Doing More with Less: A Success Story

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Today’s Learning Objectives

• Gain insight regarding **the importance of addressing operational issues**
• Learn to **identify inefficiencies** in business operations
• Hear about **effective strategies to secure buy-in** from all levels of your institution
• Hear **how others have implemented changes** to improve efficiency in systems, processes, communication and education
Importance of Addressing Operational Issues

Increasing pressures on research administrative infrastructure

- Growth in Sponsored Activity
- Competitiveness for Funds
- Increasing Federal Regulations for Fiscal & Regulatory Accountability
- Increasing Demand for Transparency
Goals

• To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of research and sponsored programs
• To increase sponsored programs productivity for the entire university
• To improve customer and employee satisfaction
• To provide comprehensive support services for the development and administration of sponsored programs
• To mitigate compliance risk
Key Areas

- Organizational Culture
- Process
- People
- Training
- Lessons Learned
Organizational Culture

- Securing Buy-In
- Implementing Changes
- Managing Communication
- Leadership
Securing Buy-In

- Establish steering committee(s) to provide input
  - Key Research Administrators from Schools/Central
  - Faculty
- Utilize steering committees as “champions of change”
- Utilize external reviews to complement internal reviews and validate needs assessment
  - NCURA Peer Review
- Develop short term plan for key improvements
- Win the support of key individuals
Implementing Changes

- Establish a sense of urgency
- Utilize steering committee(s) to distribute/implement changes
- Determine priorities: short-term and long-term
  - Immediate focus on “low hanging fruit”
- Demonstrate momentum
- Consult and inform frequently
- Understand why change will be resisted and how it can be managed
Phases of Change

- Steady State
- Disorganization
- Recovery
- Reorganization
Managing Communication

• Improve communication between central offices
  • Regular meetings
  • Coordinate review/revision of processes that cross units
  • Coordinate technology development and improvements
• Implement Research Administration forums for both campus and central research administrators
• Implement brown bag and other informal discussions
• Disseminate news about changes
Leadership

- Committed and relentless
- Enthusiastic and inspirational
- Strategic and tactical
Process

• Procedures
• Roles and Responsibilities
• Automation
• Change Systems
• Performance Metrics
Identifying Inefficiencies in Operations

- Conduct internal review and needs assessment
  - Review processes and performance
  - Assess organizational structure
  - Review current workload and distribution
  - Identify roles and responsibilities
- Conduct customer surveys
- Identify red rules versus blue rules
PDCA Cycle

- **Plan**
- **Do**
- **Check**
- **Act**

**Process**
Procedures

Research Administration provides **information, documents and tools** to investigators and research advancement teams across the university.

The **Process & Work Instructions** provide the "how to" detail you need to **complete research administration tasks properly**.

Click on any of the processes at the right for more information.

**QUICK LINKS**
- Research Integrity
- OKED Finance (RID & IIA)
- Proposal Routing & Approval Form
- Request For ORSPA Action Form
- Standard Institutional Information
- Effort Reporting
- Proposal Budget Info (includes ERE)

**RESEARCH OPERATIONS UPDATES**
- 03-30-12 Newsletter: NIH Salary Cap Calculator
- 03-30-12 Newsletter: ERE Encumbrances by Sub-Object Code
- 03-30-12 Newsletter: Eligibility
- 03-30-12 Newsletter: FY2011 Single Audit
- 03-30-12 Newsletter: All Hands Meeting

**Resources**
- Who can help me?
- Forms & reference docs
- Process & work instructions
- Federal sponsor links
- Faculty toolbox
- Project Management Office
- Glossary

**KEY TOPICS**
- Contracting with ASU
- Cost Accounting Standards (CAS)
- Cost transfers
- Data management
- Export control wizard
- F&A
- Financial accountability
- Recharge centers
- Topical guide

**RELATED SITES**
- Funding information
- Research integrity
- ASU policies

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Search: _____
Roles and Responsibilities

Focus on inputs and outputs of each process step

Execute project is the **sixth step** in the research administration process.

This involves post award project management from planning, financial management, monitoring progress, change requests through deliverables and end of obligation.
Procedures

Draft budget and justification

Responsibility: Unit

This work instruction contains the following sections:

Draft Budget
Prepare Budget Justification

Draft Budget

1. Review the sponsor requirements for allowable costs to the budget as found in the opportunity announcement or on the sponsor website. Budget must adhere to sponsor guidelines as well as ASU policies and Circular A21 (if sponsor is federal or subfederal). General ASU budgeting guidelines can be found on the ORSPA website.

   • NOTE: If you are responding to a Fellowship/Scholarship program, please be sure to review the Fellowship Reference Document in the Topical Guide section of the website under fellowships.

2. Confirm and make note of budget restrictions, such as minimum or maximum budget amounts, sponsor required budget periods, start date, and maximum or minimum project length (e.g., project cannot exceed 3 years)

3. Use current HR database to acquire and document payroll and benefit data on all principal investigator(s), collaborator(s), graduate student(s), undergraduate student(s), post doctoral appointment(s), research professional(s) and administrative personnel associated with the project.

   • Please note that the undergraduate student’s full hourly rate must be used when preparing the budget and cannot include any
Automation

- Develop a strategic plan for improving technology used by central and department units
  - Identify & assess current technology
  - Identify deficiencies
  - Identify options for system improvements
- Hire outside experts to conduct detailed review of current systems and validate needs assessment
- Identify short term solutions to improve efficiency
Change Systems

- Change Management Board
- Newsletter
- All Hands Meetings – Central and Units
- Networking events
# Change Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I want to...</th>
<th>So I should...</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit a proposal</td>
<td>Create a research proposal sharepoint site and add <a href="mailto:dl.wg.pnt.SharePoint.Owners@asu.edu">dl.wg.pnt.SharePoint.Owners@asu.edu</a> as a member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate a contract</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:proposalandnegotiation@asu.edu">proposalandnegotiation@asu.edu</a> and include any relevant documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise/update/inquire about a proposal that has been submitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a new account and/or new subaward</td>
<td>Email relevant information to <a href="mailto:notifications@asu.edu">notifications@asu.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit a change affecting an existing account including change to existing subaward, request for at-risk account or CAS exception approval on existing account.</td>
<td>Complete the Request for ORSPA Action Form and email to <a href="mailto:notifications@asu.edu">notifications@asu.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for guidance or inquire about the status of an invoice or financial report for an existing award</td>
<td>Send an email to your assigned AMT GCO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit a subaward invoice for payment.</td>
<td>Forward subrecipient invoice to <a href="mailto:subawards@asu.edu">subawards@asu.edu</a> (with PI approval if already obtained).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit a non-payroll Cost Transfer Request</td>
<td>Complete a Non-Payroll Cost Transfer Request Form and send to your AMT GCO via campus mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request a patent report, property report or account closeout</td>
<td>Send an email to James Obenour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposit a check into a sponsored account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request a W-9 or banking information for a proposal or award</td>
<td>Deliver the check to INTDSB Room 163. Send an email to <a href="mailto:cashmanagement@asu.edu">cashmanagement@asu.edu</a> and include any relevant documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not sure what I need to do...</td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:rahelp@asu.edu">rahelp@asu.edu</a>.</td>
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Performance Metrics

- Identify and address the backlogs in key processes impacting customers
  - Account set up
  - Account closeout

- Implement performance measurements to evaluate processes
  - Measure days to set up account
  - Distribute performance metrics to demonstrate improvements

- Establish service commitments
  - Proposal Review and Service Commitment
People

- Skills Assessment
- Organizational Fit
- Engagement and commitment
Skills Assessment

- Staff development framework
- Personalized training plans
- StrengthsFinder™
Fit

- Instructing
- Clarifying
- Directing
- Encouraging
Training

- Evaluate training program and relevance to operations
- Address the lack of defined core competencies for research administration positions
  - Central
  - Department units
- Assess current staffing
  - Number of staff
  - Capacity
- Streamline hiring process to improve selection of qualified candidates
Training

- Implement training program
  - Customer service training
  - Negotiation
  - Implement on-boarding program for new staff

- Focus on professional development
  - Develop formal career plans
  - Conduct annual performance evaluations
  - Tie merits to performance

- Develop resources for campus community
  - ‘How-to’ documents to identify processes
  - Checklists
By the numbers:

- Satisfaction rating from faculty and unit staff: 99%
- Average account Activation time: < 5 days
- Improved on-time delivery of financial reports & invoices: 62% → 95%
- 70% increase in efficiency of award dollars under management per FTE (FY08 & FY12): $3.3M → $5.6M
Lessons Learned

- Control scope creep
- Realize it takes time but be impatient
- Incorporate and manage conflict
- Be transparent
Questions

asuresearch.asu.edu
research.usc.edu