



# The RAP Up

VOL 7, ISSUE 2: Spring 2016

NURAP'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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## NRSA Tips and Tricks

How do you feel when you hear the words “F30”, “F31”, “F31 Diversity”, “F32”, or “F33”? Do you feel a sense of confidence, having worked on these fellowship grants before? Or perhaps you feel a sense of worry, these being new and challenging proposals you have only heard of before now? Or just maybe you feel a sense of blissful ignorance, unfamiliar with what these are and instead happy to return to working on that 90-day journal.



The spring cycle for the **National Research Service Awards (NRSA)** will be upon us soon – the April deadlines are right around the corner. Given the popularity of this type of grant mechanism, we have compiled a list of tips for fellow RAs working on NRSA applications.

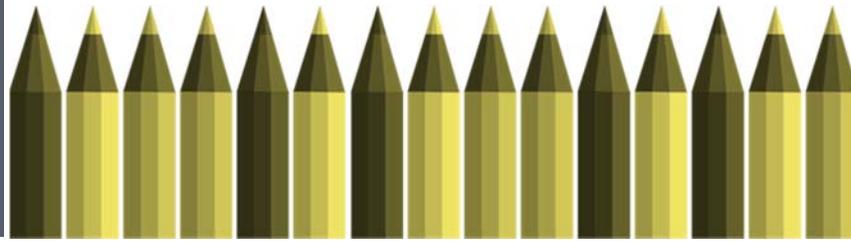
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Helpful  
Tips

## NRSA Tips and Tricks (continued)

### What is an NRSA?

The F-series NRSA's are NIH individual fellowship grants. Per NIH's website: "NRSA awards support the training of biomedical, behavioral, and clinical researchers through individual pre- and postdoctoral fellowships, and institutional research training grants. NRSA awards provide training opportunities for individuals at various stages of education and training, beginning at the baccalaureate level and through the postdoctoral phase."



The following are the NRSA individual fellowship grant mechanisms:

- **F30** — Predoctoral for MD/PhD and other Dual Degree Individual Fellowships
- **F31** — Predoctoral Individual Fellowships
- **F31 Diversity** — Individual Predoctoral Fellowships to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research
- **F32** — Postdoctoral Individual Fellowships
- **F33** — Individual Senior Fellowships



Herra Iqbal is a Research Administrator in a Department of Medicine.

### Tips from a Research Administrator

#### 1. Explain the Workflow – InfoEd > Approvals > OSR > Submission > Post Award

For many fellows, NRSA submissions are their first exposure to the research administration world at Northwestern. Fellows often have spoken to their peers about the submission process, but we all know that our research administration lingo basically sounds like gibberish to everyone else. When fellows first express inter-

est in any NRSA application, it is beneficial for both of you to sit down and **discuss the process**. I first show them what infoEd is and why we use it, often by showing them an example of a submitted proposal. In addition, **identify the key players in the process**. It is important for our young investigators to understand the function of OSR and be able to distinguish the role that RAs play and the role that a GO plays. This may sound tedious, but it tremendously helps the fellows understand the importance of deadlines and overall timeline of the submission process at Northwestern.

#### 2. The Effort Question – “But it HAS to be 80% effort!”

Departments and divisions across campus may have different policies on allowable effort for research fellows. Fellows often reach out to their peers to seek advice on general application requirements. Many times they argue that 75-80% effort is required for all fellowship applications. While that might be the case for some, it definitely is not the case for all NRSA awards. Recipients of independent career development awards are generally required to devote 3-6 person months (25-50% effort) conducting research and research career development related activities during the period of the award. Some awards allow and may

## NRSA Tips and Tricks (continued)



require more than 6 person months (50% effort). For example, K02 recipients are required to devote 9 person months (75% effort) to research. The relevant Funding Opportunity Announcement will provide program-specific minimum percent effort requirements. It is important to have these conversations early, and ensure that the division is willing to cost-share effort if it is beyond the threshold of the award funding. OSR requires confirmation of cost-share via email or a letter from the division Chief or department Chairman.

### 3. Budget: NIH Formula for Tuition and Fees

NIH will award 60% of each requested predoctoral trainee's tuition and fees up to a cap of \$4,500 per year, or \$16,000 for those in formal degree-granting programs. For postdoctoral trainees and fellows, tuition is limited to that required for specific courses in support of the approved training program or research training experience supported by the fellowship, which should be identified in the application (see NOT-OD-10-173, <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-073.html>). Depending on the institution, additional information on the courses along with an explanation of the fees might be required at the Just-In-Time phase.

### 4. Post-Award: The Relentless Activation Notice and Payback Agreement Forms

An Activation Notice (PHS 416-5) must be submitted to the NIH awarding office, ideally before the day the fellow begins training.

For the Chicago Campus, submission of a Payback Agreement form is also required for postdoctoral fellows in their first 12 months of Kirsch-

stein-NRSA postdoctoral support. A payback agreement does not apply to predoctoral support. These forms require original signatures to be sent to the address provided on the NOA. It is the RA's responsibility to facilitate PI, Sponsor, and OSR signatures. OSR is not responsible for mailing the forms and will let you know when it is ready for pick-up. The NIH expects these forms to be delivered via FedEx or UPS to ensure delivery.

For the Evanston Campus, OSR-Evanston will mail the activation notice directly to NIH, though they require the document to be signed first and that the department provide a non-sponsored chartstring to cover postage costs.

### 5. Keeping Up with Stipends: Matching Stipend Rates with Budget Years

Our fellows are not direct University employees. On the Chicago campus, they are employed by a Northwestern Affiliate organization called McGaw. As such, their paychecks come directly from McGaw and not from the University. Many departments have a "set it and forget it" attitude at the beginning of academic years for fellow sourcing and forget to update the NRSA stipend level at the beginning of a new budget period. This results in many of our NRSA awards being underspent at award closeout. Always make sure to update your NRSA Stipend levels to be consistent with your NOA for the current period.



## NRSA Tips and Tricks (continued)



### Tips from a Grants Officer

#### 1. Conflict of Interest

It is important that the fellow has been correctly entered into InfoEd and that there is a current FCOI disclosure on file for both the fellow and the sponsor in eDisclosure. The COI training component also needs to be up-to-date, with a training date within the past four years.

#### 2. eRA Commons Usernames

Make sure both the fellow and the sponsor have eRA Commons usernames and confirm that their accounts have the correct roles designated in their profiles – the “PI” role for the fellow and the role of “Sponsor” for the sponsoring faculty member. If you need to request a Commons username or add a role to an existing account, you can submit a request via the link below:

<http://osr.northwestern.edu/era-commons-help>

#### 3. Cover Letters

Cover letters are required and need to include the list of referees - at least 3 references but no more than 5. Remember that the sponsor and any co-sponsors cannot be included as referees. The letters of reference are submitted separately from the application, directly through eRA Commons.



#### 4. Funding Levels

Be sure to use the most current stipend and institutional allowance levels. Also, the tuition requested should be the full tuition rate in place at the time the application is submitted. As Herra notes, NIH will award tuition at a reduced rate, but the full tuition rate should be listed in the application.

#### 5. Biographical Sketches

The biographical sketch format for fellows is different from the standard NIH biosketch template and includes the following sections: personal statement, positions and honors, contributions to science, and scholastic performance.

#### 6. Additional Educational Information

The Additional Educational Information document is required by some funding announcements, typically for F30 and F31 applications. In general this document is no longer required for postdoctoral F32 applications. Carefully read your specific funding opportunity for additional guidance.

#### 7. ABC — Always Be Checking (the Guidelines)

It is crucial to remember that application guidelines and funding opportunity announcements change frequently. Be sure to check the FOAs and the links provided for revisions and requirement updates. The NIH individual fellowships website is a great resource for updated policy notices, current funding opportunities, application guides, and forms.

<https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships>



**Rachel Mugg** is a Grants Officer in the Office for Sponsored Research (OSR), Chicago Campus.

## Export Controls



Export controls are US laws and regulations that regulate the distribution of technology, services and information to foreign nationals and foreign countries for reasons including foreign policy and national security.

Export controls usually arise for one or more of the following reasons:

- The nature of the export has actual or potential military applications or economic protection issues.
- Government concerns about the destination country, organization, or individual.
- Government concerns about the declared or suspected end use or end user of the export.

The Office for Export Controls Compliance (OECC) visited with NURAP at Noon for its March 2016 meeting and discussed the impact of export control regulations on the University as well as the role and evolution of OECC. That presentation can be found here:

<http://www.nurap.northwestern.edu/files/2015/09/OECC-for-NURAP-Chicago-Mar-2016-2kdgnq7.pptx>.

OECC oversees Northwestern's Policy On Export Controls Compliance, the first of its kind for the University, which was approved in May 2014.

[http://exports.northwestern.edu/sites/default/files/files/export\\_controls\\_compliance.pdf](http://exports.northwestern.edu/sites/default/files/files/export_controls_compliance.pdf)

Among the federal rules and regulations governing the University activity are:

- The Export Administration Regulations, including items outlined in the Commerce Control List, which are subject to federal restrictions <http://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/commerce-control-list-ccl>
- The International Traffic in Arms Regulations, which list defense items and articles subject to federal restrictions via the U.S. Munitions List <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=86008bdfdd1fb2e79cc5df41a180750a&nde=22:1.0.1.13.58&rgn=div5>

- The Office of Foreign Assets Control's sanctions program, outlined at the Treasury Department's website

<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/Programs.aspx>

In addition to regulating physical shipments overseas, these regulations also govern what are known as "deemed exports," the release of technology to foreign nationals regardless of location. The so-called "deemed export rule" has made export compliance at universities across the country a high profile area, and has led to significant growth in the field, particularly over the last few years.

Equally important to understand within the university context is the Fundamental Research Exclusion, which provides a safe haven for universities to conduct research to the extent that such research qualifies as "fundamental"; in order to qualify, the research must be that which is ordinarily published and must not contain any restrictions on the involvement of foreign nationals.

In Spring 2016, OECC expects to roll out export compliance training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), (<http://www.citiprogram.org>). An array of courses is offered through CITI, including sessions geared towards research administrators and researchers. This training will be accessible via the LEARN @ Northwestern platform (<http://learn.northwestern.edu>).

If you have any questions regarding export compliance issues at the University, please contact its Director, Lane Campbell, at 847-467-4063 or [lcampbell@northwestern.edu](mailto:lcampbell@northwestern.edu), or visit OECC's website at <http://exports.northwestern.edu>.



**Lane Campbell** is the Director in the Office for Export Controls Compliance (OECC).

## DEPARTMENT DOSSIER: Calculating Non-12 Month Salaries



### Tips for Non-12 month Appointment Salary and Effort Calculations

When I was a project coordinator on the Chicago campus, I rarely had to deal with appointments that were not for 12 months. As a consequence, when I first came across an investigator with a 9-month academic appointment I did not understand fully what this meant and how to calculate summer salary - or why the investigator was practically begging for the main PI to approve it! Now that I am a research administrator in a center on the Evanston campus, I have come across 10- and 11-month calendar appointments that can also be confusing. Although there are effort calculator worksheets, they do not fully explain what you need to know about academic appointments and usually do not include the 10 and 11 month types. In addition, the worksheets will not help you calculate salary correctly.

Given the ever-growing amount of cross-campus collaboration, I thought better understanding of these different appointment types might be useful to promote more accurate pre-award budgets and effort being listed in Cognos.

#### 9 Month Academic Appointments

Many of the Evanston campus professors have 9-month academic appointments. This means that their contracted salary is provided for 9 months of a faculty member's work, i.e. for teaching and service during the nine month academic period in a year. Their institutional base salary for their main paid appointment is therefore the monthly pay rate  $\times$  9.



**Jody Hirsh** is the Senior Research Administrator in the Center Chemistry of Life Processes Institute and is the current President of NURAP.

Summer Salary. I think it helps to envision summer salary as "the icing on the cake". This is salary paid for work during the summer academic quarter that is in addition to the contracted academic salary. Summer salary is an incentive to obtain research grants to cover work during this time period. Salary for these months is paid at the same monthly rate as during the 9 month academic period. There is a limit of 2.5 months of this time that can be paid from sponsored funding.

Additional Factors: Some faculty members with academic appointments also have directorships which are paid over 12 months. Their academic base then is the sum of the 9 month salary and 9/12ths of any directorship salaries. But do not worry, if you are obtaining the salary information from the PI's administrator, this will already be included and you will not have to calculate this.

#### 10 and 11 Month Appointments

Non-tenure track research faculty, e.g. Research Assistant Professors, who are in many Evanston campus Centers or Cores, often have 11-month and rarely 10-month appointments. These are considered calendar type appointments. As in the academic appointment, the additional months are incentive to obtain research grants to pay summer salary. Similarly, all but  $\frac{1}{2}$  month of the additional months can be paid with sponsored funds. However all effort is reported on the basis of the 10- or 11-month calendar period (see next page).

## DEPARTMENT DOSSIER: Calculating Non-12 Month Salaries (continued)

### Application of the NIH Cap

The NIH cap monthly rate is currently \$15,425 for FY16 (\$185,100 for 12 months). Therefore, the salary cap for a 9-month academic appointment is 9x this rate, or \$138,825. Similarly, it is \$169,675 for an 11-month appointment and \$154,250 for a 10-month appointment. Typically you will only come across academic appointments that are over the cap. Therefore if you are given a salary of \$140,000 for someone with an academic appointment, your first instinct may be to think it is under the cap because it is less than \$185,100. But now you know in this case that it is over the cap, and to use the cap rate.

### Effort Calculations

You do not really need a worksheet to figure this out. The same principles are used as for calculating 12-month appointment effort, only adjusted to the different lengths of the calendars.

**Academic appointments:** Academic effort is spread over 9 months. Therefore 5% academic effort is  $0.05 \times 9 = 0.45$  month. 10% is 0.9 month, etc. Inversely, going from months to % effort, 2 academic months effort is 2/9ths or 22% academic. Summer effort is spread over 3 months. Therefore 5% summer would be  $0.05 \times 3 = 0.15$  month; 1 month summer is 1/3 or 33% summer effort.

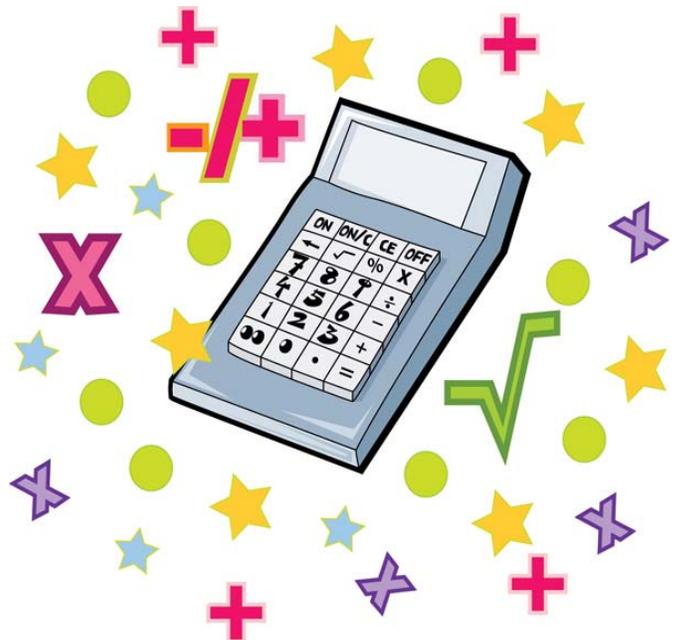
**11-month appointments:** The calendar is 11 months long instead of 12. Therefore 5% effort is  $0.05 \times 11 = 0.55$  calendar month. 1 month effort is 1/11 or 9%. For 10-month appointments, use 10 instead of 11 in the calculation.

### Other considerations when Calculating non-12 month Salaries

There are many different templates used across the University to calculate the internal/detailed grant budgets. To simplify, if your template calculates salary by % effort, then % effort  $\times$  annual salary will yield the correct amount. However, you must be sure to calculate effort correctly for the budget justification.

On the other hand, if your spreadsheet calculates salary as monthly pay rate  $\times$  months of effort, you will need to be sure to have the correct monthly rate and accurate months of effort.

If you are informing another administrator about effort for collaborating faculty who have academic appointments, it is a good idea to tell them not only the % effort, but the time period it will be for - academic, summer, or annually. As you can see, 5% effort could possibly be interpreted three different ways: 0.45 academic, 0.15 summer or 0.45 academic AND 0.15 summer.



## NURAP STAR: Kate Cosgrove Booth



**Kate Cosgrove Booth is the Senior Compliance Officer in the Conflict of Interest (COI) Office. Recently, RAP Up Co-Editor, Melanie Mkrdichian, got together with Kate to reflect on her time here at Northwestern.**

**MM: How did you first get interested in Conflict of Interest (COI) and how did you get to this point in your NU Career?**

KCB: Working in research compliance, and conflict of interest specifically, was a career change for me. I came to Northwestern as a postdoc in Feinberg, but after a couple years knew that I was ready for a change. I spent a year working in McCormick essentially as a program coordinator where my role was loosely defined and I did anything that needed to be done. That transition year was extremely valuable to me because I learned so much about research administration and how many people it takes to make a project truly successful. It was also a bit of a soul-searching year where I spent time thinking about where and how I could still be a part of research without being in the lab. When this position opened up with Conflict of Interest, it was everything I was looking for: a way to leverage my scientific background, focused on protecting research integrity, and featured working with people.

**MM: What are your duties?**

KCB: If you've ever been to one of our presentations, you'll know that when a research project comes in, before the chartstring can be opened, it needs to be reviewed alongside any

external financial interests the Investigators may have. What that means is that we look at the science of the project, the budget to look for any large purchases or subcontracts, and we see if there is a related protocol for use of human subjects in the research submitted to the IRB. In cases where there appears to be overlap between the project and external interests, we prepare a summary and send it to each school's dean's office for their review. I am primarily responsible for these reviews and preparing these summaries.

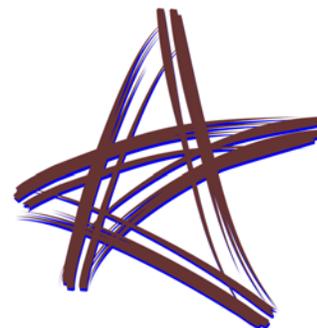
**MM: What is the best part of your job and working with COI?**

KCB: The people, hands down. I feel like everyone says this in their interviews, but it's really true. Julia, Mari and our new teammate Paula, are all just wonderful people to work with. I also love that I get to read about the research that is happening across the university. At least once a week a project will cross my desk that proposes to do something that I had no idea was possible, let alone happening just down the road. It's fascinating, humbling, and one of my favorite parts of the job.

**MM: What is the most challenging part of your job?**

KCB: I think one of the hardest parts of my job, and the job of our office, is the negative connotation that comes with the phrase "conflict of interest" – everyone assumes something bad happened, which is not really what a conflict of interest is! A conflict of interest just means that a person has two or more interests, but both (all) can be very good things. Our office is concerned with making sure there's transparency about what those things are and whether they could potentially or be perceived to influence each other.

Our other biggest challenge is that the volume of work can be high, a statement that will surprise no one in research administration. Making sure projects are reviewed in a timely manner even when the volume goes up can be hard, but we do our best to keep things moving as quickly as possible.



## NURAP STAR: Kate Cosgrove Booth (continued)

### MM: What do you do for fun to de-stress?

KCB: I like to walk around the city. I'm from Pittsburgh which is also set up as a series of different neighborhoods that all have a different feel, but Chicago takes that to a new level. It's fun to just show up in a different neighborhood and see what it has going on that day, especially in the summer when all the festivals are happening.

### MM: What's your favorite vacation?

KCB: I think Edinburgh is my favorite city to visit, though I have not traveled as much as I would like. The city is so beautiful (there's a castle right in the middle of it, for Pete's sake), and the way they've preserved the history while still being a modern city is wonderful.

### MM: What kind of pet do you have/what is your favorite animal?

KCB: I have two cats who are not smart, but can be awfully cute.

### MM: Do you have any advice for new/junior research administrators who will start working with COI?

KCB: If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to ask. We're a pretty friendly bunch and know that there are a lot of pieces to fit together. We are happy to come meet with you in person as well; it's always nice to have a face to go with the emails!

### MM: What is something most people don't know about you?

KCB: I helped to run a beer tasting club that had over 600 members in Pittsburgh. We would hold organized meetings every other week that would feature six tasters on a theme, or we'd bring in breweries to highlight their portfolio. The worst idea we had was trying to make 150 tiny, 4oz black & tans in plastic cups, but we introduced a lot of people to some great beer and better people.

## SPOT (Sponsored Project Online Training)

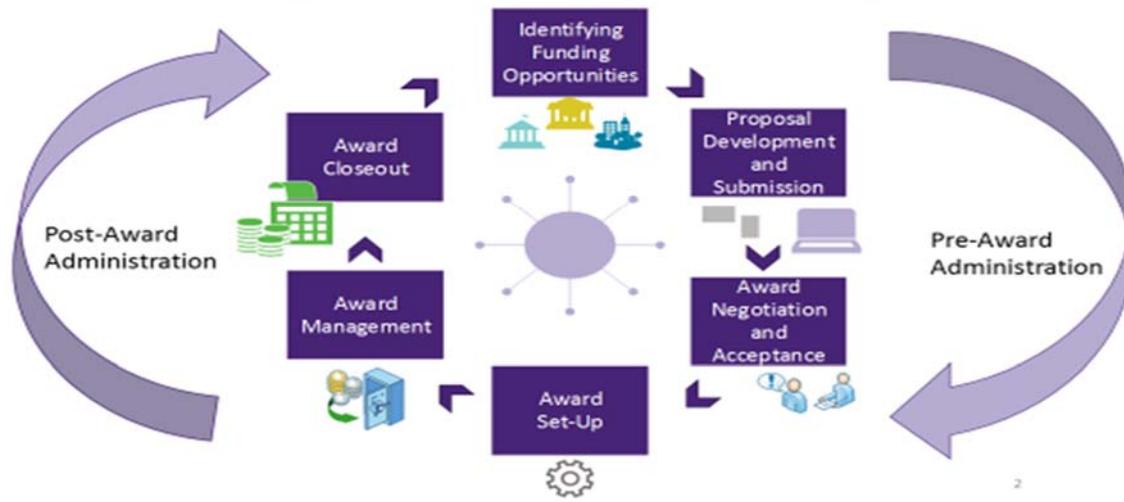
In February 2016, OSR launched SPOT (Sponsored Project Online Training), the first web-based phase of a training initiative. SPOT is being developed in partnership with a Training Advisory Committee made up of representatives from schools and other central offices involved in sponsored research. In 2015, Chris Riner, OSR's Senior Training Consultant, conducted a training needs analysis that included numerous discussions with research administration professionals across both campuses as well as with sponsored project training developers at peer universities. After reviewing and discussing the needs analysis findings, the advisory committee decided to initially deliver on-demand and self-paced, web-based training components that will serve as stepping stones for additional content down the road. These future offerings will include in-person training and professional development opportunities for seasoned veterans.



One of the first tasks the Training Advisory Committee tackled was to develop a visual display of the Sponsored Project Life Cycle. Ultimately, the goal is to provide an introductory online mini-course for each phase in the life cycle, along with more advanced online offerings, to be developed in continued collaboration with OSR's partners.

## SPOT (Sponsored Project Online Training) (continued)

## The Sponsored Project Life Cycle



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SPOT resources are located on the OSR website under the “Training” menu (<http://osr.northwestern.edu/training/spot>). Content from the initial phase of development is provided in three different formats:

**Mini-courses:** 20-30 minute interactive videos created in an e-learning authoring tool that allows designers to make engaging training content with audio, visual, and interactive components. The mini-courses’ subject areas include a range of topics in sponsored research administration.

- Introduction to Sponsored Research
- Beginner’s Guide to Sponsored Project Solicitations

**Microlearnings:** Functionally-oriented videos addressing a discrete topic or task. These modules are five minutes or less. The microlearning modules are supplements to job aides or user guides.

- Request an Outgoing Subcontract

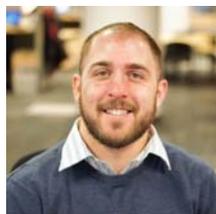
**OSR LIVE! Presentations:** These recordings “bring to life” presentations available on the OSR website from content delivered previously on both Chicago and Evanston campuses.

- NSF Update: Revised GPG & Other Topics

OSR is currently working with the advisory committee on SPOT Phase II, with new offerings slated to launch in May 2016. This phase will include another mini-course, Anatomy of the Administrative Shell, microlearning modules including vendor vs. subcontract and cost sharing, as well as another OSR LIVE! Presentation.

In terms of future directions, the plan over the coming months is to develop a series of Uniform Guidance-themed microlearning modules, formalize the in-person course offerings (where individuals will work through various case studies spanning a range of difficulty), and transition the online mini-courses to the Learn@Northwestern platform. This central University-wide learning system will help manage, provide, and track effectiveness of training and development.

Note to readers: If you are interested in contributing a voice to the SPOT content or have feedback regarding the content experience, contact Chris Rinere at [chrisrinere@northwestern.edu](mailto:chrisrinere@northwestern.edu).



**Chris Rinere** is the Senior Training Specialist in the Office for Sponsored Research (OSR) — Information Team.

## Programming Summary

2016 has been a great kickoff for **NURAP@Noon**. Below are quick synopses of what we have learned during this quarter's presentations. If you would like to learn more about any NURAP@Noon presentation, please check out these presentations on our website: <http://www.nurap.northwestern.edu/>.



In January, Julia Campbell joined us to talk about **COI Update: New eDisclosure System Goes live February 2016**. Julia walked us through the new system and reminded us of the COI process of reviewing disclosures when a proposal might be funded. She delighted us with the information that all COI questions will be going through eDisclosure instead of multiple Northwestern systems.

Michelle Stallonis presented **Research Misconduct and Compliance: Navigating the Grey Areas** in February. We walked through multiple scenarios on potential research misconduct and how to report misconduct appropriately. Remember – if any potential misconduct has occurred and you wish to remain anonymous, please contact (866) 294-3545 or [www.northwestern.edu/ethics](http://www.northwestern.edu/ethics).

March was a plethora of information at our Spring Training: OSR and Export Controls Updates. Chris Rinere from OSR Info Team introduced us to the new **Sponsored Projects Online Training (SPOT)** and informed us of training modules that are available and ones that will be rolling out in the future. Lane Campbell from the Office for Export Controls Compliance educated us on the **Export Controls Updates**. He mentioned that export control issues can occur anywhere and always be mindful of Northwestern's policies. Additional information can be found in this Rap Up. Finally, Kim Griffin and expert GCOs joined us for **InfoEd Proposal Updates**. Kim recapped the changes in InfoEd proposal development and answered questions about the new system now that it has gone live.

### Future NURAP Presentations

- April: **Learn@Northwestern** with Samir Desai
- May: **Crosstown Classic: Working Interdepartmentally with Your Colleagues** with the NURAP Steering Committee



**Melanie Mkrdichian** is the Senior Financial Administrator in the Department of Surgery and is the current Co-Chair of NURAP's Programming Committee.





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