MSU Office of Research and Economic Development

Spring Seminar Series

Professional Development for Research Administrators

March 26, 2019
Today’s Presenters...

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Who are University Research Administrators?

We are higher education professionals who provide the infrastructure for and facilitate the research, outreach, and service programs and activities of our university.

We are wearers of many hats

Accounting, legal, compliance, safety, technical, department-level, and pre- and post-award administrative personnel – bridging relationships between and among educational institutions, public and private foundations, industry, and federal government agencies.
• Interpreter
• Mediator
• Expeditor

Three Basic Functions of a Research Administrator:

1. Provide services to enhance researchers’ success;
2. Provide management support for the institution’s research goals;
3. Help sponsors achieve their goals and abide by their regulations
Why Research Administration?

• Research Administration is a growing profession. More people with a wide variety of skills are needed to manage the complexities of the myriad opportunities and awards.

• We genuinely care and are interested in the work we facilitate. Research Administration gives us the chance to contribute to meaningful work, foster relationships, and learn.

• We are accountable to and take pride in representing our institutions.

• Long-term personal opportunities beyond your career
The Skills and Qualities Needed for Success:

- Working knowledge of agency policies, priorities, programs
- Understanding of federal and state laws, and institutional policies and practices
- Recognition of the value of the research enterprise
- Deadline driven
- Professional development/certification

- Interpreting information – the ability to find meaning in textual and or numeric data (extrapolating!)
- Communication (with PI, other RAs, Public constituencies)
- Problem solving and creativity
- Honesty, integrity, ethics
Research Administrators need ongoing training to:

• Stay informed of regulatory and legislative policies affecting the institution’s compliance with sponsor/agency rules.
• Enhance their own career paths through leadership opportunities and outlets for their individual skills, interests, and creative energy.
• Engage in professional and personal networking.
• Help keep their institutions competitive.
So, what do we need to know about?

• Finding funding – databases and search engines
• Pre-award administration (including proposal development)
• Post award administration
• Research compliance
• Assessment and Evaluation
• Management and leadership in Research Administration
• Higher education infrastructure
Training Topics (cont.)

• Policies, procedures, and best practices
• Sponsor/agency-specific issues (regulations, programs, audits, etc.)
• IP, Tech issues, export control, responsible research
• Contracts and negotiation
• Subawards and subrecipient monitoring
• Systems training
• Soft skills (customer service, etc.)
Comprehensive training as a Research Administrator goes beyond your position

• Research Administrators at all levels deal with a very wide range of tasks or challenges daily and must be well-versed and flexible.

• Receiving training in many facets of Research Administration can help improve communication and efficiency.

• Result of growing demand for growth of institutional culture and for Research Development resources
Growth of Research Administration as an Industry

1940s primarily scientists

1950s scientists, military, federal agency business managers

1960s-mid 70s RAs trained at state colleges and universities

1980s Initiation of professional orgs – development of in-house trainings at institutions

Present day Expanded credentialing, specialized trainings and degree programs for RA within organizational context (healthcare, university, etc.)
Primary Professional Development Sources:

Professional Organizations
Credentialing/Certification
Sponsors/Agencies
Institutional Resources

[Logos of various organizations]
Professional Development Organizations

WHEN YOUR PI LEAVES THE COUNTRY...

....BEFORE THE PROPOSAL GOES OUT. "THE PROPOSAL IS IN YOUR HANDS, DUDE. IT'S IN YOUR HANDS."
Benefits of Professional Organizations

- Offer workshops, conferences, and trainings for individuals at various locations (regional, national) and virtually.
- Often have additional resources available including mentoring, publications, and professional networking.
- Leaders in the field, drive policy, and are advocates for the industry.
- Some offer industry-recognized credentials including certifications and CEUs.
- May offer travel awards for new professionals.
- Provide opportunities for volunteerism and leadership.
Organizations for Individuals

- National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA)
  - http://www.ncura.edu/

- Society of Research Administrators International (SRAI)
  - http://www.srainternational.org/

- National Organization of Research Development Professionals (NORDP)
  - https://www.nordp.org/
NCURA

- Focus: University Research Administrators, Mostly USA
- Annual Meeting, Regional Meetings, Webinars.
- Traveling Workshops
- “Collaborate NCURA”
- Publications: NCURA Magazine, Research Management Review, Others…
- Primers: IP, Contracting
Global Research Management Society; Universities, Non-Profits, Hospitals, etc.

Annual Meeting, Section Meetings, Chapter Meetings, Webinars

Traveling Workshops

Publications: Journal of Research Administration, Catalyst

Certificates: Research Law, Research Integrity, Leadership, etc.
NORDP

- Focus: Research Development Professionals
- Annual Conference, regional Meetings, Webinars
- Various Committees (Volunteering Opportunities!)
- Listserv (1 Month Trial)
Support for Institutions

Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP)
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/

University Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP)
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/uidp/

Council on Government Relations (COGR)
(AASCU)
http://www.cogr.edu/Membership.cfm

American Association of State Colleges and Universities
http://www.aascu.org/

Association of Public and Land Grant Universities
(APLU)
http://www.aplu.org/

National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)
https://www.nacubo.org/
Professional Networking

- Peer to peer
- Institution to institution
- PI to PI
- Research Administrators to sponsors
- Tools (example: NCURA Collaborate)
- Social sites (Linked In/Facebook) *PD on a budget!
Volunteering

- Improves leadership skills
- Expands your network
- Give to the greater good
- Expands your horizons
- YOU get to help pave the future of research administration!
- No job is too small!
Certifications for
Research Administrators

VOLUNTARY COMMITTED COST SHARE

IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A
STRONG SCIENTIFIC PREMISE
Overview

- Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC)
- Formed in 1993 as an independent non-profit organization
- http://www.cra-cert.org
Types of Certifications

• CRA – Certified Research Administrator

• CPRA – Certified Pre-award Administrator

• CFRA – Certified Financial Research Administrator
Who is Eligible?

1. Bachelor’s degree and 3 years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration

2. Associate’s degree and 5 years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration

3. No degree and 6 years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration (requires a petition application)
What are the Benefits?

- Knowledge/Skills Development
- Professional recognition
- Increased credibility
- Increased opportunities for employment
- Advancement opportunities
- Personal Satisfaction
- Serve as a role model and resource to others
How Do I Become Certified?

• All exams are offered twice a year during a two week window:
  ➢ CRA – May and November
  ➢ CPRA – February and August
  ➢ CFRA – March and September

• Registration deadline is at least 30 days prior to the testing window

• $385 Fee
Details on CRA Exam

- Maximum of 250 multiple choice questions
- Total testing time of 4 hours
- The exam is weighted in approximately the following manner:
  1. Project Development and Administration – 30%
  2. Legal Requirements and Sponsor Interface – 30%
  3. Financial Management – 25%
  4. General Management – 15%
Details on CPRA Exam

• Maximum of 250 multiple choice questions
• Total testing time of 4 hours
• The exam is weighted in approximately the following manner:

  1. Research Partnership and Funding – 25%
  2. Project Development and Proposal Submission – 30%
  3. Budget Design and Development – 30%
  4. Awards and Pre-Award Compliance Considerations – 15%
Details on CFRA Exam

- Maximum of 250 multiple choice questions
- Total testing time of 4 hours
- The exam is weighted in approximately the following manner:

  1. Governing Framework – 25%
  2. Project Costs – 35%
  3. Reporting – 25%
  4. Fiscal Compliance – 15%
Important Dates

• CRA
  - November 2-16, 2019
    (application deadline is 10/1/19)

• CPRA
  - August 17-31, 2019
    (application deadline is 7/15/19)

• CFRA
  - September 14-28, 2019
    (application deadline is 8/15/19)
How do I start preparing?

- RACC review sessions
- Study the RACC Body of Knowledge
- Research the links within the Body of Knowledge
- Form study groups
- Quizlet
- Practice tests (via RACC, etc.)
- NCURA and SRA Workshops and Conferences
- ORED Seminars
- Agency Websites
More Important Dates

Review Sessions:

CRA – August 3, 2019
CFRA – August 4, 2019
NCURA Annual Meeting
Washington, DC

CRA – October 18, 2019
CFRA – October 19, 2019
SRA International Annual Meeting
San Francisco, CA
Proof in Numbers

- **CRA**
  - 2990 total
  - 41 in Mississippi
  - 24 at MSU

- **CPRA**
  - 112 total
  - 3 in Mississippi
  - 1 at MSU

- **CFRA**
  - 82 total
  - 1 in Mississippi
  - 1 at MSU
How do I Recertify?

• Every 5 years - $195 fee
• Provide information on continued participation/employment in the field
• Documentation of at least 80 contact hours
• 3 questions for use on a future certification examination

OR

• Re-take and pass the exam
Federal and other Agency/Sponsor Training Resources

Your budget includes unallowable costs and does not include F&A.

This is fine.
• Agency-specific training
• Peer institutions (lead entity, etc.)
• Federal resources
  – Federal Registrar www.federalregister.gov
  – Office of Management and Budget www.whitehouse.gov/omb
• Advocacy orgs
• PI/ discipline-specific orgs
• Foundations
• Consultants
Professional Development is available through most Sponsors

National Science Foundation (NSF):  www.nsf.gov
U.S. Department of Agriculture:  www.usda.gov
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:  www.dhhs.gov
*don’t forget regional! Ex: Delta Regional Authority, etc.
Some other federal, advocacy, public, or private (consultant) sources:

Grants.gov:  [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

Grants Resource Center:  [www.aascu.org/grc](http://www.aascu.org/grc)

The Foundation Center:  [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org)

The Grantsmanship Center:  [www.tgci.com](http://www.tgci.com)

Academic Research Funding Strategies:  [www.academicresearchgrants.com](http://www.academicresearchgrants.com)

Center for Opportunity in Education:  [www.coenet.org](http://www.coenet.org)

Professional organizations of your PIs: (ex: Soil and Water Conservation Society, American Chemical Society)

*Don’t underestimate YouTube tutorials!*
Resources available via agencies and others include:

- Official policy statements, legislation/regulation and guidance, full instructions (often training) for proposal and project management processes
  - Look for resource manuals (ex: grantmaking at ED; PAPPG at NSF, etc.)
  - For private orgs, sites often contain great info on “successful projects” to use as examples
- Archived webinars (often program specific) and links for upcoming or planned programs
- Contacts of previously funded projects and agency personnel
- News/trends and data sources/reports (useful in assisting with determining agency mission/priorities and justification for projects)
- Programmatic blogs (use as example of expectations)
Get to know our neighbors!

Peer/lead institutions can be a great resource:

• compare best practices (other OSPs, similar departments, etc.)
• training modules/web series/toolkits
• Collaborators (if you have a PI who regularly collaborates with a specific institution (subawards) you may want to learn as much as you can about their policies and procedures…and make friends with your counterparts there.
• Visit or virtually!
• Be a good neighbor, too!
Institutional Resources for Professional Development @ MSU
OSP’s Departmental Administrator’s Working Group (DAWG)

- Open to all department business managers, administrative staff, etc…who work with sponsored research/outreach/other externally-funded projects
- Cradle to Grave overview of grants and contracts, as well as processes and policies of sponsors and ORED departments
- Networking - 10-15 minute presentation about yourself and your job
- New FY’20 applications will drop in July
- 2 hour class once a month from August to May/June
- Department Head/Center Director must approve
MSU Resources Continued

• **MSU Library**
  
  http://lib.msstate.edu/
  
  – Faculty and Instructors tab
  – Help with dissertations, bibliographies, references, etc…
  – Full workshop calendar:
    http://msstate.libcal.com/calendar/events/?cid=1645&t=m&d=0000-00-00&cal=1645&ct=27072

• **Office of Research and Economic Development**
  
  https://www.research.msstate.edu/rresources/
  
  – Research Seminar Series
  – Announcements and e-newsletters
  – Data Management Plans
  – Limited Submissions
  – Research Policies
MSU Resources Continued

- **Research Compliance**
  
  [https://www.orc.msstate.edu/](https://www.orc.msstate.edu/)

  MyCourses

  CITI

- **Biosafety and Biosecurity**
  
  [https://www.biosafety.msstate.edu/training/](https://www.biosafety.msstate.edu/training/)

- **Departmental/College**

  In-house training by faculty and staff

  DAVFM


  The Consummate Administrative Professional – 4 sessions on emotional intelligence, communications, leadership, and productivity
Training in our own back yard!
More MSU Institutional Resources…

• graduate school offices (Ex: tools for citation management)
• Your Associate Dean for Research (and others!!!) trainings/seminar Series/blog
• Your PIs! Ask to be invited to meetings, on-site trainings and conferences, webinars, take field trips to labs/research sites
• ORED newsletters and announcements, e-blasts, updates, news stories via OPA
• Accounting/controller’s office/ITS/HR

*the best way to learn about institutional policies and systems is to sit in on new faculty/staff orientations, general meetings, subscribe to MSU news sources, etc.
Create your own!

Work with us to plan a program to meet your/your department’s needs

• Condensed, intensive training (boot camps)
• Brown bags, “Happy Hour,” Lunch-n-learns
• Mentoring/shadowing
• Workshops, specialized programming
NEXT STEPS

OOPS I DID IT AGAIN, OVERSPENT MY ACCOUNT

I LOST MY LEDGER, OH SAVE ME SAVE ME!
Suggested Professional Development Trajectory:

1. Institutional offerings (ORED, etc.)
2. SRA’s Fundamentals of Research Administration or an NCURA Department Administrator workshop
3. A sponsor/agency-specific training specific to your program/role
4. Regional or national program (NCURA/SRA, etc.)
5. Pursue certification (RACC)
6. Ongoing development - be a presenter, volunteer, or hold an office!
Overwhelmed???

Try setting aside just one hour once a week to
• peruse training resources
• read agency newsletters, e-blasts, blogs, etc.
• Shadow a colleague in a complementary division
• Review and schedule upcoming in-house offerings
• Chat with peers and colleagues via social and in-person networks
Some “Lessons Learned” from our Panel
Just for fun...

https://www.facebook.com/ResearchAdministrationMemes/
We’d love to hear from you!

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