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# NCURA

## MAGAZINE

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UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS

VOLUME XLVII, NO. 4

Awards

Proposals

Protocol  
Processing  
Time

Account  
Setup  
Time

Patents/  
Licenses

R&D  
Expenditures

# DIVING INTO DATA

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 Automated Techniques for Enhanced Grant Oversight

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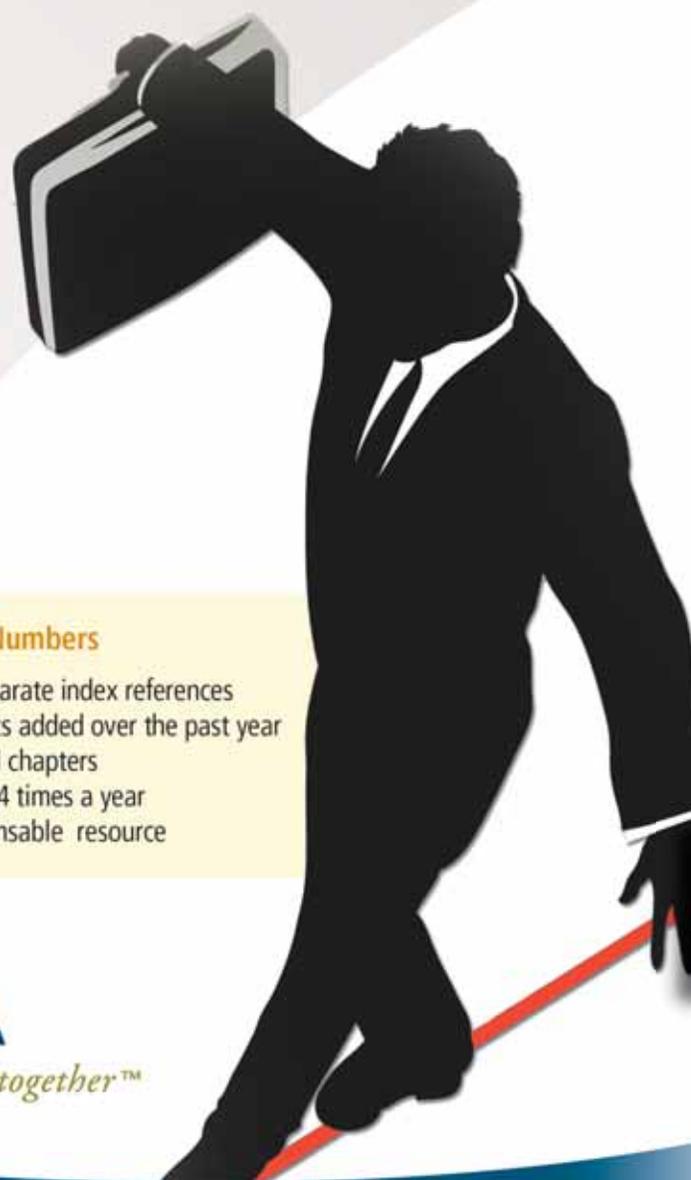


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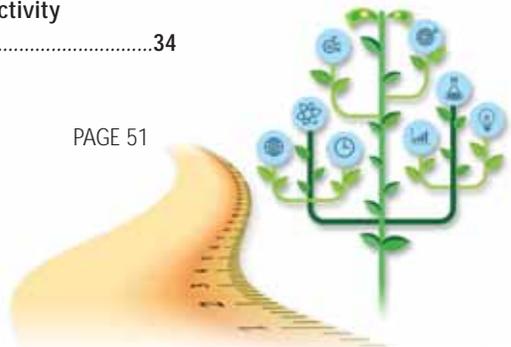
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**ON THE COVER:** As Research Administrators we are constantly asked to generate data. What were our total research expenditures last fiscal year? How many proposals did we submit last month? What is the average turnaround time for award setup? In the data crazed world we work in, we must ask ourselves, "What is data anyway?" Is data a set of numbers or is data actual information? Proponents of data will swear that data is the end all, be all for decision making. They will say without data, decision making is the same as just guessing at what the institution should do. On the other hand, critics of data will say data is just a mechanism for proving your point, whatever that point may be. Data can be



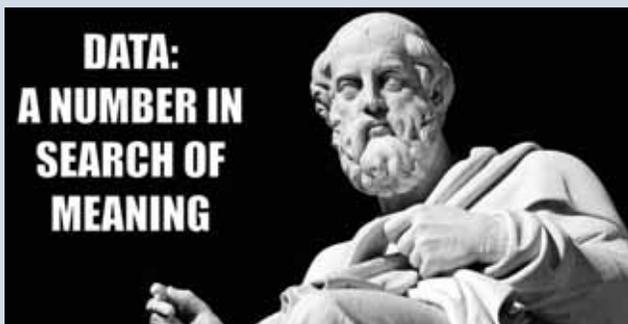
twisted and manipulated so that it tells whatever story you want to tell, therefore it is no more reliable than the person presenting it. How can there be such differing opinions on something as concrete as a number? It is because both the proponents and the critics are correct.

The first concept we have to consider when exploring data is understanding what questions to ask to get data that actually helps us. Without knowing what to ask, we could be wasting time generating useless information that may confuse the situation more than improve it. But, even after knowing the right questions to ask, your data is still just a number until you have context to put that number into. That context may be achieved in one of two ways; comparing yourself against others or comparing yourself against your own past.

In this issue we will explore data in a variety of ways as it relates to many aspects of research administration. Data is often used in the pursuit of internal improvement, regardless of whether you work at a research intensive or primarily undergraduate institution. We are always trying to figure out how to build our own capacity and increase our productivity. Data is also being used to forecast the future based on the past.

Plato said, "A good decision is based on knowledge not on numbers." More than 2,000 years later, in our increasingly complex profession, his wisdom could not be truer. Being able to differentiate between what the numbers say and what the numbers mean is the key to turning data into knowledge and turning knowledge into decisions that propel the institutions we serve.

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# Message from Your President

By Michelle Vazin, NCURA President



Summer is here! This time of year represents a different flow of activity on our campuses. For most of us, a large part of our student body is gone and many faculty take off to parts unknown, but for the world of research things continue and in many cases even escalate, during the summer months. For Research Administrators, summer is really a very busy time. You have to get through the fiscal year-end close process, deal with your single-audit on federal programs, and provide oversight, feedback, and metrics for the financial statements as it relates to sponsored project awards and expenditures. For many of us, the sponsored projects portfolio is a significant piece of our institutions financial fabric. As such, sponsored programs have come under more and more scrutiny over the last few years. Institutional leadership can't get enough when it comes to metrics on all things sponsored. We are all investing in building and developing processes and tools to slice and dice the data and produce critical metrics for management dashboards. I personally find myself at that crossroad on my own campus, and so I was very excited when I heard that the theme of this issue of the magazine was going to be "Diving into Data." Any insight on this hot topic is welcomed, and I know you all will find this issue valuable.

NCURA is also interested in understanding data pertinent to its continued success. By getting a more thorough understanding of the makeup of the membership, NCURA can better position itself to meet the needs of our members. To facilitate this endeavor, NCURA is rolling out a campaign to collect enhanced membership information which includes demographics, topics of responsibility, and expertise. I want to encourage all of you to make sure and complete your information profiles online. I recently updated my information and it just took a few minutes. If you want to update your own, just sign into the NCURA website at the following link: <https://www.ncura.edu/MembershipVolunteering/ProfileUpdate.aspx>. Having complete and robust membership profiles will definitely enable NCURA to better plan for the future. Moreover, these enhancements will let you identify colleagues with various responsibilities and expertise, thus allowing you to enrich and expand your peer network.

As I indicated in the last issue of the magazine, NCURA leadership is working to update and develop the strategic plans and goals for the future of our association for the next 10 years. Having a good idea of who our members are will definitely ensure that this process is on target. At the annual meeting, the regional leadership joined into the conversation and much work was accomplished in a day-long leadership conference to further the game plan for how NCURA needs to position itself as 2025 looms ahead. By the end of year, we will have a well-defined and comprehensive strategic plan. The stretch goals that are being developed will guide our organization and keep NCURA on the cutting-edge of what is vital to research administration and relevant to our membership and community at large.

Soon the new academic year will kick off and our campuses will be full of activity and energy. I know that all of us that attended AM57 feel better equipped to deal with all things research administration as the new semester starts. Stay connected with all the new colleagues you networked with at the annual meeting. One thing I know for sure is that the network we have within NCURA is invaluable and will serve you well as you support research at your own campus.

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# Automated Techniques for Enhanced Grant Oversight

By Brett M. Baker

A federal grant is an award of financial assistance from a federal agency to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by law. Recipients must expend grant funds in compliance with federal regulations and in the execution of the programs and activities as described in the terms and conditions of the awards. The federal government makes \$600 billion in financial assistance awards to 88,000 recipients annually. Grants management officials in 26 federal agencies are charged with ensuring accountability of federal funds and that award requirements are accomplished. Federal award recipients are also responsible for ensuring that federal funds are used appropriately and meeting the award's terms and conditions, as well as the cost and administrative rules in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) 2014 Uniform Guidance.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) reviews 50,000 applications and makes 11,000 awards totaling \$7 billion annually to more than 2,200 institutions. Since NSF accomplishes its mission to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics primarily through grants to individual researchers and institutions, robust oversight of grants management is essential for proper accountability over scarce federal tax dollars intended to advance the progress in science.

There is less visibility with grants than contracts because grant recipients request payments as an aggregate dollar amount, whereas with contracts, grant recipients do not have to present supporting documentation such as invoices and receipts to receive payment from the agency. To address these challenges in its oversight mission, the NSF Office of Inspector General (OIG) is using automated techniques to:

- Identify high-risk awardees and target work
- Use fewer resources and save time
- Increase oversight from a sample of transactions at an institution for a small number of awards to 100 percent coverage of all transactions and all awards
- Conduct continuous monitoring in real time to expose problems sooner and prevent misuse

Using automated techniques enables NSF OIG to obtain data from multiple databases which can be compared and analyzed to identify anomalies in

cost data and in award-expenditure patterns. This approach helps to separate unallowable activity from the many grant expenditure transactions under review. These techniques also provide transparency in recipient spending that was difficult to see using traditional methods. Some examples of the data sources we can now use are listed below. Integrated with automated tools and techniques, these significantly expand our oversight coverage of grants.

- Internally available data – proposal budgets, progress reports, and drawdown patterns
- Externally available data – Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) and Federal Audit Clearinghouse (tracks Single Audits)
- Recipient financial system records – general and subsidiary ledger data, travel and purchase cards

Agency proposal and award data combined with externally available information can show awardee activity over time, including anomalous patterns. Agencies maintain grant proposal and award financial information at the grant-level and institution-level as part of their award and post-award monitoring efforts. This includes information such as proposal narratives, quarterly reports, drawdowns, and closeout reconciliation. This information can be imported into an OIG database and combined with other open-source information (information available on the Internet) to produce an institution risk profile that can be compared against other institutions to surface outliers.

Incorporating institution financial and program management data after an awardee has been selected for audit helps identify highest-risk areas and transactions to review and focus audit work. Automated analytical tests of general ledger information can uncover questionable expenditures that review teams can perform in-depth testing on to determine the allowability, allocability, and reasonableness.

The NSF OIG's use of automated techniques is a starting point in its grant audit work, not an end point and **complement** traditional audit techniques. Automated techniques focus attention on higher risk awards and transactions, and allow audit teams to more directly test allowability, allocability, and reasonability through interviews and review of supporting

documentation. The use of automated techniques by NSF OIG for grant oversight are similar to those used in private industry and other governmental entities. For example, these are the type of tools banks and credit card companies use to flag usage anomalies that may indicate fraudulent or improper credit card use. Similarly, government agencies charged with medical payment oversight use automated techniques to examine millions of medical claim transactions to more readily identify costly provider and beneficiary fraud.

### Lifecycle Approach to Grant Oversight

Automated audit techniques provide greater insight on risks and expand the capacity for oversight throughout the lifecycle of grant awards – solicitation, proposal review, award, research, payment, and award closeout. Risks associated with each phase in the life cycle of grants—pre-award, active award, and award/closeout—are shown below.

Risks during the pre-award phase can include those where the award may have been made to an institution due to inaccurate proposal information, eligibility restrictions on participating in federal awards, or conflicts of interest in the evaluation process.

During the active award phase, recipients expend grant funds throughout the period of performance, which can range from one to five years. Recipients request reimbursement payments from the awarding agency generally as an aggregate dollar amount, and unlike contract payments, recipients do not provide an invoice or other billing detail to support the expenditures. While recipients provide quarterly, annual, and final reporting, those

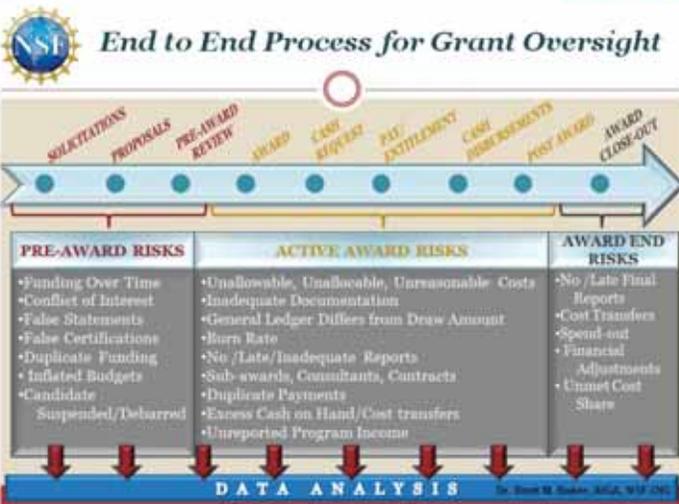
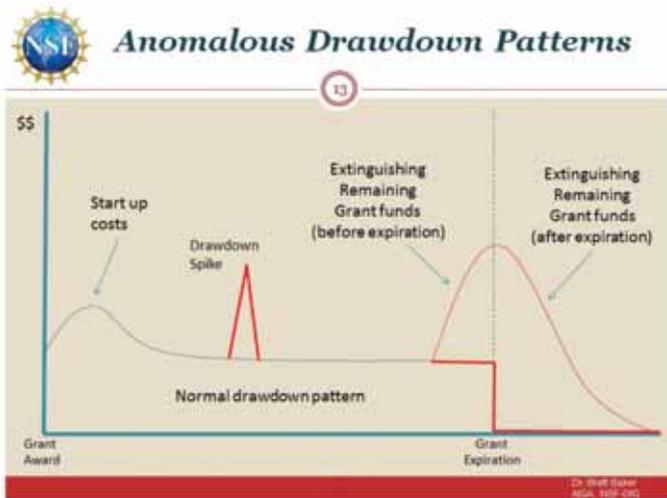
reports do not detail how the grant funds were expended, i.e., what the funds were actually used for. The limited visibility of expenditure information is a significant challenge for agency grants officials and makes it difficult to determine whether payments made to an institution have only been used for costs that were allowable, allocable, or reasonable.

During the award end and closeout phase, no further costs are allowed to be incurred after the period of performance for a grant has ended. Thus, the recipient is responsible for reporting total expended award funds to the awarding agency, both to close the agency's award financial account and as part of the final project report that describes the results and benefits of the project financed with federal award funds. Inappropriate cost transfers and late, incomplete, or missing final reporting are common risks during this phase.

To date, NSF OIG auditors have applied this approach to over \$2 billion in active NSF research awards, thus ensuring greater accountability over limited federal research funds. Recognizing that the need for improved grant oversight extends beyond NSF, the OIG has also worked with OIGs from other federal agencies who are interested in utilizing his grant oversight model in their work. Because ensuring accountability over federal funds is not just a goal of the OIG community, NSF OIG has also worked with several grant management offices across the federal government to help them gain an understanding of his use of automated techniques to enhance grant accountability. In addition, NSF OIG has also worked with a number of university audit and sponsored research office communities to illustrate how data analytics can enhance their management of federal funds with their own financial systems. His coordination with OIGs, oversight officials, and the research community provides cross-cutting coverage that gives taxpayers greater assurance that hard-earned tax dollars are being used appropriately.

### Conclusion

In summary, using data analytics throughout the grant life cycle can provide oversight organizations with greater visibility and insight into how institutions are using federal funds, resulting in greater accountability, integrity, and transparency. Data analysis of agency award information, combined with available external and awardee data, can help identify higher risk activity for planning purposes, as well as surface anomalous and questionable grant expenditures during audit work. While offices of inspectors general can enhance their grant oversight using automated techniques, other oversight organizations within federal agencies and the research community, can also benefit from the approach. Collectively, these organizations can provide greater assurance to the public that government funds are being used appropriately. [N](#)

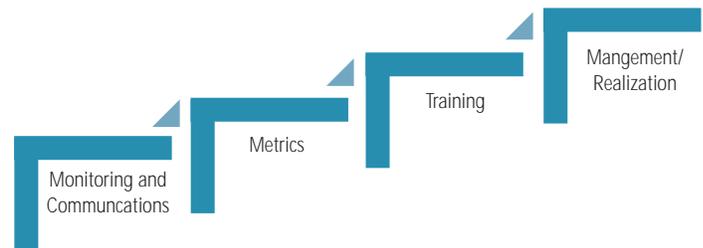


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# Compliance Monitoring, Metrics, Management and Training: A Comprehensive Approach - Part 2: Training

By James Luther and Julie Cole

The second of three articles that describes Duke University's journey to the creation of a comprehensive approach for compliance monitoring, metrics, management and training. This article focuses on the Duke training component.



**Background:** In 2007, Duke University faced an issue common to many large research institutions. The research portfolio had doubled and then doubled again, putting significant strain on institutional compliance and programmatic and research administration service demands. This situation served as the catalyst for a systemic overhaul of Duke's approach to people, processes and technology through an initiative called the Research Administration Continuous Improvement (RACI). In the previous article the authors discussed the identification and management of financial compliance risks as a component of Duke's comprehensive approach to enhance support to the research community. Another component of this multifaceted initiative was the development of an innovative training curriculum for grant managers that launched in the spring of 2015.

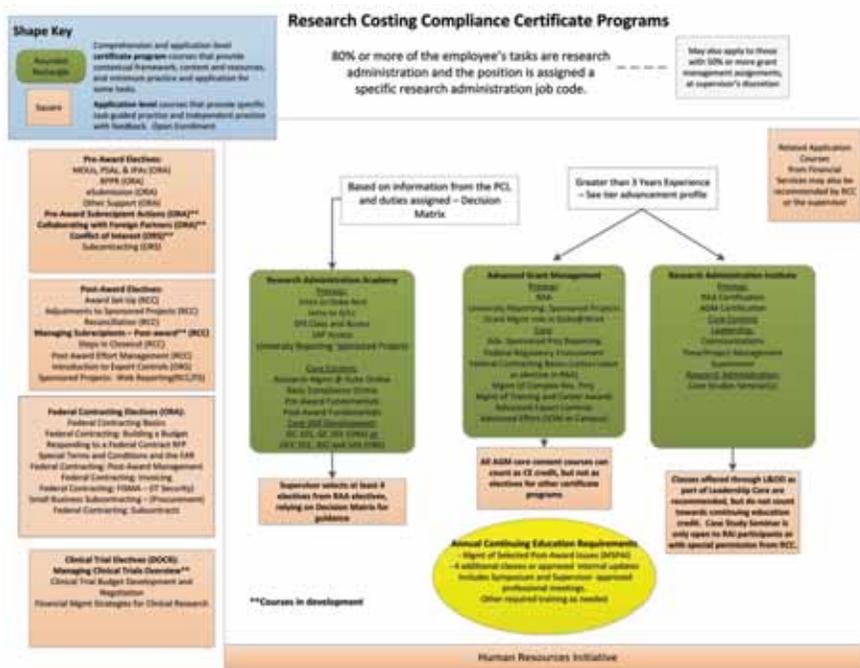
Beginning in 2007/2008, RACI began identifying staff engaged in grant management at the department/central level to ensure consistent roles, responsibilities and training. The Duke environment is characterized by a highly decentralized operational approach. Grant managers are critical to providing support throughout the sponsored project lifecycle. A review indicated there were as many as 1,200 department grant managers, but these individuals might be performing as little as 10% true grant management duties.

Departments have the flexibility to assign duties according to what they deem to be the best fit for their unit. Consequently, there were grant managers performing only pre-award duties, only post-award duties, both, or singular assignments such as closeout. Moreover, job descriptions that codified true grant management duties into identifiable and measurable performance objectives did not exist in sufficient, consistent detail. Duke Human Resources, led by the Vice President for Administration, took on the task of creating tiered job classifications utilizing consistent job de-

scriptions that defined grant management functions. Senior members of both campus and School of Medicine management centers played key roles in development and implementation of a sweeping plan to restructure grant management personnel. Those who performed at least 80% grant management duties were identified and positions were reclassified into a new HR structure. The process enabled the development of a more formalized competency-based approach to grant administration: job categories and career progression, training, performance management and rewards, work design, and succession planning. The codifying of roles and responsibilities around each level of grant administration was critical to Duke's understanding of how grant administration positions should be structured, how Duke recruits for these positions and how training programs should be designed for current staff. It is important to acknowledge the considerable efforts of the central and management center Human Resources teams in developing a comprehensive and detailed HR program for career progression at Duke University. (<http://finance.duke.edu/raci/compensation/index.php>)



**Training and Professional Development:** Research Costing Compliance (RCC) is a unit located in Cost and Reimbursement Accounting (CRA) within Financial Services. CRA is a blend of cost accounting, post-award management, space/equipment management and training and monitoring services. As noted in the previous article, RCC manages two related functions: a comprehensive monitoring/data analytics process dedicated to identification/management of potential financial risks associated with



correlate functions performed with expected performance outcomes. Test questions were developed to validate the expected knowledge gained/skills attained. RCC electives allow the enrollee and the supervisor to customize training to immediate and long-term, work-related goals. Elective content is deliberately flexible, allowing RCC to include new policies, practices and systems as these are developed.

An online elective matrix tool was developed to facilitate selection of electives for RAA. The matrix features an extensive list of grant management activities, clustered into pre-, post-, compliance, contracting, and clinical trials function areas. The “activities list” is generated directly from the learning objectives in each RCC class. Once completed, the matrix provides guidance on appropriate classes matched to assignments. Originally intended as a “one-time” RAA enrollment tool the matrix has evolved into a powerful planning and training management tool, and may become a required annual component of updating and retaining certification. Background data from the matrix is being accessed by RCC and translated into a comprehensive picture of assigned grant management duties at all levels. Matched with PCI and RCC Monitoring data (as discussed in the previous article) departments and management centers will soon have a suite of metrics and data tools to better manage their expanding grant portfolios.

The Advanced Grant Management certificate features advanced topics and content suitable to the career progression path mapped by Duke Human Resources. AGM requires testing and a proctored final exam. The Research Administration Institute is an intense senior forum that features identification of leadership styles, supervisory and problem-solving techniques using case studies on research administration topics.

**Testing and Evaluation:** RAA and AGM certificates require passing individual classes and a final proctored exam with a score of 80% or better. While the individual class exams allow for multiple external resourcing, including discussion of the questions with one’s supervisor, the final exam occurs in a proctored computer lab. Learners may bring their study materials and use the web as a resource. The proctored exam tests knowledge attained, skills developed (for example, use of specific financial reports to identify correct answers), and use of the web to identify Duke policies and procedures for correct responses. The exam allows for up to four hours for completion and features a bank of more than 175

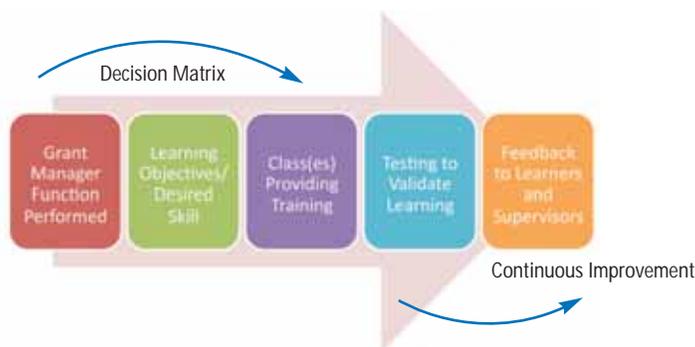
sponsored programs and a nationally regarded training program for all individuals involved in grant management duties.

RCC restructured its original successful training program to coincide with HR expectations and the new grant management classification. Three tiered certificate programs were created to map to the new HR positions: the Research Administration Academy (RAA), Advance Grant Management (AGM), and the Research Administration Institute (RAI). These certifications became a stated requirement in the new HR job descriptions. Newly classified grant managers were provided with a roadmap for required certificates and accelerator options for upward mobility. This requirement created a benchmark for basic skills and knowledge attained across all positions.

The baseline certification created in 2002 and revised in 2007 (RAA) was totally revised. Input was sought from two advisory groups – a senior-level team that advised on overall process change

and a department representative team that provided insights on elements of content, design and questions. Both deemed supervisor engagement essential and strongly recommended the development of a supervisor-centric approach that required active engagement of the grant manager’s supervisor in determining training needs and future career paths. The teams observed that RAA certificate classes were so detailed and content-rich that they were overwhelming to a new grant manager. Given the diversity of grant management assignments at Duke, the team recommended a general “core” class requirement and customized “elective” classes matched to assigned functions.

RAA classes were redefined; core classes provide the essential elements of compliance, pre- and post-award fundamentals. New elective classes were developed that feature case studies, hands-on application and targeted, function-specific training. Learning objectives for each class



randomly selected questions. The learner receives 60 questions on core material and 15 for each of the four chosen electives.

RCC regularly runs specialized reports to identify questions that need to be reviewed/revise and invites learners to submit challenges to questions they find problematic. The senior advisory group, plus a group of RCC lead trainers, vets all questions for accuracy and relevance. An open access, web-based training tracker facilitates management of classes taken, certification status, and transcripts. The tracker data supports both the individual grant manager and their supervisors in managing classes taken and recommended additional training. RCC routinely reviews class evaluations for additional continuous improvement.

A strong annual continuing education component ensures that new skills regarding policy, practice and system changes are attained. As previously noted, supervisors will be encouraged to use the Elective Matrix during the annual performance review process to review current job responsibilities and identify changes in functions assigned. Supervisors also have access to the RCC Risk Assessment data in Tableau to note areas where additional training might be appropriate, PCI data to better balance workload, (both RCC data and PCI data were discussed in the previous article) and a transcript of classes completed to provide a comprehensive picture of grant management in their unit. If job assignments are changed, supervisors have a roadmap to suggest/mandate training to match the new assignments.

**Operations:** RCC developed extensive business rules to correspond with HR stated expectations, created a course catalog with topical cross references, and implemented the entire training process in the university's learning management system (LMS). While many classes are taught by RCC staff, RCC supports a highly effective team of trainers and content experts from central pre- and post-award offices, plus specially designated lead trainers from the departments. The team meets regularly to update materials, develop test questions, discuss evaluations, and plan for new/emerging content. Classes and content are extensively evaluated and modified as warranted.

**Other Related Training:** The HR career path for grant managers also provides for movement through tiers associated with career growth. RCC classes and advanced certifications play an important role in mapping a career path at the department level.

In addition to the certification programs associated with HR grant manager classifications, RCC provides mandatory continuing education for all principal investigators, business managers, grant managers, and those associated with allocating costs to federal awards. Content is harmonized to ensure that the same message is provided throughout yet tailored to specific audience needs. RCC also assumes leadership in developing policies and processes related to financial sponsored program compliance that are vetted and approved by RACI, communicated broadly, and translated into the RCC required training.

**Interface between Metrics, Monitoring and Data Analytics:** The interface between training, monitoring, and metrics has been, and continues to be, reinforced and strengthened throughout this process. Previously developed in organizational silos, data is now shared at various management levels to provide for a multilayered approach to research administration throughout the university. **N**

In the third article of this series, the authors will explore how the interface of multiple data streams can combine to provide:

- a comprehensive dashboard for senior leadership
- an oversight mechanism for monitoring and accountability
- a management tool for departments to manage day-to-day activities, predict workload demands and measure performance

**For further information:**

<http://finance.duke.edu/research/training/index.php>



**James D. Luther, MA.,** Associate Vice President for Finance & Research Costing Compliance Officer at Duke University. His responsibilities include oversight of the post-award areas for the University and School of Medicine, management of fixed and moveable assets, negotiation of Duke's indirect cost and fringe benefits rates, and the Research costing Compliance (RCC) program. Jim is a regular presenter at NCURA, the Chair of the COGR Costing Compliance Committee, and the Co-Chair of the FDP Administrative Burden Sub-group. He can be reached at [james.luther@duke.edu](mailto:james.luther@duke.edu).



**Julie Cole, MA, CRA,** is the Director of Research Costing Compliance (RCC) at Duke University. She has held leadership roles in both pre-award and/or post-award offices at Wake Forest University, the University of Florida and other higher education venues. A frequent presenter and workshop leader at NCURA, Julie is currently a member of the NCURA Workshop Faculty. Julie directs Research Costing Compliance in developing and providing dedicated research administration and compliance training and in monitoring financial research compliance at Duke University. She can be reached at [julie.cole@duke.edu](mailto:julie.cole@duke.edu).

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# Digital Accountability and Transparency (DATA) Act Update

By Jackie Bendall

Many of you, like me, may be wondering where things stand with the DATA Act. A quick recap: This effort would reduce burden in terms of financial reporting and compliance costs and transform the way we currently view federal spending information. The transparency initiative related to this particular Act is being met with open arms by both federal and non-federal stakeholder partners. Connecting the dots to various data elements with common data definitions in an open and transparent way across federal agencies is one effort we can all agree is a win-win situation.

As of May, the DATA Act has moved to the pilot phase as indicated in the April webinar hosted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Treasury, highlighting their respective efforts to implement the Act. This webinar can be seen at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_jjB\\_ggYBcA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jjB_ggYBcA). While The Department of Treasury is engaged in a data mapping/blueprint exercise to identify where data resides within agency systems and revamping [USASpending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov), OMB is seeking to create standard definitions for data elements used across the federal government. OMB has also partnered with The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in an effort to reduce administrative burden in the grants community with the goal of reporting results to Congress in August 2017. Further details were provided in an HHS DATA Act Section 5 Pilot Webinar. The webinar is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yO5S9ekKaM>

Now that the blossoms have bloomed and the tourists have ventured back to their respective homelands, the month of May proved to be very productive. The recent initiatives included a deployment of a blog-type dialogue to initiate a discussion among the grants community on opportunities to reduce burden and compliance costs for Federal award recipients. In addition, a Common Data Element Repository Library (C-DER Library) has been created, and a Grants.gov re-launch that includes information on the lifecycle of grants. Additional information about the initiative can be found on [USASpending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov). While there is much left to be done to make this dream a reality, please bear in mind that the entire initiative remains **unfunded** and that the wonderful work that has been done to date is at the expense of already overloaded work schedules.



For now, the DATA Act pilot timelines will continue through 2017, when all agencies will report under the standards. The OMB Guidance on Applicability to Recipients is set to be released in November 2018. Although you may feel somewhat deflated by now, let's not give up hope! Administrative burden is certainly being recognized as a serious problem on Capitol Hill and will continue to gain momentum in the new Congress. Hats off to all of you who have worked collaboratively to get this initiative off and running! N



**Jackie Bendall** is the Director of Research Compliance and Administration for the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR). She comes to COGR with over 22 years of research administration experience in both public and private academic settings. She works with the COGR membership on a variety of research compliance matters in areas such as human subjects and animal research, data management and access, misconduct in research, select agent regulations, etc. She can be reached at [jbendall@co-gr.edu](mailto:jbendall@co-gr.edu)

## 2015 NCURA Election Results



**Barbara Gray**, Director of Sponsored Programs, East Carolina University, has been elected Vice President/President-Elect of NCURA. Barbara has been extremely active throughout her 25 years of membership. She is currently a Peer Reviewer for NCURA's Peer Review Program.

At the national level, Barbara has served on both

the Board of Directors and as Secretary and has presented numerous workshops and sessions at meetings. At the regional level, Barbara served as Region III's Chair and Secretary/Treasurer in addition to presenting sessions at numerous regional meetings. Barbara also served as a Fundamentals Workshop faculty member and has been on several national and regional committees. Upon her election as NCURA Vice President/President-Elect, Barbara says, "I'm honored and truly excited to serve as NCURA's incoming Vice President/President-Elect. NCURA's future holds much promise. Together, we will strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones that benefit our members. We will continue to explore and implement new methods of delivering content and facilitating individual skill development. We will continue to build recognition of research administration as a specialized profession. And we will continue to provide opportunities for members to develop their leadership potential through volunteering. I look forward to playing a part in this future and to working with the Board, its committees, the staff, and our many volunteers in making NCURA the first choice in professional development for research administrators."



**Anthony (Tony) Ventimiglia**, Director, Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support, Auburn University, has been elected Secretary of NCURA. Tony has been a member of NCURA since 2000 and continues to volunteer in various capacities. He has been a member of the Board of Directors and participated in both the Leadership Development Institute (2005) and Executive Leadership Program (2015).

Tony has also served as co-chair of the 51<sup>st</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and 2015 PRA Program Committee and as a co-track leader for the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. At the regional level, Tony served as Region III Volunteer Coordinator (2005-2007) and Chair (2008-2009). He has also served on the Program Committee for various Region III Spring Meetings. Tony presents frequently at both national and regional meetings and currently serves as faculty for the Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration workshop. On being elected as NCURA's next Secretary, Tony stated, "I am looking forward to my continued service to NCURA and its membership. I am always thrilled to be able to contribute to the advancement of NCURA's mission as my participation within the organization has done so much for me, both within my professional career, and in my leadership development."



**Shannon Sutton**, Director, Sponsored Projects, Western Illinois University, has been elected to the position of Treasurer-Elect. Since Shannon became a member in 2002 she has served NCURA in several capacities. Shannon has served on several regional committees, is currently the Treasurer of Region IV, has presented at several national and regional meetings,

and participated in NCURA's Executive Leadership Program. Upon being elected, Shannon shares, "I am humbled and honored by the support of my NCURA colleagues. As a beneficiary of NCURA's professional development opportunities there is no better way to pay it forward than to serve on the Board of Directors. As Treasurer-Elect, I am excited to learn the ropes from the current treasurer, Heather Offhaus. NCURA is synonymous with excellence. I am committed to working with all members to ensure the organization continues to be the premier development and research resource for today, tomorrow and years to come."



**Denise Moody**, Senior Director of Research Compliance, Harvard University, has been elected to the position of At-Large Board Member. Since becoming a member in 2002, Denise has served on the Board of Directors, has been on numerous national program committees and regional committees, participated in the Leadership Development

Institute, has been a member of the Professional Development Committee, and a Collaborate Community Chair. Denise has presented many sessions at regional and national meetings. She is currently serving as Secretary and as a contributing editor for the *NCURA Magazine*. On being elected as At-Large Board Member, Denise says, "I am very honored to serve on NCURA's Board of Directors for the next two years. I am thrilled to be part of the long-term strategic planning NCURA will undergo in order to ensure longevity in the organization's established and renowned reputation for supporting the research administration profession."



**Leslie Schmidt**, Assistant Vice President for Research, Office of Sponsored Programs, Montana State University, has been elected to the position of At-Large Board Member. An NCURA member for the last 17 years, Leslie has been a presenter at both regional and national meetings and has also been on several national program committees. She has served

as a faculty member for both the Fundamentals and FRA Traveling Workshops. Leslie served as Chair of Region VII and is currently serving as Past Chair as well as an *NCURA Magazine* Contributing Editor. On being elected to this position, Leslie shares, "I am so thrilled and honored about this opportunity to engage more with NCURA's wonderful members and staff! It is such an exciting time to be involved in the dynamic and ever-changing world of research administration and with an organization recognized as a global leader."

**Both Moody and Schmidt will begin serving January 1, 2016 for a two-year term. Gray will take office January 1, 2016 for one year after which she will succeed to a one-year term as President of NCURA. Sutton will become Treasurer-Elect on January 1, 2016 and will serve for one year after which she will succeed to a two-year term as Treasurer. Ventimiglia will take office on January 1, 2016 and will serve a two-year term.**



# TRACK CHANGES:

How a PUI Uses Data to Improve Internal Grant Programs

By *Patience Graybill Condellone, Esther Erkins, and Susan Morgan*

For sponsored research offices (SROs), external grants dominate the annual report because external grants comprise the SRO's basic purpose. Internal funding programs are often dwarfed by the responsibilities accompanying externally sponsored projects, especially at primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs) with few staff members. However, internal grants are popular mechanisms by which to offer seed funding for promising research and to train faculty seeking external support. It is worth our effort to create internal programs with a high payoff. Data can help us understand how best to structure and revise these programs to do so.

The decision to collect data on internal programs is informed by how your institution defines success for the programs. Using data to track the outcomes of internal grant projects allows administrators an overview of the outstanding results internal funding has provided, and lends them tools for discussing successful research. Such data also provides

excellent fodder for annual reports and publicity! Yet what you seek in the data will change according to how your institution interprets the role of research on your campus. Are you looking for strong scholarly impact on the field? What evidence can be provided in this arena; is it presentations, publications, or awarded grants? Are internal

programs successful when your grantees win more external dollars than originally invested, or do they prevail only when a high percentage of the resulting external submissions are awarded? By articulating such priorities, institutions can more easily shape internal programs and how to collect information about them.

Learning to gather appropriate data can allow research administrators to make better informed decisions and bring concrete evidence into conversations with key partners. This article outlines the journey of one PUI to improve internal grant procedures and enhance tracking methods. We will articulate lessons learned about gathering data and using it to assess internal programs.

### SIUE Grant Programs

At Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), we have the rare ability to support several internal funding mechanisms. There are a range of programs, including seed grants, outstanding researcher awards and resubmission support. Because indirect cost recovery funds support our programs and there is an institutional mandate to increase external sponsorship, we must show the effectiveness of the internal grant programs in achieving external support.

Information-gathering about our programs takes various forms, and our methods have evolved over the last 5 years. The “data” we use to assess our programs includes statistical data on applicants and reviewers; feedback from individuals involved in the process; procedural notes and information from various tracking-points in our grant procedures.

In 2010 we began tracking project outcomes gathered from final reports. We now have 5 years of data, which has helped create a picture of our awardees’ productivity and results stemming from internal programs.

### Why the Need for Data?

Creating a systematic practice for tracking data provides an important weapon in assessing program effectiveness and finding intervention points. Data also becomes an ally in showing how your office initiatives contribute to the university enterprise.

### Getting back to the basics: Re-examining guidelines and goals for the funds

An administrative change in our office between 2010 and 2011 led us to closely examine our existing internal grants. A re-evaluation of our program guidelines helped inform the eventual changes to data tracking. We had previously emphasized the “seed” aspect of our largest program, i.e., the need to support “new” rather than ongoing research, as well as projects that could be competitive for external funding. However, we found several trends that influenced our data points. The trends were: 1) the same faculty members were returning to internal programs to get summer support and maintain their research; 2) multiple individuals never finished their external submission requirement; and 3) external grant submissions were not successful.

Therefore, guidelines were revised to address these issues. Other changes in the guidelines included a cap on total summer salary to discourage reliance on the internal grant for summer salary and adjusting the weighted evaluation criteria to give a higher percentage value to the “potential to receive external funding.” Such changes were justified to our research oversight committees through information culled from our database and final report data.

### Aligning baseline data with university strategic goals: Improving final reports and data collection

In 2013-2014, the increased emphasis on external funding support in our university strategic goals raised the bar in terms of what was expected for

externally-sponsored projects. Goals include increasing the number of submissions and awards, the total funding requested and received and the percentage of tenure-track and tenured faculty pursuing external funding. Through the articulation of these “key performance indicators” (KPIs), it has become more important that our internal programs enhance the external funding potential of our research.

Data-gathering tools and procedures also became more important. In 2010, we had established an online final report using Qualtrics survey software. This enabled a more convenient and extensive means of collecting data from awardees. If needed, the data points can be modified, but the information has been relatively consistent across the years to allow comparison over time. We have also expanded our database to include more refined data points.

### What Types of Data to Gather and How?

The data gathered has changed slightly in recent years; however, we can state that we currently gather demographic and disciplinary information on the applicants to provide a statistical picture of applicants; and we track reviewers’ disciplinary background. (Reviewer data can be handy when disgruntled rejected applicants challenge the process.)

We collect annual reports from most of our awardees 90 days after the end of the project period. Typical final report surveys ask awardees to self-report on project outcomes, such as publications, presentations, associated external grant submissions and awards, student outcomes (if the award includes students), creative activities, scientific outcomes, patentable products, outreach, or other activities affiliated with the project and actual budget expenditures.

Faculty self-reporting is one mode of data collection, but we have not relied solely upon it. We have opted to limit its use due to inaccuracies in the reported information when compared to the SRO’s database. Consequently, we built in quality controls which allow us to cross-check final report information with our database. Since eligibility for future internal funding is contingent upon an external submission, application deadlines become a prime opportunity to talk to applicants about updating external grant information and/or strategies for meeting previous internal award requirements.

The outcomes information from final reports and cross-checking have allowed us to build trend data that informs our streamlining efforts. This information ultimately becomes evidence in our annual reports, illustrating how internally-funded research projects contribute to the mission of scholarship, teaching and outreach. Furthermore, the data creates a picture of budding research and PIs we can target to develop the aims laid out in our university strategic goals.

### Interpreting the Data for the Future: (Re)-Defining Success?

Data collected about past research internal grant awards can inform how you move forward toward your ideal programming results. At SIUE, goals are squarely focused on promoting external sponsorship. We are particularly interested in getting the most out of the internal grant investments by translating them into higher success rates with external funders.

Thanks to the new baseline data, mapped in response to the research KPIs, we are able to look more intently at the yearly comparative data to determine if we are getting the right “bang for our buck” from internal awards. We can track how a particular cohort performs compared to another, but we can also track how a particular cohort’s external grant performance changes in the 2 to 3 years following the project end date.

This may, for example, provide us with a better picture of how long it takes for internally funded projects to achieve external support.

In viewing our 5-year data, we have found that some of our major programs are earning more in external dollars than we originally invested. At the same time, we have been able to perceive weaker funding programs and lower-than-desired external funding success rates. We have articulated that an external submission requirement does not necessarily translate into a strong external award record, and we have begun looking into ways we can further support our internal awardees in their bids for other funding after the internal grant ends.

We are asking ourselves if we need more outreach to internal awardees as they prepare the final report; for example, assisting them to think ahead to the external funding requirement. Do we target our efforts to the higher scoring awardees? Or do we, perhaps, target applicants not funded through internal programs and encourage them to transform rejection into an opportunity to connect with external funders?

These are just a few ideas that have arisen from our preliminary trend data, and how we move forward will depend on not only how we can best use our resources but also what future data reveals the effects of our intervention strategies have been. **N**



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**Esther Erkins, Ed.D.**, is Director of Grant Development in the Office of Research and Projects at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She is responsible for forming and directing teams for large and multidisciplinary external submissions, new research initiatives and oversight of pre-award services. She is a new member of NCURA Region IV and can be reached at [eerkins@siue.edu](mailto:eerkins@siue.edu).



**Susan Morgan, Ph.D., P.E.**, is Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She oversees the Office of Research and Projects, has presented at NCURA regional meetings and currently serves as a mentor in the Region IV "Mentoring Our Own" program. As a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering, she conducts research and publishes on stormwater management. She can be reached at [smorgan@siue.edu](mailto:smorgan@siue.edu).

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**Moderator:**

**Kim Moreland**, University of Wisconsin - Madison

**Panel:**

**Michelle Christy**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Mark Davis**, Attain

**Cindy Hope**, The University of Alabama

**David Kennedy**, Council on Governmental Relations

**Jim Luther**, Duke University



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# Snowball Metrics

## AN INTRODUCTION

By Martin Kirk



**M**easuring the impact of research has become the “Holy Grail” for both research universities and governments. But how we measure the return on investment and the impact of research is the billion dollar question.

There are many approaches to creating a scorecard of metrics that attempts to answer the return on investment and impact challenge. Snowball Metrics is one of them.

The Snowball Metrics project partners are a group of top UK universities that account for approximately 40% of UK research funding and publications: University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, University College London, University of Bristol, University of Leeds, Queen’s University Belfast, University of St. Andrews, and Elsevier, a publisher and provider of bibliometric data and systems.

The Snowball Metrics project is an institutional led, bottom-up initiative to create global standards in research metrics that allow comparative, institutional benchmarking covering a wide spectrum of research activities. Finally, the vision of Snowball Metrics includes an open and freely accessible platform with tight definition of metrics/key performance indicators (KPIs) so data source is not an issue.

The real benefit of Snowball Metrics (apart from the obvious attributes listed above) is that it allows one to choose from a large number of well-defined KPIs and build a custom “scorecard” of KPIs.

The types of metrics that are defined in Snowball Metrics include:

- Input metrics – e.g. number of funding applications
- Process metrics – e.g. research revenue/income volume, etc.
- Output metrics – e.g. Number of publications/citations, etc.

On the downside, even Snowball Metrics does not define every possible useful research metric and KPI. A person interested in research metrics is advised to review other metric systems including the STAR METRICS system in the US, the REF system in the UK, and the ERA system in Australia.

Having spoken to both Lisa Colledge (Elsevier) and John Green (chair of the original Snowball Metrics steering committee), two of the key leaders involved in the delivering the project, Snowball Metrics is clearly seen as a good start to solving the challenge of appropriate research metrics but key questions remain. How do we properly evaluate research carried out outside the traditional domains where research funding is translated into journal papers which are then cited by peers? Is citation by peers a reasonable proxy for creating real value for our tax-paying society? How do we evaluate direct impact on society? Many questions still remain and we need to continue the journey towards more evolved metrics. I am optimistic about the future of metrics, and Snowball Metrics has taken us a long ways forwards! **N**

For more information on Snowball Metrics visit <http://www.snowballmetrics.com>.



**Martin Kirk**, is Immediate past president of the Canadian Association of Research Administrators (CARA) and Director, Office of Research Services at the University of British Columbia, Canada. He can be reached at [martin.kirk@ors.ubc.ca](mailto:martin.kirk@ors.ubc.ca).

By Charlene Blevens

The NSF OIG released 4 new audit reports on incurred costs in March 2015, and HHS OIG issued an audit report of a California University in April 2015 as part of a series of reviews on claimed administrative and clerical costs.

## National Science Foundation Audit of Incurred Cost

The audit reports issued by NSF reviewed costs at Universities in California, Wisconsin, Florida, and Michigan. All of the audit reports contained a common finding related to salary costs for senior personnel that exceeded NSF's two-month maximum for salary allocation. This one finding represented 86% of the total questioned costs of \$5.4 M for the universities.

Both OIG's finding and the universities' responses referred to NSF guidance. The auditors and universities differed on both the guidance that was followed and how they interpreted the same guidance. The auditor's position was that the costs in question were due to a lack of effective monitoring caused by an over-reliance on re-budgeting authority. The universities disagreed with the finding, in some cases strongly, and stated that they relied on guidance from the policy office. They argued that as the recipients of federal funds, they must be able to rely on the oral and written interpretations provided by staff in the NSF Policy Office in order to manage awards responsibly. Earlier columns reported on the same finding in university audits in Illinois and Virginia.

Guidance provided as support in the audits opinions and responses included:

- PAAPPG (Proposal & Award Policy and Procedures Guide)
  - Part I – Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)
  - Part II – Award & Administration Guide (AAG)
- A January 27, 2015, NSF webinar that stated that under normal re-budgeting authority, an awardee can internally approve an increase of person-months devoted to the project, even if doing so results in salary support for senior personnel exceeding the two-month salary rule.
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Proposal Preparation and Award Administration

### Specific Language in the Referenced Guidance

*The NSF AAG, Chapter V, Section B.1.a. (ii) (a), states "NSF normally limits salary compensation for senior project personnel on awards made by the Foundation, to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year. This limit includes salary received from all NSF funded grants... any compensation for such personnel in excess of two months must be disclosed in the proposal budget, justified in the budget justification, and must be specifically approved by NSF in the award notice."*



PPAG Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) [http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/faqs11\\_1.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/faqs11_1.pdf)

**Does the "2 month" salary rule apply to all senior personnel or only to faculty on academic appointments?** While the salary policy contained in GPG Chapter II.C.2.g.(i) does apply to all senior personnel listed on the NSF budget, the policy does allow for flexibility to request more than two months of salary per year. ... If more than 2 months is approved by NSF, it will be included on the award budget. **Must awardees request prior NSF approval if making a change post-award to the amount originally budgeted for senior personnel salary?** NSF has not changed the terms and conditions or any of our post-award prior approval requirements. Therefore, under the normal re-budgeting authority, an awardee can internally approve an increase of salary after an award is made. No prior approval from NSF is necessary. The caveat is if the change would cause the objective or scope of the project to change...

One of the areas of interpretation where the auditors and universities differed was the applicability of the two month rule to research faculty where the researcher is solely dependent upon external funding sources and the compensation from an NSF grant does not replace the faculty member's organizational salary. They argued that this differs from the appointment for tenured and tenure track faculty where research is part of their assignment and funding from an NSF grant replaces portions of their organizational salary.

The universities' position was that the questioned costs related to employees who do not have university appointments in which compensation for research is part of their regular organizational salary as referenced in the NSF Policy for Senior Personnel and should not be constrained by the 2 month salary rule. NSF policy referenced PPAG II C.2. g. (i) (a) which states "NSF regards research as one of the normal functions of faculty members at institutions of higher education. Compensation for time normally spent on research within the term of appointment is deemed to be included within the faculty member's regular organizational salary...."

The auditor's position was that, "there is no NSF exception for research personnel". Per the GPG Exhibit II-7, senior personnel defined by NSF as PIs, Co-PIs, or faculty, are jointly responsible for the direction of the project. These individuals are the senior personnel responsible for the project and subject to the two-month salary limit.

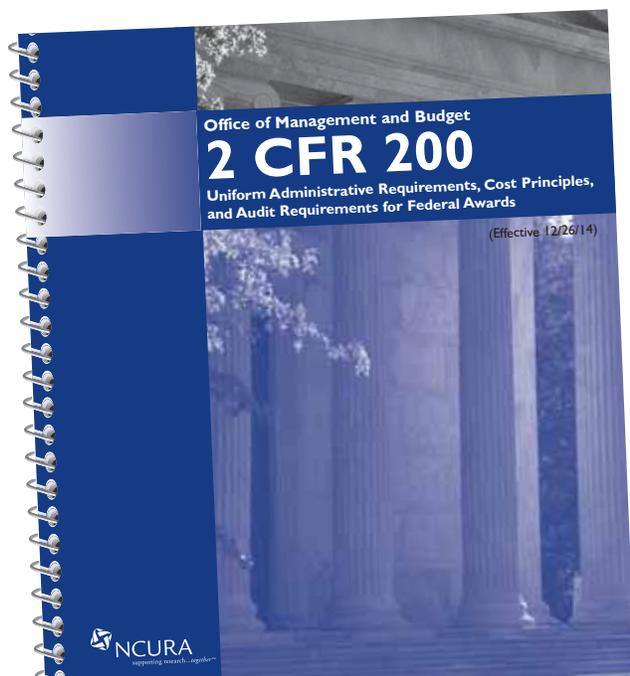
The second area where the universities and OIG differed on interpretation of policy guidance was re-budgeting authority. The universities contend that NSF's AAG does not require grantees to obtain prior approval for senior personnel to allocate more than two months' compensation to an award, as this requirement was not included in the approval matrix, and therefore

they are not required to request approval from NSF to re-budget funding in this situation. The universities based their interpretation on NSF's FAQ's on Proposal Preparation and Award Administration which states, NSF did not "change the terms and conditions or any of our post-award prior approval requirements..." Also referenced was NSF's incorporation of the FAQ information into the latest PAPPG that went into effect December 26, 2014.

In support of their position that this was a clarification of existing policy (not a policy change) they pointed to slide 14 of a presentation in a NSF PAPPG Webinar held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 which included a bullet point "clarification of two month's salary" and where Head of the Policy Office supplemented the bullet point by emphasizing and reiterating that NSF has made no policy change, and that there is no need to request prior approval to exceed two months' salary support, unless a change in objective or scope occurs as a result.

The universities further argued that the GPG instructions only apply in the event that a need for extra salary allocation is recognized at the time of the proposal; they noted that some of the questioned salary costs identified relate to situations in which a need for increased effort was recognized after

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award and therefore would not have required prior approval based on their interpretation of the GPG.

The NSF OIG's position was that grantees are fully responsible for the adherence to NSF policies. The auditors cited the NSF AAG Guide, Chapter V, Section B.1.a. (ii) (a), they further stated that the FAQ document is non-authoritative and contradicts the NSF requirement per the AAG which was in effect during the audit period. In one audit opinion, the auditors stated that the universities interpreted the November 2010 FAQ on Proposal Preparation and Award Administration to mean the two-month salary limit on senior personnel could be disregarded (for) post award. However, the FAQ made no mention of the ability to disregard or violate the NSF Award & Administrative Guide (AAG) and that re-budget authority does not apply. Furthermore, informal communication in a FAQ does not supersede the official policy per the AAG. In regard to the PAPPG that went into effect December 26, 2014, the auditors stated that, "this PAPPG is not a retroactive document, and, as a result, is not applicable to the audit period."

The NSF OIG position was that simply including information on budgeted salary for other sponsored projects within the "Current and Pending Support" document provided to NSF does not fulfill the NSF AAG's requirement that any compensation for senior personnel in excess of two months of their regular annual year salary must be disclosed in the proposal budget, justified in the budget support documentation, and specifically approved by NSF in the award notice. The OIG did state that they agree that the *Grantee Notifications to and Requests for Approval from the National Science Foundation* matrix included in NSF's AAG does not specifically require grantees to obtain approval before allocating more than two months of a senior personnel member's compensation to an award, however, the matrix also states, "This listing of Notifications and Requests for Approval is not intended to be all-inclusive." As this requirement was not specifically waived, the guidance in Chapter V, Section B.1.a (ii) (a) should have been followed. In addition, while the FAQ referenced does indicate that grantees are not required to obtain prior approval from NSF to exceed the two-month salary limit, the FAQ responses do not represent authoritative guidance and therefore do not overrule the Award and Administration Guide requirements.

Other questioned costs included travel expenses and services performed after award expiration, unsupportable or unallocable expenses; unreasonable equipment; student stipend advances; unallowable meals and associated services; unreasonable travel expenses; unsupportable and unallocable immigration fees; purchases before the award effective date; unreasonably allocated leave accrual payouts (methodology used was a lump-sum payment of all leave accumulated by an employee is charged to the funding source for the employee's final month of effort, regardless of when the leave was actually earned); inappropriately allocated equipment expenses; unreasonable consulting expenses; and unallowable relocation expenses.

Purchases of equipment questioned per the auditors either did not appear to benefit the award, did not appear necessary for the administration of the award, or where the purchase appeared to be general purpose computers not primarily or exclusively used in the actual conduct of the

proposed research. Equipment questioned included a MacBook Pro; a Lenovo ThinkPad Laptop that appeared to be a general purpose computer, not exclusively used on the award and purchase of an iPad, and accessories where the PI stated that he used the iPad over 90 percent for document storage and retrieval related to the research however, from the date the iPad was purchased, the PI's time was charged 100 percent to non-NSF awards.

## HHS OIG Audit of Clerical and Administrative

In the HHS audit of a California University, 142 sample transactions totaling \$580,278 were reviewed. Questioned costs for 17 transactions totaling \$56,375 (9.7% of total costs reviewed) were found not allowable.

### Costs for Temporary Employees Were Not Adequately Supported

Ten of the 17 questioned transactions related to timesheets for temporary employees. At the time of the audit, timesheets recorded only the total hours worked, not the hours worked on each project. The university acknowledged that the format of the timesheets used by temporary employees did not allow for entry of hours per each project. However, they argued that department review procedures and information gathered during the review confirmed the allocation percentages initially budgeted were appropriate to the federal awards and supported by the Principal Investigator (PI) or supervisor's first-hand knowledge of the temporary employee's activity. Subsequent to the audit the university developed an online time keeping system. The university also stated they planned to conduct an internal audit of Temporary Employment Services, timekeeping procedures and the online pay system developed as a result of the DHHS-OIG audit.

### A Capital Expenditure for Equipment Was Misclassified as Maintenance and Repairs

For one sample transaction, the university claimed excess F&A costs totaling \$19,505 because it misclassified a capital expenditure for equipment as a maintenance and repair cost. The university had charged the award \$35,789 for a maintenance and repair cost related to factory and site acceptance testing of special purpose equipment. The purpose of the testing was for the preparation of the equipment for use. The auditors found that the cost was not incurred for the necessary maintenance and repair of the equipment. Because the cost was classified as maintenance and repairs instead of as a capitalized expenditure, the university claimed excess F&A costs of \$19,505. The university concurred with the disallowance and agreed to refund the Federal Government \$19,505 of unallowable F&A costs.



**Charlene Blevens** has worked in the financial area in both the public and private sector in various capacities for more than 25 years with more than 13 years' experience at universities in Research. She is the author of the *Summary of University Audits, Settlements and Investigations* located on the *Cost Accounting Listserv* at [www.costaccounting.org](http://www.costaccounting.org). Charlene is a certified public accountant, certified research administrator, certified fraud examiner and holds an MBA from the University of Houston.

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In 2015, the average research administrator has stacks and stacks of paper, uncounted databases of information, and shared files that are bursting at the seams. This data was either system-generated, captured because it was mandated, or deemed important at the time. These are all valid reasons for it to exist, but once the data are collected, what can be done to make the data *support* the business? Beyond the initial need, unless the data is explored and organized to create benefit, the *metric* value remains locked away. By understanding what the data means, research administrators can begin to change and improve the research administration environment outside of a database. It is clear that as more and more data floods into our offices every day, research administrators cannot afford to ignore the data that drives the organization.

# DIVING *into* DATA

Finding Research Metrics

*By Catherine Breen, Govind Narasimhan and Thomas B. Spencer*



The attempt to explore research administrative data is not a new idea. Peer-reviewed articles show that data and metrics, often called research analytics, can support research administration if common pitfalls are avoided. In 1986, Baylor College of Medicine sought to use metrics to understand faculty and department activities—including research grant dollars—and by 1998 had created a “culture of data and accountability.”<sup>1</sup> Well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, institutions can use metrics to provide research administrators and all levels of leadership with valuable and actionable information.

This two-part article begins to explore how members of the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) understand the concept of metrics. Where these data and metrics can make a difference relies on the day-to-day understanding of why metrics are important, how to be aware of and avoid common pitfalls, and how to ensure that the institution is prepared to provide ongoing support for this importation function. These three topics allow the conversation to move away from “what are metrics?” to “how can metrics support us?”

### Why are Metrics Important?

Utilized correctly, research metrics are an important tool for research institutions, higher education, and the healthcare industry because they can measure an institution’s performance in obtaining and executing sponsored research funding. Metrics, or research analytics, also can help institutions formulate strategy and plan for the future. The main benefits of research analytics include: providing institutional leadership with actionable data to inform decision making and planning; demonstrating leading indicators of future trends in sponsored funding which, among other things, allows for better budget projections; and offering a comparative view across different units or with other institutions.

More specifically, the leadership of an institution may decide to provide more resources to a particular unit or department based on projected growth. Executives may decide to allocate space, personnel, and services differently based on research activities and the type of support needed. For example, if a department of cell biology asks a dean for more laboratory space, metrics are the tool that deans should use in making an informed decision. If an institution sees significant increases in proposal and award volume in one particular area, its leadership may wish to dig into the data to see where the growth stems from, and what kind of support will be needed. Another illustration: if a new public health initiative generates two dozen proposals for new funding for an international program, what is a reasonable expectation for award success? And based on that expectation, what kinds of plans should that school or program be making? Will administrative departments need expertise to handle foreign transactions and manage new international subcontracts? Will additional legal counsel be needed for the type of work that is being proposed? These questions can be anticipated with good data and analytics, and therefore an institution can systematically plan for the future rather than engage in last-minute scrambling.

From a financial perspective, knowing how research portfolios (and, as a related factor, indirect cost recovery) may grow or contract helps institutions plan for important events like hiring, building, and/or purchasing equipment. Metrics will also help an institution with analysis by discipline: should researchers and institutional leaders be spending more time and resources on areas with greater success rates for funding? Should they focus their attention on programs that they know to be of interest to specific sponsors or donors? Institutions know these things not only by analyzing and comparing internal funding environments and data but also by looking at publicly available data from funding agencies. Additionally, comparing metrics and rankings across institutions can provide institutional leadership and regulatory boards a better understanding of how peers measure success. No matter the data source or the expected outcomes, it is important to get started on the right foot to save time and maximize efficiency.

### How to Get Started & Avoiding Common Pitfalls

#### Determine the Question

Determining the question to be answered is similar to the process researchers go through when designing a scientific study. When deciding which data to pull together or when responding to a request for analysis, it is critically important to determine the actual question and articulate the need for the information. Investing time and effort in the beginning is necessary for the project to have a greater chance for success. To define what is required, start by asking questions about the data. What is the team looking for? Can the question be expressed clearly, both to the owners of the data as well as to those who will be receiving the metrics?

Understanding the definitions for reports and metrics can be a problem, and must be defined by all groups. When working with external groups, ensure explicit and common data definitions for the provider and receiver to ensure buy-in. For example, if a department is asking for an assessment of changes in research volume one year to the next, does the requesting team expect sponsored expenditures? Or revenue? Perhaps proposal volume? These questions drive the investigation.

In short, specificity is necessary to get accurate and useful answers. And if the answers do not provide the information that was originally needed, ask different questions, refine the questions, or broaden the scope. Providing report parameters and documenting data definitions will help ensure transparency and clarity when sharing or presenting data analysis and metrics to other parties; for example, from a five-year view to a ten-year view or from looking at one department to looking across multiple departments. Again, similar to research activities, setting data boundaries through a series of questions supports a successful report. If a requested report measures incoming awards for a given year, how should that report count the start date of a new award? For date ranges, the



questions may be: By the date of the award notice? Or project start date? Or perhaps the date that the award was set up in the institutional system?

### Identify the Data Sources, Set Boundaries and Collaborate

A common pitfall is using the wrong source of data. Data needed for reporting on research productivity, compliance, and other related issues often resides in multiple different offices across a research institution. After the defining questions have been clarified, it is important to determine where that data is housed. It is also important to discuss other issues such as application security and permissions, formats of the various systems, system interfaces, and data quality and stability.

To maximize both efficiency and success, identify the data and application owners. If communication with these key stakeholders is transparent and benefits the larger group, the collaboration will likely be much smoother, and if there are any questions, bring the group together to explain objectives. Offering to share the results or the findings is another way to encourage collaboration. Once key players are gathered, it is often helpful to reiterate the objectives and state the intended plans for distribution of the metrics so that there is a common understanding of the goals.

### Human & Technical Resources:

If the institution does not have existing expertise or human resources to generate reports on research or conduct analytics, a pitch to leadership highlighting why metrics are important can get the ball rolling. A few sample reports that show comparative data across departments or institutions, coupled with analysis of what the data mean, why it is important, and demonstrating that pitfalls have been avoided should help executives understand what a powerful tool metrics can be. The detail oriented skills needed for quality metrics are built-in to the core of research administration: organized, straightforward visual illustrations such as graphs and charts, are important to get points across. Too much information in one slide or on one page can confuse the reader.

If the institutional leadership is convinced that hiring a specialist for research analytics is necessary and useful, think about what kind of support is needed. If budgets are tight, consider using existing resources, including student workers or central IT to help. Initially, the department may wish to hire a reporting analyst who will take the lead on writing data queries and running reports to provide management with the type of information needed to answer questions and provide comparative analysis.

The types of skills needed for a reporting analyst will likely include experience in using relational databases, report/query building tools, and familiarity with some programming languages. Experience with data manipulation and analysis are often needed, using programming tools such as SQL or Python. However, if the institution uses a simpler framework, Access or Excel may suffice. If the institution is looking for more sophisticated analysis, knowledge of statistical modeling and a background in data science might be necessary. For any role involved in research analytics, prior experience in research administration and/or knowledge of sponsored

research is helpful for contextual understanding of the industry and better comprehension of the data.

### Conclusion

Part one of this article has explored why metrics are important, where metrics can go wrong, and the important concept of ongoing support. NCURA members have vast stores of data collected, so why not let the data help guide the work? Transforming data into useful metrics builds assessable knowledge that can be tapped for both operational and strategic use. Part two, currently slated for December of 2015, will continue to touch on topics related to exploring metrics that can benefit NCURA members. As this is a two-part article, feedback and real-world examples are greatly appreciated. **N**

### References

- 1 Garson Jr, Authur, et al. "The metrics process: Baylor's development of a" report card" for faculty and departments." *Academic Medicine* 74.8 (1999): 861-70.
- 2 Yaprak, Attila. "Measurement problems in cross-national consumer research: the state-of-the-art and future research directions." *Handbook of research in international marketing* (2003): 175-89.



**Catherine Breen**, is a seasoned higher-education administrator with expertise in managing large, complex research programs and in international operations and activities. Currently, she is Senior Director for the Office of Sponsored Programs at Harvard University, overseeing pre-award, research finance, compliance, training and reporting. Prior to coming to Harvard, Cathy worked as a project manager at the International Finance Corporation, the investment arm of the World Bank. Cathy can be reached at [catherine\\_breen@harvard.edu](mailto:catherine_breen@harvard.edu).



**Govind Narasimhan**, started his career in sponsored projects administration and financial research administration in 1985 at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and after 16 years in Dallas, Govind continued his research administration career at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston for 6 years before joining The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, TX where he currently serves as the Director of Research Finance. Govind has over 25 years of experience in Sponsored Projects Administration and Financial Research Administration in addition to having a Bachelor's in Finance and a Master's in Business Administration. He can be reached at [gnarasim@mdanderson.org](mailto:gnarasim@mdanderson.org).



**Thomas B. Spencer, M.B.A.**, is the Assistant Director for Operations for Academic Information Systems and the Research Software Core at UT Southwestern Medical Center. He is currently a Lecturer and Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences at UT Dallas focusing on Research Administration. Thomas joined NCURA in 2007, completed the ELP program in 2014 and has served in a number of regional roles including Chair of the Publications and Communications Committee. He can be reached [Thomas.Spencer@UTSouthwestern.edu](mailto:Thomas.Spencer@UTSouthwestern.edu).

# NCURA Returns to Qatar



*L-R: Dr. Moumen Hasnah, Associate VP for Academic Research; Dr. Hassan Al-Derham, Vice President for Research, Qatar University; Jilda Garton, Georgia Tech; Bob Andresen, University of Wisconsin - Madison; Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan; Professor Sheikha Abdulla Al-Misnad, President, Qatar University*

This past April, the NCURA Global Traveling Workshops returned to Doha, Qatar to present a new offering. The two and a half day workshop focused on special topics specifically requested by Qatar University: the roles of departmental research administrators; intellectual property and technology transfer; policy development; and critical current issues. The workshop was led by Robert Andresen, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Heather Offhaus, University of Michigan, and Jilda Garton, Georgia Institute of Technology, who shared their expertise with colleagues from Qatar University, neighboring universities, and the Qatar National Research Foundation.

“We were excited to have the opportunity to return to Qatar University and to be able to focus on topics of mutual interest. This year was a chance to build off of what we have learned and shared from previous years” stated Robert Andresen. “Even though there are some differences in our funding agencies and institutions, there are more similarities than you might expect. The interactions between faculty and administrators, between universities and industry, and the importance of policy and governance are issues faced by research administrators around the globe.”

When asked how the workshop content was put together, Andresen noted that each of the faculty took the lead on a major topic. “Heather concentrated on ‘Departmental Research Administration,’ Jilda focused on ‘Intellectual Property and Research Agreements’ and I worked on ‘Critical Issues’ which QU requested include material on policy development, risk assessment, internal controls, and audit.” said Andresen. “It turned out that the critical issues were all topics that are prevalent issues at my institution as well because of the implementation of the Uniform Guidance in the U.S.” He continued, “The workshop really pointed out to me again how much each of us can learn from each other, no matter how far our institutions are located from each other.”

*Universities interested in NCURA's global workshops can contact [NCURAglobal@ncura.edu](mailto:NCURAglobal@ncura.edu) for further information.*



# 2015 Awards

## 2015 Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award

**Pamela Whitlock**, Emeritus, Director, Office Of Sponsored Programs, University of North Carolina at Wilmington is the 2015 recipient of the NCURA Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award. This award recognizes a current or past NCURA member who has made 1) noteworthy contributions to NCURA, and 2) significant contributions to the profession of Research Administration. First awarded in 1994, this award is NCURA's highest honor.

Pam's contributions to NCURA are many, spanning her nearly 30 years of NCURA membership. She has been involved at both the regional and national levels, fulfilled the role of NCURA President in 2007, served on the Board of Directors, Chair of the Education Scholarship Fund Task Force, has been on FRA, PRA, and Annual Meeting program committees, served on the Professional Development Committee and was Chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee. She also served as a faculty member for the Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration traveling workshop. Pam was a member of the leadership team for the Leadership Development Institute and later the Executive Leadership Program. Pam spent many years on the Peer Review team. She has presented countless times at both national and regional meetings. Pam is widely known for her willingness to share her knowledge with her colleagues through mentoring. Pam received NCURA's Distinguished Service Award in 2009.

**Pamela Napier of Agnes Scott College says** *Those of us at PUIs consider Pam "the mother of the NCURA PUI track" because she always makes sure there are sessions offered for those of us in small offices and at non-research-intensive institutions. This significant support for research administrators at PUIs, in addition to all of the other ways she has contributed to the profession—including as NCURA President in 2007—makes her stand out as especially noteworthy to all of us who have learned from her throughout her career. It would be hard to find a single member of NCURA who has not learned something from Pam Whitlock.*

**Pam's colleague Mary Jean Carver West of University of North Carolina, Wilmington says** *I have known Pam for over 18 years. She has been my boss, my mentor and a consummate friend. She was always very supportive and encouraged me to get involved with NCURA soon after I started at UNCW. As Director of Sponsored Programs, she was always the first person in the office and the last person to leave—the epitome of "leading by example." Pam always made herself available to her staff.*



**Pamela Whitlock**

*Every mistake or question was a teaching moment. She always took the time to explain and discuss questions until she saw our "Aha moment."*

**NCURA Past President Jerry Fife, Emeritus, Vanderbilt University shares** *Pam served NCURA as President with energy and brought dignity to the office. Pam served as mentor to numerous young research administrators over the years and continues to do so even in her retirement. Her energy to serve her profession is impressive and I am truly honored to have served alongside her.*

**Bonnie Bruno of Elon University adds** *She was pivotal in inspiring me to develop my knowledge and expertise in order to pursue my goal of directing a research administration office. As I watched her oversee the sponsored programs office, volunteer and present at NCURA, and devote time to service activities outside of the field, I quickly learned the level of commitment necessary to become a well-rounded representative who provides invaluable contributions to the profession.*

**Julie Cole of Duke University shared** *Pam often says that NCURA is her "family." If this is so, then her family extends from coast to coast and across the seas as she has represented NCURA in all of these venues. Her resume speaks for itself in documenting all of her myriad of contributions. Instead of repeating these, I would like to tell a brief story that is perhaps representative of Pam's personal commitment to the organization and to its members. Several years ago, a group of colleagues were reminiscing about their collective years with NCURA. Many were retiring or preparing to retire. Pam organized, orchestrated, and with her famous "get-it-done" touch, brought together these longtime members of Region III in an impromptu cookout (of course, she cooked) and reunion at a Region III meeting. The stories were funny, nostalgic, and even a bit sad as we all realized that we may not see these friends again at future meetings. But, it was a night for family, and none of us fortunate enough to be there will ever forget.*

On receiving the award, Pam states, "I am honored to be recognized by my NCURA colleagues with the NCURA Outstanding Achievement Award in 2015. I was truly beyond words when I was notified. Thank you to my many mentors through the years and their unwavering support."

*Pamela Whitlock will receive the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration on Monday, August 3, 2015, at the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Keynote Address.*

# 2015 Awards



Marjorie Forster



Brenda Kavanaugh



Tom Wilson

## 2015 NCURA Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Awardees

This year the NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected three veteran NCURA members to receive the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes members who have made sustained and distinctive contributions to the organization.

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

### THE 2015 AWARD RECIPIENTS ARE:

**Marjorie Forster**, Emeritus Assistant Vice President for Research and Global Health Initiatives, University of Maryland Baltimore. Marjorie has been an active NCURA member for 40 years. Marjorie has served as Treasurer, *NCURA Magazine* contributing editor, has been on numerous committees and has made many presentations both nationally and regionally. In 2009, Marjorie received the Region II Distinguished Service Award. Marjorie is currently on the Peer Review team. As a recipient of this award, Marjorie states, "It is a great honor and privileged to be the recipient of the Julia Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award. When I first entered the field of research administration NCURA was my lifeline and provided me with the knowledge, skills, expertise and the confidence I needed to serve my faculty and institutions well. I knew I could always rely on all my NCURA colleagues and friends to unstintingly support me and provide answers to any nagging question or problem I encountered. Through the years I reached the point where I was in a position to 'give back' to an organization that had so generously supported me. It has always been professionally rewarding to be part of the NCURA team dedicated to providing the best training and professional development for its members."

**Brenda Kavanaugh**, Associate Director, Office of Research and Project Administration, University of Rochester. In her 20 years of membership, Brenda has served as the Chair for the Professional Development Committee, served as a co-chair for both the Annual Meeting and the Financial Research Administration conference, served on the Board of Directors, and was the Region II Treasurer. Brenda has been on numerous committees and has made many presentations at both national and regional meetings. She is also currently on the Peer Review team. Brenda shares, "I am both honored and humbled to receive such a distinguished award. Receiving any award that recognizes your accomplishments is humbling, but to know it is an award for which you were nominated by

colleagues who understand what you do and believe your contributions are sustained and distinctive ranks this award at an entirely different level. Add to that, the fact that I am receiving this award in honor of Julia Jacobsen, a founding member of NCURA who laid the groundwork for the NCURA of today and that I have the honor of receiving it alongside two colleagues that I have the utmost respect and admiration for and I am simply awestruck! Thank you NCURA for providing the opportunity for me to participate in amazing professional development activities to benefit Research Administrators across the globe."

**Tom Wilson**, Assistant Vice President/Senior Research Administrator, Rush University Medical Center. Tom has been an involved NCURA member for the last 30 years. Tom has served on the Board of Directors, as Vice Chair and then Chair of Region V, as both a member and Chair of the Professional Development Committee, as both an *NCURA Magazine* Contributing Editor and Magazine Co-Editor, has been a member of Annual Meeting, PRA and FRA program committees, has served on the Fundamentals Traveling Faculty team and will be serving on the Level II: Sponsored Project Administration Traveling Faculty team beginning in 2016. Tom is also currently on the Peer Review team and serves as a Co-Editor for NCURA's scholarly journal, *Research Management Review* (RMR). Tom has presented at both national and regional meetings on a variety of topics. In reaction to the award, Tom says, "My time in service to the NCURA community has been very rewarding. I am honored to have received this Distinguished Service Award from my peers in the research management profession."

*The Distinguished Service Award recipients will be recognized at the upcoming 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, August 3, 2015. Please join us in thanking them for their service and their contributions!*

# 2015 Awards

## 2015 Joseph F. Carrabino Award

The Joseph F. Carrabino Award, established in 2003 by the NCURA Board of Directors, is named after the late Joe Carrabino, NSF Grants Officer. This award recognizes a current or former Federal partner who has made a significant contribution to research administration, either by a single project, activity, or innovation, or by a lifetime of service. The NCURA Nominating and Leadership Development Committee selected **Gilbert Tran** as the recipient of the 2015 Joseph F. Carrabino Award.

Gil Tran is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the Office of Federal Financial Management, which is responsible for the financial management policy of the Federal Government. Gil has been heavily involved in the OMB's endeavor to streamline grants management, ultimately leading to the issuance of the Uniform Guidance. Gil has continued to work in the best interest of universities on the implementation of the Uniform Guidance. In addition, Gil has also served on NCURA's FRA program committee assisting with the Federal Track and has presented at NCURA conferences.

**Susie Sedwick from Attain shares** *This recognition is probably way overdue as Gil has always been willing to consider the perspective and concerns of research universities in the policy making process related to the cost principles. He has worked collaboratively and collegially with the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) membership to address policy issues related to cost management of federal awards. He has been a frequent and popular plenary speaker at the FDP meetings, always delivering the message with a sense of humor but has also been willing to address smaller groups within the FDP to work through specific concerns.*

**Gunta Lidars from University of Rochester states** *Gil has worked diligently to balance the concerns of all constituencies (e.g., universities, state and local government, etc.) in the development of policies and standards. In addition, Gil has dedicated much of his professional career to understanding the unique aspects of research institutions and in seeking to make improvements to the administration of research as it specifically*



**Gilbert Tran**

*affects colleges and universities...Despite a hectic job with numerous responsibilities, Gil has been very generous with his time to assist NCURA members. In addition to numerous presentations at national meetings, Gil has served as a federal representative on NCURA program committees. Gil was a pleasure to work with, and his insights were valuable to the program at large.*

**Jane Youngers, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio contributed** *In his tenure at the Office of Management and Budget, Gil has been involved with policies and standards that affect the entire federal awardee community. Time and time*

*again, we have been able to go to Gil with our questions and comments on various government policy issues and he has welcomed these with open arms...He is always at the ready to talk and listen not only privately but also in public forums such as NCURA, FDP, and COGR meetings and he communicates federal policies and decision making with style, grace and, oh, that sense of humor. Bestowing this award on Gil is past due. It is particularly fitting that we present it to him this year in light of the major overhaul of the guiding principles and requirements for federal agencies to pass down to awardees. This is a landmark document that will change sponsored projects administration for years to come. While Gil characterizes the document as "same same but different," it is the product of many years of development and his input is seen throughout.*

In his own words, Gil says, "It is truly an honor to receive this prestigious award, especially for just doing what I LOVE: Reducing the research administration burden while maintaining accountability for Federal dollars." Gil also shared his favorite quotes related to research grant administration, which include "Grants cannot be taken for granted" and "We Scare...because We Care" (from the movie Monsters, Inc.).

*As recipient of the 2015 Joseph F. Carrabino Award, Gil will be recognized at the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting during the luncheon on Monday, August 3, 2015.*

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# Forecasting for the Future:

## Using Quantitative Data to Understand Qualitative Results

By Johanna Zimmerman

Department research administrators (DRAs) often get stuck in data. Every day we respond to budget questions or financial problems that come via email, in person, and over the phone. We process numerous transactions: approving invoices, reviewing travel reimbursements, hiring personnel, and preparing a budget for a proposal that we found out about yesterday and that is due tomorrow. Working at this hectic pace, it's easy to get lost in the numbers. Although putting out fires is an inevitable part of our job, it is important to make time in our calendar and review each project to make sure it is on track. Although this type of detailed review takes time, reviewing the current financial data of a project and projecting costs on a regular basis can help to stop fires before they start.

### Using data NOW

For DRAs, data is usually quantitative. Everyday we are comparing the budget against actual expenses. Although reviewing numbers all day can make our head spin, reviewing quantitative data can help us better understand the qualitative results of a project. Analyzing the financial progress of the project can indicate whether or not the project is on track.

A good financial data reporting system can streamline research administration and make the job of a DRA easier. With a good financial report a DRA can more efficiently review and identify individual transactions, determine the available balance, forecast costs for the future, and standardize the fiscal monitoring of a project.

The cost is often the biggest obstacle that prevents an institution from creating a reporting system specific to grants. One way to overcome this obstacle is to customize an already existing program or reporting tool for grant purposes. By using a reporting tool in which the institution has already invested; you not only have an already existing platform to use, but also have the necessary IT support to maintain the data-reporting tool.

My institution used a pre-existing reporting system to create a grant specific financial report that dumps data into an excel workbook with various sheets (overall summary, monthly transactions, personnel, and costs other than personnel services). This report system communicates with the business system and updates daily, creating a specialized report that includes all the transactions of a project from its inception to the date that you ran the report, which allows the DRAs to review and compare the budgeted costs,

actual expenses, and available balance easily.

Regardless of the tool you use to get your financial data, when reviewing this data, I recommend that you follow these steps:

### **Step 1: Access and assess current data**

First, it is important to make sure that the data you are working with is current and correct. Too often we assume that the information in the business system is 100% accurate; however, keying errors happen. When running the report make sure that the information is up to date and review the most recent transactions (e.g. payroll, travel, invoice, etc.) to make sure that they look correct, appropriate, etc. At this time, it is a good idea to review the back up documentation (e.g. effort certification reports for payroll, invoices, and receipts) to make sure that the business system and report that you are using also matches the auditable documentation. Doing a cursory review for errors when running each report can save time by mitigating errors that can compound at the end of the project, which can lead to bigger audit risks.

### **Step 2: Review often**

Although it is impossible to follow every purchase made on a project, implementing a regular review process can help catch errors before the end of the project period and may save last minute cost transfers. Every office and DRA is different; I find that running monthly reports for my awards is helpful. It allows me to quickly review them for any anomalous spending or unexpected transactions. Even if I can't review the report in detail, having the data available for review is helpful if a PI calls or drops by with a question. I would recommend setting, at minimum, a 3-month reporting and review cycle.

### **Step 3: Consider Re-presentation**

Even though research administrators often create, access, and analyze reports, we need to make this information clear and accessible for our audience: the PI. A financial report that dumps data may simply look like a bunch of numbers for a busy PI. So, after collecting this raw data, it is important to present it in a way that will resonate with your investigators. You will have to analyze it to make sure that it fits with the current plan for spending on the project, and then present the information in a way that the PI will understand. This often means re-presenting the information using a spreadsheet that the PI can easily understand, which might entail inserting and manipulating the proposal budget into the reporting spreadsheet so that you can easily create a budgeted, incurred, and available balance column, highlighting the deviations from the budget.

Additionally, I recommend adding a column at the end for "Notes" that explains costs that are already encumbered, planned deviations that have already been charged to the grant, specific terms and conditions to remember, and, finally, that will help you plan the next step: projections for the future.

### **Forecast the FUTURE**

Reviewing past data can help to plan for the future. By analyzing the costs that are incurred, you can better forecast the types of costs that are needed in the future.

What to forecast? Here are some things to consider when forecasting costs on the grant: personnel (salary and fringe), outstanding invoices, travel advances (or upcoming conferences, meetings, etc.), supplies (average the amount of supplies used per month x the number of months), recurring costs (phone charges, parking, subject costs, etc.), equipment purchases, sub-awards, and indirect costs.

How far do you forecast? This is a good question: do you forecast for the next 3 months? 6 months? 1 year? The response often depends on your institution, the project, and where you are in the planning stage. I would recommend that you forecast at least 3 months into the future. However, if expenses for the next year are planned, then encumbering these costs on your report and removing them from the available balance may give a more realistic picture of the amount of funds that are available for unplanned expenses; ultimately, if reviewed and updated frequently, this approach can help against overspending.

Long-term and continuous forecasting can help the DRA and the PI determine if the project is on budget; thus, this financial, quantitative, data can help the project team assess the big picture and determine the qualitative progress of the project.

### **Assessing and Communicating the BIG PICTURE**

After reviewing the budget, current expenses, and planned projections, both you and the PI can assess the current state of the project. You can determine the following: are you on track (both financially and in the scope of work)? Do you have enough funds available in the budget to cover your projected expenses?

Creating a budget summary (i.e. budget report) that has all of the financial data and budgetary plans easily accessible allows both a detailed review to better plan the budget on a project and a quick review of available costs. This can be extremely helpful in processing everyday transactions and allowing the DRA to quickly

determine if the funds are available to cover an allowable expense.

It is also important to communicate the big picture to the PI. I send out quarterly budget summaries, which allow the PI to easily review the current data. I point out the costs that are forecasted, identify the available balance, and use this information to ask questions about the planning for the next stage in the project.

### **Re-evaluate, Revise, Re-visit**

Finally, once you have a reliable data reporting system and a good process for reviewing this data, it is important to re-review the report against each project at set intervals.

Additionally, be sure to re-evaluate the reporting schedule, forecasting timeframe, and the presentation of the data for each PI and project. You may need to adjust your reporting approach based on department—maybe one of your departments is more self-sufficient and prefers quarterly reports sent via email, while another department may need more guidance and thus requires monthly reports and a meeting to discuss the report, project status, etc. By being flexible, you can tailor the data and report so that it provides the most impact and the best outcome for each PI/project.

Assessing the financial data on a project is an ongoing job. Although it can be time intensive and mundane, regularly reviewing and analyzing this financial data allows you to identify problems, monitor spending, and determine the progress of the project. However, please remember that, although a good reporting tool, each shadow system is still only a tool – it does not take the place of auditable documentation or your institution's system of records. Always be sure to take the time and check the data you are using against the backup documents and tie the reporting tool data to this backup, adding clarity and transparency in preparation for an audit. By using the financial data that you collect now to forecast for the future, both you and the PI can better plan the costs of the project and ideally keep the project on track both financially and scientifically. <sup>N</sup>



**Johanna Zimmerman**, a Department Research Administrator at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, has a Master's and Bachelor's of Arts in English Literature and is a recent member to NCURA. Johanna's responsibilities at PSU include pre-award and post award activities including some financial duties. She can be reached at [johanna7@pdx.edu](mailto:johanna7@pdx.edu).

# Vietnam and U.S. Science and Technology Collaboration:

## *20 Years After Normalization*



*By Tran Ngoc Ca and Jesse J.K. Szeto*

Since U.S. President Bill Clinton announced the normalization of ties between the U.S. and Vietnam on July 11, 1995, scientific and research collaboration between the two countries has increased dramatically. Even before diplomatic normalization, science and technology cooperation between the two countries was reinitiated in the 1980s through the US Committee for Science Cooperation with Vietnam and Laos, which was headed by the late Judy Ladinsky, a professor from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. However, the level of collaboration has substantially increased in just the past 7 years: in 2008, there was a total of 5 U.S. federal grants and 2 sub-grants to Vietnamese organizations. In contrast, by 2014, those numbers had increased to 60 grants and 29 sub-grants. In all, from 2008-2015, there has been a total of 249 grants and 140 sub-grants to Vietnamese organizations, totaling \$115 million (see Chart 1). As Table 1 indicates, four federal agencies accounted for more than 95 percent of these grants and sub-grants: DHHS, USAID, Department of State, and Department of Defense. The predominance of health-related projects is even clearer in Table 2 which shows that 16 of the top 20 recipients of U.S. federal grants and sub-grants in Vietnam are to health-related organizations such as the Vietnam Administration for HIV/AIDS Control, the Ho Chi Minh City AIDS Committee, and the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology.

In addition, more than 16,000 students and scholars from Vietnam currently study in the U.S., and since 2000, the two countries have signed a Bilateral Agreement on Science & Technology Cooperation, paving the way for the dramatic increase in scientific collaboration and setting up the infrastructure to further deepen STI (Science, Technology, and Innovation) ties. One result of this has been a Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) that is held once every two years to bring together scientific and diplomatic stakeholders from both countries to focus on potential areas of collaboration as well as to report on the progress on current joint projects. In fact, the 8th JCM was held in Washington, DC, in 2013 and included working groups on the following topics:

- Biotechnology and agriculture
- Healthcare and medical
- STEM education and research exchange
- Conservation sciences
- Hydrology, meteorology, and storm forecasting
- Public, private, community partnerships to facilitate science and technology innovation

In addition to the formal working groups, a discussion group on space sciences and technology was also held. This year, which marks the 20th anniversary of diplomatic normalization between the two countries, Vietnam will host the 9th JCM in Ho Chi Minh City.

Among the key pillars for research and higher education collaboration between the U.S. and Vietnam is the Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF), which was created by the U.S. Congress in 2000 for the purpose of building a closer relationship between the two countries and helping Vietnam build excellence in science and technology through educational exchange. Funded at \$5 million annually until 2018, VEF supports 3 different exchange programs:

1. Fellowships for Vietnamese citizens pursuing graduate degrees in the U.S.
2. Visiting Scholar grants for Vietnamese citizens to receive post-doctoral training in the U.S.
3. U.S. Faculty Scholar grants for U.S. professors to teach at Vietnamese academic institutions.

More than a hundred U.S. universities have signed memoranda of understanding with VEF, including the largest U.S. research universities, and more than 30 Vietnamese universities, including the top universities in the country, are a part of the VEF alliance.

While no Vietnamese university is among the list of top 20 Vietnamese recipients of U.S. federal grants or sub-grants in Table 2, a growing number of Vietnamese universities have been quite successful at collaborating with U.S. universities and / or in applying directly for U.S. federal grants, including six universities that received more than \$100,000 in combined grants/sub-grants between 2008-2015 (see Table 3).

One example of the longest-standing and most robust collaborations has been a multi-faceted collaboration between the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM). Starting with a Master Affiliation Agreement in 2011, which paved the way to establishing the Molecular and Nanoarchitecture (MANAR) Research Center between the two universities and with the University of California, Berkeley, as a third partner, the collaboration has since expanded to include the Center for Global Mentoring (CGM) and the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center (JCCC)-VNU collaboration on cancer.

MANAR’s mission is to create world-class nanomaterials research capability at VNU-HCM and eventually in Vietnam as a whole through mentorship programs for young Vietnamese scientists to work with world-class nano-



materials research groups at UCLA and UC Berkeley. By 2012, this had resulted in a \$3.2 million MANAR Center at VNU-HCM that will support a PhD program in nanomaterials there, focusing on applying nanomaterials to energy and environmental uses, including natural gas purification, storage, and conversion and solar energy systems. The Center for Global Mentoring (CGM) focuses on training VNU-HCM biomedical students in advanced biology and chemistry through a new biomedical degree program that integrates a 2-year training period at a UCLA biomedical lab. In addition to their own training, the CGM program equips the students to provide further mentoring training after returning to Vietnam, thus ensuring the sustainability and expansion of high-level biomedical mentoring in Vietnamese universities.

The JCCC-VNU cancer collaboration is the newest and arguably most ambitious collaboration to date between UCLA and VNU-HCM. Cancer levels and morbidity rates in Vietnam are quite high (73% death rate), and as a result, VNU has developed strengths in certain types of cancer (liver, cervical, stomach) as well as research in cancer stem cells and immune therapy. JCCC’s strengths are in translational science, cancer prevention and screening, and cancer therapy. Beginning with a comprehensive approach for liver cancer and cervical cancer, the collaboration will be a model for establishing biomedical research and training, will establish comprehensive cancer research and therapy, and will contribute to a better understanding of cancer prevention for the Asian American population in the U.S. The long-term goals will be to expand cancer research collaboration to other Southeast Asian countries, to establish a Nanocancer Asia-Pacific Network (including cancer research centers in Vietnam, the U.S., China, Japan, and Korea), and to pursue virus

Table 1: U.S. Federal Grants / Subgrants to Vietnamese Universities (2008-2015)

U.S. Federal Agencies	Total Grant/Subgrant Amounts	No. of Grants/Subgrants
Department of Health and Human Services	\$92,754,942	140
U.S. Agency for International Development	\$12,780,118	92
Department of State	\$5,532,768	102
Department of Defense	\$3,070,887	42
Department of the Interior	\$476,702	10
Department of Agriculture	\$365,550	2
Environmental Protection Agency	\$150,000	1
Grand Total	\$115,130,967	389

infection in cancer as a promising avenue in cancer research.

As Vietnam's cancer research capabilities have expanded, its research institutes and universities are successfully pursuing additional partnerships with U.S. cancer institutes. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC), consistently the top-ranked cancer center in the U.S., has agreed in principle to collaborate with the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology, VNU-HCM, and the Ministry of Health (National Hospital for Cancer) in order to help develop national oncology action plans while also disseminating best practices through its cancer cell signaling course to provide Vietnamese scientists with the latest advances in cancer treatment, research, and prevention. Though in its early stages, the partnership will eventually lead to the creation of a sister institute to MDACC in Vietnam to promote cancer prevention and education, and to improve cancer treatment, diagnosis, and research in Vietnam.

Another major collaboration between the U.S. and Vietnam is the Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP), which was established in 2010 through a partnership of Arizona State University, Intel Corporation, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Seeded by the three original partners at \$5 million, the project has since expanded to \$40 million through additional partners such as Siemens, National Instruments, and Cadence. The purpose of the program is to modernize the top engineering and technical vocational universities in Vietnam through developing experienced university leadership, constructing innovative and effective curriculum, and promoting university engagement. Through faculty workshops, offered at Arizona State University and abroad, HEEAP is enhancing traditional theory-based engineering and technical vocational programs by advocating the addition of applied and hands-on instructional approaches. The results

Chart 1: U.S. Federal Grants & Subgrants to Vietnam



will be work-ready Vietnamese engineering graduates who possess the applied and technical communication skills required to excel in multinational corporations.

The above is just a sampling of the types of cooperation that have flourished in the fields of health and engineering. In fact, Vietnamese and U.S. research collaboration has expanded into a number of other fields, too, such as agriculture, environmental and conservation sciences, and marine sciences. As an example, the Agriculture Genetics Institute (AGI), under Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, developed a

Table 2: Top 20 Recipients of U.S. Federal Grants / Subgrants in Vietnam (2008-2015)

Vietnamese Organizations	Total Grant/Subgrant Amounts	Total No. of Grants/Subgrants
Vietnam Administration for HIV/AIDS Control	\$49,139,808	7
Ho Chi Minh City AIDS Committee	\$21,119,749	5
Natl Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology	\$5,694,072	24
Hanoi School of Public Health	\$2,443,570	7
Vietnam National Lung Hospital	\$1,782,950	16
Vietnam Department of Animal Health	\$1,763,519	7
Pasteur Institute of Ho Chi Minh	\$1,656,995	3
Peace Trees Vietnam	\$1,523,719	7
Center for Community Health Research and Development	\$1,370,000	3
Pacific Scientific and Technical Joint Stock	\$1,335,160	1
Ministry Of Labor/Invalids/Social Affairs	\$1,321,025	7
Ho Chi Minh PAC	\$1,169,315	3
Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry	\$1,050,000	4
Institute for Preventative Medicine	\$856,458	5
Hanoi Center for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control	\$774,032	4
Dien Bien Provincial AIDS Center	\$768,796	5
Hue Monuments Conservation Centre	\$729,084	2
Pasteur Institute	\$725,000	2
Quang Ninh Provincial AIDS Center	\$693,608	6
Ministry Of Health, Vietnam	\$690,000	2

**Table 3: U.S. Federal Grants / Subgrants to Vietnamese Universities (2008-2015)**

Vietnamese Universities	Total Grant/ Subgrant Amounts	No. of Grants/Subgrants
Hanoi Medical University	\$660,838	6
University of Science Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City	\$421,426	10
University of Medicine and Pharmacy	\$172,118	2
Vietnam National University	\$160,380	10
Tan Tao University	\$120,000	2
International University of Vietnam National	\$115,000	6
University of Economics and Law-Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City	\$86,248	2
Thai Nguyen University Learning Resource Center	\$59,990	1
Vietnam National University, School of Education	\$42,568	1
Tay Bac University	\$29,890	1
Vinh University	\$27,969	1
Hanoi University of Science and Technology	\$10,000	1
Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology	<\$10,000	1
Hong Duc University	<\$10,000	1
Ton Duc Thang University	<\$10,000	2
Can Tho University	<\$10,000	1
Ho Chi Minh City University of Pedagogy	<\$10,000	1
Vietnamese Language Center - Hanoi University	<\$10,000	1
Quang Nam University	<\$10,000	1
Nha Trang University	<\$10,000	1
Hoa Sen University	<\$10,000	2
Binh Duong University	<\$10,000	1
Thai Nguyen University	<\$10,000	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,938,698</b>	<b>56</b>

range of joint research labs and agreements with U.S. partners such as the Danforth Center and the University of Missouri.

Overall, it is apparent that the 20 years of normalization have yielded a number of important scientific collaborations that will benefit both the U.S. and Vietnam and their respective populations. It is also clear that while diplomatic normalization is an essential building block to scientific partnerships, successful collaborations are predicated on trust, the availability of funding, and dedicated scientists and research administrators in both countries who were willing to believe in the blossoming of science diplomacy in the wake of normal diplomacy and were willing to wade through the regulatory changes and establish new contract terms and agreements that were acceptable to the pioneering collaborators. While every bilateral relationship has its own idiosyncrasies, it is possible to ascertain some patterns and much cause for hope for the eventual establishment and expansion of U.S. research collaboration with researchers in Myanmar, Cuba, and perhaps someday Iran and North Korea. **N**

**Additional Resources:**

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**Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP):**  
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**Jesse J.K. Szeto** is the Senior Manager for Global Operations at the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA), which serves as the Horizon 2020 National Contact Point for Legal and Financial Affairs for the U.S. He has been a university administrator in both the University of Wisconsin and the University of California, and he has also managed economic and social development projects for the State of California, the United Nations, and the Swedish government. He also currently serves as U.S. Advisor to Sri Lanka-based Verité Research. He received his Master's degree in International Development from the International University of Japan and his Bachelor's degree in East Asian Studies from Harvard University. He can be reached at [szeto@ncura.edu](mailto:szeto@ncura.edu).

# METRICS

By Ronda Britt and Michael T. Gibbons

Research universities continually face challenges in supporting high-quality research environments. They need to retain and recruit the best researchers by providing the best resources possible, and they must do this in an environment of increasing competition for funding. Many university administrators view their institution's financial constraints within the context of their institutional peers, whether they're regional peers, national peers or aspirational peers. This enables them to assign resources to areas where they can best compete. The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES), which is a Federal statistical agency that is part of the National Science Foundation (NSF), provides several data sets that can help administrators understand university R&D trends.

NCSES provides data on academic research space, equipment, expenditures and personnel. These metrics can aid administrative researchers with benchmarking and other analytic studies. Data produced from the biennial Survey of Science and Engineering Research Facilities include:

- Net assignable square feet (NASF) of research space by S&E field, including space for clinical trials and medical schools;
- Condition of research space by S&E field;
- Sources of project funding for new construction and repairs and renovations;
- Amount of research space and costs for new construction projects (recent, planned and deferred);
- Costs for repairs and renovations of research space (recent, planned and deferred).

All data from this survey are available at the institution level with the exception of the condition of research space. Those data are confidential and only available in aggregate form.

The research facilities data can be very useful on their own, but they provide added value when combined with data from NCSES's annual Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey. The HERD data include metrics such as

- R&D expenditures by funding source (federal, state/local, business, non-profit, institutional funds, other) and by federal agency;
- Expenditures for basic research, applied research, and development;
- R&D expenditures in S&E and non-S&E fields;
- Expenditures for capitalized R&D equipment in S&E and non-S&E fields;
- Number of PIs and other personnel supported by funded expenditures. Personnel data are not provided by academic field.

Data are available in multiple formats. NCSES's Integrated Science and Engineering Resources Data System (WebCASPAR) provides access to data from the surveys noted here, as well as nine other surveys managed by NCSES or the National Center for Education Statistics (see <https://ncesdata.nsf.gov/webcaspar>). Users can select variables of interest to create their own reports for download in SAS, Excel, or CSV formats. The database provides variables that allow users to identify peers by attributes such as institutional control (public/private), presence of a medical school, highest degree offered, or geographic location.

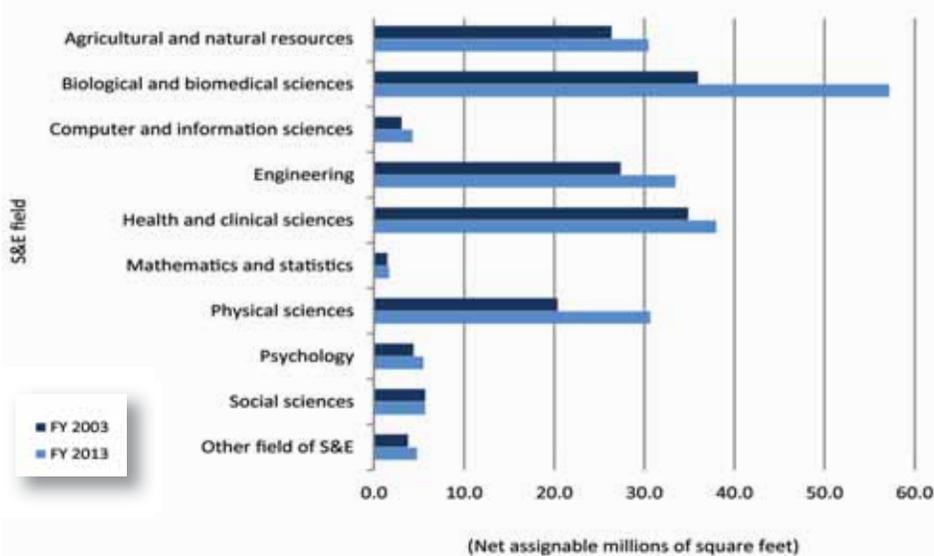
NCSES provides detailed statistical tables for all surveys including the Facilities and HERD surveys at [www.nsf.gov/statistics/surveys.cfm](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/surveys.cfm). These include tables with national totals and trends, as well as individual institution data and rankings. NCSES also produces InfoBriefs, which are summary analytical reports that accompany each survey's data release and focus on the key trends found within the latest data.

A useful Facilities Survey metric is the change in the amount of research space. Total research space at U.S. universities and colleges increased 30% from 2003 to 2013. Of the ten S&E fields tracked, space devoted to the biological and biomedical sciences grew most rapidly, increasing 59% between 2003 and 2013 (figure 1). Research space in all other S&E fields combined increased 21% over the ten year period. More recently, total research space grew by 4.7% between 2011 and 2013.

Research-performing universities have added less research space through new construction during each successive biennial period since 2002-03, with the exception of 2008-09 when state and local funding for capital projects was at the highest point since FY's 1986-87. The percentage of new space

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Fig. 1. S&E Research Space at Academic Institutions, by field:FYs 2003 and 2013



constructed versus what was planned has consistently increased over the past decade. For example, the amount of new research space construction started in FYs 2012-13 (6.7 million NASF) was 80% of the total 8.4 million NASF initially planned for construction two years earlier. By comparison, new research space construction begun in FYs 2004-05 was 53% of that planned for in FYs 2002-03. When sorted by field and by peer group, these data can offer considerable insights to university research administrators.

The HERD data complements the Facilities data with trend information on research expenditures by field. Academic institutions reported 211.8 million NASF in FY 2013 and \$63.4 billion dollars in science and engineering research expenditures. That's an average of about \$301 of

research performed for each square foot of available research space. As expected, this ratio varies across the S&E fields.

The ratio of research expenditures to NASF is just one component of the equation. In FYs 2012-13, construction costs for new research space averaged \$816 per square foot. Space in the physical sciences cost the most to construct at \$934 per square foot. NASF in the social sciences was the least expensive to construct at \$514 per square foot.

Similar data are available for research equipment expenditures. Universities purchased \$2.2 billion of capitalized R&D equipment in FY 2013 as part of their R&D expenditures. On average, the ratio of new equipment purchases to NASF was \$10.43. Research in the computer sciences

had the highest new investment in equipment per square foot of available space at \$63.18 in FY 2013. Equipment purchases to aid research in the social sciences equaled \$2.11 per NASF, which was the lowest for all major fields.

The Facilities Survey also collects data on completion costs for repairs and renovations by S&E field. While these costs aren't collected by square foot, the survey tracks costs for the most recent two years as well as those planned for the upcoming two years and any deferred projects. This can help researchers track where their peers are heading.

These are just a few examples of the type of academic R&D-related data available to the public. WebCASPAR and the detailed tables provide the flexibility to explore the most relevant data for your institution. Which institutions employ the most post-docs on research or have the highest ratio of R&D expenditures per PI? How much lab space per PI do your peers have? These questions are answerable, and the answers might help you find institutions that serve as good models for expanding your research capabilities. [N](#)



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# RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION IN JAPAN



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ASEAN Center  
Opening Ceremony  
and Commemorative  
Symposium  
held in Bangkok  
on 28 June, 2014.

## KURA URAs Frontline: Japanese URA's Experience with ASEAN

*By Ayako Fujieda and Yoshimi Osawa*

Japanese universities face a range of challenges associated with internationalization in the world of higher education. The Japanese government has launched a number of programs to help universities promote cooperation in international research and education, and to help them pursue more globalized education systems. Additionally, universities have established and implemented individual strategies for internationalization. This has led Japanese universities to establish more than 400 overseas offices around the world, to boost Japanese universities' presence, and to develop close connections with overseas universities.

The Kyoto University Research Administration office (KURA) has been engaged in Kyoto University's internationalization activities, and has been actively involved in establishing and managing Kyoto University's representative overseas centers, including the Kyoto University ASEAN Center, which opened in Bangkok, Thailand in June 2014. Three University Research Administrators (URAs) specialize in supporting various research activities in the ASEAN region. Each URA resides in

Bangkok to work with the Center for around 3–4 months a year on a rotational basis. Although the Center is located in central Bangkok, it administrates the entire ASEAN region, and we travel to various parts of the region, from Yangon, Myanmar, to Jakarta, Indonesia (the location of the ASEAN headquarters and secretariat) in order to facilitate communication between Kyoto University and universities and research institutes in ASEAN.

This article introduces URAs' experiences in exploring potential for overseas centers.

### **Kyoto University in ASEAN**

Historically, the ASEAN region has been pivotal in promoting cultural exchange between the East and West. Southeast Asian countries have accumulated considerable knowledge in research and education, and in promoting mutual prosperity and coexistence within diverse communities. There are currently around 600 million people living in the ASEAN region—a population greater than that of the EU—and the region has

become a major political and economic center. The rise of research and education networks in the region will undoubtedly increasingly promote regional cohesion and global competitiveness.

Kyoto University has participated in research and education in the ASEAN region since the early twentieth century. In 1963, the University established the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), which has become a base not only for Japanese researchers, but also for researchers from around the world who are interested in researching Southeast Asia. CSEAS established a liaison office in Bangkok in 1964, followed by a Jakarta liaison office in 1970; both became bases for on-site study, and for exchange between researchers and students from Southeast Asian countries. From its roots in area studies, Kyoto University has expanded its network and deepened its academic partnerships in the ASEAN region. Today, Kyoto University has 29 overseas offices and centers in eight ASEAN countries (Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia).

The 29 offices and centers' functions vary, from equatorial atmosphere radar for atmospheric observation in West Sumatra, Indonesia, to field stations as bases for field research. Environmental science, anthropology, area studies, energy science, ecological research, biological conservation, agriculture, and disaster mitigation are some of the areas our researchers are addressing in the ASEAN region. Although a researcher studying labor migration and another studying sustainable energy may be working in the same country, they may not know of each other, as they are members of different disciplines and faculties.

#### Establishment of Kyoto University ASEAN Center

Kyoto University formulated an international strategy known as named “2x by 2020,” which is the slogan of the new international strategy by means of which Kyoto University aims to double its international indices in research, education, and international service by 2020. The Kyoto University ASEAN Center was established as part of this strategy to provide support for the promotion of research, education, and international collaboration in the ASEAN region by integrating various existing research and educational activities and networks in the region, and by expanding collaboration with ASEAN universities and research institutions.

Although our university has considerable experience in the ASEAN region, we must admit that the university had not previously made a collective effort as a whole. In order for the Kyoto University ASEAN Center to become a real hub, we first needed to connect the Center to Kyoto University's researchers and faculties that were engaged in research and educational activities in the region. The Center and URAs' director visited the dean or representative of each faculty one by one to introduce the Center, and to learn about ongoing activities and existing challenges. Face-to-face discussion not only provided opportunities to comprehensively grasp the current



Dr. Osawa introducing Kyoto University ASEAN Center to the students and faculty members at Mahasarakham University in Thailand.

situation, but also became essential to mobilizing internal cooperation.

The next challenge was to establish a system for regularly sharing ideas and information between the Kyoto University ASEAN Center and researchers, and among researchers across faculties, and a mechanism to incorporate them into the university's international strategies. Representatives from seventeen faculties were invited to establish the Kyoto University ASEAN Network Committee, which meets regularly about every two–three months to review activities, share information, and explore opportunities for new collaboration. The Center in Bangkok and the ASEAN Network Committee have thus formed the Kyoto University ASEAN Platform.

#### Exploring new horizons in collaboration with ASEAN universities

After establishing our internal cooperative framework, we began exploring new horizons in our collaboration with ASEAN universities and institutions. First, in March 2015 we organized the “Kyoto-ASEAN Forum 2015 Kickoff Meeting,” in which members of the ASEAN Network Committee and representatives of academic institutions and governmental agencies in ASEAN countries met to identify current challenges and potential for collaboration in research, human capacity development, and social responsibility and contribution.

Although the diversity of the ASEAN countries must be considered, it became clear in this meeting that we all face common challenges regarding sustainable collaboration, due to the effects of factors such as lack of funding and changing policy makers. To make collaboration more effective and enduring, we concluded that we must upgrade our collaboration to an institutional level, mobilize our resources to develop a promising Kyoto-ASEAN collaboration strategy, and advocate it in academic policy dialogue.

#### At a glance: Activities in Myanmar

As mentioned above, it is one of our important missions to act as a hub for our researchers. This year, Kyoto University will sign a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the University of Yangon, Myanmar. Several Kyoto researchers have been involved in research and education in Myanmar.

To give a few examples, Professor Ari Ide-Ektessabi, who leads the Advanced Imaging Technology Laboratory at the Kyoto Graduate School of Engineering, has been involved in human resource development projects addressing the digitalization, documentation, and conservation of cultural heritage in Myanmar. Associate Professor Yoshihiro Nakanishi (Center for Southeast Asian Studies) authored “Strong Soldiers, Failed Revolution: The State and Military in Burma, 1962–88,” whose research addresses Myanmar politics. Professor Mamoru Kanzaki, of the Kyoto Graduate School of Agriculture, has been researching biodiversity and sustainable tropical



KURA staffs at the ASEAN Center welcoming the delegates from Mahidol University and King Monkut's University of Technology Thonburi from Thailand on 2 March, 2015.

forestry in central Myanmar. We cannot introduce all the Kyoto University researchers engaged with Myanmar in this article, for lack of space.

The Center and the URAs provide opportunities for these researchers to become acquainted each other, exchange information, and possibly cooperate. Though researchers' fields may differ, research interests and issues in a region or country often overlap. Signing a MoU between Yangon and Kyoto will enrich existing collaboration, and facilitate various types of exchange between researchers from both universities. These researchers were brought together and coordinated by the Center's URAs, and are exchanging opinions and ideas about possible collaboration through Yangon University and beyond. It is no exaggeration to say that the signing of the MoU mentioned above could not have been organized without the establishment of the Center and the work of the URAs.

### The state of international collaborative research

The Japanese government has promoted the internationalization of Japanese universities that encourage international collaborative research. Spending time in overseas centers and supporting the activities of Kyoto University's researchers is a practical and efficient way to understand researchers' support needs. We address challenges with our researchers, learn how international research collaboration may be initiated, and consider with researchers how collaboration may be sustained. Through this on-site experience, we directly observe the process of the promotion of international collaborative research.

Working in the Center provides URAs with more opportunities to meet our researchers than are available in the Kyoto office; we believe this is essential to properly supporting researchers (see previous report by Sugihara in the March/April issue of NCURA magazine). A surprising number of our researchers travel to, and spend time in, the ASEAN region for various reasons (e.g., conducting research, establishing joint laboratories, attending meetings and symposiums, and organizing seminars and workshops). As mentioned above, we expect the new ASEAN office to become a significant regional hub, not only for Kyoto University researchers, but also for anybody with interest in the ASEAN region. Moreover, we expect interactions among people from all over the world to occur in this office. By establishing sustainable relationships with our ASEAN partners in order to work closely with our researchers, we suggest there is something important beyond measurable outcomes (e.g., publications and funding) in international collaborative research. We are fortunate as URAs to work in exciting and challenging environments where we can directly support our researchers to address global challenges to benefit international collaboration. For more information about Kyoto University ASEAN Center, please visit <http://www.oc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/overseas-centers/asean/en/> and our Facebook page. **N**



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If you have a habit of starting projects and not finishing them, ask yourself: Why that is the case? Well, you are not alone. It appears to be an ongoing problem for most of us. We tend to come up with great ideas, get started on them, and then run out of steam before they are completed. What can you do? Here are a few things to consider.

### Become Aware of the Pattern

Recall the last two projects that you worked on. Take a moment to write down why you began the projects and why you stopped. See if you can find any commonalities.

### Know Yourself and Try Being Realistic

Stop setting goals that are impossible for you to achieve. Don't set yourself up to fail by raising the bar too high. Instead set mini timelines that are reachable. This will add some structure to your project, and keep you motivated to continue working.

### Quit Getting Stuck on the Big Picture

"Procrastinators don't miss the forest for the trees – they miss the trees for the forest". They can see the big picture, but just have trouble completing the work. Deconstructing the tasks to make them more manageable is what causes paralyzation.

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**Tolise Miles** is a Training Development Specialist at University of Colorado-Boulder.



# A P R O A C T I V E A P P R O A C H

## TO POST AWARD ADMINISTRATION



By Kathy Kuhns and Steve Koogler

The Office of Research & Commercialization (ORC) at the University of Central Florida (UCF) serves UCF scholars as the official liaison between UCF and funding sources, and by helping faculty work through the pre and post award management process. The ORC consists of departments including Financial Compliance, Contracts & Grants, Research Information Systems, Ethics & Compliance, and Technology Transfer.

The Financial Compliance office (FC) is an integral part of post-award administration of sponsored projects assisting the Principal Investigator (PI) and department administrator during the closeout process of all awards. The FC provides each college/department administrator a compliance point of contact (FC coordinator), who monitors and tracks specific performance and audit based data such as:

- ✓ ePAFs (electronic personnel action form)
- ✓ Cost Transfers
- ✓ Effort Certification
- ✓ Cost Share Monitoring
- ✓ Expenditure Review

### Identifying Expenditure Data

A major financial compliance burden at closeout is identifying and removing unallowable costs,

which can lead to residual balances that can no longer be utilized towards the project. To alleviate this problem, FC decided to review high risk and highly questionable expenditures during the life of the project. This expenditure review process provides financial data in a timely manner so project funds are utilized appropriately during the remainder of a sponsored project.

Each month, ORC's database administrator runs a query extracting unique expenditure account codes posted on sponsored projects in the previous month. These specific account codes were provided by internal audit and include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Office Supplies
- ✓ Equipment Rental
- ✓ Rental of Facilities
- ✓ Food

Once the query is complete, FC separates the data into each FC coordinators' designated college because the coordinator is familiar with their college's unique spending habits. For example, the FC coordinator for College of Education may understand binders (traditionally deemed office supplies) as an allowable cost on teacher training project whereas the FC coordinator for College of Engineering might probe further to determine if the expense is allowable.

Streamlining this data process by including a unique set of account codes and separating the data by FC coordinator/college, allows FC to analyze expenditures that pose the most auditable risk for UCF in a timely manner.

### Analyzing the Data

The query provides data including the PI, department, expense, account code, expense amount, and the date purchased. Using knowledge from the OMB Circulars, Uniform Guidance, agreement terms, and internal procedures, FC begins analyzing the expenditure data for allowability. The FC coordinator is also able to use their knowledge of the PI, project, and expense type to assist in performing this analysis.

When an unallowable expense is identified, the department administrator must remove it and the remaining funds can be utilized towards other allowable expenses. FC also analyzes the expenditure for account code accuracy: is the correct account code being used? For example, the department administrator used the account code for Scientific Equipment when Research Supplies was the appropriate account code to use for the expenditure.

This communication with the department administrator and PI is documented and uploaded into a repository as part of the audit records for the project.

By reviewing expenditures monthly, FC is able to track the misuse of account codes, improper allocation of charges, and unallowable expenses to determine if patterns exist specific to project personnel, departments, colleges, or university wide. When FC starts to see a pattern, immediate and specific training can be completed.

### Benefits/Results

Analyzing expenditure data during the life of a project has many benefits, including **reducing:**

- ✓ Necessity and amount of cost transfers requested more than 90 days after an expenditure posts to a project
- ✓ Potential incorrect billing of unallowable or unallocable expenses
- ✓ Financial cleanup at project closeout

While also, **improving:**

- ✓ Outreach to department administrators/PIs
- ✓ Consistent treatment of costs
- ✓ Internal policies and procedures

Since the expenditure review process began, FC has seen a significant reduction in cost transfers processed more than 90 days after an expenditure posts. The remainder of these cost transfers are primarily moving costs off of sponsored projects. By running a monthly expenditure query, FC communicates with the Principal Investigator (PI) and/or department administrators within 30 days of a questionable expense. As a result, they are more likely to remember what was purchased and the reason or justification for the purchase. This significantly reduces the risk and number of cost transfers requested more than 90 days after an expenditure and the potential for unallowable or unallocable costs remaining as an expenditure at project end. The data shows a decrease in cost transfers submitted over 90 days but also a significant increase in cost transfers submitted under 90 days. Although there is an increase in cost transfers, the timeliness of removing unallowable costs is improving. This timeliness leads to more accurate invoicing and reduces the time spent reviewing expenditures at project completion.

This review process also gives FC the opportunity to reach out to provide guidance to department administrators about identifying these types of unallowable costs in the future. FC provides training on using the ORC eRA system to review expenditures and consider:

- ✓ How do I know if this cost is allowable?
- ✓ How do I find the project scope of work and budget?
- ✓ When should I ask for a justification for a purchase?

This, in turn, empowers the department administrators to analyze and question any expense prior to purchasing. Recently, FC has noticed that department administrators are reaching out to seek guidance for allowability prior to purchase. This continuous communication also builds rapport between the central research office and department administrators.

FC provides monthly deliverables to ORC leadership including expenditure review data. Quantifying the data provides vital information for making business decisions such as:

- ✓ Staffing needs
- ✓ Distribution of workload
- ✓ Annual performance measures
- ✓ Knowledge gaps in departments
- ✓ Internal communication of policies and procedures
- ✓ Consistent process application and treatment of costs

### Dissemination

As part of the on-going use and review of data, ORC hosts a monthly meeting to disseminate important information regarding sponsored research. This meeting includes personnel from the sponsored research office, colleges/departments, Human Resources, Internal Audit, and the Finance and Accounting (F&A) department. At these meetings, ORC is able to communicate any data trends, policy changes, audit updates, etc. The expenditure review data is communicated as part of FC's best practices discussion. Meeting attendees are able to make any announcements, ask any questions, and discuss any concerns relating to sponsored research. This monthly meeting provides the opportunity for the UCF research community to share data and improve research administration.

### Future Considerations

The expenditure review process has been in place for over a year. Now that FC has gathered data and trends on project expenditures, FC plans to look at:

- ✓ Reducing or eliminating cost transfers under 90 days by working with department administrators allocating expenditures properly before they are incurred.

- ✓ Methods to streamline data review process by
  - reducing the review process of certain expenditures (lower volume or risk) to a longer time frame, i.e. bi-monthly instead of monthly
  - Implementing minimum thresholds for some expenditure categories
- ✓ Options for an automated workflow to allow for pre-expenditure review of high volume, high risk categories (pre-expenditure review workflow in the University financial system is currently for only equipment and certain travel categories)

### Conclusion

Identifying, analyzing, and reporting expenditure data consistently provides the PI, department administrators, and University with an added layer of protection for ensuring financial compliance on the research aspect as well as the financial aspect of sponsored research. Our data demonstrates that through the constant review of existing data, research administrators are receiving feedback in a timely manner. This allows the PI to maximize the use of their entire budget. In addition, with limited personnel resources, making the expenditure review processes part of a monthly procedure alleviates a significant amount of work at project closeout. Streamlining this process also reduces possible audit and awarding agency issues or findings. FC is continuously providing customer service by working closely with department administrators during the life of projects. For UCF, this initiative has proven successful. **N**



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# GENERATING DATA WITH SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY

## *Nurturing Good Data Practices and Preventing Research Misconduct*

*By Keri Godin and Daniel Wainstock*

**R**esearchers, scientific publishers, sponsors, and research administrators all share a deep commitment to research integrity. Data integrity problems can arise from a variety of sources ranging from the inevitable human error to the malign-intentional fraud. In the normal practice of science, unappreciated confounds lurk within the complex systems that scientists study, while inadequate mentorship, differing cultural norms, and language barriers may interfere with appropriate data generation and interpretation practices. In rarer cases, wild ambition or a reckless disregard for established scientific practices can result in intentional falsification or fabrication of data. This article addresses three key areas in which individuals and institutions can have a meaningful impact on the generation of data with scientific integrity with an eye towards mitigating risks of potential research misconduct.

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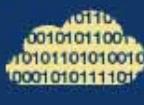
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## Training scientists who love their data (more than their hypotheses)

A commitment to research integrity begins with how we teach and mentor new researchers. Acquiring and objectively interpreting data is the central practice that defines one's identity as a scientist, and science remains a profession in which influential mentors profoundly impact a young investigator's commitment to producing data with integrity. Wright, Titis, and Cornelison (2008) suggest that mentors are in key positions to reduce the occurrence of junior investigators engaging in fraudulent research behaviors. Some best practices that they identify include (1) regular review of trainee raw data, (2) standard-setting and enforcement of standards, and (3) attention to trainee stress levels (Wright et al., 2008, p. 335). While the eager new researcher begins an experiment with an established hypothesis in mind, how he or she responds if the resulting data do not conform to that hypothesis is critical to protecting the integrity of the data and the story those data tell.

These best practices begin inside the lab and are successful when implemented in a culture that fosters healthy skepticism and encourages the challenging of data and interpretation in constructive ways. Independent replication of findings prior to publication is an important practice inherent in this type of lab culture. In addition, Principal Investigators (PIs) who routinely review **raw data** (not just compiled, publication-quality figures) during one-on-one meetings and make unannounced visits to the bench to look through a microscope or review a lab notebook, reap multiple benefits. The purpose of these interactions is two-fold: the PI can observe the mentees' skills, technique and interpretation of data and provide hands-on guidance and instruction, while the unpredictable nature of these visits can deter struggling scientists from employing questionable research practices.

Outside the lab, trainee presentations during department meetings, at public symposia, or through formal publication, allows for further transparency and engagement with the relevant research community. This ensures that the methods used to obtain and analyze the data, as well as the data themselves, are held to a rigorous gold standard. When these practices are consistently employed, new scientists gain the benefit of feedback and benchmarking, and learn to view them as integral to the scientific process and to their own career progression.

## Respecting the international character of modern scientific research

Research aimed at identifying causal factors for research misconduct shows that both language barriers and job insecurities, e.g., due to competition for positions or funding, are correlated with findings of research misconduct (Davis, Riske-Morris & Diaz, 2007). Lack of proficiency in English, the language of the world's most respected journals and symposia, may affect a non-native speaker's ethical conduct as he or she seeks to compete on an international scientific playing field (Xiguang & Lei, 1996). Davis, Riske-Morris and Diaz (2007) speculated that these individuals may also "fail to ask for assistance for fear of being perceived as inadequate due to low proficiency in spoken or written English" (p. 407). Beyond language barriers, an overarching concern about the security of one's employment, particularly when such employment is contingent upon maintaining one's visa status, may result in falsification or fabrication of data out of a sense of desperation. In addition, a review of the federal Office of Research Integrity's (ORI) case data and of cultural norms in some non-U.S. countries suggests that foreign-born investigators may be more susceptible to engaging in behaviors that constitute research misconduct than their U.S.-born colleagues (Davis, 2003). For example, in the Chinese quantitative evaluation

system, many scientists are driven almost exclusively by publishing papers and securing research dollars, with little emphasis placed on conducting research for the sake of the public good (ORI Newsletter, December 2011). More robust studies exploring the influence of culture on acts of scientific malfeasance are needed, and lessons learned from these studies should be integrated into institutions' and mentors' research ethics education.

*“Data management plays a central role in assuring the integrity of scientific data and should not be an afterthought.”*

So how can these difficulties be addressed? First, institutions and individual PIs need to appreciate that each new scientist enters the lab with a different perspective and interpretation of how to conduct ethical research. This is true regardless of whether that scientist comes from a different country, a different field, or a different methodological background. In Chinese tradition and culture, as an example, “there is no concept of copyright, and scholars often quote each other without a clear citation” (ORI Newsletter, p. 5), an act that, if conducted in the U.S., constitutes plagiarism. At a minimum, Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training at research institutions should extend to all vulnerable cohorts, institutions should develop ethical principles and a code of conduct that sets forth expectations for all employees, and PIs should engage each new lab member individually in a discussion of data integrity, data recording and replication standards, and data retention.

Finally, the dependence of foreign-born researchers on their PI for their visa status and career progression may heighten the risk that a supervisor's excitement over promising data or impatience in the face of potentially being ‘scooped’ may be misconstrued as pressure to obtain results that support the hypothesis or to rush preliminary findings to publication. Keeping these issues and individual researchers' stress levels in mind when embarking on conversations about scientific ethics will help ensure that all the participants in that conversation both understand each other and contribute to a constructive data-centric lab culture of research integrity.

### **Data are only as useful as they are accurate**

Data management plays a central role in assuring the integrity of scientific data and should not be an afterthought. Despite this, a survey of nearly 100 university officials charged with institutional oversight of research misconduct cases revealed that inquiries and investigations were “hampered by inadequate research records” (Schreir, Wilson & Resnik, 2006, p. 42), in some instances because many foreign investigators record data in their native languages without reference to RCR standards of data retention in English (p. 43). Another study reported that 27% of the faculty investigators interviewed openly confessed to inadequate record-keeping related to research projects (Martinson, Andersen & de Vries, 2003). Compounding this problem, the complexity of modern research environments has increased at such a rapid pace that the bound, hard-copy lab notebook that once served as the gold standard for documentation now falls woefully short. Automation of data generation in varying file formats and the diversity of other highly specialized apparatuses generating large electronic datasets dictate a more nimble method of data organization and integration. This

trend has only increased with the rise of “big data” and the range of tools and infrastructure needed to annotate, mine, archive, and retrieve it. The problems that Schreier et al. (2006) identified thus reflect a critical time in the evolution of scientific research and institutional data management support, when it is essential to establish new types of formal record-keeping standards that may not yet exist. In this context, the common lab practice of having peers teach newcomers record-keeping habits will not suffice.

Why is this critical to data integrity? When data are not managed properly, the researcher faces a heightened risk of introducing human error into the data use, discovery, and retrieval processes. Further, erosion of data quality and questions of authenticity arise when data are stored absent invaluable metadata (required for data interpretation and replication) and without a clear link to the scientific protocol. Data versioning should be a key consideration for investigators who choose electronic lab notebook or hybrid (paper/electronic) solutions, particularly as multiple investigator and multi-lab projects gain popularity. New scientists are well positioned if taught that good data management practices are the foundation for reproducible research, and information specialists and library archivists are an essential part of the conversation as institutions develop longer-term investments in a flexible infrastructure to retain and archive research data.

No single approach can address all of the variables that factor into the generation of objective, high quality data that informs scientific progress and withstands the rigorous testing of disinterested parties. However, frameworks can be established to promote research integrity, with the ultimate goal being a profound respect for what the data truly say. **N**

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## Emerging Audit Trends

# What You Need To Know

*By Nikki Normandy, Adrienne Larmett,  
and David Clark*

The Offices of Inspectors General (OIG) of federal agencies have recently increased their focus on compliance and efficiency of operations at institutions of higher education. As a result, OIGs (and external firms they have subcontracted to) are more frequently performing audits of college and university programs to 1) review compliance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance regulations, agency grant policies, institution policies and procedures, and terms and conditions of federal awards; and 2) identify cost recovery opportunities on unallowable award costs for these federal agencies.

The objective for this two-part article series is to provide relevant and current information to our colleagues at institutions about the OIGs and these types of audits. As this trend is emerging, there are a number of themes we have observed among our clients who have been through these audits. In these articles we will give a general overview of agency focus and audit approach, outline what universities can expect to see in these audits moving forward, and explain what your institution can do to prepare for an OIG audit.

## AGENCY FOCUS AND APPROACH

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have both demonstrated an increased interest in using data analytics audits for evaluation and cost recovery measures. The NSF OIG has developed and employed a specific approach to using data analytics to assess awardee spending, which may be categorized into two phases:

**Phase I** – initial analytics and risk assessment: Using a combination of internal NSF databases and external data sources (including the single audit clearinghouse), NSF performs continuous monitoring to help identify “high-risk” institutions that will be selected for a detailed review.

**Phase II** – detailed audit of costs incurred by high-risk institutions: The OIG reviews 100% of costs incurred and other information, including cash drawdowns, project reports, university’s general ledger, and external data, to identify types of costs at high risk for misuse of NSF funds.

During these phases, certain red flags may cause a particular institution and/or transaction to be selected for audit. Examples of these red flags include:

- General ledger data differs from the drawdown requested/performed by the institution;

- Anomalous draw down patterns, particularly including:
  - Costs incurred prior to award start date;
  - Costs incurred after award end date;
  - Spending pattern indicating attempt to expend remaining award funds in the final month (or two) prior to award end date; or
  - Large spike in spending compared to a standard/expected curve.
- Higher than expected project burn rate (i.e., rate of spending compared to time elapsed on project);
- Spending beyond award budget and/or outside of budgeted categories;
- Excessive salary charges (including salary charged in excess of 2/9 an employee’s salary);
- Cost transfers, especially from one sponsored account to another or from a non-sponsored account onto sponsored funds; and
- “Riskier” cost types, such as:
  - Administrative or clerical type charges, or other types of charges normally treated as indirect costs;
  - Subcontracts and/or consultants;
  - Travel (especially foreign travel); and
  - Equipment purchases.

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## WHAT INSTITUTIONS CAN EXPECT TO SEE MOVING FORWARD

OIGs have spent a considerable amount of time and effort on developing this set of analytic markers, so institutions can expect this audit trend to continue, at least at NSF where the OIG plans to perform approximately 20 such data analytics audits each fiscal year. This approach allows the OIG to more effectively utilize its available resources to identify potentially unallowable costs, and provide enhanced monitoring and validation of costs charged to sponsored awards. However, though this approach is based on positive intentions, the change has left auditees reacting to an unfamiliar process.

While the previous audit technique focused on one particular researcher or portfolio, the new approach could cover transactions from across a multitude of departments, researchers, or even campuses of an institution. Responding to such audits requires a high level of coordination, communication, and collaboration across campus. It also heightens the possibilities for institutions to develop their own continuous monitoring or data analytic techniques to provide enhanced monitoring of research expenses and work to identify and reduce (or eliminate) these type of red flags prior to receiving an OIG audit.

The good news for institutions is that as more colleges and universities undergo this type of audit, it will be easier to identify the markers as this information will be shared among peers. As such, institutions will be able to develop their own testing markers and incorporate them as a proactive monitoring tool, which is an excellent outcome from a less than excellent collective audit experience.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In the next issue of *NCURA Magazine* we will provide further details of the challenges and pitfalls in responding to agency and OIG audits and what you can do to prepare not if, *but when*, your university finds itself in the same position. **N**



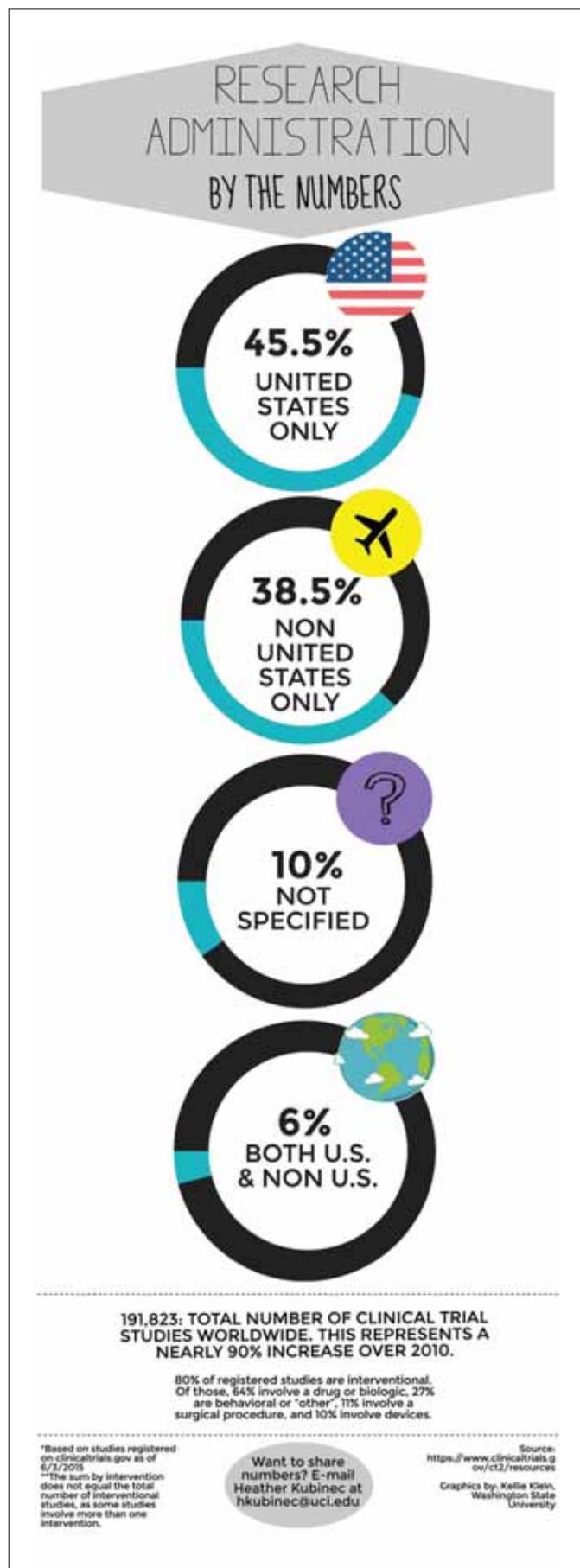
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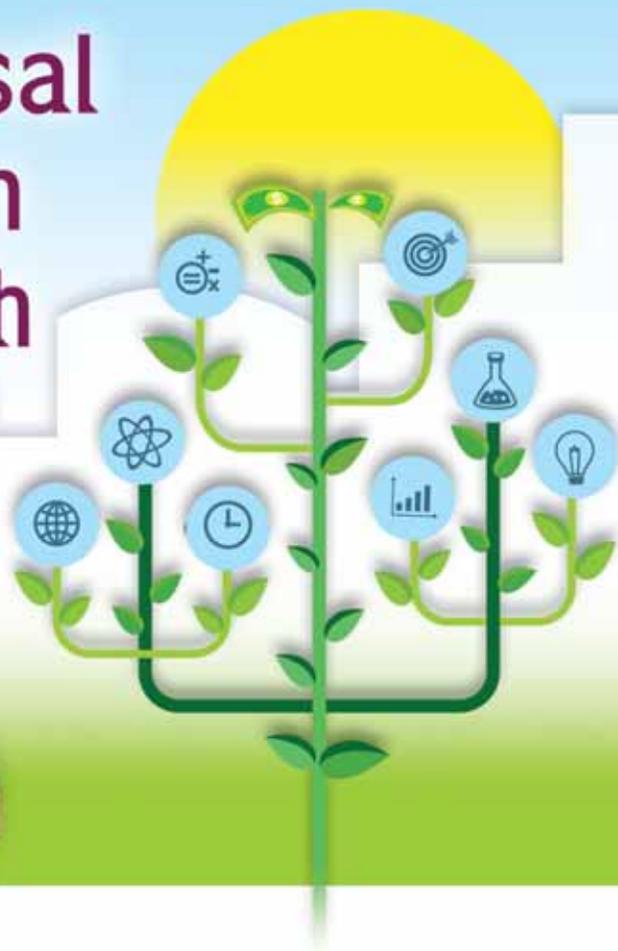
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# Measuring Proposal Success Rates Can Show You the Path to Research Productivity

By Jennifer Easley



Each day in our world of research administration we see failures and successes. We see the hard work that goes into a proposal submission, and we get to know the stories of people whose livelihood depends on this external funding. While it may be tempting to imagine a world where only those who neglect to meet our internal deadlines fall into the stack of non-funded proposals we purge each year, the truth is that no one is really immune to the proposal rejection notification. Despite all of the efforts that go into a proposal submission, NIH's funding rate for fiscal year 2014 was only 18.1% (Rockey, 2014) and NSF's funding rate was 23% (National Science Foundation, 2015). Do you know where your institution and PIs stand in comparison to these overall rates?

In his book *Failing Forward*, John Maxwell (2000) suggested that what separates achievers from average people is that achievers persevere, understanding that failure is part of life. Achievers see failure as a journey, much like success, rather than a destination. They look at failures and determine what they can learn, and then pick themselves up and move forward. In our role as research administrators, we can help researchers by providing them with the data to learn from their successes and failures. If you are not doing it already, a regular analysis of proposal successes and failures can be eye-opening for your institution, and may be just what is needed to increase research productivity through proposals and awards.

# NCURA PATHWAYS

## Volunteer Pathways

NCURA has identified three distinct volunteer pathways for its members to get involved - Presenter, Leadership, and Volunteer at the regional and/or 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/volunteer/volunteeroportunities>

## Janet Simons' Journey



The NCURA annual meeting is large. New attendees are looking for friendly faces, if only to ask how to find the next session.

The best way I know to find more and more friendly faces each year is to volunteer. My

first opportunities to volunteer came from Region II – working with newcomers, regional program committee, presentations, and eventually, regional Chair. I also slowly began participating as a presenter at national meetings.

I've been lucky enough to meet NCURA members from around the world when I present on international topics, and as a member (and now Chair) of the Global Community Subcommittee. While opportunities for leadership and committee work are valuable parts of my NCURA experience, I truly enjoy presenting and teaching. I learn as I prepare, and I learn even more from those who attend and share their knowledge and experiences. And I meet new friendly faces, every time.

**Janet Simons, MBA**, is the Director, Research Policy, and Export Compliance Officer at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. She has over 30 years experience in central and department research administration, and currently chairs NCURA's Global Community Subcommittee.

## Measuring Success

While simply comparing total proposed dollars by total award dollars for a particular year may be a quick and dirty method for calculating success rate, this method does not really provide meaningful data for analysis, particularly if you are wanting to help someone at an individual level. To truly do some powerful analysis, you will want to track success rates down to the individual proposal. Few of us have sophisticated grants management systems that will provide us this data on demand, and the good news is that you can pull together the data needed, with just a little bit of spreadsheet finesse. Pivot tables and VLOOKUP functions in Excel will be your friends in this exercise. If you do not know what pivot tables and VLOOKUP functions are, do yourself a favor and learn about these, as they are powerful tools for analyzing data!

When starting this exercise, one of the first things you will need to determine is the timeframe of the data, or your proposal base year. Ideally, you should wait about two years after the proposal data before pulling in the award data, as most awards will have arrived by that time. For example, if you are using fiscal year 2013 as your base proposal year, wait until fiscal year 2015 has ended before checking these proposals to see if they have been awarded. There will always be outliers, but at least you will have captured the majority of potential funding. In addition to identifying which proposals have been funded, you should also identify the funded amount.

Once you have the data in one place, you are pretty much limitless in the number of ways you can slice and dice this data. Because our institutions are so diverse, what one institution considers a measure of success may differ from another, so each institution will need to define success when determining how to analyze the data (Bergan & Bitting, 1989). A good starting point might be to calculate the success rates for the following:

### Department or center/institute

- Further summary by PI

### College or division

- Further summary by PI

### Type of sponsor (federal, state, private)

- Further summary of each federal agency or state agency  
Funding level (\$0 - \$249K, \$250K - \$499K,  
\$500K - \$749K, \$750K - \$999K, \$1M+)

Remember to look at both the success rate by number of proposals funded as well as the success rate by the proposed dollars funded, as each number has a story to tell. As you begin to communicate this data to others, you will likely discover even more meaningful ways of grouping the data.

## Additional Considerations

As you calculate proposal success rates and begin to share this data with others, you will inevitably run into some other considerations that need to be made. Some areas of concern may be the communication of the results of your analysis, the effect of outliers within the data, and how to use this data going forward. The more preparation you can do beforehand on these areas, the better your message will be received.

You will need to determine how transparent you want to be with this data, particularly when sharing across divisions. It might be best to start small, having one-on-one discussions with each division about the success rates within that division, rather than sharing all details with everyone. Of course, each division or unit will probably want to know how it compares

with the institution as a whole, so you can share high-level trends of data with all. One of the first questions we received when communicating this data with others at our institution was, “How do we compare with the national averages?” Being prepared with the answer to this question will only add to your credibility as a number-crunching guru.

Outliers within the data can cause success rates—particularly on proposed dollars funded—to be skewed, so you will need to be sure those outliers have been addressed in your calculations or presentation of the data. By analyzing rates at different funding levels, you will be able to make these outliers clearer. Also, note that your data may include high dollar equipment items, which may be perceived differently than a grant of the same size with multiple personnel and other budget categories (Print & Hattie, 2006). While you might not necessarily want to change your method of calculations, you should at least keep these factors in mind when deciding what story is told by the data.

Finally, after this exercise, your institution will need to determine what to do with this data. If you find that every one of your proposals to a particular agency is getting rejected while the national success rate for that agency is 25%, you might want to take a closer look to be sure the proposals are addressing the agency’s needs before investing efforts into new proposals to that agency. Perhaps now that you have this data your institution can identify areas of strengths, investing more resources in those areas of success and minimizing efforts in less successful areas. Identification of mentors and mentees may also be a next step, as PIs identified as highly successful might be able to share best practices with others who are not having as much success in their proposal submissions. The key is using

this data to improve the quality and likelihood of success in your institution’s proposal submissions. Once you better understand where you have been, the course for the future becomes much clearer. [N](#)

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# How to Get a Head Start on Analytics and Audits:

## *Proactive preparation and responses to federal audits*

By Anne Sullivan

There's a new wave of data analytics transforming the way auditors can track, review, and report financial documents, providing a new level of sophisticated assurance. Paving the way for the data-driven federal grant and contract audit field, the National Science Foundation Office of General Inspector's (NSF OIG) use of analytics is cutting edge, changing the way organizations must react to, plan for, and support audits.

Specifically, this sophisticated practice is being utilized for reviewing grant expenditures and ensuring fiscal stewardship of NSF funds. As a result, many grant recipients have started emulating the NSF OIG's data analytic methodology by developing their own data-based monitoring procedures and tools for proactively managing grants. The NSF OIG's recent findings from its first wave of data analytic audits provide insights on how to prepare for this type of audit, as well as key considerations for organizing institutional responses. NSF has also communicated a continued focus on reviewing accountability of awardees in its annual Audit Work Plan (**Source:** <http://www.nsf.gov/oig/2015auditplan.pdf>).

While the NSF OIG may be the pioneer leading the way on analytics in grant audits, other federal agencies are likely not far behind in enacting similar methods. Furthermore, it is an opportune time for federal grant recipients to consider how to improve controls, oversight mechanisms, and roles and responsibilities in light of emphasis on internal controls in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Guidance.

### ***Recent NSF OIG Audit Findings***

Throughout the award lifecycle, there are dozens of financial and regulatory risks — and your institution must consider how to effectively identify and monitor those risks. To start off, there are a few key questions you should ask:

- What are the most high risk areas for grants administration?
- How would we set up automated controls or monitoring mechanisms to identify risky patterns or to detect transactions that may spark heightened scrutiny?

But before thinking about the second question, consider some of the areas that have been highlighted as findings in recent NSF OIG data analytic audits.

The NSF findings published in recent reports correspond to unallowable, unallocable or unreasonable costs, or inadequate documentation. In particular, some of the recurring questioned costs in draft audit reports included transactions or expenditures related to the following:

- Senior personnel salaries and the 2/9<sup>th</sup> rule
- Summer salaries
- Cost sharing
- Cost transfers
- Equipment
- Participant support costs
- Travel (meals, conferences, and foreign travel)

In the new data analytic approach, auditors can run transactional reports to diagnose questionable spending patterns, quickly detecting costs that are more difficult to support as direct charges or tend to require more supporting documentation to prove allowability or allocability.

### **Preparing for the Data Analytic Audit Process**

The steps of a federal audit may follow a flow similar to diagram. Based on experiences with previous data analytics audits, it is advisable that grantee institutions have their own audit-response strategy mapped out during each audit phase in order to be proactive and collaborative. While the NSF audit approach is still relatively new in the grant environment, institutions can glean important lessons about the role of the grant recipient during the audit, ensuring the most efficient, collaborative, and (hopefully) favorable experience.



A data request will likely include a data download of all general ledger transactions posted to NSF awards over a specified period of time, and the auditors will then review 100 percent of the transactions provided using automated tools. We have learned from the NSF OIG that the types of activities conducted during their Data Analytic Audits include the following: (Source: Baker, Brett, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, National Science Foundation. “NSF OIG and Data Analytics.” NCURA 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Washington Hilton, Washington, DC. 12 August 2014.)

- Identification of systems and anomalies between databases
- Identification of key controls
- Changes in behavior over time
- Drawdown patterns such as spikes, spending down grant funds, significant budget reallocations
- Composite burn rates of the institution
- Tests including linking databases, computed fields, invalid dates, duplicates, etc.

In order to be prepared for what an auditor would be seeing during fieldwork, the auditee can run some queries to “test” their own data set and identify any potential red flags or questionable transactions that may be flagged during the NSF’s audit. For example, organizations can analyze any expenditures that post later in the award period or a significant volume of cost transfers in a certain period of time.

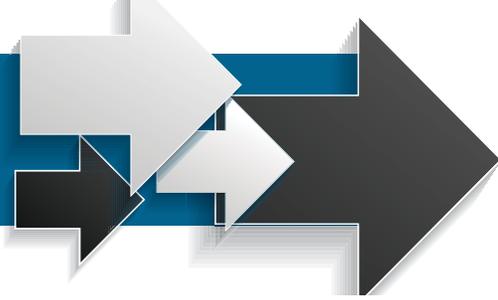
What can you learn about those transactions prior to the auditor asking the same questions?

Consider gathering supporting documentation or building an understanding of the circumstances that led to patterns of spend, as there are likely explanations (and perhaps some documentation) to justify them. One or two dedicated resources may be warranted to analyze the materials and data provided to the auditors, helping prepare for the types of questions that might later be raised.

During the audit fieldwork and post-fieldwork follow-up, an auditee has the opportunity to present its case for supporting certain questioned transactions. Any work done early in this stage may be advantageous down the line. Institutions that are successful in resolving questioned costs had a point person or team analyzing and investigating said costs, working with the department(s) and PI(s) to gather supporting documentation, and developing concise descriptions and justifications for the appropriateness of each charge. Not only is it critical to document a well-developed response, but the institution should be prepared to articulate its policies and procedures that demonstrate proper stewardship of federal funds and how the policies align with federal regulations.

### **Proactive Management and Monitoring**

Even if an institution is not selected for an NSF Data Analytic Audit, it does not mean it should sit idly by and not gain a head start for this new wave of analytics. It’s possible that other federal agencies align their audit

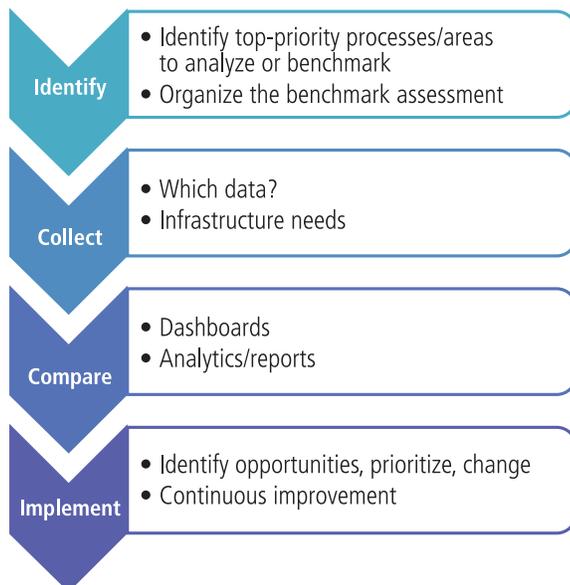


approaches with the NSF's in order to automate the audit approach and increase efficiencies given limited audit resources. Many of the themes from audit findings give grantees takeaways on areas for improvement.

Consider some of the key questions below, and determine whether or not your institution has implemented practices that would hold up in an audit and could utilize data analytics to help identify and mitigate risks.

- **Policies and Procedures:** Do you have formal, written policies and procedures that are up to date with federal guidance?
- **Documentation:** Do processes require adequate documentation for questionable spending patterns or red-flag expenditures?
- **Awareness:** Are PIs and other department personnel aware of the sensitivities and requirements for research compliance?
- **Screening:** Have you determined the appropriate level of pre-review that should be performed before a transaction can be processed?
- **Monitoring:** What roles, internal controls and systems support your monitoring program?
- **Causes:** Can you determine the “root causes” driving challenges in high-risk areas such as cost transfers or effort reporting?

The internal use of data analysis should be encouraged across your research operations in order to monitor compliance, strengthen internal controls, and detect or prevent wasteful spending. Internal data analytics can help an organization self-assess and better understand compliance risk at the institutional level — or even at the department or grant level. Targeted benchmarking or data review focused on specific compliance areas can help detect departments that may have higher risk profiles.



### Sample Metrics Used

- Effort reporting (% completion)
- Cost transfer volume (# and \$ volume)
  - ✓ Late salary transfers (# and \$ volume)
- Sponsor accounts in overrun status (# and \$ value)
- Delinquent financial closeouts
- Expenses past period of performance
- Expired cost sharing accounts with unexpended balance
- Active cost sharing accounts with low expenditure rate
- RCR training overdue

Thus, a best practice and proactive strategy for using data to manage research compliance and monitor for questionable expenditures includes the following components: Identifying, collecting, comparing and implementing.

During the “Identify” step, consider the stages of a project lifecycle and the various financial or regulatory risks during pre-award, post-award and closeout. Focus on data points an NSF auditor would analyze with its analytic tools in order to “Collect” metrics for internal data analysis. There are several data points that you should be collecting and the take steps to “Compare” your metrics against target levels to help gauge risk. Finally, it is in the “Implement” step when institutions should focus efforts to reduce and minimize these possible risks.

As institutions get to work preparing for these data-driven audits, a litany questions will surely arise. But stay the course and focus. Keep a wish list of metrics that you consider to be most useful for self-monitoring, and consider how your systems or databases can be leveraged in capturing and analyzing the data. It's important to prioritize; with a workable and strategic plan in place, data analytics will no longer be intimidating, but will become just a normal part of your process. **N**



**Anne Sullivan**, As a senior director for Huron Consulting Group's education practice, Anne has more than 13 years of experience assisting research universities and academic medical centers with reviewing and improving administrative operations, assessing their compliance with federal and other applicable regulations, and enhancing institutional compliance programs. She can be reached at [asullivan@huronconsultinggroup.com](mailto:asullivan@huronconsultinggroup.com).



# USING STATISTICS TO TELL YOUR STORY

By Trisha Southergill and Brigette Pfister

Words like *data* and *metrics* are often met with an inner cringe by busy departmental research administrators, particularly when it appears that yet another item may be added to the never-ending to do list. However, when used wisely, data and metrics are helpful tools that any research administrator can use.

## What are data and metrics?

Before we can harness the power of data and metrics, we must understand what they are and how they are related. Merriam-Webster defines *data* as “factual information used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation.” *Metrics* are the standards by which we measure our data. Metrics can tell us whether we are successful as a unit, whether our workload is reasonable and equitably distributed, and much more. Both data and metrics can be used in a variety of ways to motivate our teams, departments, faculty, and even ourselves.

Many organizations already collect data and have metrics in place. If yours is one of these, you may already have access to huge amounts of collected data and robust metrics for measuring success. If not, you may have to start the process from scratch. Either way, you can learn to use metrics advantageously.

Research administrators are surrounded by overwhelming amounts of data every day, such as our workflow or workload. Much of it is unused or untracked. Some data isn't very useful in a workplace context. For example, it is possible to measure how many breaths we take while seated at our desks, but there is no practical reason to do so. However, other data points may be very useful indeed, like the amount of time it takes on average to review a proposal. Data collection efforts are driven by a set of questions that arise from our daily work. What data points exist in our world that are easily measurable and can be captured? How do we use our data to the best advantage? The answers to these questions will vary depending on each unique situation. Take a look at your business practices and processes, as well as common issues, to best determine what type of data you want

to collect and turn into useful metrics. Common data points collected in research administration include the number of proposal submissions, the dollar value of requests, awards, and expenditures, and the average time required to process a proposal or set up an award in the accounting system.

But wait, isn't all this data collection expensive? At PUIs especially, and even larger organizations in the current financial climate, funds are not always available for special programs or databases. But a fancy database is not always needed to collect this data and analyze it thoroughly. Sometimes an old-fashioned Excel spreadsheet can be sufficient, especially at the department level. For example, a common complaint among faculty is the turnaround time required for pre-award proposal review and submission. A simple way to collect data on that issue would be to create an Excel workbook on a shared drive in which each research administrator records information about each proposal they process. They can include information such as the PI's name and home department, project title, the date information was received from the PI, the date the proposal was successfully submitted, and any necessary notes about extenuating circumstances. It may look like the below.

Once you have considered the data questions, and know what data you can collect, you can develop metrics by which to measure your data. In our proposal processing time example, a manager can use the information collected in the spreadsheet to develop a reasonable average processing time metric for the department. This metric could then be used as a standard for measuring ongoing performance, as well as a tool for explaining to faculty why it is important to allow enough lead time before a proposal deadline.

Metrics should be reassessed on a regular basis to make sure you are on point. Things change with the passage of time, and you may need different information to improve your business practices and processes. Do you have specific problems that need to be addressed? Do you need support in a different area? Are there investments your institution needs to make? By tracking data and

PI Name	Department	Title	Info rec'd	Prop submit'd	Notes
Adams, J.	Physics	To the Moon and Back...	May 1, 2p	May 5, 4:45p	Due May 5. Upon arrival, proposal was incomplete
Jones, A.	English	Once Upon a Time...	May 4, 10a	May 6, 2p	Not due until May 7. Includes mandatory cost share.
Smith, R	Electrical Engineering	How to Change a Light Bulb	May 3, 3p	May 5, 4:30p	Proposal due May 5 and complete when it arrived

implementing metrics you can clearly identify areas of need and have solid evidence for institutional investment. This can be crucially important, especially when budgets are tight.

### Using Metrics at the Department Level

Our example of a turnaround time metric is an easy one to use as a tool for improvement, motivation, and gauge for department performance. Having an acceptable, predetermined, and realistic time parameter for review is key. If an actual review time is longer than the determined metric, then there needs to be justification to support the overage. By recording this information, the team can be aware of common delays and situations and then find ways to overcome them.

Similar metrics can be used in job descriptions as well. Many times our job descriptions do not clearly explain the tasks we actually need to do. This can be confusing, especially for newcomers to the field. For example a job task may be to “Ensure timely proposal submissions.” This is rather vague and could open to interpretation. A better articulation could be “Process proposals within the established time frame of 5 business days.” By creating explicit and measureable descriptions (whether they are job tasks or other functions), we can clarify expectations and define good performance.

You can also use this type of metric to ensure that the workload on your team is fair and equitable. Collecting data will quickly let you know if one member of the team is processing significantly more proposals than anyone else, or if an individual is consistently unable to meet the processing time target. You can even develop metrics for your team that tell you how many proposals on average an individual can process at a time. This will allow you to make systematic improvements to turnaround time *and* team performance. You can also identify training needs, lower stress levels, and improve morale on the team, by focusing things in the right direction.

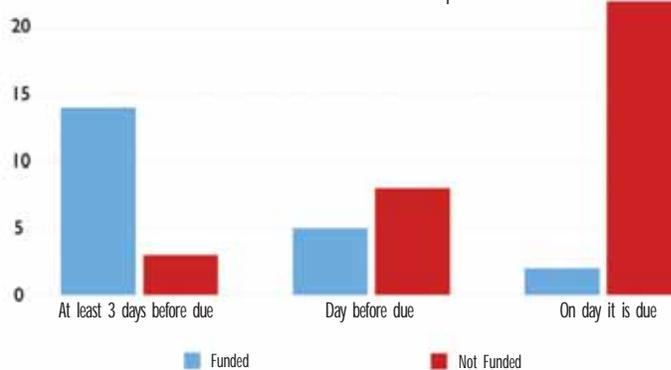
You can also use metrics to recognize team members. This could be as simple as a verbal commendation during a weekly staff meeting, or it could be a more formal recognition such as a letter or memo for their personnel file outlining the individual’s exceptional performance. Some organizations even have the option of giving small monetary bonuses for documented excellent performance. You can even use metrics to motivate teams by offering small incentives for meeting specific goals. For example, a manager could offer to buy lunch for the individual who processes the most proposals in a given period with the fewest errors. The sky (and possibly your pocket-book) is the limit.

Metrics also make for great PowerPoint slides to showcase our activity for faculty and upper level administrators. A graph showing the department’s performance in clear measureable form can be impressive and can help your audience understand the workload and volume of your jobs (see below).

And of course, this same type of analysis can also be applied to faculty data: Which faculty members have the highest success rates? Which ones are consistently late in sending in their proposal materials for review? Are the consistent latecomers more or less successful than their timely counterparts?

In any ongoing data collection effort, patterns inevitably emerge, and they can be surprising. One great example of this is a comparison

**Proposal Arrival Time & funding ...**  
More time for Review Can Lead to Proposal Success



of success rates between proposals that were submitted after a full pre-award review (5 business days, in our example) and proposals that were submitted without complete review (less than 2 business days). When we compared the data in our department, the success rate was staggeringly in favor of the full pre-award review. You may find that this type of analysis will get the point across to faculty much better than any policy reminder ever will.

### Using Metrics at the Individual Level

If you are not in a supervisory role, you can still use metrics. You can begin collecting data about your own performance: How many proposals have you submitted this year? How many transactions have you processed? Has your productivity increased or decreased over the past year? If your institution has centralized reporting, can you compare your personal data to the overall data for your department or College? For some of us, this type of analysis can be a powerful motivator.

Taking the initiative to collect and analyze this type of information has several upsides. First, it makes you aware of your own abilities and areas in which you can improve. It can be a useful learning experience. In addition, having your own performance data ready can be crucial ammunition when asking for a salary increase or promotion.

We have merely scratched the surface of all that metrics can do for us. Luckily, much has been written on the subject. Hopefully this article is but a starting point in your quest to collect data and use metrics. [N](#)



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Count of Proposals Submitted by Proposal Creator between 7/1/2014 and 5/29/2015														
Primary Admin Contact Name	Fiscal Year 2015													Total
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		
Dept Reviewer #1	8	9	6	18	15	11	15	11	8	12	4	10	127	
Dept Reviewer #2	16	10	13	22	25	14	13	11	14	3	6	4	151	
Dept Reviewer #3	7	7	15	7	24	5	13	17	11	12	2	8	128	
Total:	31	26	34	47	64	30	41	39	33	27	12	22	406	

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## Michigan Tech is Pioneering The 3D Printing of Nerve Tissue in NSF Biomaterials Program

By Bridget Butler Millsaps

3D bioprinting is already being used in a number of bioprinting applications that are quite stunning to the general public just becoming educated on the subject; and no matter your level in science, biology, technology, and more—what 3D printing can offer will make anyone shake their head in wonder.

From everything to 3D printed skin and 3D printed thyroids, to the hopes of soon being able to use 3D printing for organ transplants, the integration of live cells is a big conversation within this new age of technology and for a select few researchers—it's a big, and very real, project.

Currently, researchers at Michigan Technological University are among the select few who are actually working in bioprinting, not only becoming seriously proficient at 3D printing but also in searching for bio-inks that are suitable for what they need to use as material for actually making 3D printed tissue—a process that is in the works long before you begin reading about it in the headlines.



Dr. Tolou Shokuhfar is an assistant professor of mechanical engineering and biomedical engineering at Michigan Tech. Directing the In-Situ Nanomedicine and Nanoelectronics Laboratory at Michigan Tech, she also serves as adjunct assistant professor in the bioengineering department and the College of Dentistry at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Currently Dr. Shokuhfar and Dr. Reza Shahbazian-Yassar are working together in attempting to 3D print live tissue, making good use of Dr. Shahbazian-Yassar's experience in cellulose nanocrystals.

A Richard and Elizabeth Henes Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering-Engineering Mechanics at Michigan Tech, Dr. Shahbazian-Yassar shares the fact that nerves are based on electric impulse. Due to Dr. Shokuhfar's work with that concept, using graphene, she was given a CAREER grant from National Science Foundation (NSF) for her work.

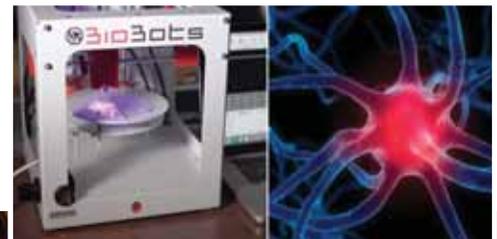


Photo Credits: Michigan Technological University

“Graphene is a wonder material,” she said. “And it has very good electrical conductivity properties.”

This is just one of the materials they are studying for use in regenerative 3D printing, hoping to reach ambitions of perhaps being to further help patients with spinal cord injuries one day. The bioprinting lab is currently being funded by the NSF Biomaterials program, as they delve into an extremely challenging and difficult area of research.

“We wanted to target a big issue,” Dr. Shokuhfar says. “We are born with all the nerve cells we'll ever have, and damaged nerves don't heal very well.”

The team points out that projects on this scale and with such level of complexity are often more successful when sticking with simplicity.

“We can pursue nerve regeneration research with a simpler printer set-up,” says Shayan Shafiee, a PhD student researching and working with Dr. Shokuhfar and her team. “Our work always comes back to the question, is it printable or not?”

Their current 3D printing system uses a syringe and needle system for making what are so far small bits of tissue which must be built slowly, layer by layer, from a red, thick, syrupy polymer material.

There are no standards yet, so it is up to researchers to truly explore the great unknown and by trial and error figure out which equipment, software and materials—as well as all the processes involved in between—will work. While they don’t have a roadmap to work from, they do have the exciting adventure in being bioprinting pioneers, making the rules as they go along.

What do you think the implications of making 3D printed tissue are, with hopes to be able to help patients who currently have severe nerve damage? Tell us your thoughts in the Researchers Pioneering 3D Printing of Tissue forum thread over at 3DPB.com. [N](#)

Michigan Technological University 3-D Bioprinter YouTube video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fjiaTV-Gco>

The original story can be found here:  
<http://3dprint.com/64485/pioneering-3d-printing-tissue>

If you want to share a “cool” project idea, please email Kellie Klein at [kellie.klein@wsu.edu](mailto:kellie.klein@wsu.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. Some of our popular recent topics include:

- ➔ **Departmental Administration Community** – “What Would You Do Series?” June 2015 edition posted by Amy M. Brusk a Grant Specialist at Kansas State University, College of Veterinary Medicine. She posted a “What would you do?” question referring to a PI who has requested to take a sabbatical leave for 5 months.
- ➔ “Sharing Proposals?” in the **Pre-Award Community**, posted by Rebecca Drake, Research Administrator at the University of New Orleans. Rebecca inquired thoughts pertaining to a PI who received a request from AASCU’s Grants Resource Center for a copy of a recently funded NSF EAGER proposal.
- ➔ “New NIH GPS and existing awards” in the **Global Community**, posted by Laura Plant Fuentes, US Grants Coordinator at the Karolinska Institutet inquired advice on how other institutions are treating existing awards with the new guidance implementation.



Join the conversation at  
<http://collaborate.ncura.edu/home>

# When the Sun Shines on MEDICAL SCHOOLS, DENTAL SCHOOLS, AND TEACHING HOSPITALS:

## Bask in the Light of the Physician Payments Sunshine Act or Pull the Blinds?

*By June Anne Insko*

**O**pen Payments, commonly known as the Sunshine Act, started in 2013. Or, as we in academia sometimes say, another “unfunded government mandate” has burdened our lives.

Open Payments is a federally-run program that makes public industry-physician financial relationships. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) are charged with collecting the data, then making it available to anyone on an easily searchable public website: <https://openpayments-data.cms.gov>. The regulation itself does not require any action by physicians or academia, nor does it place restrictions on us. But that doesn't mean we have not felt the impact on our time and resources.

So what did Congress have in mind? According to Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa, “Shedding light on industry payments to physicians would

be good for the system. Transparency fosters accountability, and the public has a right to know about financial relationships.”

### What the Regulation Requires

Briefly, the program dubbed the “Sunshine Act” requires companies in the healthcare industry producing FDA regulated products, which are subsequently reimbursed by CMS, to track payments and other “transfers of value” made to teaching hospitals and physicians. This information must be submitted annually to CMS by March 30<sup>th</sup> for the previous year (January 1 to December 31). The regulation also imposes significant financial penalties should a company fail to make a required report.

Physicians and teaching hospitals must be given the opportunity to review and dispute the information submitted by industry before it is made public

by registering on the Open Payments website. CMS will notify industry of disputes registered on the Open Payments website, however does not participate in finding resolutions. CMS will post corrected amounts or the company's verdict if a conflict cannot be resolved.

The first data collection period covered August 1, 2013, to December 31, 2013. In September 2014, CMS made this data available to the public. The term ‘physicians’ above does not mean just the family's medical doctor but can also include specialists such as podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, dental surgeons, and dentists.

The “transfers of value” that industry must report includes anything worth \$10 or more, as well as items under \$10, should their cumulative value exceeds \$100 in the calendar year. This also includes “trickle down” payments. As an example, Big-Pharma, Inc. gives an educational



grant to the Penny Less Professional Society (PLPS). PLPS uses the grant to fly in Dr. Smarty to give a talk. Dr. Smarty's honoraria and travel expenses must be published as a transfer of value from Big-Pharma, Inc. to Dr. Smarty. Other examples of reportable payments and transfers of value to teaching hospitals and physicians include:

- Consulting fees
- Royalty fees
- Research funding
- Equipment loans
- Stocks (the physicians' and those of the physicians' family members)
- Gifts—e.g., pens, newsletters, clinical trial posters, article reprints, and product information sheets

## The Impact of the Regulation on Academia

The first use of resources at institutions with teaching hospitals and/or physicians affected by the regulation went toward analyzing it. Attorneys, research directors, compliance officers, and staff set to work, compared notes with peers at other institutions, pondered, and planned what steps to take.

The first direct hit on research administrators came in the form of requests for information from sponsors. Research payments to teaching hospitals are required to include the name of the principal investigator only, not every physician with effort on a clinical trial. Nonetheless, as industry prepared to submit data to CMS, research administrators received insistent letters from companies asking how much each physician on

a trial had been paid from the research funding.

Perplexed research administrators went to their supervisors, who then went to the conflict of interest folks, who in turn double-checked with the legal office. Academia's lawyers said the Industry lawyers had misinterpreted the regulation. University peers across the country consulted with each other via email, conference calls, and on-line forums.

By the end of the data collection period, there was general agreement that only the name of the principal investigator(s) (PI)'s name needed to be reported—not how much the PI, or any other investigator participating in the trial had apportioned to their effort out of the total research payment.

As the date of the review period grew near, Universities considered what resources they could provide to assist physicians who chose to review and dispute the data CMS had collected. They



questioned what level of detail their physicians would find helpful. Deciding when to tell them was particularly problematic as CMS repeatedly changed the date the review period would begin. Originally scheduled to begin in January, the review period did not start until mid-July.

Along with many of our peer institutions, the University of Michigan (UM) began informing physicians about Open Payments in the fall of 2013. When the review period opened, medical school faculty received an announcement from the Dean's Office which recommended physicians register and review data reported about them but did not require that they do so.

An onerous registration and review process taxed the time and patience of those brave few who decided to conduct a review. According to CMS (CMS, 2014), 26,000 of the 546,000 physicians named in Open Payments registered to review data. This means that less than 3% of all U.S. physicians logged in before the data was made public. Clearly, we spent more time telling physicians about Sunshine than they spent looking through the blinds.

In a process similar to that used by physicians, UM registered on the Open Payments website to see what data industry had provided CMS about payments and transfers of value made to the "Teaching Hospital." Our experience was like that of physicians—the reported information lacked sufficient context for us to compare our records with the submitted records. For example, Boston Scientific reported a \$1 grant made on 11/4/2013 to UM. (Nope, that's not a typo—one buck!) We had no records of a \$1 grant. Supposedly, we received \$3,164,194.43 in total research payments. That's a much lower figure than we show on our spreadsheet.



One of the first questions that institutions asked each other was, "Are you going to compare CMS postings with what your physicians reported to you?" As you are likely aware, the Public Health Service/NIH requires institutions to collect financial information from investigators in order to assess whether or not they have a conflict of interest related to their funded research. The Open Payments Program gives us an opportunity to see if investigators have fessed up to everything.

We peeked through the blinds and found that we would be comparing apples to oranges. What CMS posts and what we collect do not match up one-to-one. For example, PHS wants us to know how much someone has earned in the last 12 months whilst Open Payments is based on the calendar year (and this first publication was for only 5 months).

Here at the UM we chose to focus on the top earners; we limited our analysis to those who, according to Open Payments, received cumulative totals of \$50,000 or more in payments and other transfers of value. We chose this threshold as we anticipated that the media would target the highest

paid physicians. We matched apples to oranges to the extent possible and were ready when the first reporter knocked on the door.

## Long Term Impacts

Earlier, the term "unfunded mandate" was used. As indicated, the "mandate" is on industry, not academia; we "self-mandated" our duty to respond. We did it to support our faculty and protect their and our institutions' reputations. In terms of time spent on analysis, communications, and support, this first Open Payments period should prove the most expensive and coming the years should require fewer resources (perhaps a tan instead of sunburn?). We can't yet determine the long-term impacts of Open Payments but right now we know that:

- Industry spent millions of dollars complying with the tracking and reporting requirements. That's millions that won't be used for research;
- Some physicians discontinued personal relationships with industry because they fear the stigma that could come from their name appearing on the Open Payments website. This could lead to fewer industry collaborations;
- Some physicians are paying for clinical trial-related travel expenses out of their discretionary funds because they don't want patients thinking they accepted an industry-funded vacation that will influence their treatment choices.

We all want our physicians making decisions based on what's best for us, uninfluenced by money they made speaking for a drug company. Time will tell if Open Payments will achieve its goal to create transparency about physicians and their financial ties to industry in a way that will enhance patient care.

I've looked up my physician. Have you looked up yours yet? You can get the inside scoop at <https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov>. <sup>N</sup>

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- Medicare, Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Programs; Transparency Reports and Reporting of Physician Ownership or Investment Interests; Final Rule, 42 CFR Parts 402 and 403 (2013)



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# NCURA Magazine e-Xtra Headline Highlights

Enjoy some of our favorite links from prior e-Xtra mailings!

## POLICY/REGULATION/COMPLIANCE NEWS:

**Ouch:** One economist calculated it would take the average adult 3 years to read all of the U.S.'s federal regulations [More...](http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2015/05/fight-rule-regulation-overload-000038)  
<http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2015/05/fight-rule-regulation-overload-000038>

**A New NSB Report:** Revisiting the STEM workforce, "it's time to focus on a STEM-capable U.S. workforce" the report says. [More...](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=134866&WT.mc_id=USNSF_51&WT.mc_ev=click)  
[http://www.nsf.gov/news/news\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=134866&WT.mc\\_id=USNSF\\_51&WT.mc\\_ev=click](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=134866&WT.mc_id=USNSF_51&WT.mc_ev=click)

## UNIFORM GUIDANCE:

**Comment on the NSF PAPPG:** NSF recently published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the availability of a "for comment" draft of the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG). The Foundation is accepting comments from the external community until July 20, 2015. [More...](https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/05/19/2015-12086/comment-request-national-science-foundation-proposalaward-information-nsf-proposal-and-award)  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/05/19/2015-12086/comment-request-national-science-foundation-proposalaward-information-nsf-proposal-and-award>

**New NIH Grants Policy Statement:** A new NIH statement has been released, effective for budget periods beginning on or after 12/26/2014 and awards that received supplemental funding on or after 12/26/2014 (a familiar date!).  
[More...](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/nihgps.pdf)  
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/nihgps.pdf>

## AGENCY NEWS:

**Marijuana:** House votes in favor of medical marijuana protections. [More...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/03/congress-medical-marijuana_n_7505066.html?utm_hp_ref=tw)  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/03/congress-medical-marijuana\\_n\\_7505066.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=tw](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/03/congress-medical-marijuana_n_7505066.html?utm_hp_ref=tw)

**More Marijuana:** Anti-legalization group calls for medical marijuana research overhaul. [More...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/28/project-sam-medical-marijuana-research_n_7461164.html?utm_hp_ref=tw)  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/28/project-sam-medical-marijuana-research\\_n\\_7461164.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=tw](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/28/project-sam-medical-marijuana-research_n_7461164.html?utm_hp_ref=tw)

## FUNDING NEWS:

**NSF Discovery:** Balancing life, health and research. [More...](http://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?cntn_id=135307&WT.mc_id=USNSF_1)  
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**Grants for Today's Student:** A new report contends that state aid programs should better meet the needs of modern students in today's college landscape, which is vastly different from when most such programs were developed.  
[More...](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/04/30/report-calls-states-adapt-grant-programs-modern-student)  
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/04/30/report-calls-states-adapt-grant-programs-modern-student>

## TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER:

**Tech Transfer E-News:** How to build a winning social media strategy. [More...](http://techtransfercentral.com/2015/05/26/how-to-build-a-winning-social-media-strategy)  
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**Tech Transfer E-News:** Osage University Partners closes \$215 million fund for university start-ups. [More...](http://techtransfercentral.com/2015/05/26/osage-university-partners-closes-215-million-fund-for-university-start-ups)  
<http://techtransfercentral.com/2015/05/26/osage-university-partners-closes-215-million-fund-for-university-start-ups>

## FUN AND CHUCKLES:

**Selfies:** How average selfies improve smartphone security. [More...](http://www.futurity.org/smartphone-average-photo-888502)  
<http://www.futurity.org/smartphone-average-photo-888502>

**Pop Music Research:** From James Taylor to Taylor Swift: Music evolves like biological organisms. [More...](http://news.sciencemag.org/social-sciences/2015/05/james-taylor-taylor-swift-music-evolves-biological-organisms)  
<http://news.sciencemag.org/social-sciences/2015/05/james-taylor-taylor-swift-music-evolves-biological-organisms>

## E-XTRA NOTABLE AND INTERESTING:

**Higher Ed. Efficiency:** How a James Madison University physics lab is improving higher education efficiency. [More...](http://www.jmu.edu/news/2015/03/23-improving-higher-ed-efficiency.shtml)  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/2015/03/23-improving-higher-ed-efficiency.shtml>

**A Huge Deal:** New patent lawsuits are down for the first time in five years. Here's why that's a huge deal. [More...](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-switch/wp/2015/05/21/new-patent-lawsuits-are-down-for-the-first-time-in-five-years-heres-why-thats-a-huge-deal/?postshare=3981432255349403)  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-switch/wp/2015/05/21/new-patent-lawsuits-are-down-for-the-first-time-in-five-years-heres-why-thats-a-huge-deal/?postshare=3981432255349403>

If you have any favorite links from e-Xtra that you would like to see in a future issue of NCURA Magazine, please email suggestions to Lourana Swayne at [l.swayne@wsu.edu](mailto:l.swayne@wsu.edu)

# NCURA MILESTONES



**Carol A. Burdsal**, Ph.D., has joined McAllister & Quinn's higher education team as Managing Director of Grants and Federal Affairs. Most recently Assistant Provost for Research at Bucknell University, Dr. Burdsal will leverage her experience as a former faculty researcher, university grants administrator, and Program Director at the National Science Foundation to assist clients with federal grant-seeking activities.



**Tony Ventimiglia**, formerly Associate Director of Education & Communication in the Office of Sponsored Programs at Auburn University is now the Director of the Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support in the same institution. Tony will utilize over 16 years of experience with OSP to assist faculty and staff at Auburn in the broad aspects of proposal development for their research, scholarly, and creative programs.

**James Casey** is now Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, at American University. Effective July 1, 2015, he begins his tenure as President of the Nonresident Lawyers Division for the State Bar of Wisconsin.



**Karen Woodward Massey** is graduating in May from the Harvard Graduate School of Education with a M.Ed., where she honed her skills in higher education leadership and educational technology.



**Robert Holm**, formerly Assistant Director of Education & Communication in the Office of Sponsored Programs at Auburn University is now the Associate Director of the Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support in the same institution. Bob will utilize over 15 years of research administration experience at two universities to assist faculty and staff at Auburn in the successful development of proposals as they pursue funding for their research, and will continue his coordination of the successful COMPASS educational curriculum for those staff involved in pre and/or post award activities at the university.

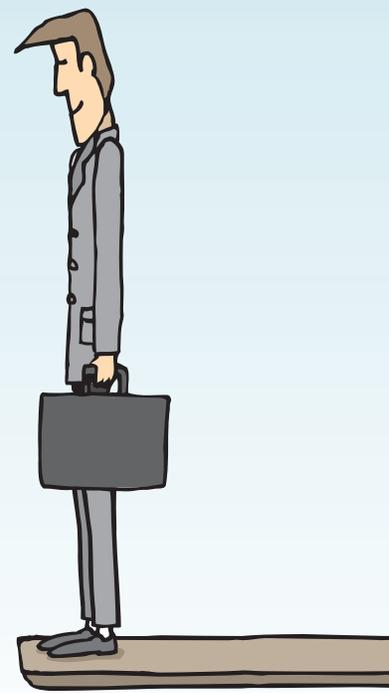


Research Administration Memes  
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# Using Data To Springboard into Process Improvement



By Angie Mitchell and Natasa Raskovic

**R**esearch is an important element of a university's strategy. Not only does it help attract funding, but it engages faculty, staff, and students, makes contributions to society, engages the local community, and collectively elevates the reputation of the university.

As a central administrative office, our mission is to add value to the university by serving faculty, staff, and students through transparent and efficient processes that facilitate research and other activities. One way to create additional value for research functions and activities is to extract data in a useable format so that it can be accessed, analyzed, and shared. At the same time, data related to research administration activities can be used for identifying opportunities for process improvement.

Managing data in-house enables the organization to be self-reliant and save time by allowing users to quickly and easily obtain data without going to other resources. This information may also be shared with a single unit or with other units within the organization.

Plunging into data for decision making is not an unfamiliar concept. For example, we use our minds to process daily schedules such as time to wake up, eat, go to work, exercise and sleep. The mind often does not even realize it is calculating the information to make routine decisions. This shows the importance of data in everyday life. Having data readily available allows for self-reliance and gives the opportunity for proactivity. Data provides the means to quickly adapt in an ever-changing environment by allowing a person to make informed decisions. Data allows us to be responsible stewards of the projects we monitor both personally and professionally.

The research administration community swims through waves of data to assist in the monitoring of all pre and post award activities, bridging the gap between the researchers and the research administrators. Data has the ability to mitigate the stress of the dreaded audit by increasing the accountability for compliance. For example, generating reports allows us to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and requirements for sponsored projects.

The research administrator is able to wade through all the data available

to create an efficient method for managing and monitoring all pre and post award activities. The source of data can be collected and analyzed internally or externally.

A pre award administrator can plummet into data to develop a time management plan by forecasting times of high demand. In addition, data helps to recognize untapped research opportunities. Cross referencing data related to researchers' areas of expertise and interest can encourage an interdisciplinary collaboration. This collaboration has the ability to create a new perspective on an area of research, making a "stand-out" proposal.

A post award administrator can use data to make decisions regarding billing, collections, reporting, and deadlines. Reports created from an internal database can show the unbilled awards of an entire department or receivables not collected. This sample data can be helpful to determine the high-risk areas, prioritize billing, and assist with workload management.

In addition, sponsors provide external data that can be compared to internal data. A sponsor provides information on the cumulative amount spent on a specific award. That report can be compared to internal reports reflecting the cumulative total of expenditures. Comparing such data would allow any discrepancies to be caught at an early stage, making corrections much easier.

Managers use data to identify strengths and weaknesses of an organization. Data can be used to control, change, and implement internal processes in order to create a more streamlined and efficient way of doing business.

The ever changing world of the research enterprise forces management into continuous process improvement. Streamlining the business process requires reevaluation of old practices, and process improvement based on efficiency and effectiveness. Data diving is instrumental for identification of process improvement opportunities, as well as development, testing and monitoring of process improvement solutions. To demonstrate, an office can collect feedback on customer service using an online survey tool, emails, and personal contacts. The data can be used to identify opportunities for improvement in operations.

A real life illustration of using data collection and analysis for process improvement was the identification of a bottleneck in the award set up process. The following steps were used:

- Define the problem using customer feedback
- Analysis of the current process using existing turnaround times for award set-up
- Pinpoint the problematic areas
- Generate possible solutions
- Test the solution by collecting new data for a sample
- Implementation
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation

As a result of taking the above steps, a new process and format were established for award set up. The new process promoted clearer, consistent, and accurate communication.

When using data for process improvement in operations, it is important to keep in mind that data is not stagnant, it is constantly evolving. Points to remember:

- Data should be functional and be focused, Only collect what can be used and analyzed
- Data should be trustworthy, “Junk in , junk out”
- Data should be relevant, qualitative vs. quantitative
- Data should be organized

- Data should be monitored on a regular basis
- Data should be interpreted, tell a story

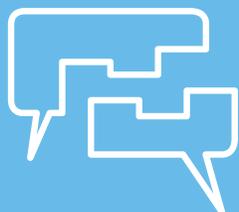
Regardless of its source, personal informal communication, online survey, or databases, data is essential for the any research administrator. Constantly collecting, analyzing and reevaluating data helps to successfully deal with the challenges of an ever changing environment. The proper use of data in process improvement has the power to spring board units into achieving the goal of higher efficiency- doing more with less. **N**



**Angie Mitchell**, *Angie Mitchell is a Post Award Grants and Contracts Analyst in the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Angie helps manage awards from setup to closeout, including billing, financial reporting, re-budgeting, and communicating with agencies. Federal agencies make up the majority of her portfolio, but she also works with some state agencies as well as private agencies. Angie enjoys the daily challenges of research administration in that each agency and award offers unique differences that make the workload diverse and interesting. Angie can be reached at [asmitchell@alaska.edu](mailto:asmitchell@alaska.edu).*



**Natasa Raskovic**, *Grants and Contracts Specialist in the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Natasa is positioned on the busy corner of Research Administration and information technology. She is interested in utilizing modern technology for process streamlining. She is working on database development and data analysis for both pre and post award process. Her goal is to make Research Administrators' lives easier. Natasa can be reached at [nraskovic@laska.edu](mailto:nraskovic@laska.edu).*



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# NCURA's Traveling Workshops

Expand and enhance your industry knowledge! Learn from experts and meet others who share similar job challenges. *Choose from:*

Registration  
Now Open!

## San Antonio, TX: September 9-11, 2015

- Financial Research Administration (FRA) Workshop
- Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop – FUND 2.0
- Level II: Sponsored Projects Administration Workshop (SPA II) – *Critical Issues in Research Administration*

Host Hotel: Hyatt Regency San Antonio Riverwalk

Registration  
Now Open!

## Providence, RI: September 10-11, 2015

### Export Controls Workshop **NEW!**

Host Hotel: Renaissance Providence Hotel

This 2 day workshop will introduce the primary U.S. export control regulations and explain how they apply to an academic environment.

Registration  
Now Open!

## Savannah, GA: December 2-4, 2015

### Departmental Research Administration (DRA) Workshop

Host Hotel: Hyatt Regency Savannah

	Fund 2.5 days	Fund 2.0 2.5 days	SPA II 2.5 days	FRA 2.5 days	DRA 2.5 days	Export Controls 2 days
Sept. 9-11, 2015 Location: San Antonio, TX		✓	✓	✓		
Sept. 10-11, 2015 Location: Providence, RI						✓
Dec. 2-4, 2015 Location: Savannah, GA	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Find more details at

[www.ncura.edu/Education/TravelingWorkshops.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/Education/TravelingWorkshops.aspx)



## REGION I New England

[www.ncuraregioni.org](http://www.ncuraregioni.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/ncuraregioni>



### Greetings Region I!

I'm happy to report that the Spring Meeting in Portland, Maine was indeed a rousing success! Thanks to all who contributed to make it the success it was.

One highlight of the meeting was the Awards Luncheon where we had the opportunity to recognize Region I members for the time and effort that they commit to Region I activities and the field of Research Administration. Please join us in congratulating our 2015 award recipients Bob Stemple and Jeff Seo! Bob received the 2015 Outstanding Volunteer Award for the significant contributions he has made volunteering his time to Region I and Jeff was recognized with the 2015 Merit Award for his outstanding achievement in research administration within Region I.

We are also pleased to announce our 2015 Travel Grant Recipients:

**Spring Meeting:** Brandi Glover, Connecticut Children's Medical Center; Linda Crocker, Worcester State University; and Anna Dement, Brigham and Women's Hospital

**AM57:** Constance Vickers, University of Bridgeport; Thanh Than, Harvard University; and Laura Friedeberg, Connecticut Children's Hospital

Another highlight of the meeting was the Governance Committee's Meet and Chat. Current and former Region I Officers were on hand to talk with members of the region about what they do, how they manage it, and provide those interested in being an officer the opportunity to ask questions.

**Reasons Why YOU Should Run For a NCURA Region I Officer Position:** **EXCHANGE OF VIEWS:** As one of the largest professional associations of research administrators we provide a forum for discussing and sharing information and experiences on the latest "hot" issues, allowing for the exchange of views on mutual concerns. Let your voice be heard! **CAREER ADVANCEMENT:** It can provide opportunities to support career advancement. Taking a leadership role amongst your peers enhances your network, brings recognition, and develops your knowledge of the industry. Mentoring opportunities abound, and your expertise is honed in conference with other leaders. Today's colleague may be tomorrow's employer!

**WE NEED YOU:** Region I benefits from diversity. Its Officers should represent the diversity of the institutions, serving all in terms of institutional size, regional distribution and capabilities. NCURA needs everybody: people with new ideas to fulfill its mission to achieve the maximum potential in academic programs, to exchange views and information, and to stimulate the personal growth of its members. Diversity makes us strong!

The deadline to submit nominations for Chair-Elect, Treasurer-Elect, Secretary-Elect and National Board Member is July 15, 2015. To nominate someone, or yourself, please forward a letter (limit one page) to [governance@ncuraregioni.org](mailto:governance@ncuraregioni.org). The letter should include why the individual is qualified for the position and a summary of past NCURA experience.

See you in Washington DC at AM57, stop by our Hospitality Suite (Room 7101) to say hello!

*Michelle Auerbach serves as Chair of Region I and is the Executive Director of Research Integrity and Assurance at Boston University. Michelle can be reached at [chair@ncuraregioni.org](mailto:chair@ncuraregioni.org)*



## REGION II Mid-Atlantic

[www.ncuraregionii.org](http://www.ncuraregionii.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii>



When I wrote the last article for the NCURA magazine I was very careful in what I included about the Region II Spring Meeting in Baltimore since I was writing the article prior to the meeting and I didn't want to talk about something that didn't happen. At that point the worst I was thinking was that the Orioles game we planned to attend on Tuesday night would be rained out. Little did I know...

Anyone that knows me knows that I'm a planner; I like everything scheduled with little room for error or changes. The Region II Spring Meeting in Baltimore taught me how important it is to go with the flow and adapt as necessary.

As most of you know from the National news, the end of April in Baltimore was a tumultuous time due to protests and riots in the city. Our meeting unofficially started on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> with workshops offered by the Region II Professional Development Committee. I happened to be teaching one of those workshops. It was a beautiful Baltimore spring day; the O's were playing at Camden Yards across the street from the hotel, what could go wrong? Well, what started as peaceful marches and protests (visible from the workshop room windows) turned into violence. Many protestors faced off with police just a block away from the hotel. Luckily things calmed down and Sunday was mostly uneventful. The Program Committee (led by Anne Albinak and Ted Fehskens) and other Region II volunteers were busy checking in attendees at the registration desk, teaching workshops, attending workshops, and getting ready for our Sunday night reception.

Monday started out again with beautiful Baltimore spring weather. Region II members were busy attending sessions, checking out the exhibitors, and networking with colleagues. However, in the afternoon, the protests turned violent again. Region II Leadership and the Program Committee had to make a decision about our evening events and the remainder of our meeting. Due to the Baltimore location, many of our presenters and attendees

were commuting to Baltimore from the surrounding areas. We were concerned about the safety and security of our commuters as well as those attendees staying in the hotel. At that time we chose to cancel our planned dinner in Little Italy and our walking ghost tour of Fells Point. The Baltimore Hilton team jumped into action planning a fantastic on-site dinner in less than two hours!

That night the Region II Steering Committee met to decide what to do about the remainder of the meeting. After consulting with the NCURA National Office we decided to continue the meeting with a modified schedule to accommodate those presenters who were unable to commute in to teach their sessions but still offer quality programming to the attendees who were sticking it out in Baltimore to participate in the rest of the meeting. Emails were sent, schedules were changed, presenters were contacted, it was a whirlwind night where everyone chipped in. We left some flexibility in the Tuesday schedule to allow for a possible changed time of the O's game that we were all supposed to attend. Unfortunately, the game was canceled due to the ongoing situation in the city. At that point, the Hilton again stepped up to the plate and put on a ballpark themed dinner for us to enjoy. We put together a trivia game to entertain people after dinner. Congratulations to the winners!

Due to the 10pm curfew in Baltimore, we enjoyed the hotel amenities for the night and the hospitality suite after dinner and trivia. We wrapped up our meeting the next afternoon with a slightly modified Wednesday morning schedule.

I really want to express my sincere appreciation to all of the Spring Meeting attendees, presenters, the Program Committee and the staff at the Hilton for their flexibility, understanding, and support during the Baltimore meeting. We were all disappointed to have to cancel events and some sessions, but the safety and security of attendees and presenters was paramount. We made every effort to continue the meeting and offer alternative arrangements to the best of our ability. Here's hoping we can come back to Baltimore in a couple of years and really get to enjoy the city (and an O's game)!



### Annual Meeting Travel Award Winners

Please join me in congratulating the winners of the AM57 travel award. Congratulations to Sarah Robertson, University of the Sciences and Angela Henke, Primary Care Research Institute. The travel awards provide a small amount of funding to cover travel, registration and hotel expenses for individuals located within Region II who have not attended a NCURA Annual meeting. The awardees are expected to stay for the duration of the Meeting and submit a report about their experience.

### Professional Development Committee Update

I want to express my appreciation for Denise Clark and Ann Holmes, two very hard working faculty of our PDC, for all of their work presenting and promoting workshops for the PDC since its inception. Ann and Denise will be taking a well-deserved break from presenting for the PDC and will be missed. Thank you, Ann and Denise, for your hard-work and dedication to the Region. We hope to have you back next year for more fabulous presentations!

Visit the PDC section of the Region II website (<http://ncuraregionii.org/pdc>) for a current listing of PDC workshops near you! Want a workshop to come to your area or interested in hosting a workshop at your institution? Contact the PDC Chair, Greg Slack [gslack@clarkson.edu](mailto:gslack@clarkson.edu). Don't forget - institutions hosting a workshop receive either two free workshop registrations or one free Region II Spring Meeting registration!

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncuraregionii/> and Twitter: @NCURAREGIONII

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





## REGION III Southeast

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



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/192985687430137>

### Same Great Region, New Leadership

Region III would like to congratulate Danielle McElwain for taking office as Chair and Kay Gilstrap as Chair-Elect. Both ladies bring to our leadership

team a wealth of experience that will further our reputation as a productive and prosperous region. While we say goodbye to Laurianne Torres as Chair and Tony Ventimiglia as our Chair-Appointed Board Member, we are confident that they will continue to contribute to NCURA in other ways and represent our region well.

### Region III's National Contributions

One of the remarkable traits about Region III is that our membership is comprised of professionals who are committed to the success of our profession and NCURA. This is evidenced, not only by the number of volunteers that serve at the Regional level, but also by Region III's contributions at the National level. At this time, we would like to recognize the following members for their national service:

- President **Michelle Vazin**
- Board of Directors – **Erica Gambrell, Kerry Peluso**
- Nominating and Leadership Development Committee – **Debbie Smith**
- Professional Development Committee – **Sam Gannon, Bob Holm, Jeanne Viviani**
- Financial Management Committee – **Linda Bucy, Erica Gambrell, Cathy Snyder**
- 2015 PRA/FRA Program Committee Co-Chair – **Tony Ventimiglia**
- 2015 Annual Meeting Program Committee – **Laurianne Torres, Cynthia Hope, David Smelser, Anne Pascucci**
- 2016 PRA/FRA Program Committee Co-Chair – **Laurianne Torres**
- NCURA Magazine Co-Editor – **David Smelser**
- NCURA Magazine Contributing Editor – **Randi Wasik**
- Research Management Review Editor – **Jo Ann Smith**
- Research Management Review Editorial Assistant – **Brigette Pfister, Beryline Temples**
- Research Management Review Editorial Board – **Tim Atkinson, Jerry Fife, Sam Gannon, Robert Lowman, Dhanonjoy Saha**

Thank you all for making a difference in our profession!

### Save the Date

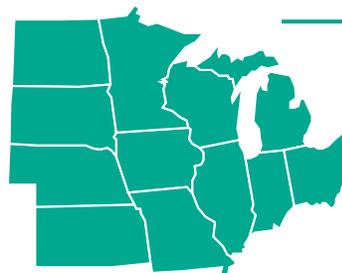
After such a remarkable Spring Meeting in the Isle of Palms in May, you can still hear the ruffling of flamingo feathers across the southeast region.

Energized with information and professional connections, Region III is already gearing up for the 2016 Spring Meeting. Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us for another opportunity to network with your peers from other institutions and obtain valuable information on current research administration topics. The 2016 Spring Meeting will be held May 1st to May 4th at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Gold Resort & Spa in the gorgeous setting of Miramar Beach, Florida. For more information on the wonderful location please visit <http://www.hiltonsandestinbeach.com/index>

Watch your email for the theme and request for proposals for workshops, concurrent sessions, and discussion groups in late September! We will also announce the winner for the theme contest!

### Stand Up for Standing Committees:

If you want to get involved with Region III, there is a standing committee that would benefit from your time and talents. Please visit <http://www.ncuraregioniii.com/committees.php> or email [chair@ncuraregioniii.com](mailto:chair@ncuraregioniii.com) for ways that you can get involved!



## REGION IV Mid-America

<http://www.ncuraregioniv.com>



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ncura-Region-IV/134667746605561>

Summer is flying by. Thank you to everyone who attended the Region IV and VIII spring meeting in Chicago last spring and helped us make this meeting such a success! We really enjoyed meeting everyone, participating in thoughtful discussions, and networking with colleagues from around the world. We hope you got as much out of the meeting as we did.

I cannot believe that the national meeting is upon us already, and can't wait to see everyone in a few days. Region IV is once again offering the famous DC After Dark tour, a must if you have not gone yet. Make sure to practice the lyrics to Region IV's "Everything is Awesome" song, and get ready to jump on stage with us on Tuesday night – we think we can win this competition. And don't forget to grab your passport and hit the hospitality suites! Can't wait to see old friends and meet new friends too.

Finally, honoring region IV's continuing commitment to education, a few notes from Jennifer May and the Region IV Professional Development Committee:

Calling all Region IV members! Are you looking for a unique way to engage with NCURA colleagues? Maybe you need a mentor to be your coach or help you with some specific issues? Or maybe you had a great mentor and now it's time to give back and help someone navigate their career in research administration? Whether you are looking to mentor or be mentored, the Region's Mentoring Our Own (MOO) program can help you achieve your goals. Our program is designed to pair up two people so they can work together to advance networking and support options for the profession and within our Region. Mentors share knowledge and experience and mentees gain access to experienced research administrators. Both

participants can practice and improve leadership and interpersonal skills, increase their professional network, and have the opportunity to learn from each other or work on specific goals. All the information you need to sign up is on the Region IV website. <http://www.ncuraregioniv.com/professional-development-committee.html>

See you all in DC!

**Kirsten Yehl** serves as the Chair of Region IV and is an Administrative Director at Northwestern University.



## REGION V Southwestern

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



<https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=78596532079&v=wall>

“Anytime I see a rainbow, what comes into my mind is how skillful and talented someone was to create an ark that didn’t leak through a prolonged period of flood. We must work our talents out and work them out skillfully and then our rainbow of excellence will show.”

**Israelmore Ayivor**

As I write this article, Region V is just coming to grips with the results of the recent floods in Texas and Oklahoma. The torrential waters left devastation in their path, however, they also provided great opportunity to change perspective, educate the community and bring people together to analyze, problem solve, support and expand networks.

The Region V Annual Regional meeting in Houston provided our members with a flood of opportunity (without the devastation!). The spring meeting, our second largest regional meeting to date, had an outstanding program thanks to all the presenters, volunteers, sponsors and the hard work and dedicated effort of the Program Committee. I would like to thank Scott Davis, Colette Solpietro, Courtney Frazier-Swaney, Krystal Toups, Robyn Remotigue, Roxanne Smith Parks, Joanne Palmer, Katie Plum, Thomas Spencer and Shelly Berry-Hebb for their service on the Program Committee. As Chair of the Committee, it was an honor to work with these dedicated members to provide educational and networking opportunities to the 220 attendees.

At the meeting, Region V recognized and honored Hollie Schreiber as outgoing Chair. New officers were also announced with the election of Shelly Berry-Hebb, Texas A&M University System, as Chair Elect; Courtney Frazier-Swaney, University of Texas at Austin, as Treasurer Elect; David Ngo, UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, as At-Large Executive Committee Member and Scott Davis, University of Oklahoma Health Science Center, as Region V Member to the National Board of Directors. Katherine V. Kissmann took office as the Regional Chair at the close of the meeting.

Shelly’s election provided an opportunity for a new Volunteer Coordinator for Region V. I am happy to announce that our new Volunteer Coordinator is Beth Milam, Senior Contract Negotiator II with the Texas A&M University System. Beth will soon be sending out a call for volunteers for the 57<sup>th</sup>

Annual Meeting in Washington DC. We will also be sending out information on other volunteer opportunities available on various committees within the Region. If you are interested in finding out how you can become more involved, please feel free to contact Beth at [bmilam@tamus.edu](mailto:bmilam@tamus.edu).

We are happy to announce that we have scheduled the venue and dates for our 2016 Annual Regional meeting. The meeting will be held at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas. Save the date, watch for more information coming soon and plan to join us April 24-27, 2016 for another excellent regional opportunity for professional development and networking.

**Katherine V. Kissmann** serves as Chair of Region V and is Director, Contracts & Grants, at The Texas A & M University System Sponsored Research Services.



## REGION VI Western

[www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura](http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/r6ncura)

Dear RVI Members,  
It was a cold October Saturday, in 2007, when I arrived in Washington DC. My suitcase over-packed as I was ready for any East Coast weather. I was attending my first

NCURA Annual Meeting. Nobody in my department, at my employment grade, had been granted travel to the Annual Meeting in the past, so I knew I was lucky. My attendance was only made possible because I applied and was awarded the NCURA travel award. I realized it was unlikely for me to attend a future meeting anytime soon so I was determined to get the most out of my experience. I was not going to overlook any opportunity to participate, network or learn. I was not going to overlook any opportunity to be of value. At the meeting, I volunteered at the registration desk and I quickly connected with our RVI leadership. I got involved. That cold October in 2007, I wanted my membership to help me be a success. Yet, I realized years later that my success was heavily weighted on my determination to be of value. Like the words of Albert Einstein, “Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.” As Chair, I have not forgotten the opportunity provided because of the travel award, and I have not forgotten how striving to be of value leads to success. I invite you to join-in and volunteer. You will not be disappointed.

### Highlights of RVI activities:

**Elections: RVI 2017 Officers:** I would like to thank our fellow members who are stepping forward to volunteer and serve as our 2017 RVI Officers, with their Officer-elect positions beginning January 2016. The voting period began mid-June and closes July 10th. The voting link was emailed to you. Please look for your ballot to select leaders for these important positions. Your vote counts! A special thanks to the Election Committee: Chair, Csilla Csaplar (Stanford); Joseph McNicholas (Loyola Marymount), Julie Guggino (Central Washington University), Rosemary Madnick (University of Alaska, Fairbanks), and Kimberlee Eudy (University of Southern California) for their dedicated work!

**RVI Travel Awards:** Thanks to all the applicants who applied for the RVI travel award to attend AM 57. The applicant pool was competitive, and RVI would like to congratulate our AM57 travel award recipients: Angela Mitchell (University of Alaska, Fairbanks), Aiden Barin (University of California, Irvine), and Hanna Kim (University of California, Irvine).

Region VI will offer travel assistance awards for our upcoming region meeting in Salt Lake City. Please visit our region website and look for the open call for future travel award applications or reach out to our Awards Chair, Stella Sung ([shsung@mail.ucsd.edu](mailto:shsung@mail.ucsd.edu)) for additional information.

**NCURA Catherine Core Minority Travel Awards:** In addition to the RVI travel awards, NCURA offers the Catherine Core Minority Travel Awards. I am pleased to congratulate the award recipients in RVI: Amber Wynn (California State University, Fullerton), Juanita Kalif (Benaroya Research Institute at Virginia Mason), Sandra Stevens (University of California, Irvine), and Nhan Nguyen (University of Washington). Great job!

### **RVI and RVII Salt Lake City Regional Meeting:**

#### ***Life Elevated...reaching new heights in research administration Salt Lake City, Utah, October 4-7, 2015***

Your fellow RVI and RVII members are hard at work preparing a dynamic professional development program for you in Salt Lake City. While there are many details to prepare a region meeting, the details are coming together nicely. With that said, we are always looking for more help. So, if you are interested, please reach out to our RVI New Member Volunteer Chair, Sam Aleshire ([skgoodwin@alaska.edu](mailto:skgoodwin@alaska.edu)).

**AM57, NCURA Annual Meeting:** The Region VI Officers and Volunteers are supporting various activities at the upcoming annual meeting, which is just around the corner. We look forward to seeing our new and emeritus members at the RVI/RVII New Member and Emeritus Reception. We also look forward to seeing you at the RVI Business meeting and networking with our colleagues at the RVI/RVII Hospitality Suite following a day of wonderful sessions.

**Membership and Volunteer Committee:** Sam Aleshire (University of Alaska, Fairbanks) has agreed to serve as the New Member and Volunteer Committee Chair. Sam has been on the Committee for over 6 years. Her knowledge and involvement will be instrumental in helping lead the committee's activities. Thank you, Sam for agreeing to serve in this vital role.

I would also like to thank and congratulate Allison Ramos who served as the New Member and Volunteer Committee Chair from 2014 through May 2015. Allison is now welcoming a new member of the Ramos family. Her support the region has been tremendous.

I would also like to thank and congratulate Lindsey Demeritt, Elected RAC Member (who was transitioning to serve as Chair the New Member and Volunteer Committee) on her new position at Dell Medical School at UT Austin. Lindsey's energy and support will be missed in our region.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Washington, D.C. and Salt Lake City!

Regards,  
Melissa R. Mullen ([mrmullen@calpoly.edu](mailto:mrmullen@calpoly.edu))

*Melissa Mullen serves as Region VI Chair and is the Director of Sponsored Programs at the California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo.*



## **REGION VII Rocky Mountain**

<http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu>

*"I can't change the directions of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination" – James Dean*

As summer rapidly approaches, I am reminded of how quickly time passes and just how busy all of us are. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to everyone in our region. Without you, we wouldn't be successful and able to begin new endeavors. The Annual Meeting is almost upon us and we need volunteers for the registration desk. If you are interested in a rewarding experience, meeting new people, and the opportunity to help out, please send me an email [marj.townsend@asu.edu](mailto:marj.townsend@asu.edu). We will also be sending out the SurveyMonkey volunteer sign-up soon, so if you are interested, you can sign up there too. Ease and accessibility is our goal!

Bring your energy! If you aren't able to make it to the Annual Meeting in DC, save a spot in your busy calendar for our Regional Meeting in Salt Lake City, October 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>. It's not going to be all work without fun. There are plenty of things to do in the area. The weather will be nice with an average October temperature of 52 degrees. For us Arizonans, that is downright cold especially after surviving the scorching summer! Make sure you check out the SLIC visitor's site at <http://www.visitsaltlake.com> and our webpage at <http://ncuraregionvii.asu.edu/announcements>. Rooms are filling up, so make sure you make your reservations today. We will be recruiting volunteers for this meeting too, in a variety of capacities, so please let me know if you are interested. This is a great stage to share ideas, meet people and learn new things.

It's also that time again for elections. I am amazed by our executive leadership team. Our Nomination and Election Committee has been busy working on compiling a list of candidates for:

- 2016 Chair Elect
- 2016 Secretary/Treasurer
- 2016 Member at Large (1 slot)

Keep an eye out for the announcement and vote! Your vote is important for us to continue to prosper as a region. It takes a village to manage growth and change. You can be the change.

Lastly, I want to thank Christine Marquez for serving as Chair for our region up until recently. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, she had to step down. Christine has been a wealth of information and has been diligently working with the RVI Chair on the upcoming meeting. Thank you Christine!

Please make sure you visit our webpage often for upcoming announcements. Looking forward to seeing you in Washington D.C. and Salt Lake City!

*Marj Townsend serves as Region VII Chair and is the Research Advancement Manager for the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University.*



## REGION VIII International

<http://www.ncuraintregion.org>

Spring has been and gone in the northern hemisphere and now (most) NCURA members are enjoying the beautiful summer weather while the smaller proportion of NCURA members in the southern hemisphere are preparing for the chilly winter season.

Some of us were lucky enough to experience spring in Chicago at the joint Region IV/VIII Spring meeting. The international region was represented by nearly half the International Region members. Many presented throughout the meeting and I can safely say that everyone walked away with new thoughts and learnings along with a wider NCURA network after mingling in the Princess Diana Hospitality Suite and chatting to colleagues during the social events. A big thank you to the program co-chairs, Eva Bjorndal and Kirsten Yehl, for planning such a fabulous meeting.

The meeting provided the first opportunity for Region VIII to thank some of our founding region members with awards for their hard work and effort:

Distinguished Service Award – **Agatha Keller**, ETH Zurich

Outstanding Volunteer Service Awards – **Annika Glauner**, ETH Zurich and **Eva Bjorndal**, Karolinska Institute

The International Region is supporting a satellite meeting in Zurich from the 2-4 September, 2015. The Global Fundamentals Workshop offers research managers and administrators a two and a half-day professional development opportunity that focuses primarily on the post-award phase of US grants including financial aspects of administering US grants, audits, communication with NIH, monitoring of sub-awardees outside the US. More information can be found on the international region website: <http://ncuraintregion.org.previewdns.com/meetings/#Zurich>.

We are planning an International Region dinner on Monday 3 August at the national NCURA meeting in August, keep your eyes open for the details in the program!

We are also pleased to announce that in 2016 we will be joining forces with Region VI & VII for the regional meeting in Hawaii, October 2-5 2016. Stay tuned for more information.

**Julie Ward** serves as the Region VIII Reporter and is the International Research Manager, Division of Research, at The University of New South Wales, Australia.

## What I Found on Twitter



*Amanda Snyder: Please follow me  
[@travelgirl76](#) and follow [@NCURA](#)*

National Science Foundation - [@NSF](#) - The value of #basicresearch: <http://1.usa.gov/1cxCOmE> via [@whitehouseostp](#)

Sally Rockey - [@RockTalking](#) - We clarified which publications training grant PIs must submit under our Public Access Policy. Reducing burden. <http://1.usa.gov/1FcGrWk>

Higher Education - [@GdnHigherEd](#) - How to apply for research funding: 10 tips for academics <http://gu.com/p/485dz/stw> #higherEd

DoD Inspector General - [@DoD\\_IG](#) - Our new #FOIA Reading Room provides a searchable database of redacted reports: <http://go.usa.gov/39db5>

PATH - [@PATHtweets](#) - What kinds of innovation could be unleashed if all researchers had access to all the knowledge within their fields? <http://bit.ly/1CgGqRp>

Brookings - [@BrookingsInst](#) - As federal support for R&D dwindles in the U.S., states & metro areas are beginning to step up: <http://brook.gs/1JxrUKF>

NYU Stern - [@NYUStern](#) - Does #data - driven #management improve performance? Research by Profs Steven Blader & Claudine Gartenberg in @Ozy: <http://ow.ly/Nibu1>

TED Talks - [@TEDTalks](#) - Learn how we create our own happiness in this fascinating, classic talk: <http://t.ted.com/SkLvB3u>

I just started following [@ozy](#), [@caura\\_acaru](#), [@IHME\\_UW](#), and [@NIHCatalyst](#).



# NCURA

# On The NATIONAL LEVEL

## Craig Reynolds

Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, University of Michigan



A 2013 OSTP memorandum instructs the heads of executive departments and agencies to develop policies for increasing public access to the publications and data that result from federally funded scientific research. NIH has had such policies in place for years, and NSF and Energy recently announced plans for similar policies going into effect January 2016. The remaining agencies will follow suit.

The goals of the OSTP memo are laudable, but they do impose more administrative burden on faculty. What can universities do to minimize the impact? Training is key, but what else? Hire staff to ensure publications are compliant with federal agency policy (or risk delays in funding)? Create tools and digital repositories at great institutional expense? Pay journals to ensure our compliance? And where do our libraries and IT services fit into the mix? We face more questions than answers right now, but the costs will be evident soon enough. Are we prepared?

## Mary Veazie

Executive Director, Clinical Research Finance, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center



Every institution involved in clinical research must deal with complexities and the ever changing landscape in this industry. When these institutions incorporate patient care into their clinical research structure, the complexity increases. Clinical research billing begins with an accurate listing of items and services required to fulfill the hypothesis of the clinical research study. Each item and service must be reviewed to determine the appropriate billing requirements. The determination of the appropriateness of billing for items and services associated with the clinical research study is only the beginning. An effective clinical research billing program requires coordination and thorough communication between the clinical research departments, the billing office and other applicable units. Strong institutional leadership, policies and procedure compliment the program. Every institution struggles with these issues.

## Derek Brown

Sub-Award and Reporting Administrator, Washington State University

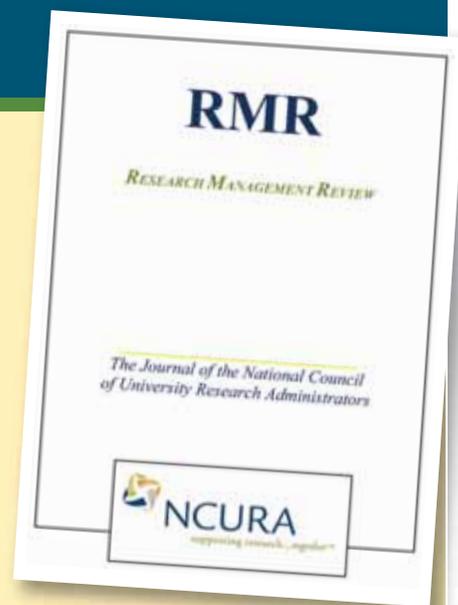


As research administrators, we rely on proposal, award, and expenditure data in many ways (as proven throughout this issue devoted to the topic). Elsevier and Snowball Metrics recently worked to create a standardized definition of 'proposal success rate' and generated two fully developed metrics, proposal success rate by count and amount. As part of this process, WSU was able to provide feedback on how to better account for revised budgets and competitive renewal applications to identify a definition that fit both national and international perspectives. As a result, we have implemented updated reports that match these definitions at WSU (our reports previously included success rate by count only), and encourage all of you to examine these and other metrics as you make strategic decisions at your organization.

## Research Management Review

See the latest issue of our scholarly journal. Articles include:

- Research Cluster Development at a Predominantly Undergraduate Institution
- Promoting Strategic STEM Education Outreach Programming Using a Systems-based STEM-EO Model
- Determining Best Practices in Effort-Reporting Compliance
- Rising From The Ashes: Strategic Approaches for Reclaiming Healthcare and Research as a Culture of Innovative Care
- Assessing Grant Capacity and Readiness: A Systematic Review of the Periodical Literature of Research Administration
- The Effect of Computer Automation on Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office Efficiency
- Burnout and Quality of Life among Healthcare Research Faculty



Now Online at: <http://www.ncura.edu/PublicationsStore/ResearchManagementReview.aspx>

## WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT NCURA'S LATEST WEBINAR?

The Right Metrics: Choosing, Measuring and Evaluating Metrics to Drive Performance Success in Your Office

*This was the **BEST PRESENTATION** on metrics we have seen to date. Thank you!!*

Available now on demand!  
[http://www.ncura.edu/  
Education/OnlineEducation/  
Webinars/Metrics.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/Education/OnlineEducation/Webinars/Metrics.aspx)

*Kerry Peluso is a **GREAT** speaker! I would participate in future meetings she is teaching... very impressive command of the material!*

*I was **VERY IMPRESSED** by Kerry's breadth of knowledge.*

### What's Next?

Air date: July 14, 2015  
(now available on demand)

Is it a Gift or a Grant and other Critical Funding Mechanisms your Staff Should Know

September 29, 2015

How a Few Bad Apples can Cost your Institution Millions: What your Institution Needs to Know to Mitigate Institutional Risk of Research Misconduct and Navigate Landmines in the Process

October 30, 2015

Going Global: What Your Institution Needs to Know about Managing Research Without Borders

November 18, 2015

Crowd Funding: An Enormous Opportunity at your Fingertips

December 1, 2015

Creating the Cohesive Team Your Office Needs to Thrive



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# NCURA

# CALENDAR of EVENTS

## TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

**Global Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration Workshop**  
Zurich, Switzerland.....September 2-4, 2015

**Financial Research Administration Workshop**  
San Antonio, TX.....September 9-11, 2015

**FUNDAMENTALS 2.0: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop**  
San Antonio, TX.....September 9-11, 2015

**LEVEL II: Sponsored Project Administration Workshop**  
San Antonio, TX.....September 9-11, 2015

**Export Controls Workshop**  
Providence, RI.....September 10-11, 2015

**Departmental Research Administration Workshop**  
Savannah, GA.....December 2-4, 2015

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

**Region VI/VII - Western/Rocky Mountain**  
Salt Lake City, UT.....October 4-7, 2015

## ONLINE TUTORIALS

- A Primer on Clinical Trials
- A Primer on Federal Contracting
- A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements
- A Primer on Subawards

Visit our  
website for  
enrollment  
periods.

## WEBINARS

**The Right Metrics: Choosing, Measuring and Evaluating Metrics to Drive Performance Success in Your Office**..... Available On-Demand

**Is it a Gift or a Grant and other Critical Funding Mechanism Clarifications Your Staff Need to Know** ..... Available On-Demand

**How a Few Bad Apples Can Cost Your Institution Millions: What Your Institution Needs to Know to Mitigate Institutional Risk of Research Misconduct and Navigate Landmines in the Process**  
.....September 29, 2015, 2:00-3:30pm Eastern

**Going Global: What Your Institution Needs to Know about Managing Research Without Borders** .....October 30, 2015, 2:00-3:30pm Eastern

**Crowd Funding: An Enormous Opportunity at your Fingertips**  
.....November 18, 2015, 2:00-3:30pm Eastern

**Creating the Cohesive Team Your Office Needs to Thrive**  
.....December 1, 2015, 2:00-3:30pm Eastern

## DEADLINES FOR OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2015

Submission of Articles to Contributing Editors .....August 28, 2015  
Submission of Articles to Co-editors.....September 4, 2015  
Submission of Advertisements .....September 4, 2015

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

For further details and updates visit our events calendar at [www.ncura.edu](http://www.ncura.edu)