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The RAP Up

The Newsletter of NURAP

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WINTER 2010

Focused on the Whole: Centralized Research Administration Services

Jill Bockes, Northwestern Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute



Northwestern has recently seen two developments in centralizing research administration operations. This past October, under the guidance of the Dean of the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, the College made a commitment to reorganize to better support research administration. Also in October, the Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM) Research Office began to offer research administration services to the School.

A centralized research administration service isn't new to WCAS. The college has had a pre-award position serving the humanities and social sciences divisions for 15 years and a post-award position in the dean's office for one year. Gretchen Talbot fills the role of Director of Research Administration and supervises two Research Administrator positions – one serving the humanities and social sciences, the other working to support existing research administrators in the science and math departments. This group reports to the Associate Dean for Research. Because the Dean for Research position is generally rotated every three years, the new research administration group provides consistency and is the bedrock of research operations in Weinberg.

Talbot and her two research administrators look at operational efficiencies and where they can add value. They host monthly meetings for research administrators on current and relevant topics such as reporting, F&A recovery, cost share and chart sting reconciliation. They are responsible for the entire life cycle of the grant from pre-award to post-award.

A centralized research administration service might be old hat in Weinberg, but it's new to Feinberg School of Medicine's Research Office as of October. The service was developed to help small departments, centers and institutes who don't yet require a full time RA as well as larger units in transition or in need of RA services for the long or short term. The aim is to assist with pre and post awards, as well as the entire life cycle of an award including management and compliance.

Michelle Melin-Rogovin, an RA for the new service, says it's her job to help departments who request the service to know where they are, where they are going, and to keep them moving in the right direction. "Our service was created first and foremost as an investment in FSM, because every area of the medical school should have this kind of support, and we value every investigator," Melin-Rogovin said.

Because the service works with departments large and small across FSM, they are able to identify trends and issues. Once identified, Melin-Rogovin said the next step is to ask "how can we assist?" By taking a customer-service and team based approach, Melin-Rogovin works with a department's current staff, enhancing what is already happening and adding to the department's capacity. "We have great respect for the departments we work with who are growing their research enterprise," she said.

A key outcome of these centralized research centers is that representatives of all areas of the University can now work together to better serve and develop research as a whole. For example, Talbot says her office works often with the Cancer Center, even though it is a part of the Medical School, since a number of WCAS faculty are involved with the Center. Through this collaboration, central research centers will have more opportunities to brainstorm and learn from one another, thus benefiting the entire University.



From the Editor

Alden Chang, Office of Research Development

Happy New Year!

Like most of you know, the New Year brings a period of reflection, self evaluation, and goal setting to help us to attain a year's worth of aspirations and goals.

This holds true for NURAP as well.

We've started off strongly this year, with a NURAP at Noon event addressing one of the most critical pre-award processes: development of proposal budgets. A talented team of your peers--**Ellen Feldman, Michelle Grana, Mary Lynne Williams,** and **Andrea Zakrezewski** provided in depth presentations that not only reviewed the steps to developing a budget, but provided context, the thirty thousand foot view of how the institution is affected by every decision made in this budgeting process.

NURAP is also demonstrating a renewed resolve to professionalize our field by assembling a pilot cohort of members to take the Research Administration Certification Council's certification examination. This effort lead by **Elizabeth Adams** and **Frank Cutting** again illustrates how NURAP is at the vanguard of research administration organizations not just in the Chicagoland area, but nationally as well.

Our activities in this certification effort send a strong message to the research community at Northwestern that we are committed to the enterprise and that ours is not just a job, but a bona fide career path that encompasses a broad and complex skill set that requires mastery of federal, institutional, and statutory regulations and principles.

Research administration is gaining recognition for the critical role it plays in the conduct of research. As sponsors' requirements for reporting and compliance grow, the need for education and specialization also increases. It is the NURAP Steering Committee's honor to continue to serve your training and education needs in the New Year.

Member Recognition

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The following NURAP Members received a service excellence citation in calendar year 2010 and were honored at a lunch reception on January 28, 2011:

- Rachael Basnett
- Alden Chang
- Julie Cowan
- Deborah Cundiff
- Tyra Darville-Layne
- Tyler Dorsett
- Jennifer Felten
- Amy Fowler
- Javier Gonzalez
- Pamela Hawkins
- Emilie Kahle
- Sara Krentz
- Kathy Mandell
- Julia McPherson
- Tasha Osafo
- Jarrod Routh
- Matthew Ruchin
- Elizabeth Tang
- Latonia Trimuel
- Jamie Young

WE WANT YOU!

NURAP is **always** looking for members interested in organizational leadership.

If you are interested in becoming a leader in NURAP, please contact Lori Palfalvi (l-palfalvi@northwestern.edu) or Alden Chang (alden-chang@northwestern.edu) about how you'd like to contribute to our exciting organization!

Membership Views

In commemoration of the new year, NURAP asked members attending a recent NURAP at Noon event about their research administration new year's resolutions.



My research administration resolution for the new year is -- I'm collaborating with other staff in our department to finally build a library of templates, checklists and handbooks -- we've been meaning to do it for months now!

Denise Dooley, Research Coordinator, Molecular Biosciences

This year I'm looking forward to participating in the many learning opportunities Northwestern has to offer, especially the CRA study sessions hosted by NURAP and the nonprofit/grant related courses through SCS. As a new research administrator, my goal is that through both these courses and on the job training I will end 2011 a more informed research administrator.

Catherine Berardi, Research Administrator, Weinberg College of Arts and Science



I resolve to be more organized and efficient in my grant maintenance by creating redundancy. Especially in those sensitive cases where frequent follow-ups are important, my calendars, email reminders, system notes, etc. will be set to keep me on track.

Bernie Hadaway, Grants and Contracts Financial Administrator, ASRSP

My RA resolution for 2011 is to expand my body of knowledge in Research Administration by participating in the CRA Study Sessions and hope to take the exam in May! I have a lot to learn, but it's a bright new year!

Farrin Abbott, Research Administrator, Materials Science and Engineering



My research administration resolution for the new year is to increase my knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the research administration process. I plan to do this by attending as many training classes, seminars and networking events here at NU as I can -- including NURAP events, of course!

Bonnie Schorn, Grants and Contracts Financial Administrator, ASRSP



Department Dossier: RA Detective Kit

Susan Morris, McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science Research Administration

Last quarter, I wrote about doing your own detective work to save time. Here are some items I keep in my detective kit.

NetID-to-Name Lookup

If you have someone's NetID (perhaps from a list of approvers) but don't know their name or contact information, search by NetID in the Advanced Directory:

<http://directory.northwestern.edu/?a=1>

EmplID Lookup

If you have lookup access in HRIS, you can find any employee's EmplID and other basic non-salary information on the Job Summary panel, regardless of their department:

[Workforce Administration > Job Information > Job Summary](#)

NIH Progress Report Deadlines

Since OSR is no longer sending progress report reminders to PIs and administrators, I recommend running NIH's public Pending Progress Reports by Due Date Query to check on upcoming deadlines. You can search any institution, but to go directly to NU's, use these links:

Evanston: http://era.nih.gov/userreports/pr_list.cfm?vInst=6144601

Chicago: http://era.nih.gov/userreports/pr_list.cfm?vInst=6144650

**Tip: Evanston proposals submitted on paper forms may end up assigned to Chicago accidentally!*

NIH and NSF Award Notices

NIH and NSF offer public queries showing recently issued award notices. This is especially helpful if you're the subawardee and want to know whether the prime institution has received their funds.

NSF: <http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/index.jsp>

NIH: http://era.nih.gov/commons/quick_queries/index.cfm#noa
(IPF #: Evanston 6144601, Chicago 6144650)

Current/Pending/Other Support Information

InfoEd-based Cognos reports aren't restricted by department or school, so you can use these reports to figure out the title, PI, end date, etc for that mysterious award where your faculty member claims he's a Co-Investigator:

[Public Folders > Project_Cafe_Reports > InfoEd_Reports > Current, Pending, and Completed Support](#)

Who approved this requisition?

Approval paths usually have multiple possible approvers at each step. If questionable purchases are slipping through without proper documentation, you can use NUFs to look up all of the people who approved a requisition along the route.

[eProcurement > Manage Requisitions > Request Status = Approved](#)

Enter additional search terms and click Search

From <Select Action> menu, choose View Approvals and click Go

Who's the administrator for this project?

If you have HRIS access, you can see the approvers, end date, and full chart string just by searching on the Project ID. The payroll approvers may not always be the right ones to contact with all sponsored research questions, but it's a good place to start when you're desperate.

[Organizational Development > Position Management > View Valid Chartstrings](#)

NOTE FROM ASRSP

- Please remember to send both grant program income and grant reimbursement checks to ASRSP for deposit.
- How you document them is important, and will affect which expense account they are posted against. For every check you send us, please tell us if it is program income or a reimbursement and include the *entire* chartstring you wish us to use, including the expense account.
- For reimbursements, it should be the same account which incurred the cost originally, and that PD/REQ or Travel Report ID should be included in your letter along with your contact information. Program income is always deposited as a negative expense (a credit) on expense account 78767.
- Neither of these types of checks should be deposited by the departments.
- If you have any questions about what constitutes program income, please contact ASRSP.

NURAP Star: Andrew Ludington

by Alden Chang

Andrew Ludington is NU's renaissance man: an IT consultant, a research administrator, and a screen play writer to boot. Andrew recently sat down with the RAP Up to talk about the future of electronic research administration, system to system grant submission, and Hollywood.

AC: So can you tell me about your background and how you came to your current position?

AL: Sure, I came to Northwestern in 1997, from the magazine *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*. I was their systems administrator. I came to Northwestern to work for OSR, which was then called ORSP, as an information specialist. I did a lot of report design, wrote a lot of SQL, and worked on their webpage. When I started they had only one webpage.

AC: Really? Was everything just thrown up on the one page, like a list of links?

AL: Right, just a list. So I did that for a few years for Sue Ross, who was my boss, and when she was promoted, I took her position as the manager for the information team. I did that for a few years and then I went to work for Change Management for a year as the functional lead for the SNUPR project. I went back to OSR as an internal consultant. My actual position title is Business Systems Analyst, Senior, but that's very sterile. What I really am is an internal consultant. So I worked on the implementation of InfoEd, NU Financials, I'm working PD right now. I work on a lot of special projects.

AC: So did you get your degree in Computer Science?

AL: No, my degree is in English Literature and Drama. As you expect, there aren't a lot of jobs in English Literature or Drama, but it did teach me how to write well, communicate well, work well with a group. I spend a lot of my time in front of groups of people, working in collaboration with people, and it did help me a lot in that regard.

AC: But you're not the tech support guy, right?

AL: No.

AC: Do you work with ORIS (Office for Research Information System) at all?

AL: I sometimes interface with on them certain projects. I worked with Suresh Mallipeddi from ORIS on e-Proposal, which we spec'ed out and produced in like five weeks. We went from being asked to do it to having something online, something people were using, in five weeks.



AC: It's funny that you mention e-Proposal. I've heard a lot of things about what it is and what it's supposed to be—a precursor or a subset of proposal development. Is that right?

AL: Yes, it's actually a routing tool.

AC: Were you guys envisioning it as a way to get people in the mindset that everything is going to be electronic?

AL: Yes, that was a big part of it. We knew that proposal development had been pushed off a bit because of the needs of NU Financials, and when Jay Walsh started as VP, he was really interested in trying to limit the number of paper forms that had to be filled out. So we put it together partially as a stop gap measure, for the convenience of the faculty and staff just so they wouldn't have to trudgeon things around in the snow all the time. But it does pave the way for PD.

AC: So proposal development is sort of this mythological creature. We've all heard about it, but no one's really seen it. Can you say with any sort of certainty when PD is going to be rolled out?

AL: Well, the certainty is always the difficult thing because there are a lot of moving pieces, including the upgrade of NU Financials which is going to suck up a lot of resources from Project Café. But the timeline right now has us doing pilot submissions this summer. So we'll train a couple of units this summer and have them do pilot submissions, take a little break for the end of the year, and then starting the new year start to roll things out in a much more aggressive fashion.

-continued on next page-

-NURAP Star Continued-

AC: *Is this where a lot of institutions are moving then, to system to system submission?*

AL: Yes, in the Big Ten every other institution is doing system to system submission, or is planning to. So that gives you an idea.

AC: *What do you see as the future of electronic research administration?*

(He points to my mobile phone recording our interview.)

Honestly, that's the answer right there. It's mobile devices. Mobile devices are eventually going to be the way that people get these tasks done while they're on the fly.

AC: *Are there any plans to get it attached to the Northwestern app?*

AL: I think there will be. Right now, I'm the chair of the InfoEd Community Advisory Group, which is just all of the customers who use InfoEd. One of the things we do is working with InfoEd and help them prioritize system developments. I think one of the things we can push is to really utilize mobile devices. I mean the research administrator who has to enter budgets and things like that is still going to use a desktop or laptop, but when it comes to things like reports and approvals all the kind of things should all be done through mobile devices. That's the way you're going to get to people who are otherwise hard to get to.

AC: *It's the New Year. Do you have any New Year resolutions related to research administration?*

AL: Yes. So, I didn't really think of it as a new year's resolution when I did it, but it sort of is. I signed up for the Certified Research Administration program. So I guess my resolution in that respect is to fill in some of the gaps in my knowledge in research administration.

AC: *So can you tell us something interesting that people don't know about you?*

Sure. I have an interesting hobby. I write movie screen plays. I've sold two.

AC: *Is it anything we've seen?*

AL: Sadly, no. If you think research administration is complex, Hollywood is a lot more complex. So, I sold a couple of scripts to production companies, neither of which were made into films. They're sitting on somebody's desk right now.

AC: *That's a very cool hobby. Did it come out of your theater background?*

AL: Yeah. A buddy of mine from college who got here a couple of years after I did, we started writing together. We've written a lot of things together, I've done a lot on my own. We're actually getting ready to produce a direct to web tv show.

AC: *So when should we look out for that? Do you have a timeline?*

Probably this time next year.

AC: *Okay, you'll have let us know when it airs. We'll send something out over the listserv.*



Sponsor News

Matthew Duoponce, Office for Sponsored Research, Chicago

Following up on last month's discussion, the National Institutes of Health eliminated its application error correction window on January 25, 2011. An application that is not submitted error-free by 5 P.M. on the day of the deadline will be subject to the NIH late policy and may not be considered for review. With the elimination of the error correction window, OSR wishes to emphasize the importance of receiving your applications as early as possible, with complete proposals due two days in advance. Providing OSR more time for application review will assist us in completing as thorough of a review as possible and will allow us extra time, if necessary, to correct any errors and resubmit before the deadline.

Looking ahead, NIH is also implementing a change regarding letters of reference for Individual Fellowship Awards (Fs) and Individual Career Development Awards (Ks). The new policy will be effective on April 8, 2011 for the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Fellowship applications and on June 12, 2011 for the Individual Career Development or K awards. Starting with the April and June dates, letters of references will be due on the application receipt date, eliminating the five-day grace period currently allowed. Letters of reference may be submitted any time after the Funding Opportunity Announcement opens and can be submitted before the application itself. All applicants are encouraged by NIH to ensure that they select references that will comply with the new policy and submit their letters in a timely fashion.

On a final note, due to Congress's failure to pass an omnibus spending bill in December that would have increased appropriations to NIH, the Department of Health and Human Services will continue to operate on a continuing resolution through March 4, 2011. This means that NIH will issue non-competing grant awards at funding levels less than what was previously committed, often funding projects at 80-90 percent of what was initially allocated. So what does this mean for your projects? As a result of reduced funding, PIs may need to make tough decisions regarding cost reduction. Perhaps the most important action you and your PI can take is to plan ahead for this budget reduction as reduced funding appears inevitable.



Post Award: Who's Managing Who?

Frank Cutting, Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs

Are you managing your grant or is your grant managing you?

For most of us, the answer is occasionally going to be the latter. We all start off on top of things, smiling every day and actually leaving our desks for lunch. But inevitably something happens that sets us back, and we are back to grabbing bites of a cold sandwich at our desks during our "lunch hour". Unless you are vigilant, you can go from "smooth sailing" to being "in the weeds" very quickly. I know- I've seen me do it. Expect that unexpected events will happen, and that you will face times where you will need a good plan to get back on top of things. That's where your experiences, or those of others you meet at NURAP events can be beneficial.

Often though, it isn't the unexpected that gets us, it's the unaddressed. Small problems become larger when left unaddressed. So it serves our purpose to quickly address any problem that can eventually get worse. Consider the relative ease of issuing a correction journal with and without a 90 day letter required. Which one would you prefer to do? Clearly fixing a problem using less time is better. But I want to talk about something a bit less obvious.

Let's consider for a moment the possibility that there are ways to avoid or even minimize problems before they occur. Ways to anticipate common problems and take action to prevent them from occurring. Ways to take that lesson learned the hard way and implement a control so that you never have to learn that lesson again. We would certainly want to use these ways to our advantage. I've found that one way is to be proactive, not reactive. Therefore the best way to stay out of the weeds is a liberal dose of weed killer. Friends, meet some of your weeds.

So much depends upon proper financial management and a monthly review of expenses. Is your monthly payroll encumbered fully and correctly, or is it hitting suspense? When you pre-reviewed that effort report, were you sure that the commitments were right and you've considered any cost sharing needed this quarter? Or will you be writing to request permission to recertify an old report the next time you have a cost sharing report due? If you find other consistent problems when you reconcile a project's expenses, what do you do to prevent them the next month? Do you run expense projections, or deal with overdrafts when they get too big? For new awards, are your prespending expenses hitting the sponsored project chartstring or are you planning on moving them over months after the award started? Are you direct charging cost shared items to fund 191 on your sponsored project chartstring, or are expenses hitting other chartstrings which need to be transferred?

All good things come to an end, and it's the same with sponsored projects. Award closeout can sometimes involve a lot of steps and

reports, and can be very time consuming. But when an award is neglected throughout its life-cycle, things get messy and late. Ask yourself: are you routinely able to work with your GCFA to issue a

report on time? Or are we usually still working out effort, subcontract, or cost sharing issues the night before it is due? If so, then we each have some work to do. Do you start the process when you get the closing letter, or after the project period has ended? Do you follow the Sample Closing Checklist provided by ASRSP, or another workable plan or do you let your GCFA drive the process? Did you meet with the PI to put together a final spending plan for closing the project, or are you issuing correction journals and retroactive HR journals to the new funding sources months after the end date because you have a huge overdraft? Do you ask University Services to have tank charges moved to a different chartstring in anticipation of the closing, or do you issue correction journals to reverse part of the charges to another sponsored project after the end date? What about ACUC and IRB protocols and related expenses- have you considered where they should be hitting?

You get the point. And those are just some ideas from a post-award financial management perspective. What about the other areas of your job which occasionally get you in the weeds? Try to apply the same weed killer idea to those areas and see what can be made to work smarter. I would like to suggest that working smarter and being more effective will help you to minimize the number and amount of time you spend in the weeds. That leads to less stress, more job satisfaction, and a greater clarity of thought which actually lets you be even more proactive. Having less stress can lead to nothing negative, friends! I want to encourage you to take a look at the way you work. Try to notice those things that set you back which you can fix. Don't underestimate the value of the most routine thing you do every week. Know that with a good plan and extra effort you can get yourself out of any backlog. Understand the big picture in that fixing a problem when it occurs is always easier than fixing it later. And believe that the effort you put into proactively preventing problems from occurring is ultimately going to benefit not just you, but the PI, researchers, and those with whom you work to administer your sponsored projects effectively. Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional.





Certification in Research Administration Update

Elizabeth Adams, McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science Research Administration

They're here! After several weeks of intense planning, the NURAP-sponsored Certified Research Administrator (CRA) study sessions are off to a promising start. The sessions kicked off on January 25 and 26, with 45 participants in Evanston and 38 in Chicago, respectively. The sessions convene staff in positions from financial assistants to directors, and everything in between. It's clear that the Northwestern research administration community desires deeper understanding of topics in the field, and values the opportunity to study with colleagues.

In the first week of the study sessions, yours truly led the Evanston and Chicago groups on solicitations, proposals and funding mechanisms. The structure and timing of the federal budget was also discussed, including how it affects individual sponsored programs (timely information in light of a possible budget impasse in Washington over the next few weeks). An interesting observation from this session was that there is a central tension within research administration—on one hand, sponsors are interested in streamlining research activity via mechanisms such as the Research Terms and Conditions (RTC) and the NIH modular budget. On the other hand, growing sponsor interest in accountability and transparency (embodied by American Recovery & Reinvestment Act awards) has significantly increased the administrative burdens of research.

The second week of the study sessions reviewed the circulars that govern organizations that receive federal funding for research. Yours truly and Frank Cutting, Grant & Contract Financial Administrator in ASRSP (also co-organizer of the CRA study sessions), led these sessions on both campuses. An overarching theme of this session was that many different types of organizations (not just American colleges and universities) receive federal funding for a variety of sponsored activities. While OMB Circulars A-21, A-110 and A-133 govern Northwestern, other circulars/federal guidance govern hospitals, non-profits, commercial entities, state/local government and foreign bodies, etc. This is not just esoteric information—it directly informs what Northwestern must do when flowing federal funding to one of these types of institutions (hospitals, non-profits, commercial entities, state/local government bodies, etc.) as a subcontractor.

The third week of the study sessions featured facilitators Ellen Feldman (Director of University Research Center Administration, Office for Research), Sheri Carsello (Research Administrator 2, School of Communication) and Katherine Kober (Associate Grants Officer, OSR-Evanston) on the Evanston campus, and Lori Palfalvi (Research Administrator 3, Feinberg Department of Medicine) on the Chicago campus. They led discussion on readings related to federal agency review and negotiation; electronic research administration (ERA) and grants.gov; and awards. An interesting note from this session was that though government agencies have

been tasked with working together to create a true “one stop shop” (electronic platform) for all federal proposal and award management for about a decade, it takes a very long time to accomplish this (from logistical, financial, political and cultural perspectives). We're not there yet.

NURAP intends to formally survey participants on the study sessions at the end of the series in May to determine impact and viability for future years. Still, informal feedback has thus far been very positive from both participants as well as facilitators. See a sample of this feedback from your colleagues below.

Frank and I would like to sincerely thank all CRA participants and facilitators for your interest and support. While we've worked on the organization of CRA part-time, it's been a full-time interest and concern for us to deliver a worthwhile program. Feel free to write with continued feedback, and hope to see you at future sessions. Whether you will sit for the Certified Research Administrator exam or not, please join us!



I have learned a lot through participating in the sessions, and getting the context behind common tasks has given me a better understanding of how my job fits in to the bigger picture of NU's research mission. It is also neat to put some faces to names!

--Erin Farlow, Grants Assistant, Office for Sponsored Research-Evanston

Part of the value is not just in what is being presented but also the discussions that are taking place during the sessions. In addition, meeting colleagues from across the university is beneficial and sharing experiences helps to underscore some of the "rules" of research administration that we are reviewing.

--Andrea Zakrzewski, Research Administrator, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science

I really appreciate your help in putting these sessions together; I understand it is a collaborative effort that is going to pay off to the university. I do a minimum with grants, but one of my aspirations is to work directly in that area...I believe that this program is going to help me theoretically and will open doors for me to do the job.

--Olga R. Garcia, Administrative Assistant to the Chief, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine
also help me do better at my job.

-continued on next page-

-CRA Updte Continued-

I like the format of everyone reading the material in advance, and then reviewing and discussing some of the key points at the session. I think the CRA study sessions are very helpful and worthwhile, and I really appreciate all of the time that the facilitators are putting into the process. I think that what I am learning will not only help me prepare for the CRA exam, but it will also help me do better at my job.

--Deborah Cundiff, Associate Director of Research Administration, McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science

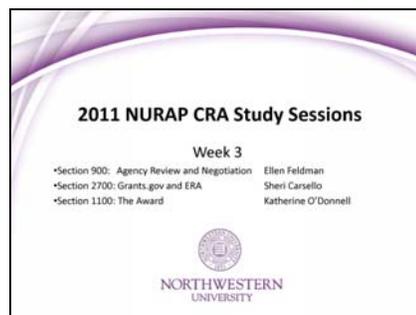
The sessions are great – from learning the material related to the CRA exam to meeting and networking with others on campus. HUGE "thank you" to NURAP for leading this...great job!

--Sarah Kalmon, Business Manager, International Institute for Nanotechnology

I am so delighted with the CRA sessions so far. They are providing

the depth that I was looking for. The reading material provides the background reference and the presenters provide relevance from their experience. Congratulations and thank you to all those who have contributed to this important effort. It is an incredible amount of work pulling this together.

--Helen Hutten, Asst. Project Manager, Chemistry of Life Processes Institute



eRA Update

David Hull, Office for Sponsored Research, Evanston

Grants.gov

While Northwestern anticipates the transition to System to System submission to Grants.gov in the near future, Adobe forms remain the single means of transmitting a proposal to Grants.gov. Currently, Adobe Reader versions 8.1.1 thru 9.4 are compatible with Grant.gov. As newer versions of Adobe Reader are released, it is important that you check the compatibility updates on the Grants.gov website before updating Adobe Reader on your computer since using incompatible version will cause an error in your submission. For a "safety check" to assure compatibility, please utilize the Adobe versioning test on the Grants.gov website at: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>. For full details on which operating systems and versions of Adobe Reader are appropriate, please visit: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#adobe811.

It is also worth mentioning that sources behind the scenes at Grants.gov have indicated they are in the early stages of redesigning their website. Their goals are to improve communications and navigation, offer timely updates, and give the site a more inviting look and feel. Grants.gov's mission will continue to serve as the main source to FIND and APPLY for federal grants.

Cognos Training

The need for reliable pre-award and post-award grants data

continues to grow throughout the university community. As I mentioned in a previous posting, Cognos offers a wide variety of InfoEd and NuFinancials report templates available to both research departmental staff and faculty who apply for access. The observations I have gathered among users seeking data is that prior training or a refresher course in using Cognos would be a huge benefit to getting the results you are looking for. Please visit the Project Café training page at: www.cafe.northwestern.edu/training. There you will find tremendous resources including a hands-on training course matrix, detailed training materials on specific reports, step by step online demos, and an Open Lab schedule.

OSR Web Resources

The OSR web carries a number of great assets and extensive information to assist you in your proposal and budget preparation, as well the development of one's awareness of policies and practices in sponsored research at Northwestern and throughout funding agencies. Some of the specific tools are a Budget calculator with built-in current rates, modular tabulators, agency proposal checklists, a fringe quick chart, past training presentations, and so on. Please visit the OSR Training & resources web page at: <http://www.research.northwestern.edu/osr/training.html> to get the most of out of your efforts and personal research development.



Important NSF Updates

Mary Lynne Williams, Office for Sponsored Research, Evanston

The new [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\) \(NSF 11-1\)](#) went into effect for proposals submitted on or after January 18, 2011. This includes the requirement to submit a Data Management Plan as a supplementary document. FastLane (the proposal submission system for NSF) automatically checks for this. Proposals that do not comply with the requirement are prevented from submission.

It is important for principal investigators to note that the Data Management Plan will be reviewed as an integral part of the proposal, coming under Intellectual Merit, Broader Impacts, or both review criteria, as appropriate for the scientific community of relevance. Also, simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards are a single unified project and should include only one supplemental combined Data Management Plan, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included.

For very general information to be included in the data management plan, visit the OSR website at: http://www.research.northwestern.edu/osr/nsf_notices_1210.html.

NSF FAQs on the data management plan requirement are available at <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmpfaqs.jsp>. Further, data management requirements and plans specific to the Directorate, Office, Division, Program, or other NSF unit, relevant to a proposal are available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>. If guidance specific to the program is not available, then the



requirements established by NSF in Chapter II of the PAPPG apply.

Other important changes in the PAPPG include the required **Project Outcomes Report for the General Public** and prohibition of **Voluntary Committed Cost Sharing**.

Project Outcomes Report for the General Public. Within 90 days following expiration of the grant, a project outcomes report for the general public must be submitted electronically via Research.gov for all awards, funding increments, or supplements issued on or after January 4, 2010. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. NSF FAQs are available at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/porfaqs.jsp>.

Voluntary Committed Cost Sharing Prohibited. All organizational resources necessary for, and available to a project, must be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal. The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. NSF Program Officers may not impose or encourage cost sharing unless such requirements are explicitly included in the program solicitation.

The new PAPPG is available on the National Science Foundation website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg11001.

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