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*NURAP brings together staff from across the university with the aim of improving institutional cohesiveness in research administration and fostering professional excellence by providing forums to discuss current policies, exchange best practices, and network.*
Recertifying your CRA: How to Earn Continuing Education Contact Hours
Written by: Jody Hirsh

Recertification of your Certified Research Administrator (CRA) status is required at the end of each 5-year period. This involves submission of your employment history in the field, documentation of 80 contact hours Continuing Education activities over the past 5 years, 3 questions suitable for future CRA exam, and payment of a $195 fee/$295 late fee via an electronic application on the Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC) web site, https://www.cra-cert.org/

What are Continuing Education Contact Hours?
As defined by the RACC, one Continuing Education (CE) contact hour is equal to one hour of time taken OR taught which is related to any aspect of research administration. The requirement: is to earn 80 hours over 5 calendar years beginning Jan 1 of the year you were last certified.

Educational activities include:
- Teaching a class, workshop, or seminar
- Serving on professional journal or review boards
- Serving on boards of relevant national associations (e.g. NCURA)
- Writing articles
- Participating in workshops and seminars
- Completing academic courses
- NU advisory board participation (including NURAP)

Caveats: You may not count activities performed as an expected part of performing your regular job duties. In addition, some types of activities have maximum limits for number of hours.


To assist tracking your CE, one suggestion is to save all of your documentation in a personal NU Box folder. Using a calendar program such as Outlook to schedule and apply a custom category label (such as “Training”) to your CE activities is also helpful. You can search your calendar by category and easily find everything for a selected time period. But do not wait until the last minute to get it all together!!

Documentation of CE Contact Hours
An optional but extremely helpful & highly recommended Contact Hour Tracking Log can be found at http://www.racc-cert.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/RACC_Contact-Hours_Tracking_Log_GeneralAndSpecialty2.xls

In support of the activities listed in the tracking log, you should keep copies of any National/Regional meeting registrations; Certificates of Completion, and meeting notes taken. You do not normally have to provide these backup documents with your application; however, the RACC performs random audits of applicants and you could be asked to provide them.
Some other suggestions are to save all documentation in a personal NU Box folder. This way you can easily find it and it is readily accessible. Using a calendar program such as Outlook to schedule and apply a custom category label (such as “Training”) to your CE activities is also helpful. You can search your calendar by category and easily find everything for a selected time period. But do not wait until the last minute to get it all together!! Entry of your info into the RACC application is time consuming and you may not be able to save a partially completed form.

How to earn CE with NURAP!

One way to earn CE is to become a member of the NURAP Steering Committee. This is NURAP’s decision making body. Steering committee members may work in any aspect of managing sponsored research but must have worked at Northwestern for at least one year. The subcommittees available are the Executive, Continuing Education, Communications and Outreach, Membership, and Programming Subcommittees. Each has two or more Co-Chairs. The aim is to maintain a broad representation of job titles, departments, schools, and campuses. RFAs are usually circulated annually on the NURAP listserv during the summer quarter.

If you don’t feel ready to commit to being on the Steering Committee, we also welcome anyone who would like to become an ad hoc member of a one of the subcommittees. Ad hoc members do not participate or vote in Steering Committee meetings, however they provide useful assistance and input to the Steering Subcommittees with certain tasks.

Other CE earning opportunities are attending or presenting @ NURAP@noon; attending or presenting at the CRA training sessions, and attending NCURA webcasts (co-sponsored by OSR and the Office of Financial Operations). And last but not least, writing for the RAP UP, as I am doing right now, will earn CE!

For more information please email us at NURAP@northwestern.edu & visit our website at http://www.nurap.northwestern.edu/.

Jody is a Senior Research Administrator (and CRA) in the Chemistry of Life Processes Institute.
NCURA Region IV 2018 Spring Meeting Highlights
Written by: Tanikka Mitchell

The NCURA Region IV 2018 Spring Meeting was held in Des Moines, IA on April 15-18, 2018. As a recipient of the 2018 NURAP Travel Grant Award, I received funds to help offset expenses associated with participating in this event as a first time attendee. My professional goals for attending this conference were to learn about the resources available to NCURA members, as well as explore potential careers in research administration. Here are some key takeaways I thought might be helpful to the Northwestern community:

Session: Career Possibilities in Research Administration, Kristin Harmon and Jim Maus

There are multiple paths that can lead to a career in research administration. For example, individuals with a background in science, business, finance, policy, administration, research, humanities, or law might be successful in this field. The first step to exploring a career in research administration is to identify what opportunities are currently available. This might include looking for roles in a university setting or other areas that have a research focus (i.e. healthcare, nonprofits, and sponsors). Second, you should conduct a self-assessment to identify the transferable skills you can bring to roles that match your professional interests. This process would include highlighting your strengths, weaknesses, and workplace preferences. Once you’ve secured a role in research administration, the goal is to become a subject matter expert in your area of focus. A good way to grow as a professional is to take advantage of training and mentoring opportunities. Also, you should consider developing an active network within research administration to stay current on industry changes and potential opportunities for promotion.

Session: Departmental Research Administration 101, Nathan Youngblood and Ben Nelson

The role of a department RA is to oversee and coordinate all aspects of administration in support of a PI’s sponsored project. In addition, the RA is responsible for ensuring there is compliance with university policies and procedures, as well as the sponsor guidelines. Individuals that are successful in these roles have an in-depth understanding of the sponsored project lifecycle, which includes proposal development, award preparation, award set-up, award management, and award closeout. During the proposal development stage, the RA should carefully read the solicitation, meet with the PI to discuss the project, develop a budget, collect any necessary documentation, and work with OSR to review and submit the proposal. If the proposal is awarded, the RA should carefully review the award notice to understand the terms and conditions, as well as help to ensure the award is set-up with the correct account codes. Once award set-up is complete, the RA is responsible for managing the associated chartstring(s) and processing any post award updates, including submitting progress reports to the sponsor. When the project has ended, the RA is responsible for working closely with the PI and
ASRSP to ensure all associated expenses were posted to the correct chartstring(s) and all final reports have been submitted to the sponsor.

Session: NCURA Mentoring Our Own (MOO), Sue Grimes, Kaslina Love Mosley, and Peggy Collins Luna

The Mentoring Our Own (MOO) program is open to NCURA Region IV members who want to enhance their research administration knowledge and/or skills (mentees), as well as those who wish to share their experience and leadership skills with others (mentors). The goal of the program is to provide mentees with the knowledge and confidence they need to implement change within their own system and to actively contribute to growth across the field of research administration. Mentees are typically early career (1-5 years) professionals, but participants might also include individuals who want to advance their knowledge or acquire new skill sets. Mentors are typically professionals that have five or more years of experience in research administration who want to take an active role in helping others to succeed in this field. The program pairs mentors and mentees based on areas of common interest and expertise. It involves a commitment of one year, during which time, the mentor guides the mentee through a course of leadership development activities.

Presentations from the NCURA Region IV 2018 Spring Meeting can be found here.

Tanikka is an Assistant Grants Officer in the Office for Sponsored Research
As a fairly new employee of Northwestern with two years of experience in Research Administration, I wanted to see how Grants are managed at other Universities. When I saw the announcement of the NCURA Conference, I decided this would be a great opportunity to gain an understanding of the Grant Management field. I was fortunate enough to be awarded the NURAP travel award to help support me on this journey. While attending the conference I was introduced to a completely new world. The NCURA members were unbelievably hospitable and eager to show new members the ropes. I met many great people from other institutions that I have been able to reach out to for an outsider's opinion pertaining to issues that arise in my work.

My current position only exposes me to the post-award side but I have always wanted to learn more about pre-award. I attended a few sessions that were directed towards pre-award, which provided me with many useful tools to improve my post-award management. I believe that a good understanding of pre-award processes greatly assists in managing the post-award side. One tool introduced to me during these sessions uses automated monthly reviews of allowable costs. This is done by creating a dictionary of key words that are associated with unallowable costs and running a report that searches for these words. The presenter’s University uses this on a large scale so they were able to purchase this software package from BakerTilly that accomplishes this. However, this could also be performed on a smaller scale using Excel.

In addition, I made a last-minute decision to attend a round table discussion on the future of grant management. This was probably my favorite session as I was with a group of people who had been in the industry for a very long time and I was able to gain some great insight. The general issues that people faced were having a difficult time of getting signatures and closing out awards. One University has a policy that if anything is not signed five days before the due date an exception request from the department chair is needed. By doing this the University cut their close out time significantly. We also discussed moving away from being paper-based and how this can potentially result in better compliance with deadlines. We also explored the amount of change grant management has seen over the years to how much it will need to adapt for younger generations that enter the field.

These constructive conversations provided me with comfort in knowing that I have picked a field that will always be around. It was an opportunity to envision how my career can advance from where I am at today. Overall, the NUCRA conference was a great learning opportunity and provided me with knowledge and a network that I can draw upon for years to come. I am really looking forward to the next conference and am very grateful that the NURAP travel award provided me this adventure!

Emily is a Financial Coordinator in Neurological Surgery
Offsite Collaborations Involving Animal Work

The Northwestern Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Office maintains an approved Animal Welfare Assurance with the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). This Assurance is required in order for Northwestern to receive PHS and other federal funding. Per the [NIH Grants Policy Statement terms and conditions](https://iacuc.northwestern.edu/collaborations), grantee organizations “bear ultimate responsibility for compliance with the PHS Policy in all PHS supported activities”. This includes animal work and creation of custom antibodies at Northwestern and all performance sites.

In an effort to ensure appropriate oversight and compliance with the approved Assurance, the IACUC conducts a reciprocal review of the performance site animal protocols supported by Northwestern funding. If the work is PHS supported, the NIH Grants Policy Statement terms and conditions require that work proposed in the grant application is congruent with any protocol approved by the IACUC. This institutional responsibility for congruency is accomplished by the IACUC Office while the IACUC conducts a reciprocal review of the performance site approved protocol.

For more information about this process, please visit the IACUC website at [https://iacuc.northwestern.edu/collaborations](https://iacuc.northwestern.edu/collaborations).
UPCOMING EVENT

Networking on the Job: An Interactive Workshop

Join us for an Humana seminar about Networking!
Networking within an organization is a powerful activity that allows employees to share information, contribute to projects, and move ahead in their careers. This hands-on workshop provides practical tips for becoming more comfortable, more memorable, and more effective in a variety of settings. The workshop includes role-playing and a survey of social skills for the business environment.

Presenters: Geri Mazzone: Chicago  Natalie Dubois: Evanston

**EVANSTON**
Thursday, March 28th
12 pm-1pm
Chambers Hall, Ruan Conf Room
600 Foster

**CHICAGO**
Monday, March 25th
12 pm-1pm
McGaw, Daniel Hale Auditorium, 240 E. Huron

Past NURAP@Noon Presentations are archived on the [NURAP Programs and Events web page](http://research.northwestern.edu/nurap).
Announcing: The NURAP Pilot Mentoring Program

NURAP is excited to announce the launch of the Pilot Mentoring Program. The goal of the program is to support and enhance research administration at Northwestern. One way to achieve this goal is through a structured mentoring program that pairs early career research administrators with senior level research administrators. The program provides a confidential space for discussion and inquiry around topics related to career growth, institutional knowledge and the development of soft skills.

NURAP sought out guidance from senior leaders in research administration across the University to find mentors and mentees. The five pairs from both campuses were selected in November and the program hosted a kickoff meeting in January to announce the pairs and elaborate on program specifics. NURAP plans to host check-ins throughout the course of the program to offer resources, guidance and to share successes. The pilot is scheduled to conclude in June with a meeting to discuss outcomes and strategies toward a full program.

For the duration of the program mentors and mentees will coordinate on a meeting schedule to build their relationship and then decide on a goal. There are purposefully no strict programmatic requirements other than time investment. Mentees can decide on what type of goal they would like to work toward and or accomplish during the program. Some mentees may decide to work toward a concrete short-term goal such as giving a presentation at a staff meeting. Other mentees may have a flexible, long-term goal like focusing on skills valuable to becoming a manager at Northwestern. This will be a collaborative pilot to determine what the best full program will look like for Northwestern research administrators.

We welcome suggestions from the NURAP community as we move forward on this effort. If you have questions or comments please reach out to Yael Mayer (yael.mayer@northwestern.edu), Maura Cleffi (m-cleffi@northwestern.edu) and Nathan Youngblood (nyoungblood@northwestern.edu).

Contact Us

To suggest or contribute content for future issues of The Rap Up, contact us by email at nurap@northwestern.edu

Visit us on the web at nurap.northwestern.edu