint research of this kind and scale is no small task. Anticipating challenges and recognizing promising opportunity, the Karolinska Institutet Grants Office (KI GO) in Sweden and the Mayo Clinic Office of Sponsored Projects Administration (MC OSPA) obtained internal funding earlier this year to develop a shared platform designed to facilitate research proposals to external funding agencies and cultivate management strategies to support awarded projects.

While our two offices have traditionally worked in relatively exclusive funding spheres, (U.S. and European) our respective expertise is analogous and complementary to each other. In a project involving each office’s directors, pre-award, and post-award specialists, we are building bridges across global research administration that represents a significant return-on-investment for both institutions. The initial pre-contract focus of the project is aimed at supporting project proposals to external funding agencies and to provide educational resources for researchers and research administrators, helping them to explore global funding opportunities.

In May 2014, two pre-contract research support specialists from the KI GO met with members of the MC OSPA in Rochester, MN to initiate the project. During the visit we shared knowledge on our respective programs and the funding landscape within our regions and developed practical action steps to build a shared grant development and award management framework. Since then, we have conducted workshops for researchers, group and individual grant consultations, and we continue to assist scientists in finding appropriate KI/Mayo collaborators to submit grants to the EU Horizon 2020 program and to the NIH (as well as to other suitable funding agencies). At the recent KI-Mayo 20th anniversary meeting to celebrate our history of collaborative research, we continued work on our platform. Five members of the KI GO, as well as KI delegates from the innovation and development offices and the KI university director, visited Mayo Clinic and discussed ways in which we can further provide administrative support. Looking ahead, we continue to develop our collaboration via regular teleconferences, as well as plan to meet next April in Chicago at the meeting for members of Region IV (MC OSPA) and Region VIII (KI GO).

By exchanging expertise and developing our grant support and management platform, our two institutions are meeting a gap in our capacity to generate collaborative research. At the same time, we are swiftly stepping into this new economic landscape and exploring both its challenges and opportunities. By developing a shared support platform, we are building a competitive mechanism that is efficient and agile, able to respond to—and even drive—opportunities in the fast-moving and complex grant environment. Finally, we will achieve a sustainable operational set of policies and procedures that will be used for future collaborations, year after year. Long term, these capacities and efficiencies will be sustained, making our future interactions equally positive and ensuring that collaborations run smoothly. Moreover, the framework we build together will assist us as we continue to expand our international collaborations with others, having laid the groundwork for managing grants through mutual respect, sound business practices, and ever-expanding expertise. The KI and Mayo Clinic partnership: working together to propel research!
How many times has this scenario played out across the country: A departmental administrator hangs up the phone in frustration after a conversation with the central office. Sighing heavily, she says to herself, “I am so irritated by that central office—why are they always second-guessing my judgment? I have worked on this proposal for three solid weeks with Dr. Superstar, and now they want us to change everything. This always happens when we have to work with them.” On the other end of the conversation, the central office administrator is equally perplexed and exasperated by the situation. “Why do the departmental administrators always push decisions off on me?” he wonders aloud to the coffee pot. “They constantly put controversial things in their proposals and then their attitude seems to be, ‘I’ll let central make this decision’ or ‘I’ll put this in here and if central doesn’t like it, they can deal with it.’” Both individuals have good reason to be frustrated, but they also share the responsibility of finding a solution to this ongoing problem.

Let’s pause for a moment, and think back to our childhood trips to the beach, with our annoying younger sister, bossy older brother, and three rambunctious cousins—and about a million other kids on summer vacation, all hopped up on ice cream and giddy from sun exposure. There’s only one beach, and everyone who wants to play there must learn to share it. Without rules, there would be chaos, tears, broken toys, and everybody would be mad. Except for the work part, research administration is a lot like that beach, and in the spirit of fewer tears, here are four general rules for how we can play nicely in the sand together.
Rule #1
The best sandcastles are built at low tide.

To translate this for research administrators, a little planning ahead eliminates much of the frustration and anger that can surface when people are pressed for time. “The Five Ps,” a maxim espoused by CEOs everywhere, applies here: Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance. Getting the entire team on the same page and working together before the deadline will help smooth out a potentially rocky road and will ensure the best result for everyone involved. For example, The University of Tennessee has put significant emphasis on encouraging and supporting faculty applications for NSF CAREER awards. Because all proposals are submitted through the central Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), this has resulted in massive chaos when the proposal due dates arrived. In order to better accommodate this large deadline and plan ahead, OSP has started working more closely with the campus units which have historically been the most active with CAREER proposals. This coordination allowed for the pre-assigning of proposals to central office administrators more than three weeks before they were due to arrive in OSP. This was done behind the scenes and did not require the PIs to alter any of their normal processes. The CAREER deadline week passed with very little fanfare, minimal stress, and over 20 proposals submitted by a team of three. By planning ahead while the proposal “tide” was low, OSP was able to “build a great sandcastle”—a streamlined system for handling a short-term proposal burst.

Rule #2
Don’t take other people’s buckets.

Time to face reality—you won’t always (or often!) be able to get everyone working together in advance. While you are racing to catch up, keep in mind that in research administration, every project is a team effort. That collaborative mindset is crucial, not only to the success of the current project, but also to setting the tone for future interactions among the people involved. When all the problems have been resolved, the proposal gets funded, and your PI is pleased as punch, make sure the credit “bucket” stays with those who actually did the work and share that bucket with everyone who helped. Show your appreciation for the departmental administrator who ran all over campus on the deadline day getting crucial letters signed, or acknowledge the central office administrator who stayed late to make sure your late proposal was submitted before the deadline. Send a thank-you email to the person you worked with, and be sure to copy their boss. By sharing those positive feelings in the good times, you’ll make a friend for life, and it will be easier to put up with each other during the bad times.

Rule #3
Kicking sand is never appropriate.

Speaking of those “bad times,” we all have them, and they are never easy to deal with. No one likes to take the blame for a mistake, and it is natural to want to save face in front of your coworkers—or your boss! However, as the old saying goes, “when you throw mud, you lose ground.” By laying all of the blame on the central office for delaying the implementation of the most recent award modification because of “red tape,” you neglect to admit that you should have sent the required compliance documents to them in advance of the modification. Your PI knew that it was coming, and even though you were swamped with other end-of-year tasks, a little prior planning on your part would have allowed the modification to move through the channels faster. Beyond earning a reputation as a mean sandkicking jerk that no one likes to work with, when you cast the blame entirely on the other party, you predispose your PI to be reluctant to work with them in the future. This can become a problem for you later, when you need to work with that person again, and the PI gets frustrated just hearing that name mentioned. By sharing the blame when something doesn’t go quite right, the tension of a bad situation can be dilated and ultimately neutralized more quickly.

Rule #4
No smashing other people’s sandcastles.

Different units across campus often have different rules, shaped by unique pressures and concerns. The standard operating procedures in your unit aren’t always better, just different. You may not understand another unit’s rules, but they are in place for a reason, and undermining or ignoring them—“smashing their sandcastle”—won’t help your working relationship with that unit. Even if you don’t like their rules, or don’t think them necessary or useful, respect their differences and operate within their system when you work together. When the department you’re working with doesn’t want to use the tuition rates recommended by the central office, it’s not the end of the world. When the central office doesn’t understand why the business manager won’t sign something you’re waiting for, without the department head’s approval, realize that this will protect both of you in the long run. When different policies clash, by all means document your attempts to address the issue and how it was resolved (or not resolved); however, challenging a long-standing procedure right before a deadline isn’t productive and adds stress to an already stressful situation. Be a team player, communicate with each other, be patient, and cultivate a respectful relationship with your colleagues across campus. And who knows? If their sandcastle gets knocked down by a giant wave one day, they might want to ask those they trust to help them rebuild—bigger, better, and stronger than before.

As we daydream about vacations by the seaside while trying to keep our minds on our work, just remember to play by the rules: The best sandcastles are built at low tide (a little bit of planning goes a long way); no taking other people’s buckets (give credit where credit is due); kicking sand is never appropriate (don’t pass the blame for a mistake); and no smashing other people’s sandcastles (respect each other’s rules). If you keep these rules in mind, your research administration job will feel just like a day at the beach, only better with all the children playing nicely together in the sand.

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Community-based research can be fertile ground for scholarly pursuits in many disciplines, but one of the main barriers is the relationship among researchers, the community, and the university’s interests. The problem has many axes, starting from the top. The institution has “town and gown” worries, the researchers have questions they want to answer, and the community doesn’t want to be someone’s guinea pigs. When everyone’s interests are met, however, it can be a win-win-win situation.

There are several ways of categorizing research with communities, but some definitions conflate very different approaches. We’d like to use the definitions from Sonoma College: Community-based research happens in the community, perhaps directly assisted by community members, but the questions and design come from the researchers. In Community-based participatory research (CBPR), the research questions and sometimes even the research design are shaped with equal participation from community members. Action research shares the hallmarks of CBPR, but action research involves simultaneously studying a system while trying to change it.

Successful community-based research of any sort requires that there be reciprocity. At minimum, the results of research must be communicated back to the community in a way the members can understand, and potentially act upon. Even better, researchers in a community-based project provide the community with capacity, with direct support for the community-based personnel’s time and costs for assisting in the research process. In fact, we have heard it said many times, “Ideally, you have a relationship with a community into which research problems are dropped and from which research questions emerge.” Mutual respect must be in place.

So how do you build these respectful relationships? One potential approach to this problem is to use programmatic grants—grants for services or community activities—as a potential basis for community-based research relationships. These can be HRSA-, state-, or philanthropy-funded services. Such programs allow the institution to provide part of the reciprocity up front, providing clear demonstration of community benefit.

These programs have additional advantages, in that they usually require evaluation. The evaluation data becomes secondary data for further analysis by researchers, allowing them to generate hypotheses and research questions that can be pursued. The relationship with the community established through providing services becomes an important entry point for researchers to follow up these questions, optimally with community input for full-fledged CBPR.

A terrific example of this is the University of Rhode Island’s Center for Human Services’ long-term collaboration with Yale University and the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families, which evolved over 15 years. URI’s Center for Human Services provides training, consulting, coaching, strategic planning and evaluation services. The collaborators at Yale initially used the data from the evaluation of the programs for purely academic publication. But as the results of these analyses were communicated back to the service providers, and to the communities they served, new research questions began to arise. The communities themselves began to realize they had specific questions and concerns that research could answer, and a reciprocal relationship became firmly established.

All successful CBPR projects appear to include similar components in development:

✓ Start by examining the strengths of the community and then the needs to determine what you can build upon.

Volunteer Pathways

NCURA has identified three distinct volunteer pathways for its members to get involved - Presenter, Leadership, and Volunteer at the regional and national level. “Pathways” is intended to inspire and inform NCURA members on how to engage NCURA as a volunteer in any or all of these opportunities. To get involved visit http://collaborate.ncura.edu/VolunteerOpportunities

Derek Brown’s Journey

My Pathway journey is currently “in progress”. While I only became an official NCURA member a couple of years ago, I have volunteered within the organization since 2008. Helping manage the Region VI website gave me great insight into NCURA collaboration and networking. Those early relationships taught me that there were others out there just like me – new and lost in our world of complex regulations and terminology.

Getting an opportunity to help edit NCURA Magazine has opened my eyes to the extent of NCURA’s reach. Helping produce and send out the Magazine’s weekly e-Xtra supplement not only enhances my connection with the organization, it also keeps me informed and helps me advise here at WSU. I have connected further by presenting at meetings, working on projects with NCURA staff, writing articles, creating YouTube Tuesdays, and more.

I have recently been voted Treasurer-Elect of Region VI and am excited to see where this path takes me next. Volunteering for NCURA was one of the best decisions I have made for enhancing my professional career. Go Cougs!

Derek Brown is currently the Sub-Award and Reporting Administrator for Washington State University’s Office of Grant and Research Development. He began as an Office Assistant, advanced to Grant and Contract Specialist where he helped implement WSU’s electronic proposal routing and approval process and now serves as a Sub-Award and Reporting Administrator. Derek has been at WSU since 2005. He can be reached at derekbrown@wsu.edu

- Help participants understand the purpose and methods of data collection for evaluation and research, and the different concepts behind evaluation and research.
- Collect program evaluation data based on the research questions generated from the needs of the community.
- Communicate results back to the community in an ongoing basis.
- Give the community tools to use the results for data-driven decision-making, best practices and sustainability.
- Help everyone, researcher and community member, understand that the cycle is iterative: work with the community to define questions and methods, implement research, disseminate findings for the community to apply, and generate new questions.

These characteristics can also apply to using other community connections to foster research, such as student service learning projects and NSF Broader Impacts activities. One key to working successfully with students in community settings (such as service learning) is to make sure they undertake discrete projects that serve a community need and that a student can do in a semester, and which can also be analyzed through evaluation. It can be even more productive if the individual projects are part of a larger institutional relationship, or funded in part by programmatic grants.

Centrally, research support staff can help in these efforts by creating and helping to keep up databases of community relationships, and by helping researchers educate themselves on best practices. Central offices can also help researchers new to community-based work find an institutional mentor to help them learn how to form true reciprocal, and respectful, relationships. And, of course, identifying potential programmatic funding opportunities on which to support the development of the research relationship is absolutely key.

This article stemmed from a presentation at the National Organization of Research Development Professionals-Northeast meeting at University of New Hampshire in July 2014.

M. S. (Peg) Atkisson, Ph.D., is currently an Associate Member of Grant Writers’ Seminars and Workshops. She began work in research development as a contract grant writer in 2001, working with major institutions and professional societies, and founded the Office of Proposal Development at Tufts University. She currently teaches grant writing, consults on individual and large grant applications, and is sometimes asked to consult on research development strategies.

Deborah L. Mathews, M. A., has more than twenty-five years experience as project manager and organizational consultant. As the Director for the University of Rhode Island’s Center for Human Services, she has partnered with a variety of organizations to strengthen their skills, improve their effectiveness and build excellence. She helps organizations identify existing strengths and energy through training programs, written curriculum, evaluated programs, facilitated strategic planning sessions and coaching, harnessing human capital to enhance capacity and build resilience.

Barbara Z. Pearson, Ph.D. is a Broader Impacts Specialist in the Office of Research Development at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is a member of the steering committee for NORDP-NE, a founding member of the National Association for Broader Impacts (an NSF-funded research collaboration network). At UMass, she continues to collaborate on her own scholarly research and helps faculty across disciplines conceive of and realize the broader impacts of their research in communities in and around Amherst and around the world.
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- Post award financial administration

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The NSF and HHS OIG audit communities have released a number of new audit reports in the last few months. The last column focused on the audit resolution where a University successfully challenged most of the audit findings. This column will provide a more in-depth review of the other audits issued.

A common theme of the audits is expenses occurring at the end of the award, cost related to travel, cost transfers, and summer salary for NSF audits.

New Audits Released in June 2014

An NSF audit of a New York University questioned costs of $75,494 on $72.6M of costs audited. The University did not agree with all of the recommendations but did agree that some of the questioned costs were unallowable. Questioned costs related to unallowable indirect costs, unreasonable foreign travel, equipment purchases made at the end of a grant’s period of performance and unallowable conference fees.

Travel & Conference Costs—The questioned foreign travel related to numerous trips to foreign countries charged entirely to an NSF award. The foreign travel was not budgeted and the purpose of the trips indicated that they were related in-whole or in-part to other projects. Unallowable conference costs related to the cost of dinners for the PI and others who participated in planning a meeting for the conference. The auditors stated that dinner and other meals are not a necessary part of a planning meeting and holding a meeting outside of normal business hours was not sufficient justification for NSF to pay for meals at meetings. The auditors questioned alcohol charged during a dinner held at a restaurant for conference participants.

Cost Incurred at the End of the Award—Also questioned were equipment purchases that occurred less than 90 days prior to the end date of the award. The auditors stated that the purchases were not available for use during most of the award period and therefore were not necessary to accomplish the award objectives and did not benefit the program.

An HHS audit of a North Carolina University in which $335,874 of costs were questioned on $8.4M reviewed. Almost 90% of the questioned costs related to cost transfers.

Cost Transfers & Documentation—Most of these questioned costs related to a $265,000 cost transfer for scientific equipment which was initially charged to a University account but transferred 10 months later to an HHS grant. The documentation was limited to a note that stated that, after review, the University determined that a portion of the equipment should be charged to the grant. The University did not document the allocation basis for the amount transferred and did not document why it took so long to transfer the costs. Other questioned costs transfers were for animal care and lab supplies which did not have adequate documentation of the nature or justification of the transfers and housing rental and an expatriate allowance under a foreign award in which rent was charged for use of a house by a University employee who also owned the property.

Inconsistent Costing—Costs that the auditors determine were not treated consistently included the cost of a laptop computer and printer cartridges. The auditors cited University policy which stated that the University generally treated computer hardware as an F&A cost unless an awarding agency approved in-advance the direct charging of such costs.

An HHS Administrative and Clerical audit of a California University questioned $3,765 costs on $503,863 reviewed. One of the findings related to a portion of a business manager in a large center where the individual worked on proposals as well as grant related activities. The individual’s effort was split-funded between federal and non-federal sources. The PI’s progress report stated that the business manager was instrumental in preparing large scale proposal but did not mention the other activities.

Audits issued in July, August & September

NSF OIG also released a report of a Virginia University with questioned cost of $1.6 M on $113M reviewed. $1.45M of the questioned costs related to senior personnel salary that exceeded NSF’s two month limit.

Equipment—Equipment expenses charged to nine awards were found to be not allocable, necessary, or reasonable. In one instance the equipment purchased was not budgeted in the original application and represented a significant reduction in the funds necessary to complete the project. The University reallocated the available budget by reducing the salaries of the project personnel without NSF approval. The auditors questioned whether a prudent person would have spent more than 20 to 25 percent of the total funding on additional equipment. Per the grant proposal, the equipment was to be donated to the University by an outside party but when the donation did not materialize, the equipment was purchased with grant funds. University officials stated the salary shortfall was made up through uncommitted cost share but the auditors were unable to determine the amount of uncommitted cost share expended on the award. Other instances included purchase of equipment on an award meant to develop partnerships and purchases of equipment near the award end date.

Travel & Immigration Fees—Questioned costs related to travel expenses that included illegible meal receipts, alcohol charges, no-show cancellations fees, a hotel rate which exceeded the rate paid by other attendees and 9 days of a 14-day trip to Australia for a student who traveled with a family member. The student spent 5 days on grant-
related activities and the auditors stated that no explanation was provided for the additional 9 days. Other questioned costs included unallowable moving expenses in which the employees did not work on the award for at least 12 months after hire as required by A-21; unallowable immigration fees not allocated on the basis of the effort charged to the award and for an employee who declined the offer.

The NSF OIG report released in August 2014 of a California University questioned $2.3M of $225.8M reviewed. In addition to the $2.1M in summer salaries questioned which was discussed in the previous column, the auditors questioned unsupported per diem costs, costs related to visa application fees that were inappropriately allocated to NSF awards, equipment purchases made at the end of a grant, unreasonable salary expenses, unallocable domestic travel, unallowable indirect costs and unallowable technology infrastructure fees.

Travel—The questioned per diem rates related to foreign travel in which travelers were told to submit up to 100% of the per diem rate with the understanding that they will adjust the rate down if less was spent. The auditors questioned the reimbursement stating that the University failed to obtain supporting documentation for long-term travel or to calculate daily expense rates and cited the travel policy. The auditors and University disagreed on interpretation of the travel policy. Costs related to visa application fees were questioned because they were not distributed across projects in proportion to each employee’s effort. In addition, visa fees for long term employees were improperly allocated to the grant. The University agreed to the questioned costs and acknowledged that its current visa fee guidance should be revised.

Cost Incurred at the End of the Award—The auditors found that computer purchases made at the end of a grant’s period of performance were unreasonably allocated to the awards. In one instance, a computer was purchased 7 days before the grant period expired on a 4 year award. On another 4 year award a computer was purchased 10 days before the grant expired. The auditors stated the computers were not available for use during most of the award period and therefore were not necessary for accomplishing the award objectives. The University did not agree with the finding. A retroactive salary transfer that occurred 2 months before the award expired was questioned. The University’s position was that the salary expense was reasonable however they did agree that the payment should have been completed in a timely manner. In another finding a PI requested and received an additional summer salary payment related to work performed almost one year earlier.

An audit released in September of an Illinois University questioned $173,290 of the $435M of costs reviewed. Salary cost for senior personnel who exceeded two months of their academic-year salaries was questioned because it was not disclosed in the proposal budgets, justified in the budget support, nor specifically approved by NSF. The University did not agree citing the FAQ’s on Proposal Preparation and Award Administration available on NSF’s website which indicated that grantees are not required to obtain NSF’s approval to exceed the two-month salary limita-

The auditors responded that the FAQ responses do not represent authoritative guidance and therefore do not overrule NSF’s Award and Administration Guidelines.

Costs Incurred at the End of the Award—Questioned costs incurred at the end of the award included a camera purchased in the last 30 days of a 4 year award, charged at the full amount with a justification that it would be used on other projects and a stipend received by five students in the final month of the award in which the summer period on the payment request was outside of the performance period and when questioned the response was that the payments were actually for work during the academic year. However, the award stated that students would work without pay during the academic year. The auditor’s view was that they may have been attempting to spend the remaining unobligated funds at the end of the award.

Findings related to cost transfers included a cost transfer on a 6 year grant made 21 days after the award ended. The transfer was for expenses incurred to install a rack system which was not completed until approximately 11 days before the award period expired. Other instances included a charge for an internal billing in which the University could not provide support for how the billing rate was determined because the rate was not approved yet and a one-time $500 annual user fee transferred to the Award that lacked documentation to support the fee.

Travel—The auditors had several questioned costs on travel related expenses. Questioned costs included an expense report reimbursement where the PI requested lodging, meals and incidentals at two different per diem rates without documentation to support the higher rate, airfare for a participant which included an invoice total with no itinerary or details related to the flight such as who took the flight, the arrival and departure destinations and whether it was economy class; travel related expenses for additional nights beyond the conference without a reasonable business purpose for the expenses and a room upgrade fee to accommodate a participant who had their son with them and hotel no show fees that were charged to the award. Additionally questioned, due to lack of documentation, was a cost differential for an airfare in which the PI included a portion of the trip as personal. The personal portion added another flight onto the trip but the PI maintained that the three flights were less expensive than the direct flight without the additional personal leg. Documentation for the cost comparison of the trips was not maintained.

Extra-days stay beyond the conference was questioned on several awards. In one instance a participant flew in before the conference, with family members, and charged the hotel stay to the NSF grant without a business purpose for the additional night. Also considered unreasonable were expenses claimed for additional days before and after an international conference. The justification provided was to prepare for the conference, the traveler had to take an earlier flight and the flight home after the conference was delayed so the traveler had to stay an extra night to wait for the delayed flight time. The auditor’s position was that since the PI was not presenting at the conference, needing two days to prepare for it was not reasonable. The auditors
also pointed out that the PI reserved his flight several months in advance with the same return date indicating it was planned in advance and not related to flight delays. The auditors disallowed the cost on the basis that the expenses appeared to have been incurred for personal travel. Late registration and a late hotel reservation which caused the hotel rate to be above the conference rate were questioned. The department stated that this was because the PI was trying to make sure that someone could cover his teaching responsibilities. The auditors noted that since the PI had reserved his flight in advance he had sufficient time to reserve a room at the discounted rate and that as an e-mail confirmed that the PI's classes would be covered by a TA, it appeared unreasonable that the PI was unable to register for the conference early. The NSF award should not have been charged the additional cost because the PI failed to sign up for the conference in a timely manner.

Also Worth Noting
A state filed federal charges against a researcher at an Iowa University, making him one of only a few scientists in the past 30 years to be brought to trial for research fraud. The fraud involved almost $19 million in grants from the NIH over the course of several years related to research for a vaccine for the HIV virus.

For those following the Morgan State University case, the US Attorney’s offices issued a press release dated August 29, 2014 that announced the sentencing of the PI to 3 years in prison. The PI obtained kickbacks from student stipends and made false representations in connection with an SBIR application where he falsely represented that he would receive release time or other release options from Morgan State, misrepresented the involvement of another University, misrepresented that his company had 8 employees and made other false statements.

Charlene Blevens, CPA is the Director of Post Award Operations at the University of Miami. She is a Certified Fraud Examiner. She has worked in the financial area in both the public and private sector in various capacities for more than 23 years with more than 11 years’ experience at universities in research. She has presented at the NCURA, FRA, SRA and NACCA conferences. In addition she is the author of the Summary of University Audits, Settlements and Investigations located on the National Conference on College Cost Accounting (NACCA) website at www.costaccounting.org. She can be reached at c.blevens@med.miami.edu

“Collaborate Conversations”
We are back with some of our favorite recent Collaborate Community conversation topics! Make sure to login to Collaborate and see what else is being discussed! Popular recent topics include:

Compliance Community – “PHS Financial Conflicts of Interest Procedural Questions”, posted by Toni Russo, Contracts Specialist, George Washington University, asked about FCOI procedures for opportunities to streamline while continuing to be compliant with the regulations. Toni wanted to know what institutions are doing for COI and FCOI disclosure processes.

“Controlled Substances – Applicable for Subawardees” in the Global Community, by Agatha Keller, Co-Director EU GrantsAccess, University of Zurich asked about the NIH-Grants Policy Statement regarding controlled substances requirements applicability outside the Unites States.

Pre-Award Community – Sarah Pratt, Research and Program Officer at Western Michigan University asked about “Budget Templates for PIs”

Join the conversation at http://collaborate.ncura.edu/home
Following an intensive, iterative design process, in August 2014, Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego announced the establishment of the Rady Pediatric Genomics and Systems Medicine Institute. Bolstered by a $120 million philanthropic donation from the Ernest Rady family, along with a commitment of $40 million from the Hospital, the Institute will “encourage the ambitious research and innovation that will accelerate the process by which discoveries are made and translated into cures,” as stated by Ernest Rady in the press release.¹ This article introduces some of the Institute’s strategic design considerations and highlights the importance of partnerships and differentiation in Institute design.
Strategic Design

The initial Institute idea was conceived by Rady Children’s Chief Scientific Officer, Dr. Gabriel Haddad, who also serves as the Hospital’s Physician-in-Chief and as Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of California at San Diego (UC San Diego or UCSD). The Institute’s design process was overseen by a Task Force of Rady Children’s Board of Trustees, which included leaders from UCSD and biotechnology firms in the San Diego area. A core team of Hospital leadership, specifically, the President, Chief Scientific Officer, and Chief Financial Officer (co-author R. Roux), assumed the charge of designing an Institute finely tuned with strengths and opportunities at Rady Children’s. Hospital leaders from information technology (IT), development, legal, and other domains were involved at selected design stages. An experienced strategy and management consultant (co-author R. Haley) was retained to bolster the team and drive the Institute design process and the development of a business plan for the new Institute.

As summarized in the press release announcing the Institute’s establishment:1

“After more than one and one half years of evaluating the design and mission of an Institute at Rady Children’s, this Institute will assemble a team of world class scientists, researchers and clinicians who will focus their talents on preventing, diagnosing, treating and curing childhood disease through genomics and systems medicine research,” said David F. Hale, Chairman of the Board. “The Institute will work closely with UC San Diego and establish relationships with other academic and research institutions, companies involved in genomics research and other children’s hospitals to advance the mission of the Institute,” said Hale.

Early in the design process, efforts were made to develop a strong, shared understanding of the international landscape of pediatric genomics institutes and related research organizations, and energies were invested in learning as much as possible about a wide range of innovative, academic and non-academic ways of productively organizing and managing research activities. Parallel self-examination activities were undertaken to better understand the strengths and opportunities prevalent at Rady Children’s and enabled by its numerous research, clinical, and other collaborations with diverse institutions. Desired Institute design characteristics emerged during the process—including targeted research foci and investments, operational agility, high research productivity expectations, and access to UCSD graduate students, postdocs, and shared research infrastructure—and served to direct additional analysis into “lessons learned” or “best practices” from successful independent research institutes, universities, hospitals, firms, and affiliations between entities. In sum, these activities were helpful in both affecting Institute design decisions and demonstrating to internal and external stakeholders that sufficient investigation and due diligence had been conducted throughout the multi-faceted design process.

An Institute “business plan” served as a concrete, iterative document in which to organize and present the design elements of the evolving Institute. Major sections of the business plan included: Institute Differentiators, Organizational Design, Research Strategy, Institute Operations, Financial Pro Forma, and Risk Management. Within each of these sections, specific Institute strategic design elements were presented. As an example, the Organizational Design section focused on elements including the legal structure, governance, leadership, employment, and physical location of the Institute. The Research Strategy section presented the approach to selecting research foci, organizing research and clinical personnel into disease-specific research groups, and making significant and differentiating research investments in areas such as recruitment, core facilities, collaborative research, and translation to patient care. The Institute Operations section addressed the approaches anticipated to be employed by the Institute to address its operations and administration needs in areas including research administration, intellectual property
(IP) management, facilities, human resources, safety, and security.

**Partnerships**

The importance of partnerships spanned the Institute design process. Existing partnerships between Rady Children’s and other organizations served to define the current state and suggest ways to build upon the collaborations. Most notably, the affiliation between Rady Children’s and UCSD, especially the University’s Pediatrics Department, served as a central relationship around which Institute design would take place. The Department of Pediatrics is the second largest department in UCSD’s School of Medicine and has rapidly expanded its faculty body and research enterprise in recent years, the latter of which more than doubled over a six year period.

Other existing Rady Children’s partnerships include collaborations with leading research institutes in the area such as the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, Sanford Consortium for Regenerative Medicine, Salk Institute for Biological Studies, Scripps Research Institute, and La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology. Geographically, it is difficult to envision a stronger home for the Institute, and a number of Institute design elements sought to capitalize on the locational aspects of research and clinical care. For example, the Institute’s design includes the utilization of two strategically-selected physical locations: one adjacent to the main campus of Rady Children’s and one in the Torrey Pines area of San Diego/La Jolla, the so-called Research Mesa, proximal to the UCSD campus and numerous research institutes, including those mentioned above.

Partnerships within Rady Children’s—particularly the connections between research and patient care—helped to define expectations related to the translation of research findings to improved care. The rapidly evolving relationship between genomics research and IT at the organization helped to define the necessary strategic research investments in bioinformatics and related research IT core support for significant Institute research productivity.

Also a part of the Institute’s design process were explorations of new research partnerships—in addition to expansion of existing partnerships—that would serve to accelerate the Institute’s progress toward its research and clinical missions. Discussions with a number of companies and not-for-profit organizations were conducted during the design process and continue following the Institute announcement. As an example, a potential partnership between the Institute and the newly formed, La Jolla based firm, Human Longevity, Inc., led by genomics pioneer J. Craig Venter, offers intriguing opportunities to enhance the Institute’s research and clinical outcomes.

**Differentiation**

As described above, a key element of the design process involved developing an intimate, thorough understanding of the complex environment in which the Institute would operate and compete for external research funding, highly-talented researchers, and other assets key to its success. Rady Children’s significant market share of the region’s patients, the opportunity to significantly build upon existing collaborations with UCSD, and the opportunity to further develop linkages with leading research institutes and firms in San Diego’s biotech innovation ecosystem served as differentiators contributing to Institute design.

Analysis of similar organizations, the state of genomics and systems medicine (and related research and technology enablers), and the role of robust research enterprises within healthcare organizations provided further information helpful in designing a differentiated Institute.

Communication of the Institute’s differentiators was also important, both internally and externally. The schematic diagram was developed relatively early in the design process—and iterated throughout—to quickly convey the Institute’s key elements and differentiators and to remind stakeholders of the agreed, core design framework. Not surprisingly, partnerships within and outside the Institute and Hospital feature prominently in the schematic.

**Implementation**

Following the official announcement of the Rady Pediatric Genomics and Systems Medicine Institute, the focus shifted to implementation. An implementation plan has been developed and is being carried out—with a continued emphasis on the importance of partnerships and differentiation on Institute success. As examples, three elements of the Institute implementation plan are: (1) recruitment—with a link to differentiation via efforts to attract the best and brightest researchers to the Institute; (2) sustaining partnerships; and (3) operations and administration—with a goal of partnering with existing hospital operations when advantageous while also striving for a differentiated agility that best supports the Institute’s research and clinical care aspirations.

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**Rand Haley** is a Senior Manager at ECG Management Consultants. He has over 14 years of experience providing strategy and management consulting services to academic, research, and healthcare organizations, including research universities, academic medical centers, and hospitals. He can be reached at rhaley@ecgmc.com

**Roger Roux** is Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Rady Children’s Hospital and Health Center in San Diego. He previously served as chief financial officer at other children’s hospitals with research institutes, consulted regarding hospital financial turnarounds, and was involved with early-stage health care services companies. Roger can be reached at rroux@rchsd.org

**References**

In the last March/April issue of *NCURA Magazine*, Michael Teitelbaum gave seven principles to guide new faculty members. So we asked Ann for a similar list for the beginning research administrator.

**Eight principles to guide new research administrators**

1. The answer to every question in research administration is, “It depends.” After “It depends,” come two important corollaries: a) The solution to every problem is more complicated than it first seems; and b) The number of solutions grows exponentially in proportion to the number of people attending a meeting.

2. Every task will take more time and resources than it should, and nothing is ever easy, fast, or simple. For example, adding a Vice President's office to an action increases emails, phone conversations, and meetings by fifty percent and adds two weeks to the process. (Repeat as necessary until retirement for you, your children, and your children's children is totally secure.)

3. During the course of a year, the majority of your work will occur between 4:45 and 4:55 in the afternoon. No matter how much lead-time is provided, a proposal will still be submitted at the last minute. Interesting factoid: an early version of the super circular specified the universal deadline for all proposals as “last minute,” whichever comes first.

To prepare yourself for 4:45, practice six-hour naps from nine through four (taking a break at lunch). This still won’t give you the energy necessary to weather the last ten minutes of the day, but the false sense of competence and preparedness will propel you nicely through the first 93 seconds.

4. Progress comes in tiny bits, fits, and starts, often punctuated by wasted time, backward steps, and sheer terror at one's own incompetence and abysmal lack of preparation. Recognize that there will be occasions when progress is delayed to the point of regress, or never comes at all (as in noregress).

5. Maintaining a To-Do list is a necessity, as is flexibility when a task must be moved to a new To-Do-Right-Now list, a misnomer for “You Shudda Done It Back Then,” or more directly, “Too Late Now.” Any list item subject to final approval from above will require another two weeks, mainly for them to give you the illusion of careful thought devoted to the decision when the item had actually been mislaid.

Even more critical is it to understand that “To-Do” lists never ever become “To Done” lists, so you can save your triumphant “Ta-Dah” for other more likely successes, like emptying the recycle bin.

Keep careful control of your lists. Unbeknownst to you, someone might slip another task in, giving you an extra item to attend to, such as the second item 3 above, erasing any hope that your critical tasks will ever be reduced to a manageable number.

6. When live human beings are involved, an IRB protocol is always necessary. This is the only iron clad rule of research administration. Iron clad to us, but not obvious to our clients.

To survive, you must learn several ways to explain this concept, as communicating it will fail the first sixteen times and stumble the next thirty-two. Have I made myself clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear clear? If you had time to add sixteen and thirty-two together and then count the number of “clears,” you don’t need this list of survival tips.

7. Varying interpretations abound. The Feds, in their bumble-headedness, assume “must” means “always.” Faculty members read “must” as “you might consider if you have the time and it’s not too much trouble.”

8. It’s important to note that therapy IS what it’s cracked up to be. So don’t wait until you’re too cracked for it to be of any value. Seek solace from a professional if your health plan covers it. If it doesn’t, seek it from an NCURA member at another institution.

**Final tip:** if you find a licensed therapist who is a retired research administrator, you should gladly pay out of your own pocket to take advantage of this rare opportunity.

Got Problems? Question Authority. Send ‘em to nordquist@wsu.edu
Federal agencies have the option to “supply and require recipients to comply with additional guidance to support these determinations.” It is not yet known whether agencies will choose to require this new documentation (Note: NSF has, thankfully, chosen not to add this requirement.)

Subaward Financial and Progress Reports (200.331, 200.328). Section 331 specifies that pass-through entities must specify any required financial or programmatic reports needed in their subawards, and that pass-through entities are responsible for reviewing such reports. Section 328 documents frequency and content of such reports. While many of us already have mechanisms to review financial reports (e.g., invoices that are annotated to denote review and approval prior to payment), we will want to ask ourselves whether we have adequate processes in place to document programmatic report receipt, review, and long-term storage for access by auditors evaluating our subrecipient monitoring.

Prompt Payments and Withholding of Payment on Subawards (200.305). When issuing payments on cost-reimbursement subawards, pass-through entities are expected to issue payment on allowable costs within 30 calendar days after receipt of the billing, unless the pass-through entity “reasonably believes the payment to be improper.” This clear timing expectation as well as the new emphasis on timely closeout of awards may prompt some of us to review our processes to ensure timely approval of invoices and closeout documents, and potentially improve documentation on the rationale for temporary withholding of payments.

Payment may not be withheld from subrecipients unless the problems cited are reasons included in 200.305 (including non-conformance with the project objectives or terms of the subaward), or in conformance with 200.207, or 200.338. Guidance for mechanisms to address performance issues and enforcement of subaward terms are also included in these sections.

Retaining “Profit” earned on Fixed Price Subawards (and Awards) (200.201, 200.400). OMB FAQ .400-1 makes it clear that excess revenue over expense (an unexpended balance) on a fixed amount award or subaward will not be considered profit as long as the price for the original fixed price transaction was properly established. This clarification is important since recipients may not “earn or keep any profit resulting from Federal financial assistance, unless expressly authorized by the terms and conditions of the Federal award.” Properly established in this context means that the cost of the subaward was determined in accordance with the cost principles in the UG (Section E) and/or using past experience with similar types of work for which outcomes and their costs can be reliably predicted. (See OMB FAQ .201-1)

Watch for 2015 Compliance Supplement, Section M. Since the Compliance Supplement provides instructions to auditors on how they should review and test our internal controls, the next supplement should be telling in terms of how auditors expect to test the updated risk assessment and subrecipient monitoring expectations listed in the UG. The next Compliance Supplement is currently expected to be released in April 2015. Previous circulars are available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default

Discerning When a Subaward is and is not Subject to the UG: OMB FAQ .110-12 makes it clear that the terms of the parent award determine whether a subaward is subject to the UG. Thus, if a new or modified subaward is issued under an existing award still subject to the current rules, then that subaward is also governed by the current rules. Conversely, if the parent award is subject to the UG, any subaward actions issued under that award will be subject to the UG. The incremental funding actions will be trickier – if an agency determines that an existing award will become subject to the UG at the time of its next incremental funding or award action, then presumably subawards will become subject to the UG at the time of their next subaward actions too. Close attention to agency guidance and implementation plans will be needed to guide us.

Pass-through Entities Expected to Retrieve Subrecipient Audits from the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC) (200.512). Section (b), Data Collection tells us that “All Federal agencies, pass-through entities and others interested in a reporting package and data collection form must obtain it by accessing the FAC.” As pass-through entities, we will no longer have an option to collect audits or audit verifications directly from our subrecipients subject to the Single Audit, but instead are expected to access the FAC https://harvester.census.gov/fac/dissem/accessoptions.html to review that information. Complete audit reports are not yet available in the FAC but are expected to be added in the next 12-18 months. Until then, one presumes that it is still acceptable to ask subrecipients for their audit reports or summaries if their current (more limited) FAC data doesn’t provide sufficient information.

Conflict of Interest (200.112). OMB FAQ .112-1 reminds us that the conflict of interest provisions in the UG refer to conflicts that might arise around how a non-federal entity expends funds under a federal award. This includes selection of subrecipients, so universities will want to verify that they have a process in place for screening and management of potential conflicts-of-interest arising between their organization/PI and their subrecipients.

Pamela A. Webb is the Associate Vice President for Research Administration at the University of Minnesota. Prior to her appointment at the University of Minnesota in July 2007, Pamela led pre-award and post-award administration in the Office of Sponsored Research at Stanford University. Pamela has been involved in research administration for 30 years, including 12 years at the University of California-Los Angeles as well as UC Santa Barbara, Northwestern University, and Stanford. She can be reached at pwebb@umn.edu
Dear Region I friends,

I know it’s hard to think about the spring right now, but trust me, and mark your calendars for the next annual Region I meeting to be held May 4-6, 2015 in Portland, Maine at the Westin Portland Harborview. Portland is a lively and classic New England shopping district with cobblestone streets, boutiques, galleries and restaurants. The brand new multi-million dollar investment in the Westin surely won’t disappoint as a first-class venue, in a first-class city, for a first-class NCURA regional meeting.

Under the guidance of Kris Monahan and Donna Smith, co-chairs of the NCURA Region I Spring meeting, planning is well underway for what will prove to be the most electrifying Spring Meeting in the history of Region I. Nearly twenty NCURA members from Maine to Connecticut comprise the Program Committee which is already planning more than 45 sessions and plenty of networking opportunities.

There is a common saying in Maine: “You can’t get there from here.” As research administrators we make research possible, we actually can get there when we work together, use ingenuity, and think differently about long standing issues. We are constantly faced with new missions; some missions are overt, while others are covert. Some missions like the Uniform Guidance (a.k.a. super-circular) implementation might feel like we need a cape and super-powers to achieve our mission. We never know what might lie ahead, but working together we make research possible. That’s why our meeting theme is “Mission Possible: You can get there from here.” Frankly, it was much better than our second choice: “Portland: People, Paper, Products.”

The committee has posted its first mission to the Region I community and hopes to discover the best cover possible for the program: In case you missed it please check the website for full details; in summary:

NCURA Region I seeks your creative talent in our “Design the 2015 NCURA Program Challenge”! We want a program cover design to reflect our theme, incorporate the NCURA Region I logo, and include the dates and location of the meeting. So, are you up for the mission?

Show off your creative talents and submit your original program design for consideration (please no copyright infringements!). The design should be high resolution and submitted as a jpeg or tif format. And please, keep it tasteful. Some of us are still traumatized from the submissions from 2013’s “Fifty Shades of Research Administration” theme. If the Program Committee selects your cover art, you will receive $100 Visa Gift Card and recognition in the program as the cover designer. Designs will be considered from members, non-members, students (anyone who is up for the challenge). Please submit your design to 2015SpringMeeting@ncuraregioni.org by November 25, 2014.

That’s it for now, Region I. Have a wonderful and safe holiday season. And remember, “I’m all about the bass, about the bass, no treble.”

Jeff Seo is the Chair of Region I and serves as the Executive Director for Academic and Research Integrity at Harvard Medical School. He is also a distinguished interpretive dancer and bowler. Jeff can be reached at jeff.seo@hms.harvard.edu

Professional Development Committee Update
The Region II Professional Development Committee has been busy scheduling traveling workshops throughout the Region. The PDC is excited to announce that additional workshops are now being offered. These new workshops include:

- Building a Budget: The Basics,
- Clinical Trials: What You Need to Know to be Successful,
- Contracts: Federal, Federal Flow-through Contracting with Industry and Universities
- Research Administration at Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions: Doing it All, Gracefully

Interested in hosting a workshop? Institutions hosting a workshop receive either two free workshop registrations or one free Region II spring meeting registration! Visit the PDC section of the Region II website for more information: http://ncuraregionii.org/pdc

Regional Meeting
The Program Committee is working hard and continuing to plan the Regional meeting in Baltimore from Sunday April 26, 2015 through Wednesday, April 29, 2015. The meeting will kick-off with two PDC workshops offered on Saturday, April 25th. Keep an eye out for emails about session suggestions, registration information and other important details in the next couple of months.

If you’d like to learn more about maximizing the benefits of your Region II membership, exploring ideas for enhancing professional development and programming, or volunteering at regional and national activities, feel free to contact me directly or through our website: http://ncuraregionii.org/contact
When people ask me what I “do” or if I enjoy my job, I always struggle for an answer. Unless someone is in the field, either directly as a research administrator or indirectly as a faculty member or researcher, it is really hard to describe what we do. Sure, I can say “I manage sponsored programs for a Big 12 university.” That always gets me the one-eyebrow-raised quizzical look that tells me they have no idea what I just said. If I start to offer details, then it changes to that glassed-over “will you shut up now? None of that makes sense to me. You’ve been rambling for 10 minutes.” look. But you can’t describe our profession in a sentence or two and the industry jargon is full of acronyms and terms that are foreign to the average Joe.

These conversations always serve to remind me that I really do enjoy what I do. Part of why I enjoy it is because of the breadth and depth of our daily activities, and because no two days are ever the same. Any given day might include writing a contract modification, reviewing a conflict of interest disclosure, testing a new electronic S2S process, or waiting on the ever turning hourglass when submitting a proposal via Grants.gov. The variety keeps me challenged and excited, also frustrated at times, but mostly challenged and excited.

Our new webpage [www.ncuraregioniii.com](http://www.ncuraregioniii.com) went live on November 1st and has received positive feedback. This webpage is just one of many ways Region III strives to keep you informed and updated. Make sure you visit regularly to know the latest and greatest about the Flamingos.

We’d also like to congratulate Catherine Church of the University of Virginia and Janis Machnik of the University of Florida for receiving their CPRA. Great job, ladies! Those who achieve this certification have demonstrated they possess a broad body of knowledge in sponsored research administration. Have you received YOUR CRA/CPRA/CFRA? If not, we encourage you to make that a resolution/professional development goal for 2015. Please note that the May and November 2015 tests will be the last ones based on A-110, A-21, etc. Thereafter, tests will incorporate the new Uniform Guidance.

We want to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to continued Region III success. Don’t forget to follow us on LinkedIn and Facebook!

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If you’re new to NCURA or simply new to Region V, I encourage you to get involved. Get to know your fellow members. The relationships are invaluable!

**Keepin’ it weird …**

**Jill A. Frankenfield** serves as the Chair of Region II and is an Assistant Director, Officer of Research Administration, University of Maryland, College Park.

**REGION III Southeast**

[www.ncuraregioniii.com](http://www.ncuraregioniii.com)

It’s indeed the most wonderful time of the year. As 2014 comes to a close, Region III proudly reviews what has been a great and prosperous year for sponsored research administration in our area. With over 1500 members, our region has been busy, and the fruit of our labor has blossomed.

Continuous efforts on the part of the Executive Committee, regional committees, and other volunteers resulted in great programs on both the regional and national level, for members to learn, share, and network. Thank you to the nearly 100 volunteers for your tireless efforts! As we look forward to an even greater year to come, there are lots of ways that you can get involved and lend your time and talent to our region. If you’re interested in ways you can volunteer, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Hagan Walker, at **haganw@clemson.edu**

Once again, Region III can boast having the highest number of members (350) in attendance at AM56, and we’re expecting another amazing turn-out for the Regional Meeting at Wild Dunes, for which registration is now open. We hope to see you in the Isle of Palms, South Carolina May 9-13, 2015!!! Another thanks goes to those who responded to our Call for Proposals and the Program Committee, that has been working to bring us another worthwhile experience. Be on the lookout for the program in January.

Our new [website](http://www.ncuraregioniii.com) went live on November 1st and has received positive feedback. This webpage is just one of many ways Region III strives to keep you informed and updated. Make sure you visit regularly to know the latest and greatest about the Flamingos.

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We want to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to continued Region III success. Don’t forget to follow us on LinkedIn and Facebook!

**Tanya Blackwell** serves as Region III’s magazine contributor and is a Contracting Officer at Georgia Institute of Technology/GTRC.

**REGION V Southwestern**

[www.ncuraregionv.com](http://www.ncuraregionv.com)

When people ask me what I “do” or if I enjoy my job, I always struggle for an answer. Unless someone is in the field, either directly as a research administrator or indirectly as a faculty member or researcher, it is really hard to describe what we do. Sure, I can say “I manage sponsored programs for a Big 12 university.” That always gets me the one-eyebrow-raised quizzical look that tells me they have no idea what I just said. If I start to offer details, then it changes to that glassed-over “will you shut up now? None of that makes sense to me. You’ve been rambling for 10 minutes.” look. But you can’t describe our profession in a sentence or two and the industry jargon is full of acronyms and terms that are foreign to the average Joe.

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If you’re new to NCURA or simply new to Region V, I encourage you to get involved. Get to know your fellow members. The relationships are invaluable!

**Hollie Schreiber** serves as Chair of Region V and is Manager, Ag Sponsored Programs Administration, at Oklahoma State University.

**REGION V Southwestern**

[www.ncuraregionv.com](http://www.ncuraregionv.com)

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**Keepin’ it weird …**

**Hollie Schreiber** serves as Chair of Region V and is Manager, Ag Sponsored Programs Administration, at Oklahoma State University.
“Serving as Region IV Committee Chair and volunteering at both Regional and National conferences have provided me with exceptional opportunities to network with other NCURA members. The collegial environment has provided a great place to enrich both my knowledge and experiences in the field of research administration.”  

Sue Grimes, Assistant Director  
Office of the Vice President for Research, Purdue University

Volunteering with NCURA  We begin this edition of Region IV’s regional corner by highlighting volunteerism. Are you looking for a way to meet your research administration colleagues and have fun? Interested in helping Region IV deliver value to members? Seeking volunteer experience to augment your professional experience? Region IV has many opportunities for you to get involved, give back, and grow personally and professionally!

There are many ways to volunteer, and I would like to take this opportunity to mention Region IV committees. Below is a description of our standing committees along with the name of the Chair and contact information. Complete volunteer descriptions are located on the Region IV Web site at http://www.ncuraregioniv.com/governance.html for the respective committees.

NCURA Region IV Committees

Awards Committee: Nancy Reidelberger, nreidel@dom.wustl.edu
Promotes nominations and equitable selection of recipients for each award category, and promotes the benefits of nominating others.

Communications Committee: Michelle Schoenecker  
schoene7@uwm.edu  
Fosters communication among Region IV members by writing and publishing e-newsletters and eBlasts, and maintaining the Region IV Web site and Facebook page.

Membership Committee: Sue Grimes, sgrimes@purdue.edu

Volunteer Coordinator: Charlie Giese, cgiese2@rsp.wisc.edu
Promotes attendance at meetings, provides information about NCURA regional and national committees, board positions, awards, networking, and the administrative resources available for members.

Nominations Committee: Diane Barrett, dbarrett@rsmart.com
Oversees the election of Region IV Officers, including soliciting nominations, presenting a slate of candidates, overseeing the election process, and certifying the election.

Professional Development Committee: Diane Hillebrand, diane.hillebrand@med.und.edu
Develops and oversees professional development programs for members, including the Mentoring Program.

Site Selection Committee: Dena McDonnell, dmcdonell@saint-lukes.org
Selects a location and venue for the regional Spring Meeting, and negotiates contracts.

I would also like to highlight the Volunteer of the Month, John Philipps. Since April 2013 John Philipps has served on the Region IV Board of Directors with unlimited enthusiasm and with a strong commitment to NCURA Region IV. He is particularly adept at promoting Region IV events to members, and in 2014 his work has been particularly outstanding. In addition to being a fine colleague, John is indeed a gentleman, always polite, courteous, and thinking of ways that he can help others. His kindness, generosity and commitment are deeply valued by Region IV and it is my pleasure to nominate John Philipps as Volunteer of the Month.  (You can also take a look at the Volunteer of the Month Page at http://collaborate.ncura.edu/volunteer/volunteerofthemonth)

In addition to being a fine colleague, John is indeed a gentleman, always polite, courteous, and thinking of ways that he can help others. His kindness, generosity and commitment are deeply valued by Region IV and it is my pleasure to nominate John Philipps as Volunteer of the Month.  (You can also take a look at the Volunteer of the Month Page at http://collaborate.ncura.edu/volunteer/volunteerofthemonth)

NCURA 2015  
World’s Fair – Research Administration Going Global!  
We’re now looking ahead to the spring meeting in Chicago this coming year, and we’re so excited to partner with region VIII, the International Region. The region is starting to buzz about Research Administration Going...
Global! Eva Björndal and Bruno Woran, from Region VIII, were both able to stop by Chicago in early September, for a visit to the windy city and help get the planning for the meeting underway. We toured the city by bus and by boat and we’re confident that we’re bringing both our regions not only an excellent educational program, hitting all the latest topics in research administration, but also many opportunities to experience Chicago and have some fun in your down time. With the planning underway, we have an offsite reception at a Chicago landmark, an evening celebrating a taste of Chicago, and offsite visits to Chicago’s leading research institutions to learn how our colleagues manage research. Plus much, much more with an expanded hospitality suite and dinner groups with an international flare.

The conference itself will be a great opportunity to learn, share, network and enjoy beverages and snacks in Princess Diana’s old room at the historic Drake hotel. The city of Chicago also offers a lot of entertainment so take the chance and enjoy some jazz, food, shopping and architecture!

Details of the program include tracks within the following fields: Federal/Government, PUI’s, Senior Research Administrators, Financial, Medical, Research Compliance and International, along with a new “Hot Topic Discussion Circle.” These small discussion groups will take place on Monday morning following the keynote. Each table will have one facilitator and focus on one hot topic question for 45 minutes. The goal of these discussion groups is to bring together colleagues across regions in an interactive and fun way, as well as present an opportunity to discuss some of the most burning research administration questions with your colleagues.

We’re looking forward to a great meeting and hope you can join us at the joint Region IV – Region VIII meeting at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, April 26-29, 2015. We are always looking for volunteers and presenters, so if you are interested in participating on the planning or execution of the meeting, please contact Eva Björndal Eva.Bjorndal@ki.se or Kirsten Yehl k-yehl@northwestern.edu.

**DID YOU KNOW….Research Administration Goes Global** is a first for an NCURA meeting and we’re celebrating similar debuts in World’s Fair Style. Did you know Juicy Fruit Gum and Pabst Blue Ribbon both debuted in Chicago?

**Volunteering Region VIII** Being a young and growing region, there are still many opportunities to volunteer within Region VIII. These opportunities with descriptions are found on at http://ncuraintlregion.org/volunteer-opportunities/ and include positions such as:

- Chairperson, and Committee Member Regional Membership Committee
- Chairperson and Committee Member, Regional Professional Development Committee

Volunteering is such a great way to build professional networks, learn, share and grow. There are numerous benefits to volunteer within NCURA - giving a little and gaining a lot!

**NCURA Region VIII Committees** As you may have read in the last edition of the NCURA Magazine, Region VIII has its first committee appointed. We welcome Fadia Homeidan (Lebanon), Laura Plant (Sweden), Sonia Furtado (United Arab Emirates) and Joseph-Francis Ogwapit (Uganda) to the Regional Nominating and Leadership Development Committee.

**Join Us – Connect Globally** Last, but not least, we would love to see where our members come from and which institutions they represent. Please join our “around-the-globe-photo-collage” all the way from Michigan, U.S., to Kyoto, Japan. Join us by sending a picture of yourself in front of your University’s logo. Let’s show just how global Research Administration is!

Warm Regards,
Eva Björndal, Chair, Region VIII
Sue Kelch, Chair, Region IV
Kirsten Yehl, Chair-Elect, Region IV

Eva Björndal serves as the Chair of Region VIII and is the Team Leader Post-Contract and Financial Compliance at the Karolinska Institutet.
Sue Kelch serves as the Chair of Region IV and is Research Finance Manager in the Department of Otolaryngology, University of Michigan.
Kirsten Yehl serves as the Chair-elect of Region IV and is the Administrative Director at Northwestern University.

**REGION VI Western**

The end of 2014 is nearly upon us and we’re looking forward to all the exciting news that is coming our way:

Melissa Mullen, Region VI 2015 Chair shares, “Your 2015 leadership for Regions VI and VII have been working to set a wonderful program for you at our upcoming meeting in Salt Lake City, October 4-8, 2015. In the next few months, we will be reaching out to our members for your suggestions on sessions. We also want to know about
opportunities that you feel will be valuable to our region’s growth and how we can further meet your needs for professional development. We look forward to your input and involvement. In the meantime, do not hesitate to contact Melissa Mullen at mrmullen@calpoly.edu if you have any questions, suggestions or are ready to sign-up as a volunteer! See you in SLC!”

Randi Wasik, Region VI 2016 Chair shares, “Get ready for Hawaii in 2016. Mark Feldman (our partner in getting the right site and contract) and I have sites selected for a visit in November. The trip will be an intense week of visiting sites and working on final pricing and bids for the meeting. I have been partnering with Regions VII and VIII on the journey thus far. There is much excitement around this meeting from all I have worked with to date. Many thanks to those of you who have provided guidance thus far and I look forward to working with the regions as we move ahead.”

Meanwhile, we’ve expanded the LeadMe program and have an outstanding class selected for 2015 already underway. We nominated Region VI leaders to national committees and for the Executive Leadership Program. This has been an amazing and exciting year! Thank you all for your continued support and generous contributions of effort, ingenuity, and dedication to making Region VI the wonderful resource and network that serves us so well.

Warm regards,

Sam

Samantha Westcott serves as Region VI Chair and is the Manager, Sponsored Projects Team, The Saban Research Institute - Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles.

REGION VII
Rocky Mountain
http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu

Dear Region VII Friends,

Wrap Up Region VI/VII Meeting:
I am writing to you aboard the plane returning from Reno where our combined Region VI/VII meeting was held this week. “Taking a Chance” on our first fall meeting seems to have worked. The transition to a fall timeframe had an element of risk, but we had 228 attendees, so not too bad. The workshops, sessions and discussion groups offered a wide range of topics, but not surprisingly the Uniform Guidance drew the biggest crowds. As we count down the months and days until the 12/26/14 effective date, many of us are still trying to learn as much as we can as we near home stretch. Remember the analogy of this being a bit like a marathon? We clearly have the finish line in sight, but who knows how we are going to feel when we’re done?

Thanks again to all of you who volunteered your time and effort to make this a stellar event.

Election Results:
The election results are in. In case you missed the e-blast announcing the winners, they are as follows:

Chair-elect – Marjorie (Marj) Townsend, Arizona State University
Member at Large to the Regional Advisory Board – Jennifer Smolnick, Arizona State University
Regionally-elected Member to the National Board – Tim Edwards, University of Montana

Thank you all for agreeing to give your time and energy to NCURA and representing our region.

Lead Me Participant: Region VI has graciously extended an invitation to include our region in Lead Me, their fabulous leadership and mentoring program. We have one participant, Michael Sanderson from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. I am pleased that we have started down this path and look forward to hearing from Michael as he moves through the program. Congratulations on your acceptance into this professional development opportunity.

2015 - Region VI/VII Meeting: Mark your calendars for the 2015 meeting! The Program Committee has embarked on the planning for next year and welcomes your involvement. If you are interested in volunteering, we have a number of ways you can help out. Keep your eyes out for emails with more details regarding SLC2015 in the next few months. I hope you all are having a wonderful fall raking leaves, watching football games and enjoying our nice weather.

Your Chair,

Leslie

Leslie Schmidt, serves as the Region VII Chair and is Assistant Vice President for Research at The Montana State University.
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WRITTEN BY: Jane Youngers, Assistant Vice President for Research Administration, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and Pamela Webb, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, University of Minnesota

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New Orleans, LA.........................................................February 4-6, 2015

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Houston, TX .............................................................December 8-10, 2014

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New Orleans, LA.........................................................February 4-6, 2015

LEVEL II: SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP
New Orleans, LA.........................................................February 4-6, 2015

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

9TH PRE-AWARD RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE
Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL ..............March 2-4, 2015

16TH FINANCIAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE
Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL ..............March 5-7, 2015

57TH ANNUAL MEETING
Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC.........................August 2-5, 2015

ONLINE TUTORIALS
A Primer on Clinical Trials – 8 week program
A Primer on Federal Contracting – 8 week program
A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements – 8 week program
A Primer on Subawards – 8 week program

DEADLINES FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015
Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors..............November 17, 2014
Submission of Articles to Co-editors .........................November 24, 2014
Submission of Advertisements.................................November 24, 2014

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