The RAP Up
The Newsletter of NURAP
FOSTERING PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4 SUMMER 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF THE RAP UP

CALLS FOR CHANGE: HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS PROTECTION

Candice Weber, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences Research Administration

So far, 2011 has proved to be a very exciting time to be a part of human subjects research protection, both across the nation and right here at Northwestern. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) office welcomed its new director, Heather Gipson, just before the start of the new year. Heather has already begun to shake things up with a reorganization that will emphasize training and compliance. And in July 2011, at the federal level, the Department for Health and Human Services (HHS) announced its plan to rework its regulations for human subject research for the first time in the Common Rule's 20-year history.

This summer the Northwestern community was treated to an overview of the IRB office's plans for improving on its goals of consistency, efficiency, and efficacy at two "state of the union" type presentations. We learned that staff roles at the IRB have been restructured to better align with what Heather identified as the four key service areas of the office: institutional review boards, special projects, training and education, and post approval monitoring. There are over four thousand active studies currently under the oversight of the Northwestern IRB. About 30% of those are in the social and behavioral sciences that are primarily located on the Evanston campus. When I talked to Deborah Yordy Coleman, one of the Evanston IRB coordinators, she was excited for a number of brown bag sessions that will be held in Evanston in the upcoming year. A renewed focus on the Evanston campus is a part of Heather's vision for the future of the IRB at Northwestern.

Not only are changes afoot in our own IRB offices, but Washington recently made waves with the Department for Health and Human Services' Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, or ANPRM, released on July 22nd with the intention of updating the Common Rule (Subpart A of 45 CFR part 46 of the HHS regulations) which governs all human subjects research. The origins of the Common Rule can be traced back to early ethical codes like the Declaration of Helsinki in 1964 and, later, the Belmont Report of 1979. Much has changed in the field of human subjects research since these principles were consolidated under the Common Rule in 1991.

The ANPRM identifies seven areas of concern with the existing regulations and invites the public to comment on its proposed changes. Examples of these changes are rethinking the Common Rule's existing risk-based framework to better reflect an appropriate level of review for each level of risk, relying on a single Institutional Review Board's review for all domestic sites in a multi-site study, and updating the forms and processes used for informed consent. You can visit the HHS website to read the entire announcement and learn about the four other proposed changes. The general public had until September 26th to register comments, with policy groups like the Council on Governmental Relations submitting their own responses. It was a unique opportunity for all voices to be heard in the policy-making process.

It's clear that the mission of the Department of Health and Human Services' regulators and the Northwestern IRB office is one and the same: to enhance the protection of research subjects and to improve the efficiency of the review process. That is a mission that we can all get behind.

From the Editor

Alden Chang, Office of Research Development

Hello Autumn!

As we head from Summer to Fall, I'm reminded by the sound of undergraduate students outside of Chambers Hall that fall is a time of change.

Eager freshmen come from every corner of the world to Evanston eagerly seeking a world-class education. For returning students, fall is a time to shake of the torpor of summer dalliances and renew their commitment to academics.

The cooler weather makes you introspective like that.

Like these students, the *RAP Up* returns, with fresh content and veteran contributors, re-engaged to serve the needs of the membership.

New features from Kathy Mustea (Kathy's Korner) and Sheri Carsello (Beginner's Track) have been added to the lineup of old favorites like Susan Morris (Department Dossier) and Frank Cutting (Post-Award).

We're also keeping a finger on the pulse of membership. Earlier in the summer, Lori sent out the annual general membership survey. In it were several questions about the *RAP Up*. Based on your input, a new section called the NURAP Job Board will be added that synopsizes the recent vacancies disseminated over the Listserv.

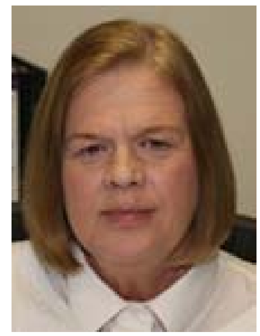
We've got an exciting autumn full of fresh ideas but with the same commitment to providing ground breaking relevant educational programming and networking opportunities for all of you. NURAP has never seen better.

Happy Fall!

New Steering Committee Members

The Steering Committee recently selected four NURAP members to join them on the Committee. They are:

Nicholas Christensen
Molecular Biosciences
WCAS



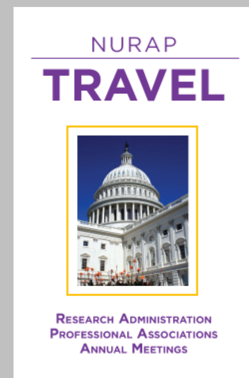
Darlene Peterson
Audit and Advisory
Services

Sara Sylvan
Robert H. Lurie
Comprehensive
Cancer Center

Michael Weis
Institute for Policy
Research

Member Recognition

NURAP Steering Committee Member, **Elizabeth Adams** (MEAS Research Administration) will become the Executive Director of OSR-Evanston on October 17, 2011**.**



Congratulations to this year's NURAP Travel Award winners, **Joseph Boes** (FSM/ObGyn) and **Mary Greene** (WCAS/Chemistry)!

NORDP Honors Holly Falk-Krzesinski with Service Award
Recognition named in her honor

During the National Organization of Research Development Professionals (NORDP) 3rd Annual conference in June, Founding President Holly Falk-Krzesinski, PhD received the organization's first Service award. This award was established by the Board to be given annually and was named in her honor, the "Holly Falk-Krzesinski NORDP Service Award."

In congratulating Holly on the award, incoming President, Jacob Levin, PhD expressed his thanks for her service: "Neither words nor awards could properly express our gratitude, respect, and appreciation for all that you have accomplished for our organization. This meeting is indeed the culmination of all that you have done; A fitting keystone to the 1st year of NORDP as a true non-profit membership organization."

Holly serves as the Director of Research Team Support & Development for the Northwestern Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute and has been with the University for close to 13 years. In this role, she provides deep expertise in collaboration enhancement and cross-disciplinary team science with an emphasis on clinical and translational research.

NORDP was established in 2010 as part of a grassroots movement to build a peer community of Research Development professionals. The organization has grown to a formal network of >350 individuals engaged in Research Development activities at universities and research institutions across the country and internationally. The central goals of NORDP are to serve these professionals, by providing a formal organization to support their professional development, to enhance institutional research competitiveness, and to catalyze new research and institutional collaborations.

"It is really quite a surprise and a wonderful honor," adds Holly. "It has truly been a privilege to have served as NORDP's founding president this past year, watching the organization coalesce and becoming acquainted with so many amazing colleagues."

Department Dossier:
What I Did Before My Summer Vacation

Susan Morris, McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science Research Administration

People who don't understand what I do but know that I work at a university often ask me, "Is it really quiet at work during the summer?" I often answer with something like, "Ahahahahahaha."

If you don't count the campers who run screaming up and down the hall outside my office, summer does tend to be a little bit quieter in my corner of the world, which is convenient because it's when I'm most likely to be out of town. Like every good research administrator, I admit to a certain amount of vacation anxiety -- what if all of my chart strings go into deficit while I'm gone? what if all of my professors decide they want to submit a DARPA proposal on the same day? -- but over the years, I've gotten better at managing my time away so that I actually get a relaxing vacation. Here are some strategies that have worked to make vacation work for me.

Location, location, location. I can relax most easily if I know that I couldn't be in touch even if I tried. The lure of remote desktop and my new smartphone are strong, so it's best if I can physically separate myself from easy phone and internet access. Successful vacation spots have included a cruise ship, foreign country, hiking above the treeline, and a tiny island on a lake in New Jersey. My advice: the next time a PI complains that the internet in his hotel is terrible, ask him for a recommendation!

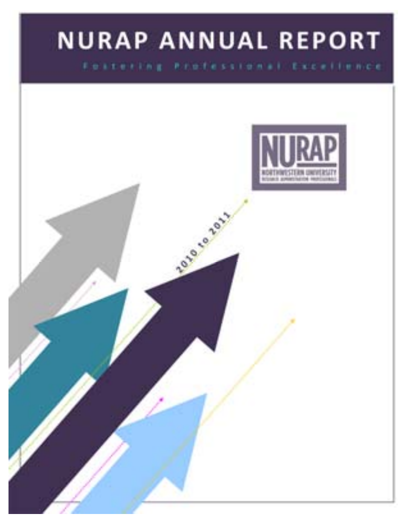
Lock the doors behind you. Yes, you should literally make sure the doors are closed, lights are off, and coffee mug is cleaned out, but don't forget the other parts of closing up your RA shop. Tell your colleagues and faculty that you're taking off so they aren't shocked to get your out-of-office message. *Leave* that out-of-office message -- on your phone and email -- so anyone else who contacts you understands why they aren't getting a response. Skipping these steps can lead to confusion, frustration, and unpleasant surprises when you get back -- not the goal of a vacation.

Who has your back? I'm very lucky that McCormick has a staff member who provides out-of-office RA coverage on a regular basis, so I know that my department is in good hands whenever I leave. If you don't have this type of permanent coverage available, it's critical that you find someone who can be the go-to person while you're gone. No one is going to be able to completely replace you, but at the very least you need someone who can serve as a point of contact to triage your emails and phone calls -- someone you can trust to calmly say to the faculty, "I will find out who can help you with that" and then go for help. Communicate this trust to your faculty so you don't get anxious worrying about their anxiety.

Leave the emergency numbers on the fridge. When you leave pets or children under someone's care, you give them the numbers to call for the vet, pediatrician, poison control, pizza delivery, etc. If you're leaving your work with someone who isn't familiar with your unit, give them the RA equivalent of those names: your OSR contacts, the people with signing authority for your unit or school, the business administrator or program assistant who can give you tips on how to reach faculty. Does your chair have a special mailbox where he picks up papers for signature? Do you have a mentor or supervisor you go to with complicated questions? That kind of inside info can really help out your backup person if they get into an emergency.

Clean your bedroom before you go. This was my mom's pre-vacation rule when I was little, and I HATED it. Why should I clean my room if no one's going to see it for the next week? I can't say that I've adopted this practice in my personal life, but in my professional life I've found great value in catching up on my filing, effort reporting, journals, or whatever else I can find before I leave. It's hard enough coming back to the office and the inevitable mountain of email without finding a mess that I left for myself.

Available for Download!
The Annual Report at the NURAP Website:
http://research.northwestern.edu/nurap



NURAP Star: Michael Weis

by **Alden Chang**

Michael Weis is the Business Administrator for the Institute of Policy Research. In a recent interview with Alden Chang, Michael tells us what it's like to juggle the competing demands of a University Research Center, newborn twins and giving back to the community through music education.

AC: Can you tell us about IPR, its history, and how it differs from other university research centers?

MW: IPR is one of the oldest university research centers, last year we celebrated our 40th anniversary. Initially, we were the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research (CUAPR) and then about fifteen years ago, we changed to the Institute for Policy Research (IPR).

The center has at least seven program areas that capture/organize our research topics broadly. Our faculty fellows and associates are grouped into these program areas, and many are linked to multiple program areas. Each program area has a faculty chair who works with the director to manage the research projects and encourage interdisciplinary research.

University research centers report to the Vice President for Research; we draw faculty from SESP, WCAS, FSM, and the Law School with the majority coming from WCAS.

AC: How did you get to this point in your career? Were you always at the University? Did you start in a department?

MW: I came to Northwestern as a graduate student in the music school. I play the trombone and earned a master's degree in music performance.

When I graduated, I performed with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. It's a high-quality and well respected ensemble in Chicago, but the pay wasn't significant because it is a training orchestra. So, I was looking at what options there were for employment and I came back to the university to see what was available for a musician.

I started at the School of Education as a receptionist and shortly thereafter, moved into a program assistant position supporting junior faculty research administration. I was promoted once within that position, and then after two and a half years, I took a position at IPR focused on post-award administration for the entire center. I left NU for a year, to take another job, and came back to this current position, I've been here for about five years now.

So in all, I've been at the university for about ten years with that one year break.

AC: Are you still pursuing your music career?

MW: Yes, I'm Vice-President of the Board of the People's Music School; a community music school in Uptown. We're the only school in the US that provides 100% free music education to students. I also have one student that I'm teaching privately, she attends ETHS and we have worked together for several years.

I don't perform anymore; it's just too much to keep up with. But I still have a lot of musical outlets.

AC: What's the difference in working for a department and a university research center?

MW: I honestly don't think there's a lot of difference, to tell you the truth. A lot of people think of IPR as a department. You can think of each University Research Center as a department in the Office for Research. And so, in that way, it's very similar.

AC: Is your current role, pre-dominantly pre-award or post award, or pre- and post- with a good degree of human resource responsibilities or…?

MW: It's a lot of things.

The post-award side is mostly management because I have staff who work with the post-award administration. I take care of all the pre-award work directly. And then I have a lot of things, outside of research, that have to do with the Center's finances, HR and facilities management. You get a little bit of everything.

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NURAP Star Cont'd

AC: What is the most difficult part of your current role?

MW: I think the most difficult part of my role is learning all the things you have to know and finding the information or resources so you can be effective.

I have to know about sponsored accounts, both federal and non-federal. I also have to know about non-sponsored accounts, appropriated, designated, gifts, and endowment. Then, there are HR policies, faculty and research staff appointments, regular staff, post-docs, visiting scholars, grad and undergrad students. I also have some activity with facilities management when we have to renovate space or address maintenance/repairs to our five buildings.

This variety certainly keeps the job interesting.

AC: What is the most enjoyable part of your job?

MW: Overall, it's the variety. But more specifically, it's knowing that you're helping a faculty member with their research grant administration, and knowing that they don't have to deal with it. We all know that the burden of research administration continues to grow, so being able to take that part off their shoulders. My faculty really appreciate the help and are very good about telling me how important it is. I think that's the most rewarding part of my job.

AC: Do you have any tips/tricks for new or junior administrators that you'd like to share?

MW: I think what I'd like to tell people is to take advantage of the opportunities out there. Use the training programs out there, like the Office for Research Integrity's research administrator training and the countless training opportunity available to the university community.

I think the university is doing a good job of training research administrators overall. I think the best way you could succeed in your job, and advance, is to go to these events, meet people, join committees and things like that…basically, participate in the research community.

There are social aspects and professional development. To me, continued learning is the key.

AC: I've heard that you've the recently had twins! Congratulations! How do you maintain a good work-life balance?

MW: It's definitely challenging. These are our first kids, so I didn't know how to be the father of one baby, much less two.

One thing that was helpful was that in the first several months, and even now, my boss was very understanding. She allowed me to work a flexible schedule. I would work at home sometimes and have days off when our newborns were most challenging. Patience was key and it has gotten easier over time. They just turned 1 year old, it really goes by very quickly.

UPCOMING FALL/WINTER PROGRAMMING

October 17 & 24
InfoEd Proposal Development
Andrew Ludington

November 2011
Recharge Centers
Jennifer Wei

December 2011
Sponsored Account Close Out
Kathy Mustea

Check the NURAP website (research.northwestern.edu/nurap) for more information

For questions or comments about the RAP Up, please contact us at:

847-467-0043 or alden-chang@northwestern.edu

Kathy's Korner: Advice from ASRSP

Katherine Mustea, Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs

Q: I received a parking ticket while attending a meeting off campus. Can I charge this on a grant?

A: No. Sponsored projects do not pay for parking tickets, bad check fees, or any other fees where the user was at fault. In some cases, your non-sponsored account may not pay for these mistakes either. Please see the applicable NU policies, as well as your school policy, before attempting to reimburse someone. Additionally, you are always welcome to contact the sponsored awards grant and contract financial administrator if you feel you have an unlike circumstance.

→ Please note that Risk Management may incorrectly charge your grant if the ticket is issued on motor pool car rented on a grant. Keep an eye out for these on your budget statements.

Q: Why is it that many of my journals get deleted at the end of the month?

A: Did you know ASRSP Grant & Financial Administrators (GCFA's) approve journals only once a day? They use a list that is sent to them at 6:00 a.m. every morning. If your journal did not have a college level or lower approval by 6:00 a.m. the last day journals can be approved, we are not aware that they are ready. Call your GCFA only if the journal is ready for ASRSP approval and we will help you get the journal posted before the 5:00 p.m. deadline. Please remember that ASRSP staff are also busy and that they need time to review journals. I suggest that you call before noon on that day, if you need a journal approved before the Accounting Service deadline.

Q. I was told that a certain expense was considered an indirect cost to my grant but when I attempted to charge 78710, the indirect cost account code, I was told that I was not allowed to do so. Why?

The account code 78710 is for F&A (Facilities and Administrative) costs. This account code is used by NU Financials to charge a sponsored project a negotiated percentage whenever a direct cost expense posts on your grant. There are several similar account codes that are only used by central administrative staff, and they all start with 787** please do not attempt to use them. However you should be aware of what they mean when you find them on your budget statement.

When you are told something is an indirect cost to a grant, you need to charge the item to a non-sponsored chart string number on the proper account code. Remember that some research expenses are expected to be born out of department accounts per our negotiated F & A rate agreement and the sponsor terms and conditions we assented to when we accepted the award.

Post Award: Payroll Certification Pilot Program at GMU

Frank Cutting, Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs

With salary wages and benefits accounting for over half the budgets of most federal awards, accounting for these funds are of critical interest to universities and the federal government. Currently the standard is Effort Reporting (ER). At NU we are lucky to have a very good ER team which keeps us on track. Our ER system from Maximus is also a useful tool for us to track and report and is a great resource for us. But the effort reporting process does add to the administrative burden of the university.

With administrative portions of the F&A rate capped at 26%, any way that can significantly reduce the related compliance expense while simultaneously providing enhanced internal controls would be welcome.

The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP), and more recently the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), has been active in this area. The Initiative to Reduce Administrative Burdens (IRAB) was a task force the FDP established to evaluate ways to streamline the Federal regulations related to cost reimbursement, and the administration of grants and audits as mandated by Circulars A-21, A110 and A-133. One of the first task force teams was the Payroll Certification or PayCert team and they held their first meeting back in 2003. The goal was to construct an "alternative but efficient method for assuring that salaries and associated fringe benefit expenses charged to federally funded projects represented fairly the activities of research personnel who are working on the projects". Eventually these methods were intended to be used as the basis to propose changes to regulatory language on payroll certification.

Specifically the FDP PayCert Task Force (TF) was concerned with section J.10 of Circular A-21 and the interpretation and application of this guidance by the academic research community. They saw five issues which needed to be addressed. Three of them have already been addressed since the report was issued and the remaining two issues are now being addressed by a pilot project now underway at George Mason University.

One of the remaining issues is that Circular A-21, Section J.10.b.(2)(d) allows for certification based on categories of activities, and allows for these activities to be expressed as a percentage of total activities. The TF contends that the term "activity" should be replaced with "actual salary and wages" as a primary method for confirming personal services. Grantees could still retain the use of activity percentages if desired. The other is that Section J.10.c.(2).(c) requires a positive confirmation of payroll distribution under all three of the acceptable methods of apportioning salaries and wages. The TF contends that payroll distributions should only be confirmed when there is a material change in the data. Distributions which remain consistent on a project would only be confirmed by exception. There is no argument that some method of relating wages to performance is necessary. So the argument tends to focus more on what is sufficient. For both of these remaining issues, focusing on what the minimum requirements are to sufficiently perform a task is key factor. Overdoing a task is wasteful and provides negligible benefits, and could produce a considerable administrative burden and expense.

Ultimately the 2003 TF proposed ten key parameters of any improvement. Four related to this discussion are: Frequency of certification- a minimum of once at project close out would be required; Coverage- cover all Federally funded projects that have payroll or cost sharing, with certification for other projects optional; Measurement- institutions should certify salary dollars that are charged to a project. Effort based certification is optional and should be used only where extenuating circumstances prohibit disclosure or access to individual payroll data; Systems- should integrate committed cost sharing into the certification process.

Just this last January, the FDP published a document entitled: Payroll Certifications a Proposed Alternative to Effort Reporting which can be found at the FDP site: http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/PGA_055834 (choose the link "Payroll Certification Proposal" under the "Documents" section). It is an interesting read, for those of you so inclined, as it lays out the rationale for the changes, and the basic elements of the system in far greater detail than I do here. Payroll Certification (PC), is an alternative to ER that uses a project-based methodology and utilizes the concept that "charges are reasonable in relation to work performed". In ER, certification is based on the concept that "effort is reasonable based on overall institutional effort". The same rationale applies for all committed cost sharing. From a post award administration standpoint, the new method would integrate PC into the set of existing internal controls, rather than simply being a report.

Now while all of their claims may not be valid at our university, the FDP maintains that current effort reporting systems add very little value to internal control systems. The actual controls are built into the financial system, and effort reports do not currently target important costing issues like the NIH salary cap, clerical and administrative restrictions, faculty summer salary limitations, and the prohibition on proposal preparation expenses (pg. 5).

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GMU Pilot Cont'd

PC changes this because "by having a system that focuses directly on correct charging of salary and wage expenses to federal projects that can be monitored during the budget year, enhances internal controls…" (pg. 8). The chart to the right comparing the two systems is extracted from the report.

George Mason University (GMU), received approval from the FDP and ONR to pilot Payroll Certification starting January 1, 2011. Three other schools (UC Irvine, UC Riverside, Michigan Tech) are currently seeking approval to begin their own pilot projects. Why change? From GMU's perspective they agree with the FDP's assertion that current systems are inefficient, costly and have limited controls, and also lack timeliness. Most people don't think about their activities in terms of percent effort. According to a presentation on their web site describing the program, GMU believes that effort is difficult to measure as 100% effort can mean any number of hours. Additionally, it is muddled by what positions are in the base or what sources of funding are excluded. Effort is not always equal across time- percent effort can be reduced upon inclusion of a new award, whereas actual physical/ mental effort towards that project may not actually be reduced. People's level of focus and effort is variable and dependent upon the task at hand. For instance one hour spent reading a sequencing gel requires more focus than an hour of reading the methods sections of journal articles to compare DNA isolation protocols, but from an effort standpoint they are equal.

GMU agrees with the FDP in that effort reports provide very little internal control value. One defense of ER is the argument that since original charges to projects are based on before-the-fact estimates that effort reports provide a control to ensure that charges are based on actual effort. While this logic seems sound, in many ER systems, ER's almost never change charges to sponsored projects. How can a system be an effective control if it almost never impacts outcomes? ER's are basically compliance documents (reports required by the federal government), instead of being effective controls.

From a timeliness standpoint, Final Financial Reports are most often due within 90 days of the project end date. However for most effort systems, all months are not certified when reports are submitted which could cause problems when the reports are certified if the amount of effort certified requires changes to the already distributed payroll. PC on the other hand assures full certification of salary expenses by the FFR submission deadline.

GMU is moving towards only certifying payroll on Federal Funds not on all sponsored funds which represented an 81% reduction in number of annual reports required. Their projected reductions in administrative expenses were not reported, but it is hard to imagine that substantial savings won't be realized. From a process standpoint, reports are generated within 60 days after the budget period end date, or the project end date whichever is sooner. A department liaison manages the process and returns reports within 45 days. Any reports not certified within 60 days results in an irreversible transfer of salary charges to a non -sponsored account.

GMU will be reporting to the FDP semi-annually and will compare metrics of ER vs. PC (timeliness of certification, accuracy, number of follow-ups required, number of reports, administrative cost savings compared to legacy system) and will solicit feedback from faculty and administrators via a survey comparing the new process to a previous survey on the legacy ER process. GMU will be reviewed by ONR quarterly and will initiate an internal audit after the first year.

PC has the potential to provide qualitative as well as quantitative benefits to the research administration community. It elevates the job of department effort/payroll certification from a purely administrative one to one with distinct roles in the institution's internal control systems. Similarly it enhances the importance of the Central Administration effort/ payroll certification offices in the same fashion.

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COMPARISON OF EFFORT REPORTS TO PAYROLL CERTIFICATIONS

Description	Effort Reporting System	Payroll Certification System
System Focus	Individuals	Project (Grant or Contract)
Certification Frequency	Quarterly	Annually (Based on project's budget year)
Time frame for distributing the form	Consistent points in time	After the end of the project's budget year
Signers	Individual employee, Principal Investigator, or person with first hand knowledge	Required: Principal Investigator Optional: Co-principal Investigator, business officer, lab supervisor, etc.
System Rationale (Theoretical foundation)	Salary and wage amounts are reasonable based on percentage of effort	Salary and wage amounts are reasonable based on their relationship to work performed
Committed Cost Sharing	Shown as a percentage of effort	Shown as an amount reasonable in relation to work performed
NIH Salary Cap	Shows total effort expended on the project, but amount reflects cap limitations	The acceptable amount is net of the cap disallowance.
Special Costing Requirements: Clerical and Administrative, Summer salaries, No proposal preparation time charged to project	Not addressed	Part of the certification

GMU Pilot Cont'd

It may reduce institutional expenses simply because of the greatly reduced volume of reports generated. And most importantly it is a more intuitive system which faculty should welcome. While the final results won't be available for some time, and any potential implementation even further away, we will keep watching these pilot projects and keep you informed. Until then, continue to strive to pre-review your reports on a timely basis and make sure your faculty certifies on time. Any questions, call your expert Effort Coordinator!

Photos from the NURAP Summer Networking Events

Beginner's Track: NIH Jargon

Sheri Carsello, School of Communication

Are you are beginner in research administration, new to federal awards, or need a refresher of some of the basics?

This column will touch on some fundamental information that is useful to know regarding federal agencies. The current article will shed light on some of the basics of an NIH award.

Ever wonder what all of those letters and numbers in an NIH award number means? Knowing the building blocks of the award number can provide you with a great deal of useful information about the grant.

First of all, it is helpful to understand the concept of an NIH Institute or Center. NIH is composed of the central office (Office of the Director) and its 27 Institutes and Centers (IC). Each of these ICs has a specific research agenda, often focusing on particular diseases or body systems. Each is also referred to by its acronym. For example, NCI is the National Cancer Institute, and NIDA is the National Institute on Drug Abuse. When investigators apply for a grant, they are usually aiming at a specific institute or center for their submission.

Now to get down to the details. An NIH grant application/award number consists of the following parts (using sample application identification number 1 R01 AI 183723 -01 A1 S1):

- a single digit application type (1)
- a three-digit activity code (R01)
- a two-letter IC (Institute or Center) code to which it is assigned (AI/Allergy & Infectious Diseases)
- a six-digit serial number assigned by the Center for Scientific Review (CSR) (183723),
- a two-digit grant year suffix showing the support year for the grant (-01)
- other information identifying a supplement (S1), amendment (A1), or a fellowship's institutional allowance. For contracts, the suffix is replaced by a modification number.

There are nine types of application types, which is that initial number in an award number. The various types are outlined in the table to the right.

There are too many activity codes to list them all in this article, so we will cover some of the commonly used three–digit codes and the grant programs that they refer to. If you would like a complete list of all activity codes, please visit this link: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/ac_search_results.htm

R01 is the NIH Research Project Grant Program that supports a project to be undertaken by an individual investigator.
Used to support a discrete, specified, circumscribed research project

Application Types

I	New
2	Renewal (a.k.a. Competing continuation)
3	Competing Revision/Administrative Supplement Application for additional (supplemental) support to cover increased costs (non-competing administrative supplement) or to expand the scope of work (competing revision)
4	Extension- Request for additional years of support beyond the years previously awarded. Used only for select programs.
5	Non-competing continuation
6	Successor-In-Interest (A SII may result from legislative or other legal action, such as a merger or other corporate change where assets are transferred.)
7	Change of grantee institution
8	Change of NIH awarding IC for a non-competing record
9	Change of NIH awarding IC for a Renewal application

- NIH's most commonly used grant program
- Generally awarded for 3 -5 years

R21 is an NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award encourages new, exploratory projects in their early stages of development.

- Limited to up to two years of funding
- Combined budget for direct costs for the two year project period usually may not exceed $275,000.
- No preliminary data is generally required

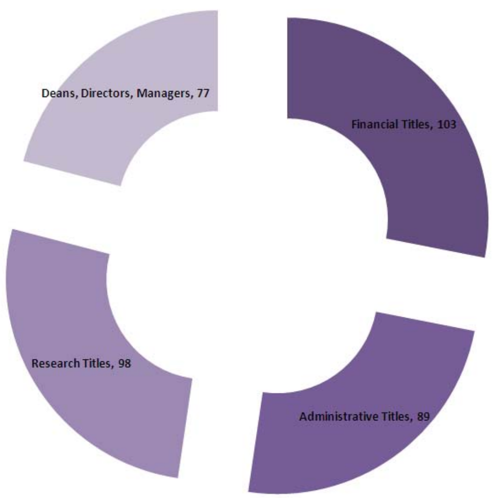
U01s are Research Project Cooperative Agreements that have substantial programmatic involvement between the investigator and the NIH Institute.

- Supports discrete, specified, circumscribed projects to be performed by investigator(s) in an area representing their specific interests and competencies
- One of many types of cooperative agreements

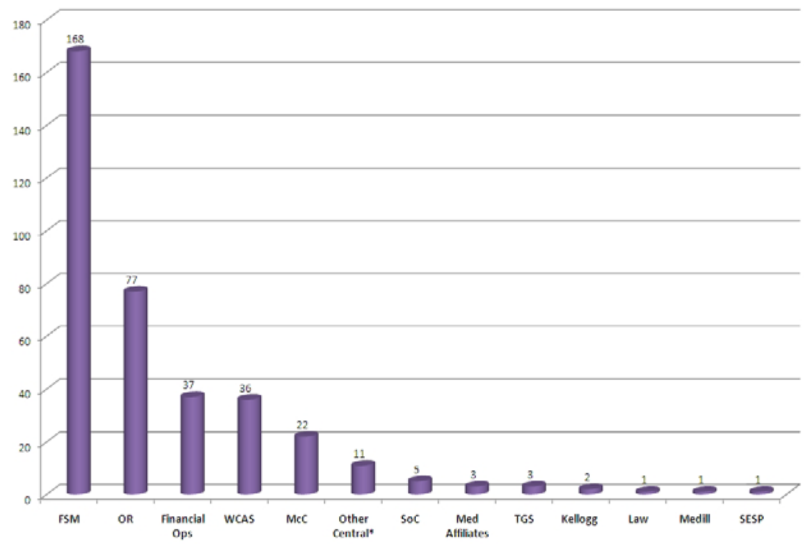
Now that you know that NIH numbers and letters in an award have a purpose to them, you might be able to make more sense of an NIH award when you are fortunate enough to have one. For the next newsletter we will go over some of the basics of NSF awards.

NURAP By the Numbers: Membership Data from the FY11 Annual Report

Membership by Role



Major Unit Affiliation of NURAP Members



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