NATIONAL COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS

Established 1959

NCURA

NCURA Region IV

SUMMER 2007 VOLUME 19, ISSUE 1

www.ncuraregioniv.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Mid-America Region

NCURA Region IV Recognition Awards

Written by Michelle M. Schoenecker, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

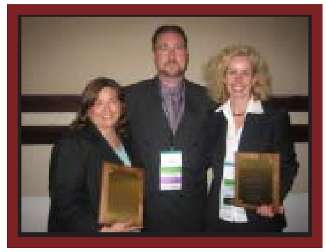
The NCURA Region IV Awards Committee presented two awards on May 14, 2007, at the Region III and IV Joint Regional Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Christa Johnson, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, received the 2007 Kevin Reed Outstanding New Professional Award, and Glenda Luecke, Washington University, St. Louis, received the 2007 Distinguished Service Award.

Distinguished Service Award

This award recognizes members with a record of continuing long-term contributions to NCURA, Region IV, and the field of research administration. Nominees must have at least five years' experience in the research administration field, have served either as a regional or national officer or as a committee chair at the national level, and have made regional or national presentations in the field.

Glenda began working in the research administration field in 1992 at the University of Missouri-Rolla. Currently, she is Manager of Financial Operations for the Division of Hematology in the Department of Internal Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis. Among Glenda's accomplishments and contributions to NCURA:

- Pre-award Research Administration Conference Presenter, 2006
- Region IV Board of Directors Member at Large, 2004-2006
- Region IV Spring Meeting Co-Chair, 2006
- NCURA Region IV/SRA Midwest Region Spring Meeting Program Committee, 2005
- Region IV Secretary, 2000-2002.
- Region IV Representative to National Membership Committee, 1997-2000
- Region IV Executive Committee Member-at-Large, 1996-1998



- Region IV Site Selection Committee, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2005 & 2006
- National Meeting Roundtable Committee Co-Chair, 1997
- Region IV Roundtable Committee Co-Chair, 1997.

Glenda received the Kevin Reed Outstanding New Professional Award in 1996. She is the first person in the history of NCURA to receive both awards.

Kevin Reed Outstanding New Professional Award

This award recognizes NCURA members who have had no more than five years' experience in the research meeting at the regional or national levels as a presenter, panelist, or moderator.

Christa began working in the research administration field at Washington University in St. Louis as a Grants Specialist and Special Projects Coordinator in the Research Office. Today she is the Assistant Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, and Adjunct Professor, Department of Historical Studies at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Among Christa's contributions to NCURA:

- Program Committee, NCURA Annual Meeting, 2007
- Moderator, NCURA FRA Meeting, 2007.
- Program Committee, NCURA Region IV Meeting, 2006 and Region IV/III Meeting, 2007
- Board of Directors, NCURA Region IV, 2006
- Panelist, NCURA Region IV Meeting, 2006.

NCURA is indeed lucky to have Christa and Glenda as active and fully participating members. Region IV extends hearty congratulations to them and best wishes for their continued success.

Chair's Corner

Hello Region IV!

As I write this, I am still trying to recover from our joint meeting with Region III in Nashville. The meeting was a success due to the commitment of our members, and I greatly appreciate the work and dedication of everyone involved.

Before you know it, we will be planning for our next conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

In 1999, I attended my first NCURA Board Meeting in Kansas and now nine years later, I'll be going back as the Chair of the Region. I feel like I should click the heels of my silver shoes like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*! I don't have a dog named Toto, but I do have two Weimaraners, Gunnar and Chloe!

Anyway, after my first meeting and with encouragement from my boss, things started falling into place for me in NCURA. I started out as a volunteer putting registration packets together, next I was a discussion group leader, then a session presenter, and before I knew it I was on the NCURA National Program Committee. In 2002, I was honored with the Kevin Reed Outstanding New Professional Award, which continues to be one of my greatest professional accomplishments because my colleagues at NCURA recognized me and my efforts. Today, when I reflect back and think about all I have learned throughout my years with NCURA and all the truly wonderful people I have met, I feel very fortunate to be a part of such a fantastic organization.

The one recurring message that I cannot be emphatic enough in stressing is the importance of "getting involved," whether it be as a member of a committee or as a volunteer at one of our meetings.

Recently I received feedback from our members about the Nashville meeting. One of the questions was "Please describe the most valuable portion of the program." More than half of the 175 responses mentioned networking. The following are a few responses from our members to the above question:

- Volunteering! It was great for networking and socializing
- The sessions were great, but the networking opportunities were even better
- This was my first regional meeting and the allotted time to network and meet other people from the region was invaluable. I really felt like this was the best networking I have been able to do at an NCURA meeting.

Networking in this organization is priceless. I gave my business card to an attendee I met at our last meeting. This morning, I received an e-mail from him asking about pricing for their service center. I laughed because a few years ago I myself gathered cards at an NCURA meeting and subsequently inquired about pricing structures to several NCURA colleagues.

Your participation in any capacity will not only help maintain Region IV's premier NCURA status, but also give you access to other individuals in our industry. It is a small world and even smaller when you get involved with NCURA. We learn from one another and come to realize that we are not alone in this wonderful world of research administration.

If this letter compels you to get involved or you just have a question, please call me at 312/695-1329 or send me an e-mail at s-streich@northwestern.edu.

Sincerely,

Sara Streich, Chair, NCURA Region IV
Northwestern University

Region III/IV Meeting in Nashville

Written by Jamy Rentschler, Iowa State University

Each year, NCURA Region IV holds an annual spring meeting to provide a chance to learn more about research administration, network with colleagues from other institutions, and have some fun. This year's joint meeting with Region III was no exception. Numerous exciting and informational sessions were offered. Here are a few attendees' thoughts about which sessions they found to be the most interesting.

One session of interest was "Make Them an Offer They Can't Refuse: The Godfather Concerto (Negotiating and Managing Clinical Trial Agreements)." This session covered complex issues surrounding clinical trial agreements such as the limits of confidentiality, indemnification and subject injury language, and appropriate payment schedules. This session was extremely helpful for anyone who was new to dealing with clinical trials. The handouts were very informative and could be used as handy references for future use. Not only that, but the presenters were very fun and kept the session lively by playing snippets of *The Godfather* movie.

Another session of interest was "The OHRP On-Site Evaluation: Is there Light at the End of the Tunnel?" This session was a case study of a recent audit conducted by the Office for Human Research Protections at a large public university. This session was described as timely because every office dreads the potential audit that may be looming in the future. One of the highlights of the session was the candor and openness of the speaker. While it can be difficult to share personal experiences, the speaker had a lot of practical tips that were very applicable. The session also generated a lot of group discussion where people shared about their own programs, which led to some great networking opportunities.

Finally, there were several sessions that directly and indirectly addressed training topics that piqued attendees' interest. One session in particular was "Developing Training to Empower Principal Investigators: Allegro, Arpeggio, Al Fine." This session detailed the development and implementation of a comprehensive principal investigator training program. With more and more institutions offering formal training programs for principal investigators and grant administrators, these sessions were an excellent showcase of what is currently being offered and a great opportunity to seek new ideas.

Overall, the joint NCURA Region III and IV meeting offers relevant information to assist us all in the many areas of research administration. The opportunity to learn from professionals with years of experience, to connect with other people in research administration, and to gain a broader understanding of research administration as a whole are just a few of the reasons why you should attend the NCURA IV meeting. We hope to see you there next year in Kansas City!

A special thank you to Diane Ament, Diane Meyer, and Glenda Luecke for sharing their thoughts about this year's sessions.

Cost Transfers

Written by Jeffrey Ritchie, Aurora Health Care

Support from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for research grants and contracts will exceed $20 billion in 2007. While the NIH budget is no longer growing as it has in recent years, Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) are demanding even higher levels of accountability from awardees. That's why the DHHS Office of Inspector General's 2007 Work Plan again calls for scrutiny of cost transfers by NIH grantees. On-site visits to grantee institutions have found cost transfer policies "nonexistent, incorrect, or confusing" and, needless to say, inspectors found numerous instances of improper and undocumented transfers. Cost transfers that don't meet NIH audit requirements can lead to your institution having to pay some hefty fines–potentially in the millions of dollars. So how does one avoid that fate?

Have a Cost Transfer Policy

Most larger institutions already have a policy in place on this subject, but smaller ones (particularly non-profit organizations) may not even be aware that this is a compliance issue. Now a word of caution if you're rushing out to develop a policy (or even if you already have one): Remember that you're going to be audited based upon both the policy's compliance with federal regulations *and* your institution's compliance with its own policy. The word of caution is to be sure that your policy is one that you can effectively implement and maintain.

For example, if your policy prohibits late cost transfers–those that occur after 90 days–your institution has to be prepared to live with that self-imposed restriction. If you process a "late" transfer, even if it's otherwise allowable, you'll run into audit trouble because your institution is not following its own policy.

Avoid this difficulty by writing a policy that includes language allowing late transfers but with a higher level of documentation and authorization. Your policy must require an explanation as to why the transfer was late and how future late transfers of this type will be avoided (this is in addition to the usual documentation for cost transfers).

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Auditors simply won't give your institution credit for good intentions, and the fact that you have had a lot of turnover recently will not buy you any sympathy. You have to get this right every time, and so you have to make sure that everyone in your organization knows what is expected.

A review of your cost transfer policy should be part of your institution's orientation for every new employee involved in research administration, and you should be offering annual refresher training. Other forms of communication, such as your institution's website, should have easy access to your policy.

One of the things that you can communicate to all parts of your institution (including your researchers) is a list of "red flags" when it comes to cost transfers. If an auditor finds evidence of any of these on the books, you will need to have some meticulous documentation to avoid a disallowance:

- *Transfers between federally funded projects*. This is especially the case when the transferring project is overspent and the transfer has the effect of balancing the project account.
- *Transfers more than 90 days after the original entry*. Some institutions have policies that forbid these late transfers altogether; others allow them but with extensive justification and documentation.
- *Transfers that occur shortly before the end of a project*. The appearance to an auditor is that the investigator is trying to "spend down" surplus funds in an account rather than return the funds to the sponsor.
- *Transfers that appear on the project but not on the payroll system*. Costs that are not documented by the payroll system or the institution's effort certification program pose a double threat in an audit by calling into question the institution's process for effort certification.

Maintain Appropriate Documentation

Even transfers that are otherwise appropriate can result in disallowances if the transfer is not scrupulously documented. The NIH Grants Policy Statement specifically states that brief, generic statements such as "to correct error" and "to transfer to correct project" are not sufficient to document and justify a cost transfer. It should also be noted that frequent cost transfers, regardless of their cause and degree of documentation, could result in an audit finding all by itself.

No process is perfect. The need to transfer costs will always be a part of research administration; the trick lies in making sure cost transfers are done in a way that complies with regulations and avoids unpleasant audit findings.

Lean: Two Teams Walk Through Kaizen

Written by Diane M. Meyer, Iowa State University

Figure 1 – Value Stream Map

In the previous article about Lean, I introduced the concept of Lean and how it could be applied to sponsored programs office processes. In this article, I'll provide an overview of the weeklong Kaizen event for the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration (OSPA) and then explore the lessons learned and success gained.

The team leaders for the Industry and Awards Teams explained their workflow and identified where the delays were and why they occurred. This can be a very humbling process, so part of the preparation was to mentally bolster the individuals who would be participating. "Don't take it personally" became our mantra.

The goal for the Kaizen event was to find ways to improve the quality of our services by increasing customer satisfaction, reducing the time needed to complete tasks, improving communications, reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, and allowing for more flexibility.

The first task was to map the current process. The was done by rolling out white paper on the wall and using self-adhesive notes to identify tasks, decisions, hand-offs, value-added points, delays, and loop-backs. This is an important visual tool that was used to find inefficiencies. From this we could identify the number of steps required and time taken to complete the process.

Next, Lean tools were applied at various points in the workflow. Ideas that were generated follow the tool name and brief description follow.

- Standard Work (preferred way to perform any task). Training materials for principal investigators (PIs) who are working with industry partners, certification/training program for grant administrators, creating a standard indirect cost waiver request form, establishing standard terms and conditions for contracts
- Flow (how the work comes in, the steps to handle it before it leaves the office). Contact PI's early and often during the negotiation process, set up a conference call with all interested parties if the negotiation will be complex.
- Set up time (the amount of time necessary to get ready to perform a task). Be ready with standard terms and conditions for contracts
- Visual control (a way to check the status of a process). There are various databases being used to track proposals, awards, and other paperwork; our goal is to bring them all together with one interface
- Error proofing (introduce tool(s) that don't allow the user to perform a task incorrectly). Budget templates that have escalation factors and fringe benefit and indirect cost calculations; create electronic approval forms for rebudget, subcontract, advanced account, and no-cost extension requests.

One thing that we discovered through this process was our need to be able to track activities and process time. This data allows us to see where we are and what improvements are actually made when a change is implemented.

Some of the suggested changes were implemented immediately, some took several months, and others won't be implemented based on further evaluation. An example of the latter was the planned development of a resource cell. The idea was to bring together one person from each of the following units to process various aspects of sponsored funding for one college unit: the Proposal Team, the Awards Team, Sponsored Programs Accounting (SPA), and the Administrative Unit (College). Discussions with the Administrative Units revealed that they didn't have the time or staff to devote to the resource cell. The next proposal was to replace that person with a "generalist" who would be able to field basic requests, which would provide the OSPA and SPA staff members with more time to devote to their specialized tasks. The request for the addition of two generalist positions was rejected, so the resource cell has been put on the back burner.

We continue to look at the tasks we perform and develop ways to streamline the process. We have small Lean events that focus on smaller, specific tasks. The evaluation can take as little as a few hours now that we better understand the process.

We've learned that the success of a Lean event requires a lot of pre-preparation, which includes the following: a carefully defined scope, the involvement of representatives from each office that may be affected by the suggested changes, the readiness to implement changes immediately, and the ability to continue to look for and make improvements.

Lean tools have proved to be a valuable resource. Because the staff members who perform the tasks are involved in making the decisions for change, they are less resistant to implementing the changes based on the Lean tools used.

I hope you will find Lean interesting enough to give it a try in your office. Some resources that may be helpful are:

- Lean Enterprise Institute, **http://www.lean.org**.
- Lean Manufacturing from Wikipedia, **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_manufacturing**.
- Womak, J, & Jones, D (2003). *Lean Thinking*.New York, NY: Free Press.

Leadership of Communications Committee Rotates

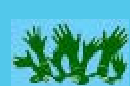
Each spring, the leadership of the Communications Committee rotates, with the newsletter editor taking on the co-chair position, the co-chair becoming the chair, and the chair rotating out to past chair. This rotation all depends upon finding a new newsletter editor each year. This year Juli Ogden volunteered to take the newsletter editor position (you can see her handiwork in the layout of this issue); however, she has recently accepted a position with an institution that is not in our region. So we are in a new search for a newsletter editor for 2007-2008 [see box below].

Our former newsletter editor, Beth Seaton (Western Illinois University) has become co-chair, a position that has been vacant for about a year. Karen Spear (Methodist Research Institute at Clarian Health) remains as chair for another year, and Bill Sharp (University of Kansas) continues as past chair for what seems an eternity. Christa Johnson, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, continues her work as our webmaster, with assistance from Jamy Rentschler (Iowa State University).

Thanks to everyone in the Communication Committee working group who does so much to contribute to the newsletter and webpage. Special thanks, too, to Glenda Leucke for all the great photos. She has joined the group as our official photographer.

Volunteer Opportunity!

The Region IV Communications Committee is seeking a newsletter editor. This is a great opportunity for someone with a good eye and a mind for detail to volunteer for the region in a position that isn't too time-consuming. If you are interested, or just a bit curious, please contact Karen Spear at kspear@clarian.org
or Beth Seaton at b-seaton@wiu.edu



NCURA Member Profile

Have you completed your profile?

?

Have you updated your profile recently?

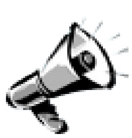
It is fast and easy! Go to the NCURA website, http://www.ncura.edu/members/, enter your member ID (your member number is on the back of any NCURA publication mailed to you--OR just use the quick email service to get it) and spend 5-7 minutes updating your profile. Start taking advantage of opportunities you have as an NCURA member!

? ? ?

Member News

Have Something to Announce?

The Region IV Web site is now accepting announcements for a new section: *Member News!*



Please send announcements concerning Region IV members' promotions, awards, distinctions, and job transfers to Christa Johnson at cjohnaa@siue.edu. Please limit announcements to approximately 200 words.

Region IV Board Members

Chair
Sara Streich
Northwestern University

Chair Elect
Sue Keehn
University of Illinois

Treasurer
Robert Aull
Indiana University Medical Center

Past Chair
Diane Barrett
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Secretary
Michelle Meeks
Indiana University Medical Center

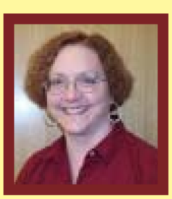
Other Board Member
Christa Johnson
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

NCURA Board of Directors, Region IV
James Casey (No Photo Available)
Independent Consultant and Attorney

At-Large Members

Robert Andresen (No Photo Available)
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Jaynee Tolley (No Photo Available)
University of Cincinnati



Diane Meyer
Iowa State University

Craig Reynolds
Central Michigan University

2007-2008 NCURA Region IV
Communications Committee

Karen Spear, Chair
Methodist Research Institute at Clarian Health
Indianapolis, Indiana
kspear@clarian.org

Beth Seaton, Co-Chair
Western Illinois University
b-seaton@wiu.edu

Bill Sharp, Past Chair
University of Kansas
wsharp@ku.edu

Juli Ogden, Newsletter Editor
Independent Consultant
juliogden@fuse.net

Christa Johnson, Webmaster
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
cjohnaa@siue.edu

Working Group

Aaron Crandall
University of Wisconsin-Madison
ascrandall@rsp.wisc.edu

Liz Gall
University of Wisconsin-Madison
gall@waisman.wisc.edu

Carole Knight
St. Louis University
knightcl@slu.edu

Glenda Leucke, Photographer
Washington University, St. Louis
gluecke@im.wustl.edu

Jamy Rentschler
Iowa State University
jamyr@iastate.edu

Jeffrey Ritchie
Aurora Health Care, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Jeffrey.ritchie@aurora.org

Lisa Shook
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
Lisa.Shook@cchmc.org

Michelle Schoenecker
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Schoene7@uwm.edu