Fresno State

Report Date: June 5, 2024

Site Visit Date: March 13 – 15, 2024

National Council of University Research Administrators
1015 18th Street, NW, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20036
peerreview@ncura.edu

About This Report

The National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) is a national organization of approximately 9,000 members. NCURA serves its members and advances the field of research administration through education and professional development programs, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and by fostering a professional, collegial, and respected community.

This document focuses on sharing knowledge and experience as a result of the recently conducted review of the research administration area of sponsored programs. Our objectives are to provide the institution with feedback on the institution's management in support of research and to share recommendations and national best practices that might be considered at the institution.

While the review utilizes the NCURA Standards for Effective Sponsored Programs Operations, the Review Team recognizes that policies and practices vary at institutions and that not all Standards apply to each institution.

The NCURA Peer Review process is based on interviews with various stakeholders involved in research and research administration areas of sponsored programs. However, the NCURA Peer Review process does not necessarily validate information or data provided by individuals or departments in preparing this report. Further, the NCURA Peer Review does not evaluate personnel, nor does it perform an audit function. The results of this review, therefore, should not be used to make human resource decisions. It should not be used to evaluate departments outside the scope of the NCURA review (and is thus limited to use in assessments of Research Administration/Office of Sponsored Programs). Nor can the use of the results help assure fiscal, regulatory, or ethical compliance with federal, state, or local regulations. The recommendations offered in this review report should not be construed as an exhaustive list as these recommendations necessarily represent an analysis by a particular set of Reviewers and at a single point in time and based on interviews and procedures and processes of certain stakeholders and Research Administration/Office of Sponsored Programs procedures and processes that are contemporaneous to the issuance of this report.

Just as a decision to follow a recommendation cannot ensure regulatory or audit sufficiency, a decision by an institution "not" to adopt one or more recommendations does not necessarily mean that the institution is failing to meet legal requirements. Rather, the recommendations reflect the opinion of peer research administrators who are active in the field and familiar with structures and approaches at other institutions. There may, however, be elements of the local history, environment, or culture of which they may not have been fully cognizant. This document does not provide legal advice.

NCURA does not warrant that the information discussed in this report is legally sufficient.

The **Executive Summary** provides an overview of the report. The **Current Environment for Sponsored Programs** section discusses the many influences and pressures that have recently impacted research administration and created some of the current stresses. The remaining sections provide a detailed discussion of the Standards as applied to this institution and includes notable practices and recommendations throughout, along with the rationale for each.

NCURA will treat the contents of this report as confidential and will not disclose nor distribute the report to individuals other than those identified by the institution as recipients. There are no such restrictions on how the institution chooses to utilize the report.

Executive Summary

The National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) would like to commend California State University, Fresno (Fresno State), for undertaking an open and comprehensive review of the research administration infrastructure. The strong support for administrative efficiencies and accountability is evident with the decision of institutional leadership and the community to engage in a process that allows all members to participate and contribute.

The NCURA Peer Review Program is premised on the belief that it is a critical part of this review process to include experienced research administrators who have significant careers and are engaged nationally. This external validation allows Fresno State to incorporate best practices and models into its final action plans.

An evaluation of the research administration of sponsored programs at Fresno State was conducted at the request of the Grants and Research Advisory Board. The evaluation was performed in March 2024 (site visit on March 13-15, 2024; see Appendix C for the site visit itinerary) by a Peer Review Team from NCURA (Appendix B for Bios).

The evaluation was framed by the Standards for Effective Sponsored Programs Operations (Appendix A) for the research administration of sponsored project activities. These Standards cover institutional expectations and commitments, policies, procedures and education, the central and unit-level operations supporting research and scholarship, and the relationship and partnerships across all institutional functions.

Fresno State was recently classified as an R2-designated university. Twenty years ago, Fresno State had no focus on research and was a teaching institute under the master plan for California. Faculty received tenure with limited peer-reviewed publications and other achievements without research being considered. Teaching for faculty has always been four courses each semester, and extra time was used for service.

Twenty-five years ago, research gradually became more important at Fresno State and - varying by discipline - became an official tenure requirement by demonstrating two to three reviewed articles. Nearly all tenure-track faculty earn tenure at Fresno State. The R2 designation in 2022 excited and motivated faculty, and Fresno State leadership has seen significant momentum of center leaders requesting assignment of time to faculty for research.

Nonetheless, two significant challenges persist:

1. A lack of mature infrastructure supporting research and research administration, particularly between pre- and post-award activities, and
2. A desire among research-oriented faculty to progress faster than budgetary constraints allow.

During the NCURA Peer Review site visit, the NCURA Peer Review discovered consistent areas of interest that will be addressed that align with these challenges:

- **Compliance Risks:** The lack of Research Compliance oversight presents substantial risks to the institution, as there is currently no supervision of compliance functions and adherence to regulatory requirements. Non-compliance with research regulations could lead to fines, suspension of research activities, or even criminal charges. Given the current focus of federal funding agencies on research compliance, particularly regarding disclosures that may result in conflicts of commitment and interest, the absence of monitoring, mitigation plan assessment for conflicts, and adequate training in this area leaves the institution vulnerable to potential repercussions.
- **Ownership of Processes:** The lack of clear ownership for certain processes poses significant risks, as there is no oversight, potentially leading to undetected non-compliance and becoming an audit risk for the institution. For instance, in the case of conflicts of interest (COI), without designated oversight, there is no verification of disclosed interests or confirmation of required COI training. Moreover, the absence of documented processes exacerbates the problem, as essential knowledge is lost when personnel depart from the institution.
- **Gaps in Internal Controls:** Gaps in internal controls are evident in various processes, such as when a single individual holds multiple key responsibilities, like developing, approving, submitting budgets, and accepting awards. This absence of checks and

balances increases the risk of undetected errors that could escalate into significant issues over time, potentially fostering conditions ripe for fraud and abuse.

- **Need for Process Improvements:** In addition to undocumented processes and a lack of process ownership, inefficiencies have been identified. These inefficiencies contribute to a lack of responsiveness and timeliness, frustrating investigators and impeding progress. As Fresno State advances its strategic plan to enhance research support, addressing these inefficiencies becomes imperative to alleviate existing challenges
- **Communication:** Communication gaps are evident within systems at the institution, exemplified by the disconnect between the Kuali pre-award system and the stateside or Foundation financial systems. There is a tendency to point to system limitations rather than seeking constructive solutions. While financial constraints may limit purchasing new systems, a feasible remedy could involve collaborating with Information Technology (IT) to develop a dashboard that pulls data from the financial system, offering a convenient overview of award expenditures, using existing tools like Excel. Further instances of ineffective communication include the lack of regular meetings between pre- and post-award staff, hindering proactive problem-solving and cohesive support to faculty investigators. Additionally, resource-sharing and problem-solving opportunities among Center Directors and Unit Administrators are overlooked due to the absence of regular meetings with structured agendas.
- **Collaborations:** Improving communication and collaboration across various units within the institution is imperative. Fresno State can foster process improvements and proactive measures in an otherwise reactive environment by facilitating collaboration among colleagues from different colleges. We recommend structured collaboration sessions with dedicated agendas, ensuring consistent inclusion of research administration topics to support necessary changes and prioritize long-term goals for the research administration infrastructure. It is also advisable to have one pre-award team member and one post-award team member attend these sessions to facilitate direct feedback gathering, enhance communication within the unit, and promote collaboration across the research administration enterprise, thus avoiding further division. Additionally, IT should be a regular agenda item in all research administration meetings to enable problem-solving within systems, provide user training for enhancements, and promote knowledge sharing across platforms. Emphasizing IT as a partner rather than assigning blame is essential for effective collaboration.
- **Staffing:** NCURA Peer Reviews are frequently utilized to address staffing issues, with some seeking justification for additional staff while others aim to confirm adequate staffing levels. Staffing challenges in research administration stem from high turnover and varying work modes, influencing job seekers' decisions. Fresno State faces both challenges and opportunities due to its location, with access to a sizable local talent pool. Effective solutions entail continuous recruitment with clear job descriptions, career paths, succession planning, and improved onboarding processes. Prioritizing team strengthening is vital to

mitigate turnover and enhance Fresno State's research administration; this includes reviewing job descriptions for growth opportunities and optimizing workload distribution based on factors like sponsor and PI complexity and project support infrastructure. A key strategy for optimizing team staffing involves extensive process improvement, leveraging technological solutions, and eliminating redundancies to streamline operations and conserve resources. Engaging talented individuals in process reviews can uncover inefficiencies, empowering staff to enhance their contributions to research administration campus wide.

- **Leadership Action:** The strategic plan's messaging has effectively resonated across the campus, garnering strong, unified support and a commitment to its goals. However, there is a need for this messaging to extend further, delving into the plan's implementation details. The campus community craves tangible actions which demonstrate execution; however, examples of such actions are not effectively reaching key participants, causing distractions. Consequently, Fresno State's leadership is perceived as reactive, particularly within research and administration circles, emphasizing the necessity for proactive measures and plans to bridge this disconnect and address communication and collaboration issues. Decision-making and actions supporting research and administration should be transparently shared, acknowledged, and celebrated to foster a supportive environment conducive to achieving the strategic plan's objectives.
- **Research Integrity and Ethics:** The commitment to Fresno State among faculty, program leaders, staff, and executives is palpable through their long-standing dedication to the institution, students, and the local community. This profound commitment reflects a genuine desire to continue serving and nurturing Fresno State's growth. Moreover, there is a steadfast dedication to responsible stewardship of the institution's resources, whether state, sponsor, foundation funds, or otherwise, underscoring a commitment to acting in the institution's best interests. To deepen this commitment, providing training on research integrity and ethics is essential for all involved in research and research administration. Such training not only enhances understanding but also establishes a framework for future initiatives and community engagement. Integrating research integrity and ethics into the institution's culture will prove invaluable as it endeavors to improve processes and uphold its values.

While structural and cultural growth are necessary, the focus should be on the continued evolution of Fresno State rather than a complete overhaul of its identity. The institution is poised for progress and expansion while retaining its unique character. Despite challenges, Fresno State can navigate this evolution independently.

Concerns about culture change should not overshadow Fresno State's exceptional identity. Cultivating growth will elevate its recognition as an R2-designated institution and integrate the institution's best qualities into its development. The President emphasized teaching, service, and research evolution over the past twenty years, highlighting the institution's adaptability. Leadership's role is to unify these elements into the institution's existing strong culture.

The Review Team wishes to express their gratitude to the Office of the President and Provost, especially to the Research and Sponsored Programs, who contributed to the compilation of materials provided to the Review Team and the assistance and hospitality provided during the site visit.

The notable practices and recommendations from the report are listed throughout the report. Each notable practice and each recommendation include a description and rationale.

CONTENTS

Current Environment for Sponsored Program Operations

Institutions aiming to develop a more research-intensive program face numerous challenges, including aligning with the institution's culture and priorities related to sponsored program activities and establishing or maintaining an infrastructure capable of supporting the growing demands of a research enterprise while meeting faculty expectations and institutional accountability.

The heightened focus on research brings increased risk, accountability, and oversight, driven by escalating policies and regulations from the federal government. This necessitates higher levels of specialization and education for institutional-sponsored programs staff, who must balance facilitating research activities with adequate oversight and internal controls to demonstrate accountability and mitigate risk.

In recent years, institutions have grappled with reduced funding, complex research collaborations, and heightened scrutiny from federal audits and investigations, leading to tighter controls and policies. However, many institutions have recognized that their infrastructure and expertise have not kept pace with the evolving complexities of research relationships and regulatory requirements.

Therefore, periodic reviews of the infrastructure supporting sponsored programs are essential to ensure efficiency and compliance with federal regulations while supporting investigators' efforts. This discussion of the national environment and specific challenges faced by transitioning institutions sets the stage for the more detailed discussion presented in this report.

Institutional Planning and Investment in the Sponsored Projects Enterprise

I. STANDARD for Institutional and Research Planning.

> The institution has defined priorities and strategic plans as relate to research and other sponsored projects, and consistent messaging occurs at all levels. An institutional commitment to research, sponsored projects, and research administration infrastructure is clearly evident at all levels of the organization, as appropriate to the institutional size, culture, mission, and strategic plans. Research administration leadership has clearly articulated action plans and metrics that support and advance the institutional research priorities.
>
> Institutional leadership expects regular and thorough assessments of the effectiveness of research administration. Institutional leadership expects regular and thorough assessments of the effectiveness of research administration.

The current NCURA Peer Review represents the first official review of effectiveness that Fresno State (Fresno State) has conducted. At many institutions, there is increasing attention on critical administrative operations and the need for a regularly occurring review cycle, as is found in academic program reviews to maintain academic accreditation. While the form for such review can be varied (internal or external), the process establishes an expectation for attention to the operational effectiveness, how well that operation succeeds in a fluid environment, and a venue for faculty to comment on the process.

The benefits of an external review for an R2-designated institution are many:

- **Quality Assurance:** External validation ensures that research administration processes and decisions use best practices and meet high standards. Reviewers assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of administrative procedures, ensuring they align with best practices, sponsor requirements, and institutional policies.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** Constructive feedback from external reviewers demonstrates the understanding of research administration and can help identify areas for improvement and recommend more efficient and effective processes.
- **Credibility and Validation:** Externally reviewed processes lend credibility to the institution's administration. It reinforces confidence among vested parties, including faculty, sponsors, and the broader community.
- **Professional Development:** Engaging in an external review provides research administrators an opportunity for professional development. Working with external

reviewers exposes them to diverse approaches and challenges in research administration, thus broadening their knowledge and skills.

- **Community Building:** An external review fosters a sense of community within the institution. By collaborating on reviews and sharing insights, participants can build relationships, exchange ideas, and support each other in navigating complex tasks.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** An external review promotes transparency and accountability by subjecting administrative processes to scrutiny and demonstrating commitment to accountability and continuous improvement, enhancing trust and confidence.

Overall, an external review can play a crucial role in enhancing research administration's quality, credibility, and effectiveness.

- **Notable Practice: Fresno State's leadership has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing sponsored project administration.** As part of this commitment, external assessment plays a pivotal role, ensuring transparency and accountability from the highest levels of the institution.

There are a number of techniques used by institutions to periodically review the effectiveness of administrative operations, to assess processes for areas of improvement and currency, and to review for compliance or risk.

- **Recommendation: Fresno State leadership should consider establishing a regular review cycle for the research administration functions and oversight areas.** This is an indicator of a new evolution in Fresno State's growth. As they regularly perform strategic planning, this regular review would ensure that goals were achieved as planned.

Fresno State recently achieved R2 designated status, a significant milestone in its research trajectory. However, just two decades ago, research played a minimal role at Fresno State, primarily functioning as a teaching institution under California's master plan. Faculty tenure was granted with limited emphasis on peer-reviewed publications or research achievements. Over the past fifteen years, research has gained prominence, with discipline-specific requirements for tenure typically involving the demonstration of two to three peer-reviewed articles. Despite these advancements, the institution still grapples with two persistent challenges: an underdeveloped infrastructure supporting research and research administration, particularly in pre- and post-award activities, and a discrepancy between the ambitions of research-oriented faculty and the constraints posed by budgetary limitations.

The strategic plan at Fresno State explicitly articulates the role of the research mission within the broader organizational framework. This plan holds immense significance for the institution, being accessible to all members of the campus community, including students. Recently, over 1,100 individuals participated in shaping this strategic vision, underscoring the commitment to inclusivity and engagement. An external review, integral to this process, ensures alignment with best practices and is a cornerstone of the plan's implementation strategy.

Research is one key area of the strategic plan. There are many who are very invested in research, yet everyone is also deeply committed to the teaching mission. There are concerns about what Fresno State may have to give up in order to continue to evolve and grow in research.

The strategic plan process is aligned with the three-year review of the President of Fresno State. There is a standing meeting with the President's cabinet on each of the five areas of the plan where they note progress and areas in need of focus, which includes research. Metrics are being set and followed as measures toward the plan. Each of the three years has a specific metric and the measures go all the way up to the Chancellor's office to review the President each three years. The two reviews dovetail, and each year, there is a concrete level of accomplishments to measure against the strategic plan.

- **Notable Practice: Fresno State boasts a robust strategic plan that is effectively communicated, incorporating input and feedback from relevant parties across all institution levels, including students, staff, faculty, Deans, and department chairs.** This plan is regularly updated, tied to measurable metrics, and demonstrates concrete levels of achievement.

Currently, there is no direct research leadership within the President's cabinet, and there are no immediate plans for expansion. With twelve members plus the President, the cabinet's representation for research falls to the Provost and Vice Provost.

Even with the institutional strategic planning process in place, further interaction and communication is needed between faculty and local (center, department, college, division) academic and administrative leadership. Input from such collaboration and communication needs to be routed up the chain of command to the Vice Provost and the Faculty Senate. Having the Vice Provost attend meetings and serve in the President's cabinet will enhance the research community's focus and priorities.

- **Recommendation: The Provost should further enhance the role of the Vice Provost as research leader for the Fresno State community**. The Vice Provost could expand their responsibilities to include regular meetings with the research administration enterprise, faculty senate, center directors, and other research participants on campus, thus amplifying communication and collaboration and being able to bring urgent or critical matters before the cabinet.

The President can then include research updates and goals in university communications, routinely incorporating the concerns of the research community with the concerns of Fresno State leadership, following up on the standing assessment of metrics against the strategic plan.

As Fresno State makes concerted efforts to strengthen research administration functions and communication across the institution, it may not be prudent to introduce a Vice President for Research at this time. However, as research and sponsored programs continue to grow, future plans should consider adding an executive-level cabinet member dedicated to research.

- **Recommendation: Future strategic plans should have the President consider including an executive-level cabinet member dedicated to overseeing research**. This step would ensure that research priorities are adequately represented and seamlessly integrated into the institution's overarching strategic direction based on the current strategic plan.

Reports on research statistics, including volume for proposals and awards, are done annually. It is the Review Team's understanding that the metrics and reports will be produced more regularly for the President's strategic plan review. Those reports need to be available to research administration leadership at the local level to develop a clear understanding of the research funding on the campus. Research is not a requirement for tenure in all disciplines and will likely continue to be an area of evolution as Fresno State grows its research portfolio. It is recommended that reports be made available to the Faculty Senate for consideration by the faculty governing body. Greater detail and more discourse will be provided throughout this report.

- **Recommendation: Pre-Award Leadership and Foundation Financial Services Leadership should meet regularly with an agenda item to determine metrics for performance against the strategic plan.** Meetings should occur regularly with quarterly metrics assessments to determine priorities for improvement in support of the strategic plan goals and the research community's needs. Within the research administration service areas, pre-award and post-award management need to review the strategic plan related to research administration. Collectively, each area will create metrics that can be used to assess performance against the strategic plan and report to their leadership. The leadership on the pre-award side may report to the Vice Provost, and the leadership on the post-award side may report to the Foundation, who would report matters to the Chief Financial Officer, thus updating the President as needed. These reviews need to be conducted regularly to ensure that they align with the evolution of research at Fresno State and the changes in the field nationwide.

- **Notable Practice: The commitment of the President to review metrics against the strategic plan demonstrates Fresno State's support for the research on campus.** Reviewing research metrics, the President clearly conveys that research is a valued activity at Fresno State.

II. STANDARD for Institutional Investment in the Sponsored Projects Enterprise.

The importance of research to the institution's strategic goals is reflected by commitments to areas that support research and other sponsored projects (e.g., seed or bridge funding, shared core facilities, release time). This level of financial and other types of support is understood by the institutional leadership.

The Fresno State faculty were excited and motivated with the R2 classification in 2022. There was significant momentum among center leaders requesting to assign time for faculty to do research. It is common for institutions transitioning to a greater level of research activity and promoting a growth in research activity to uncover two significant challenges:

1. No mature structure on campus to support research.
2. Research-oriented faculty want to move faster than the rest of the university and the budget can support.

Institutional investment activities designed to grow the research enterprise include seed funding under the Research Scholar Creative Activity Award (RSCA) from the Chancellor's office and is augmented into the Provost's RSCA. Total funding from the Provost is $500,000, with roughly an additional $143,000 from CO, for which faculty may apply to the Dean's office and is at the discretion of the college level. The funds can be used in a variety of ways, including as bridge funding, for course release, or for summer salary. Each college has its own application process. The Research and Sponsored Programs Team administers the competition for RSCA funding. Funds are managed locally by the college budget analysts.

- **Notable Practice: Institutional funding is available for support of research and is available through the colleges and enhanced by the Provost.** Central-level funding allows researchers to explore high-risk, innovative ideas and generate pilot data needed to be competitive for extramural funding.

There is extensive discussion about indirect cost return. There is no standard across the California State University system. The Review Team received feedback from leaders, faculty, directors, researchers, administrators, and management indicating that the indirect cost return policy and procedure posed many challenges. As nearly all the funding for grants, contracts, gifts, and endowments flow through the California State University, Fresno Foundation ("the Foundation"), the indirect cost return is also managed by the Foundation. Currently, the disbursement varies by college but the formula for distribution is not widely understood. Furthermore, there have been delays in the indirect costs' return and even long remuneration gaps. The faculty are unsure where the indirect return goes and understand that the college gets a small amount and there is no financial support for equipment purchase or maintenance. Center directors noted that indirect costs were not realized based on their efforts, and many projects are completed before the indirect costs reach the project leaders.

The Research Infrastructure Task Force Report shared with the Review Team addressed the matter in support of the faculty. It documents that the distribution is not done in a timely manner and does not support the PIs that generated the indirect costs. It is imperative that the distribution be transparent at Fresno State.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The President must initiate a process to overhaul the Indirect Cost Recoveries and Allocations policy and procedure. Indirect cost recovery needs to have a clear, transparent policy with a direct formula for all members of the Fresno State community to understand how the distribution and return follow the growth of IDC based on research expenditures.** The current policy (APM 503) does not clearly outline the budgeting and allocation process and the fund return schedule. It also lacks the details needed for financial planning from the institution's leadership down to the Principal Investigator (PI). PIs and faculty need to know the relationship between the recovered indirect costs on their projects and the schedule for when and how those funds will be returned within the institution. The formula needs to accommodate building projections for the return of indirect costs into budgets available for research and discretionary spending at the local level. Furthermore, the policy needs to direct departments on how indirect cost recovery will be split on projects that cross departments.

There are no core facilities or resources that are shared at Fresno State. This area is ripe for discussion and planning for the coming years. The disconnect between centers and departments keeps Fresno State from utilizing and sharing resources for research. There is also no centralized regulatory official for areas of compliance that support research. Without any of these shared resources, there is no structure either. This is an area of growth for the future at Fresno State that could be spearheaded by the Vice Provost or visited for the next Strategic Plan.

Sponsored Projects Enterprise Components and Structure

III. STANDARD for the Research Administration Organization.

> Senior research leadership is represented in key academic and institutional groups, and relevant shared governance or research advisory bodies have clear linkages with research administration.
>
> The institution has identified offices and structures that support the overall management and administration of the sponsored projects enterprise. In particular, there are offices responsible for the management of externally sponsored projects. There are defined and broadly communicated roles, relationships, and authorities between sponsored projects offices, both centrally and where sponsored project functions may reside in different institutional sectors. Effective operational processes exist between sponsored project activities and business functions, such as travel, procurement, accounts payable, and HR.
>
> Regular communications occur between sponsored project areas that reside centrally. Where sufficient research volume and activity warrant, the institution has addressed the research. administration infrastructure needs that exist outside the central operations.

The Provost and Vice Provost effectively advocate for research interests and deeply understand Fresno State's current research landscape. Their commitment to advancing research while maintaining the institution's valuable culture highlights their essential role in steering Fresno State's research initiatives.

- **Notable Practice: The Review Team noted strong support and collaboration between the Provost and the Vice Provost, as well as a deep understanding of Fresno State's culture and strengths.** A collaborative leadership team sends a clear and unified vision for research at Fresno State. This ensures all efforts are aligned and working towards common research goals.

As highlighted in Standard I: Institutional and Research Planning, Fresno State's President's cabinet lacks direct representation of research. At this stage of Fresno State's research development, expanding the cabinet to include research representation may be premature, considering the urgent needs at the infrastructure level. However, as research grows, the President and Provost must be aware of Fresno State's landscape research administration.

- **Recommendation: The role of the Vice Provost should include being a resource of support for the Research and Sponsored Programs, Research Development, and Research Compliance areas. As such, the Vice Provost should host meetings on research-related issues with Deans, Center**

Directors, Faculty Senate leaders, the Research Committee of the Faculty Senate, and all compliance committees, such as the IRB, IACUC, and Bio-safety Committees. Regular meetings with research administrative leadership will aid the Vice Provost in identifying areas of concern to bring to the Provost. Priorities can then be determined at the executive level with the President and Cabinet as appropriate.

Fresno State has identified the offices and structures to support the current research and sponsored programs portfolio. Fresno State must assess the current structure, staffing, and resources to support expanding research and sponsored programs to provide efficient, consistent, and compliant services.

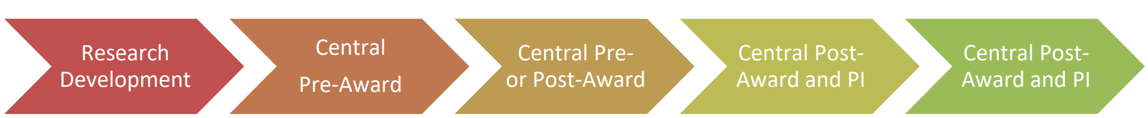
Fresno State's Division of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS) offers administrative research services, including standard research development, compliance services, pre-award services, eRA support, and non-financial post-award services. DRGS reports to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The Fresno State Foundation handles fiscal management for research grants and contracts at Fresno State. This non-profit organization oversees post-award grant and contract administration, fiscal services, gift and donation acceptance and management, and endowment.

Additional collaboration and partnership are needed between the central offices supporting sponsored programs at Fresno State, resulting in barriers that hinder collaboration and cohesion. This discord undermines the institution's effectiveness and forces faculty and staff to navigate each area independently rather than benefit from cohesive stewardship provided by centralized staff.

Generally, the lifecycle of a sponsored project flows as follows:

Generally, tasks within the lifecycle are supported at many universities as follows:



At Fresno State, support for lifecycle tasks looks like this:

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: Pre- and post-award should align the support for sponsored programs to flow from area to area with no duplication of effort, no redundancies, and strong internal controls.** A clear, streamlined pre- to post-award process increases efficiency while minimizing risk. It also provides consistent guidance and support throughout the entire grant lifecycle.

Effective research administration depends on strong operational relationships and communications between its core functions and functions related to research administration, such as auxiliary services (e.g., human resources, travel, purchasing), information technology, financial services, and regulatory compliance. Fresno State has the added challenge that auxiliary and financial services for grants and contracts reside within the California State University, Fresno Foundation. The discrepancy between the support provided through state-funded ("stateside") and Foundation auxiliary functions consistently emerged as a key concern noted during the Peer Review. While stateside-funded activities, such as purchases, hiring, and financial reporting, operate smoothly, auxiliary functions are perceived as burdensome, inefficient, and ineffective, often attributed to perceived incompetence and bureaucracy.

Principal Investigators of sponsored programs at Fresno State face significant challenges due to service inconsistencies. One common issue revolves around the hiring practices within the auxiliary corporation, which impose a cumbersome burden. These practices demand extensive documentation spanning some sixty pages and a lengthy lead time from execution to onboarding. Further complicating personnel matters is the end date of employment and the timesheets that need to be updated. A stark contrast exists for faculty when working with stateside funding instead of Foundation operations, and that creates a substantial barrier to effective faculty performance. While purchasing using stateside funds is facilitated by a procurement card, such convenience is not extended to the Foundation. Consequently, the burden falls heavily on PIs to navigate the complexities of sponsored program administration, compounded by the need to adhere to separate rules, routes, and requirements depending on the funding source.

The inefficiencies associated with auxiliary services create significant challenges for Principal Investigators (PIs) managing sponsored programs.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The President should establish a task force comprising representatives from Fresno State research administration and Foundation**

auxiliary services. The function of this task force is to develop a standardized set of procedures and protocols for managing sponsored programs. Where standardization is not feasible because of the separate governing structures, the task force should develop alternative approaches for improving operational efficiency and communication.

University Advancement oversees alumni engagement, annual giving, and University Development and Advancement Services. Government Relations is responsible for all local, state, and federal governmental and advocacy programs for Fresno State. Campus counsel who is located within the CSU Office of General Counsel is available to help retain legal resources as needed (e.g., for issues related to intellectual property, export controls, data security, conflicts of interest, or with unusual sponsor terms and conditions). The Foundation also has external counsel to assist with the review of agency contractual terms and conditions. If there are compliance issues related to the Foundation, those get directed to the Foundation Board of Governors and the Foundation's external legal counsel, if required. There is some discussion with campus counsel on data security and information sharing and how it flows at Fresno State. In meeting with Advancement, we learned that there is a deep connection with the Advancement leadership and that there are regular meetings quarterly between RSP and Advancement.

- **Notable Practice: There is a good working relationship with Advancement.** Communication and collaboration between pre-award services and Advancement allows each to leverage their unique strengths to identify funding opportunities, build partnerships, and develop competitive proposals.

There are no centrally supported unit research administrators at Fresno State. Some colleges and centers have embedded grant support staff for pre- and post-award services. These staff may be grant-funded (e.g., project managers) or funded by the college (e.g., budget analysts). While decentralized services provide direct support for faculty investigators within their units, it also presents some challenges, including:

- **Training and Development:** Since these positions are not centrally funded, dedicated training and professional development resources might be limited. Research administrators throughout the organization should have regular access to training and professional development to remain current with institutional and sponsor regulations and best practices in research administration.
- **Data Consistency and Reporting:** With budget analysts running separate award management systems and some state-funded awards managed locally instead of by the Foundation, there is a risk of missing or inaccurate data in the University's research portfolio.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Decentralized support for research administration may lead to confusion about who to contact for specific needs, especially for new faculty investigators or those collaborating across units.

The duties of the center and college-level research administrators differ from those at the central pre-award and post-award levels, requiring different related skill sets. At universities with strong research programs, local or departmental research administration support typically includes a combination of the following duties:

- Extensive paperwork and data gathering for proposal submission, including required subrecipient information
- Assisting with proposal budget development and justifications
- Providing the first level of proposal review for compliance with sponsor and institutional regulations
- Updating non-scientific proposal review feedback from the central pre-award review
- Liaising with central office staff on behalf of the Principal Investigator
- Procurement, travel, and labor assignment to sponsored projects
- Reconciliation of costs on funded projects against budget and encumbrances
- Assisting in the review of payroll and effort reporting
- Overseeing financial aspects of sponsored projects, including financial updates, burn rates, and projections
- Ensuring cost-sharing commitments are met and documented
- Initiating timely cost transfers or journal entries
- Reviewing incurred expenses for allowability and completeness
- Assisting with award closeout and any subsequent audit follow up requests

At Fresno State, the responsibilities outlined are managed with varying degrees of consistency, leading to duplication in certain areas and omission in others. Tasks are sometimes performed by PIs, Research and Sponsored Programs team members, or University Initiatives personnel. Such inconsistencies pose internal control challenges and foster a perception of bias among faculty, as certain individuals receive services that others do not. The lack of clear communication regarding these discrepancies exacerbates the sense of dissonance within the institution.

When the Review Team met with center directors, and separately with the college administrators, it was learned that much of the aforementioned list is managed differently in centers and at the Deans' levels. There is no consistent process for handling any of the proposal and award-related tasks across Fresno State, and the variance demonstrated a tremendous amount of duplication of effort and redundancies that waste resources that could be used to further Fresno State.

Fresno State would benefit from regular meetings and training between research administrative staff and unit representatives with related functions.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Dean for Research and Graduate Studies should develop a community meeting and communication channel for all staff from units that intersect with sponsored programs.** This includes unit staff responsible for research administration (e.g., project managers and budget analysts). Establishing a community and regular communication between research administrative staff and representatives from other units builds awareness of each other's roles and responsibilities, promotes collaboration, and provides a platform to address needs and challenges.

  The following is an example of an institution that has developed a campus-wide community meeting and listserv for staff from any unit intersecting with sponsored programs:

  - Colorado State University RAMAround Community: https://www.research.colostate.edu/osp/RAMAround/

To ensure cross-training and transparency as research and the infrastructure for sponsored programs grow, roles and responsibilities for key administrative functions should be made readily accessible through public-facing websites. A roles and responsibilities matrix, such as a Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) matrix, eliminates ambiguity and ensures stakeholders understand their expectations. It can be used to cross-train staff across the institution and can be adjusted to accommodate Fresno's changing needs.

As mentioned in an earlier recommendation, pre- and post-award should provide clear, streamlined processes that provide consistent guidance and support throughout the award lifecycle. This objective can be achieved by developing a roles and responsibilities matrix for all pre- and post-award functions. Roles and responsibilities development should involve all key staff and stakeholders, with the final matrix published on the RSP and the Foundation websites, respectively.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: Pre- and post-award should collaboratively develop a matrix that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each individual or team responsible for a particular function.** Robust matrices assign task accountability, promoting transparency and responsible, efficient workflow.

  The following are examples of R&R matrices:

- Colorado State University: https://www.research.colostate.edu/osp/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2023/08/Roles-and-Responsibilities-Matrix-Master-8_8_2023.pdf
- Lehigh University: https://research.cc.lehigh.edu/sponsored-programs-roles-and-responsibilities-matrix
- North Dakota State University: https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/research/documents/SPA/forms/roles_and_responsibilities_matrix.pdf
- Wayne State University: https://research.wayne.edu/spa/pdf/spa-roles-and-responsibilities.pdf
- University of Colorado: https://www.csusm.edu/corp/sponsoredprojects/spahandbook.pdf; rr_final_revisions_4-9-15.pdf (colorado.edu)

Both the Division of Research and Graduate Studies and University Initiatives focus on research development, including development of complex, multidisciplinary proposals. University Initiatives also supports Provost-directed initiatives.

Housing research development activities in two different offices create confusion and concerns about fairness among the faculty. The functions of University Initiatives are not clearly defined or aligned with the workflow of the sponsored programs. Additionally, University Initiatives is authorized to submit proposals to sponsoring agencies without the benefit of review from Research and Sponsored Programs. Bypassing the compliance review provided by Research and Sponsored Programs means there is no oversight to ensure the accuracy of budgets or compliance with sponsor regulations. A well-structured review process provides a clear chain of accountability with institutional and sponsor regulations. It also provides the internal controls necessary for safeguarding the integrity and efficiency of the proposal review and submission processes.

- **Recommendation: The Provost should place all research development support under the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.** Housing all central research development initiatives in one unit creates a single point of contact for faculty seeking research support. It also eliminates confusion and perceived inequities regarding the availability of support services.

Fresno State does not have a separate unit dedicated to research compliance. Research Compliance services are integrated within the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. Research Compliances encompasses a broad array of services, including:

- Compliance Training via the CITI Program

- Conflict of Commitment (COC) and Conflict of Interest (COI)
- Export Controls
- Human Subjects (IRB) and Assurance for the Protection of Human Subjects
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and Animal Welfare Assurance
- Institution Biosafety Committee (IBC)
- Intellectual Property (IP) and Dual Use of Research Concern (DURC)
- Radiation Safety Committee
- Research Misconduct
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)
- Unmanned Aerial Systems

Roles and responsibilities in these compliance areas, including final authority in decision-making, are unclear. Adherence to compliance regulations and training is going unchecked. The Compliance Officer position is vacant, and there is no administrative support for compliance. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) are responsible for conducting research ethically and responsibly. Additionally, for IHEs engaged in sponsored programs, investigators must adhere to specific guidelines, regulations, and training to receive funding. The move to an R2 Carnegie Classification means that Fresno State will navigate a more intricate web of federal regulations and sponsor requirements. Failing to comply with research regulations may result in:

- Suspension or termination of research projects
- Loss of funding and research opportunities
- Legal action and financial penalties
- Damage to the institution's reputation

    - **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Provost should create a task force under the Graduate Research and Advisory Board (GRAB; the recommended task force is referred to throughout the report as "the GRAB Task Force").** The GRAB Task Force will perform tasks, including surveying other California State Universities and benchmark institutions on the size, structure, and staffing necessary to run a robust compliance program. A robust compliance program, with dedicated staff, can remain current on changing federal and sponsor regulations. It can help identify potential risks to the institution, track compliance toward required training, and guide investigators and compliance committees on adhering to institutional, governmental, and sponsor regulations.

IV. STANDARD for Advisory or Other Standing Committees that Support the Institution's Sponsored Projects Enterprise.

> The institution has developed appropriate advisory and/or standing committees to foster communications concerning the sponsored projects enterprise. Members of such committees have a clear understanding of their and the committee's role, as well as expectations for interfacing with the broader institutional community.

Fresno State's academic policy dictates that the forum for research policy, education, technology, and such is the Grants and Research Advisory Board (GRAB). The body had not met for many years until last fall when it aligned with the R2 status and the strategic plan. GRAB meets twice a semester, at the beginning and the end. The Provost is the Chair, and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Vice President of Administration are also on the committee. There are four faculty members to cover research as experienced Principal Investigators, in addition to the Dean of Research and the Vice Provost. The mission is to provide oversight and direction over all research matters. As noted in Standard I: Research Administration Organization, we recommend expanding the role of the Vice Provost as a point person with the research community would be a natural expansion and further support the work of the Grants and Research Advisory Board.

The Preamble to the University Constitution (APM 127) describes the Academic Senate (Faculty Senate):

> *As the official voice of the faculty, the Academic Assembly provides the means for the faculty to participate in the collegial form of governance that is based on historic academic traditions as recognized by the people of the State of California through the Board of Trustees and the Legislature. The Academic Senate with its committee structure is the primary governance instrumentality of the Academic Assembly.*

The Faculty Senate is the representative body of the Fresno State faculty. The Senate has a research subcommittee to serve as a forum for the faculty. The Faculty Senate includes faculty, student, and staff representation.

Research Integrity is on the calendar for the Fall of 2024 for the research subcommittee. In some perspectives, the Senate is seen as a hindrance, and there are concerns that issues get stuck in the Academic Policy and Planning Committee. The President and Provost are non-voting members of the Senate.

There is potential for enhancing the Faculty Senate in both representation of research and research administration for the faculty and having a voice on campus for the implications on faculty performing sponsored projects. The disconnect between the

Faculty Senate and the GRAB could be eliminated, and both representative bodies and the faculty could be enhanced.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Faculty Senate Chair and the Provost should host an annual training for faculty on the functions of the research advisory forums of GRAB and the Faculty Senate.** The training should include how policies are formed and ensure that policies are consistent and do not create unintended negative impacts.

Another key challenge is in the overall area of compliance. Without a compliance program or dedicated compliance officer, an R2 institution faces numerous challenges and risks. First, lacking a structured compliance framework makes it difficult to ensure adherence to relevant regulations and policies governing research activities, potentially exposing Fresno State to legal and financial liabilities. Second, without centralized oversight, there is a higher likelihood of inconsistencies in compliance practices across departments or research units, leading to inefficiencies and gaps in risk management. Third, the absence of a compliance officer may hinder the institution's ability to stay updated on evolving regulatory requirements and industry standards, putting it at a disadvantage in maintaining compliance and competitiveness. Additionally, without a designated individual or team responsible for compliance, there may be a lack of accountability and clarity regarding roles and responsibilities in addressing compliance issues promptly and effectively. Overall, the absence of a compliance program and officer increases the institution's vulnerability to compliance violations, reputational damage, and diminished research integrity.

NCURA Sponsored Program Peer Reviews do not specifically address compliance. The review team did make some observations that we will share along with general feedback.

There is a lack of compliance oversight that crosses the entire institution. Committees for Human Subjects Protection (IRB), Animal Care and Use (IACUC), and research safety exist. However, each of those committees lacks substantial staff support, is self-managing, and does not connect to any central compliance oversight function.

The IRB reviews happen at the department level under an older, decentralized system. The system reflects the efficiency needed at Fresno State, as the institution is not performing any medical research and can get local subject matter experts to serve on the committees. The IRB system is online, and the IRB uses the Kuali tool for the review with incomplete record activity tying reviews to funded research. There is a small amount of administrative support and 20% of one faculty position. While the decentralized IRB model satisfies the needs and expectations of the faculty performing the research, a compliance and effectiveness review would be beneficial to ensure that needs and requirements are being met.

Currently, the animal facility is closed for renovations and farm animals are not covered under the IACUC. There is a goal for AAALAC certification, which would benefit from a compliance office supporting such a review.

The Biosafety Committee has eight members, and membership is voluntary with no time buyout or formal training. They follow the NIH guidelines and review grant proposals to ensure compliance. They are planning to extend the review to lab classes in biology, biochemistry, etc., but that fell off the plan during the pandemic.

Radiation safety representatives from different departments manage radiation safety.

- **Recommendation: The Provost should expand the compliance protections for Fresno State to include and encompass the compliance committees for the protection of research subjects and biosafety.** As compliance coverage is explored, the compliance committees need to be considered in the overall decisions for support and oversight.

V. STANDARD for Sponsored Projects Staffing and Staff Development.

> The institution has invested in and committed to a sufficient number of staff to: (1) support the core functions of the research administration operation, with emphasis on sponsored projects administration, and (2) meet obligations to sponsors and comply with governmental and locally mandated regulations.
>
> The institution has an appropriate research administration staffing plan that contains elements of recruitment, retention, professional development, and succession for key positions.
>
> Where sufficient research volume and activity exists or where operations are decentralized, the institution has unit-level research administrators residing at the department, school/college, or organized research unit level.

Fresno State faces significant staffing challenges in sponsored programs administration, a recurring concern voiced in numerous Peer Review site visit interview sessions. There is a prevailing belief that the University is severely understaffed, with non-competitive wages exacerbating the issue. Reclassification efforts are met with dissatisfaction, possibly due to a lack of recognized job classifications and career growth opportunities in research administration. This challenge is further underscored by the uneven support provided across the organization, prompting each area to maintain separate records to manage sponsored program activities. A key indicator of this issue is the reactive nature of actions, primarily initiated by PIs rather than being centrally facilitated.

Fresno State lacks succession plans for research administration, contributing to significant retention challenges. During the Peer Review site visit, it was discovered that a crucial Research and Sponsored Programs team member had given notice to accept a position at another CSU institution. The absence of a succession plan poses significant challenges, with no provisions for accommodating the transition or temporary staffing, and recruitment efforts are exceptionally difficult.

- **Recommendation: Fresno State must engage in succession planning across the sponsored project administration enterprise.** The President's cabinet must assign succession planning as an exercise for each area on campus. The Provost and Vice Provost must ensure that succession planning related to sponsored project administration is completed. The CFO must ensure that succession planning is completed on campus's financial and administrative areas. The Foundation should complete succession planning in all Foundation operations, including financial management. This blog post from SRA International provides several perspectives on successional planning within research administration at universities: https://www.srainternational.org/blogs/srai-news/2021/12/08/perspectives-on-succession-planning

Institutional resources at Fresno State are constrained, compounded by ongoing budget reductions. Despite the growth, there are no extra resources available to address additional needs, and state funding does not cover compensation increases, necessitating stringent cuts. Furthermore, other areas take precedence over sponsored programs in resource allocation. The Foundation and auxiliary sector are exploring options to address staffing challenges, such as university or campus collaboratives to pool resources effectively.

- **Recommendation: The Dean and the Director of Financial Services of the Foundation must oversee the development of a standardized job classification and career advancement pathway for sponsored project administration at Fresno State.** While the Dean should oversee the development on the research development and pre-award side, the Foundation should develop a standardized classification and career advancement pathway for post-award administration. These frameworks should harmonize with positions across the California State University and Foundation systems, reflecting the requisite activities, skills, knowledge, and experience applicable across the enterprise. The job family should delineate the roles and duties of each position within the career ladder.

  Examples include:

  - Duke University: https://myresearchpath.duke.edu/topics/career-management-research-administrators

  - University of Michigan: https://hr.umich.edu/working-u-m/management-administration/compensation-classification/compensation-classification-tools-procedures/research-administration-series-redesign
  - University of California System: https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/career-community/career-development/career-tracks/

According to feedback received by the Review Team in multiple instances, the insufficient staffing levels at Fresno State fail to meet the demands of both internal participants and external sponsors. Post-award proficiency is currently gauged by the number of invoices processed, but this metric is flawed due to delays in the financial system caused by various challenges.

While this is the commonly shared message, it is unclear how much staffing issues are the reason for gaps and delays or if the redundancies and inefficiencies are more impactful. Additionally, reliance on paper-based processes and a lack of ongoing collaboration between pre- and post-award teams exacerbate the problems. Furthermore, there is a lack of direct feedback between budget revisions and amendments, adversely impacting reconciliation efforts. Delays in the award initiation process escalate complications and heighten risk exposure. Implementing process improvement measures would help identify areas requiring additional staff or enhanced efficiency, thereby improving staff effectiveness.

- **Recommendation: Under the GRAB's supervision, Fresno State should consider establishing a Process Improvement Task Force comprising university resources in collaboration with the Vice Provost.** This task force could engage with each department supporting sponsored programs to comprehensively review existing processes. The primary objectives include identifying redundancies, enhancing internal controls, and streamlining procedures. Given the abundance of talented individuals at Fresno State with expertise in process improvement and a strong commitment to the institution, the task force could identify easily remedied issues and help leadership strategize and prioritize higher-level matters.
  - Emory University: https://sot.emory.edu/_includes/documents/sections/guidelines/continuous-improvement-tool-kit.pdf

Training and onboarding practices for central sponsored project administration staff at Fresno State exhibit inconsistencies and a lack of coordination. Currently, there is no cross-training or interaction beyond the units supporting research administration, resulting in siloed knowledge and fragmented understanding. Additionally, training lacks collaboration across different stages of the sponsored project lifecycle, relying solely on transactions within specific areas without considering the broader workflow. While the post-award team is developing onboarding training, this effort remains isolated, with minimal collaboration with other research administration teams on campus. To bridge this gap, efforts are underway to leverage resources from other CSU campuses.

Internal training primarily utilizes firsthand methods but would benefit from supplementing with external resources, such as NCURA training, webinars, and conference attendance. However, there is currently no provision for research administration staff to autonomously plan for conference attendance or training. Although a small stipend is available for some staff, this information is not widely disseminated and there is a lack of clear guidance or suggestions for its use. Moreover, there are no established standards for essential resources, such as listservs and memberships, for research administration staff, highlighting the need for greater consistency and support in professional development efforts

- **Recommendation: Sponsored project administration leadership should collaborate to create a comprehensive training program tailored specifically for Fresno State, encompassing the entire lifecycle of sponsored programs**. This training program should encompass all central functions related to sponsored programs, including organizational structure, sponsor interactions, communication protocols, and avenues for addressing questions and concerns. It should be accessible to all central staff and serve as a valuable resource for campus and auxiliary staff as well as faculty.
    - UC San Diego: https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/sra/get-help-training/ra-training/index.html
- **Recommendation: Sponsored project administration leadership should build shared resources for collaboration and outreach.** These resources would include listservs, shared newsletters, shared forums, PI category lists, and other resources that would benefit both pre-award and post-award individually and collectively.
- **Recommendation: Sponsored program administration leadership should proactively engage and collaborate with counterparts from other California State University campuses to establish a network for sharing best practices and training opportunities.** The Cal State system possesses rich resources with extensive experience and knowledge accumulated over decades. Leveraging these resources, while concurrently prioritizing process improvement initiatives, may yield significant benefits and uncover readily attainable opportunities for improvement.

VI. STANDARD for Resources to Support Sponsored Projects and Research Administration.

> The institution has in place a process to identify changing resource needs for sponsored projects and research administration in response to changes in institutional priorities and the external environment. Such resources encompass space, software/programs, office equipment, and financial resources to support the staff in carrying out research administration functions.

Fresno State is grappling with significant budgetary constraints that impact both research administration and campus resources crucial for the community. Research-oriented faculty aspire to progress faster than the institution is currently equipped to support, compounded by a budget structure primarily geared towards teaching. When faculty move from fully teaching to performing research, it necessitates backfilling teaching slots. The precarious state of California's budget further compounds Fresno State's challenges, potentially limiting long-term strategic planning and infrastructure development for sponsored programs. This creates a high-level resource struggle, with faculty having diverse interests and needs based on discipline. Despite these challenges, Fresno State endeavors to evolve and expand while preserving its unique identity.

Currently, all sponsored project funding flows through the Foundation with distributions back to the University and its colleges. However, this process would be better with more consistency and timeliness, especially as it pertains to the growth in indirect costs. Improvement in the process will support leadership's ability to make informed budget decisions to bolster infrastructure or augment staffing in line with research requirements.

As outlined in Standard II: Institutional Investment in the Sponsored Projects Enterprise, it is essential for the President to oversee the development and implementation of a transparent indirect cost return policy for Fresno State. This policy should clearly outline processes and timelines to facilitate effective budgeting and resource planning for all relevant parties. The return of indirect costs to the University can help address some of the budgetary constraints faced by the institution.

Indirect cost return is critical for supporting and expanding research endeavors at many R2 universities. Faculty have expressed concerns about system maintenance and a lack of visibility into facilities and administrative (F&A) cost distribution to maintain and support equipment and systems. IT has recommended including funds in proposals for maintenance contracts to address these concerns, which could assist in direct cost coverage.

These indirect costs are generated upon direct costs in the performance of sponsored projects. As they are directly related to the conduct of research, the indirect cost return can be leveraged to further research in various ways. This includes infrastructure investment, administrative support, research development, training, professional development, and graduate and undergraduate student support, as well as community engagement and outreach efforts. By leveraging indirect cost return, Fresno State can sustain or expand its research capabilities, support faculty and students, and contribute to its ongoing evolution as an R2 institution.

- **Recommendation: The GRAB Task Force should develop and implement a transparent plan for research infrastructure and research administration for Fresno State.** This plan should clearly outline strategies, budgets, and accountability mechanisms, while also enhancing local-level plans. It should encompass research infrastructure, faculty buyout funding, research administration, and information technology relevant to Fresno State's research initiatives.

One of the challenges is that no Information Technology (IT) dedicated support for research and sponsored programs exists. There are IT tools and knowledge within IT to provide solutions. There needs to be more integration of IT into the operations of research and sponsored programs. There are conversations and good intentions that need to be put into practice.

- **Notable Practice: The Dean of Research and Graduate Programs meets with the IT Director to educate IT on research and research administration needs.**
- **Recommendation: The Dean of Research and Graduate Programs should require RSP to include IT in standing meetings where the agenda would encompass discussions of IT challenges and potential solutions to address process challenges.** Maintaining an ongoing connection between system users and IT often leads to the discovery of elegant and straightforward solutions. This initiative will enhance the users' understanding of how the systems operate and increase the IT team's awareness of the urgency and challenges the users face, fostering a more collaborative and effective problem-solving environment.

Research Administration Communication and Outreach

VII. STANDARD for Research Administration Communications.

> Research administration recognizes the importance of establishing mechanisms for timely, regular communication regarding sponsored project trends and activity levels, policies and procedures, expectations, roles and responsibilities, changes in policies, and risk areas.
>
> Appropriate lines of communication exist between the institution's senior research administrator(s) and the institution's overall senior leadership team.
>
> The central research administration office provides regular communication to the investigators and staff about research administration, as well as opportunities to provide feedback. Current policies and procedures are readily accessible via websites and other appropriate means. Strong and regular communications exist between central offices and unit-level staff, as appropriate. Research administration periodically assesses the effectiveness of communication practices.

Effective communication and outreach in research administration are important for keeping investigators, administrative staff, and leadership informed about funding trends, institutional resources supporting research and sponsored programs, and changes to institutional policies and sponsor regulations. Communication mechanisms should be timely and regular, providing opportunities for feedback.

Policies and procedures are readily accessible via the Research and Sponsored Programs (pre-award) and Foundation Financial Services (post-award) websites. Both websites host a PI handbook for pre- and post-award procedures. Other timely communications are sent to faculty investigators via a faculty listserv maintained by the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. Updates are shared with central pre-award administrators and unit administrators on staff and administrator listservs. Post-award Foundation staff are not on any of the campus listservs and, as such, may miss important communications. Communications requiring immediate attention are shared with key stakeholders via phone or email, which is sufficient for an institution of this size. Developing a standard and critical communications plan will be important as research grows.

Funding opportunities, funding updates, upcoming training, faculty spotlights, and institutional and sponsor regulations updates are communicated in the monthly RSP newsletter, sent via Constant Contact. The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs has visibility into who receives and opens the monthly RSP newsletter. Faculty research is also showcased in the *Fresno State Magazine* and the Division of Graduate Studies and Research's newest initiative, Research Week.

- **Notable Practice: Under the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs organizes and publishes a monthly newsletter.** A newsletter can be a valuable tool for communication and outreach. It allows information on funding opportunities, upcoming deadlines, training, and regulations to be regularly disseminated. It also raises awareness of research support services and showcases faculty achievements.

Foundation Financial Services maintains a separate faculty listserv for sharing financial-related updates. Having two separate listservs, one for pre-award and one for post-award, may lead to the following:

- **Missed Opportunities**: An investigator may be subscribed to one listserv, missing updates from the other.
- **Inconsistent Communication**: Information shared may be duplicative, which is inefficient and may diminish the effectiveness of the communication. Alternatively, information shared may be in conflict, creating confusion.
- **Limited Cross-Unit Collaboration:** Having two separate faculty listservs may hinder collaboration between pre- and post-award.

- **Recommendation: The Dean of Research and Graduate Studies and Post-Award Administration leadership should develop a joint communication plan for research administration.** This plan should identify the communication channels (e.g., listservs, newsletters, websites, press releases), audiences, and schedule. It should also include a formal protocol for escalating critical issues to senior leadership and notifying key stakeholders when outside reporting is necessary. This plan should be assessed periodically for effectiveness.

  A joint communication plan ensures investigators receive consistent messaging across the research lifecycle and view research administration as a connected support system. A joint plan also fosters collaboration between pre- and post-award offices and between investigators and research administrative staff. Including a protocol for crucial issues ensures timely, coordinated communication during critical situations. Routine assessment of the communication plan helps determine if information is reaching the intended audiences and if current resources are effective and efficient.

  An example communication plan that details the target audience, purpose, frequency, and communication method can be found at:

  - University of Illinois System: https://www.aits.uillinois.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_474/File/Professional_Services/PPMO/Project_Management/Project_Communication_Plan.docx

The Dean of Research and Graduate Studies and the Provost are GRAB members. GRAB meets at the beginning and end of each semester. Outside of GRAB, there is no standing meeting or forum for the senior research official to update the senior leadership regarding new requirements, trends, and risks to the institution's sponsored research environment. Additionally, there is no Vice President for Research at Fresno State. These concerns were discussed in Standard III: Research Administration Organization.

Research administrative staff from central and college offices do not have regular opportunities to meet to discuss areas of overlap and cross-cutting themes. There are no regular meetings between pre- and post-award or regular meetings with central and unit administrators.

- **Recommendation: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs and Post-Award Administration leadership should have joint monthly staff meetings to discuss new institutional and sponsor requirements, internal processes, and issues impacting workflow between the two units**. The two units should jointly establish the agenda. Regular meetings foster communication and collaboration between pre- and post-award staff and promote efficient processes.
- **Recommendation: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs and Post-Award Administration leadership should meet quarterly with pre-award, post-award, and unit staff to discuss new institutional and sponsor requirements, internal processes, and workflow issues.** Regular meetings foster communication and collaboration between central and non-central staff, provide opportunities for input from non-central units, and ensure everyone is kept updated on issues impacting the research administration lifecycle.
- **Recommendation: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs and Post-Award Administration leadership should develop a staff communication channel (e.g., Teams, two-way listserv, etc.) for pre- and post-award administrators across campus.** The communication channel should allow for a two-way flow of communication. A communication channel provides a platform for staff to engage regularly by asking questions, contributing content, and offering suggestions.

VIII. STANDARD for Outreach Efforts and Program of Education.

Research administration has established programs of education for research staff, faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate and undergraduate students, as appropriate to institution size. Included in these educational programs is information regarding institutional and sponsor expectations for the conduct of sponsored projects and research and the technology and tools available to support these endeavors. The institution has on-going educational programs for unit-level (department, college, center, other) research administrators where such exist.

> Research administration recognizes the importance of: 1) introducing new investigators, staff, institutional administrators, and unit-level research administrators to appropriate research resources and information; and 2) continuing outreach activities to the academic community. Mechanisms are in place to identify new employees. Where appropriate to the institution, mentoring programs for faculty exist to assist them with understanding approaches and philosophies for building a track record with extramural funding.
>
> Research administration has defined mechanisms that make available information about research activities and successes to the greater research community and public.

New faculty are identified through Faculty Affairs. Research and Graduate Studies are invited to present their services during New Faculty Orientations. Additionally, the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies and the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs are invited to college meetings to discuss their services with faculty investigators. Some colleges introduce faculty candidates to Research and Sponsored Programs during interviews.

- **Notable Practice: The Deans invite Research and Sponsored Programs to college meetings to share their services with faculty investigators.** College meetings provide the sponsored programs office with a platform to share their services and resources. It also provides an opportunity to build relationships between investigators and administrative staff.

It is not uncommon for investigators to connect proactively with pre-award in search of funding opportunities and support for proposal development and submission. In contrast, the relationship with post-award is often more reactive, generally occurring when investigators encounter specific challenges or have questions about their awards. Post-award is typically not invited to meetings with faculty investigators in the same way as pre-award. It is important to connect investigators with post-award staff so that investigators are aware of post-award support and resources and have an opportunity to establish relationships with post-award staff.

- **Recommendation: The Deans and Department Chairs should regularly invite post-award staff to meetings with faculty investigators.** Post-award staff can provide proactive guidance on post-award processes and effective means for managing sponsored awards. Additionally, investigators can ask questions or raise concerns regarding project management.

Professional organizations provide pre- and post-award staff training and development support. Internally, there are programs of outreach and education for investigators and administrators. These programs consist of workshops offered by Research and Sponsored Programs and by Foundation Financial Services. Topics range from sponsor requirements, such as SciENcv, to the use of technology systems and tools. Programs are announced via the faculty listserv, in the RSP newsletter, and on central administrative websites. Untapped internal sources for providing training in specialized areas, such as technology transfer, research compliance, and research development, exist. The Review Team discussed these opportunities with University Advancement, Government Relations, and General Counsel representatives. The staff within these units are open to providing training related to their areas of expertise.

- **Recommendation: The Director of Sponsored Programs should contact University Counsel, Government Relations, and University Advancement to provide investigator training on areas of expertise (e.g., data sharing and ownership, conflict of interest, and communicating with a program officer).** Training from experts in select areas can provide investigators with a deeper understanding of research regulations and institutional and ethical guidelines. These experts can highlight risk areas and educate investigators on best practices in working with sponsors and proactively mitigating risks.

Pre- and post-award staff are invited to participate in faculty workshops presented by both offices. It is unclear if unit staff responsible for research administration (e.g., project managers and budget analysts) are invited to participate in these offerings. Also, there was little evidence of cross-participation in workshops offered by pre- and post-award services.

- **Recommendation: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Post-Award Administration leadership should encourage their staff to attend training opportunities each division offers.** Opportunities for cross-training broaden the understanding of each other's work and responsibilities. Additionally, attending training and outreach in each division provides opportunities to build relationships and demonstrates a unified administration team to investigators in attendance.

Notably, unit staff responsible for research administration are not identified at Fresno State as research administrators. Failure to recognize these support staff as part of the administrative structure means they may not be included in communications and training beneficial to their work. Additionally, they may not be recognized as valuable contributors to the research enterprise. Central research administration is missing an opportunity to get input from unit staff who work daily with the systems and structures that support proposal submission and award management.

- **Recommendation: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Associate Director of Post-Award Administration should include unit staff responsible for research administration in their communications and training opportunities.** Identifying and including unit staff responsible for research administration as an integral part of the administrative structure fosters a supported work environment providing all staff responsible for research administration the resources needed to succeed.

Faculty Engagement and Faculty Burden

IX. STANDARD for Faculty Engagement and Faculty Burden.

> Relative to the size of the sponsored projects enterprise, the research administration areas have considered the collective impact and burden on faculty and have explored mechanisms to reduce or manage that burden.
>
> Faculty are provided opportunities to discuss challenges or impediments to pursuing opportunities and conducting research and other sponsored projects.

Faculty face numerous challenges when engaging in research and sponsored programs. Some of the most common include heavy teaching loads, extensive administrative tasks, limited resource access, and inefficient systems for managing sponsored awards.

Fresno State faculty do not have a forum for discussing challenges or impediments to conducting research and scholarly activities. Items of concern can be placed on the Academic Senate agenda. However, the Review Team heard there is a significant turnaround time for items to be placed on the agenda, and often, there is no resolution.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Provost should establish a forum for faculty to discuss challenges and impediments in conducting research and scholarly activities.** Items raised during this forum requiring action can be added to the Faculty Senate agenda as appropriate. A forum for open communication and collaboration among faculty provides a platform for faculty to voice their challenges and strategize. Such a forum can lead to innovative solutions and improved support structures for research and related endeavors.

In 2016-17 and 2017-18, faculty were surveyed by the Research Subcommittee of the Academic Senate's Academic Policy & Planning Committee (AP&P). The survey, developed in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, was to understand the types and levels of research expectations, recognitions, and support departments have for faculty to engage in research and sponsored programs.

The resulting reports on the *Status of Research at the California State University, Fresno* identified impediments to engaging research and sponsored programs:

- Variance in expectations and support to engage in research and sponsored programs across departments
- Presentations and publications are required for promotion and tenure in some departments

- Research is not required of tenure-track or tenured faculty in some departments
- Resource allocation varies with assigned time and space provided to some faculty
- Limited departmental budget for research-related activities
- Limited departmental budget for equipment matching and maintenance
- No distribution of recovered indirect costs to faculty in most departments
- Indirect cost recovery is not transparent
- No funding model for research
- Collaborative research is not incentivized by departments or colleges
- High teaching loads and service requirements, with no consideration of research in the assignment of faculty workload
- Inconsistent opportunities to obtain release time through course buy-out
- Lack of administrative support in some departments and centers

Consistent with these reports, the Review Team heard a harmonious message that workload distribution was one of the top impediments to engaging in research and sponsored programs. The Review Team recognizes that academic preparation and community service are Fresno State's core values. While faculty participation in research benefits students in the classroom and provides research-related opportunities, the balance of teaching, research, and service must be strategically considered in workload allocation.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Provost should charge the GRAB Task Force with producing a fiscally sound plan for balancing teaching loads with dedicated time for research.** Balancing teaching loads with dedicated time for research allows adequate time for faculty to conduct research, publish, and secure extramural funding.

For faculty investigators already engaged in sponsored programs, there is a heavy burden to meet research and sponsored project obligations. These burdens stem from inefficient systems for award management, inefficient processes of hiring staff, and a lack of funding to maintain research facilities and equipment. To grow research and sponsored programs, the University must address the burden on faculty investigators and develop strategies to reduce, manage, or prevent these burdens. Administrative programs should be developed to prevent duplicative, redundant, or conflicting requirements.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Provost should charge the GRAB Task Force with exploring solutions to mitigate administrative burdens to engaging in sponsored programs. Viable solutions should balance risk to the**

institution, available resources, and resource planning. A prioritized approach to address faculty burdens in technology, process efficiencies, and research infrastructure can help the University strategize ways to reduce administrative burdens placed on faculty investigators.

Research Administration Policy and Risk Assessment

X. STANDARD for Research Administration Risk Assessment.

The institution periodically assesses the level of risk inherent in existing research and other sponsored activities and in emerging areas, including a process to assess research activities in leased space. The institution utilizes nationally identified methods to monitor the external landscape for new areas of potential risk. There is an appropriate relationship between research administration and the institution's internal audit function. When external audits of sponsored projects are conducted, there is ongoing communication with senior leadership.

Fresno State sponsored research could incur significant risks tied to grant and contract acceptance and execution, shaped by state, CSU System, and institutional requirements across contracting, data management, and foreign activities. Risks include project non-compliance involving ethical requirements for human and animal subjects, data breaches, and research misconduct. Fresno State lacks an established process for risk assessment, but the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies periodically evaluates risks for specific projects or processes, consulting with the PI, RSP, legal counsel, and other relevant parties. Additionally, unforeseen risks are addressed by RSP staff, bringing issues to the Dean or other responsible parties. Risk is deemed low due to Fresno State's focus on non-risky research areas, with University Counsel intervening in areas of concern like data security and information sharing. Nonetheless, there are proposals with increased risk, including export control concerns with foreign collaborators. As Fresno State continues to grow, the risk with continue to grow and this area would benefit from review.

However, there is no mechanism to monitor new sponsor requirements or compliance trends, indicating a need for centralized compliance resources. Internal audits are absent stateside and audits on the Foundation side are managed locally without systematic compliance checks. There is no mechanism to periodically review the efficacy of internal controls. As Fresno State continues to grow, periodic reviews and specified internal controls would be advisable. The CFO oversees audits related to the Foundation, sharing findings with the audit committee for corrective action. This setup raises concerns about potential conflicts of interest, as audits from the Foundation are cross-checked by the same individual stateside.

- **Recommendation: Leadership from both Research and Sponsored Programs and the Foundation post-award team should establish roles and responsibilities concerning sponsored research-related audits.** Lines of communication need to be identified as tied to responsibility. These lines can be communicated to the Vice Provost for transparency and oversight.
- **Recommendation: RSP and post-award leadership need to participate together in reviewing external trends for policy, audit, and compliance.** This information needs to be used to communicate changes to relevant parties, update operations, and train team members in real-time and ongoing with scheduled regular reviews.

XI. STANDARD for Research Administration Policy.

> The institution possesses a transparent process for policy development for those policies not imposed externally (such as specific government regulations). This process includes monitoring the research administration enterprise and developing new policies when warranted. Policy ownership, exceptions, and the associated approval process are clearly established.
>
> The institution periodically reviews sponsored project policies and performs appropriate audit and assessment activities to ensure that those policies continue to meet the needs of the institution and are being followed by institutional personnel. Where research administration operations exist outside the central office and that either establish or implement policy, the institution has established the relationship between central policies and the policies and procedures of these other operations.

Research policies are important for maintaining compliance with funding regulations and are essential for ensuring ethical and responsible conduct of research. An organized policy review and evaluation process ensures that research policies meet the laws and regulations governing research activities, including sponsor regulations.

The President establishes the process for setting and approving policy at Fresno State in consultation with faculty, managers, and students depending on the policy. All policies are reviewed by the Academic Senate and approved by the President.

Policies and policy revisions are added to the Academic Policy Manual (APM) published on the Faculty Affairs webpage. Proposed policy updates are tracked and available on the Academic Senate webpage. This webpage is not currently updated to provide transparency into when a proposed policy update was reviewed or approved by the Senate or signed by the President.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The President should task the Academic Senate with updating the webpage regarding policy review and approval dates.** Transparency in policy review and updates keeps the research community well-informed and provides updates on changes to the latest policies and procedures that govern research.

There is no standard policy format or standard process for policy development. Policies are not reviewed regularly, nor is there a process for aligning college, department, or research policies to central policy. Policies do not routinely provide exceptions where appropriate, and there is no established process for reporting non-compliance.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The President should task the Academic Senate with writing a development policy that governs the development and oversight of all formal Fresno State policies.** The Policy on Policies should include a standard format that all new or revised policies must follow. This format should include a section on policy exceptions where appropriate. Additionally, a consistent policy format makes policies easier to navigate and understand.

  The following are examples of Policies on Policies:

  - Carnegie Mellon University: https://www.cmu.edu/policies/university-policy-development/index.html
  - University at Albany, State University of New York: https://www.albany.edu/risk-management-compliance/policy/policy-development-institutional-policies
  - University of Denver: https://www.du.edu/policy/development
- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Academic Senate should include sections on policy exclusions and reporting non-compliance in the policy template.** Appropriate policy exceptions allow for addressing unique situations as they arise and a clear pathway for reporting non-compliance allows for identifying and correcting policy violations.
- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Academic Senate should align policy approval authorities to those with the requisite expertise.** Policy approvers with appropriate expertise can verify that policies comply with relevant regulations, minimizing the risk of non-compliance issues. These approvers would be in addition to the University President's approval.

The policy development process should include opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback. Feedback allows stakeholders to review proposed policies and policy changes for alignment with related procedures. Approved policies and changes should be communicated through various channels, such as email, listservs, department or college meetings, and town hall meetings before implementation. An implementation timeline and any FAQs or training materials should be communicated to educate the community on the specifics of the new or revised policy.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Academic Senate should develop a process for including stakeholder input during the policy development process, such as an open comment period. It should also include a communication plan for socializing new policies or changes to existing policies.** Including stakeholders in the policy development process provides transparency and allows investigators and administrators to provide input that policymakers might not have considered. Stakeholders with specific expertise can provide valuable feedback to ensure policies align with government, state, sponsor, and institutional regulations. Early, clear communication can help smooth the transition to new or revised policies.

Policies should be reviewed regularly to keep pace with changing regulatory, technological, and ethical landscapes. Fresno State policies and guiding documents, like the "Post-Award Principal Investigator Handbook," are not reviewed regularly, and many have not been updated within the last 5-10 years.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Academic Senate should institute a regular review cycle of all research and research-related policies, including compliance policies.** A regular policy review schedule demonstrates the institution's commitment to maintaining effective and updated research policies. It also minimizes the risk of non-compliance with the changing regulatory landscape.

XII. STANDARD for Research Administration Business Continuity.

> Research administration has a written business continuity plan to maintain sponsored projects functional operations during or immediately following disruptive events. Such a plan may be separate from the emergency preparedness plan or contained within a separate section of the plan. A disruption may include utility failures; communication disruptions; fire; explosion; the inability to access the workplace due to safety, weather-related issues, or transportation issues; or other natural or pandemic catastrophic events.
>
> Research administration periodically assesses its business continuity plan and ensures that appropriate research administration units and committees are informed.

Business continuity is vital for Fresno State to navigate expected and unexpected situations effectively. While some areas have implemented business continuity plans, there is a lack of an overarching plan that prioritizes campus-wide operations. Without a comprehensive strategy to address disruptive events, such as utility failures, communication disruptions, fires, explosions, access limitations to campus, transportation issues, strikes, or terrorism, the institution remains vulnerable to risks.

- **Recommendation: The President should appoint a Crisis Management Team that addresses business continuity plans for the Fresno State campus.** The Crisis Management Team may be led by the Safety Manager within the Fresno State Police Department. The Team needs to include research administration leadership. Any disruptive event as identified above would severely impact areas critical to the research enterprise, such as animal care, computing, freezers containing biologicals and samples, etc. The Crisis Management Team can create a communication plan for all areas of campus and a media response plan for any crisis.

While there is no formal media response plan at Fresno State, the Marketing and Communications leadership is a part of the President's Cabinet. When issues arise, all relevant parties are called up to address messaging.

- **Notable Practice: The philosophy at Fresno State is to be as transparent as possible with the public.** Ample communications, including campus magazines, newsletters, and social media, are used to share information. The Marketing and Communications group is a resource that is connected to and works regularly with the research administration teams at Fresno State.

Research Administration Systems and Data Management

XIII. STANDARD for Information Systems Supporting Research Administration.

The institution has in place appropriate information systems to support research administration and sponsored projects and has processes that integrate proposals, awards, financial management, subagreements, and compliance reviews. There is sufficient IT support for systems. As appropriate to the size and scope of the research enterprise/portfolio, the institution has implemented appropriate and integrated electronic systems. The institution periodically assesses research administration technology needs.

The institution captures real-time financial data.

For higher volume institutions, there is connectivity among electronic research administration systems.

Fresno State employs various electronic tools for research administration, including Pivot for funding opportunity searches, Kuali for pre-award and protocol review, JD Edwards for financial records, and PeopleSoft for stateside funding. While PI and departmental team members have view only access to JD Edwards, accessing current balances directly from the system is not feasible, as there is no dashboard or data warehouse available. Reporting processes are cumbersome and infrequently used due to time lags and delays. Although Kuali is utilized for routing proposals and awards, its effectiveness is hindered by a reactive process, allowing proposals to be submitted without prior approval. Workarounds in Kuali necessitate extensive documentation and are not fully utilized. Additionally, there is no established system for tracking Conflicts of Interest (COI).

A planned upgrade for the JD Edwards system is anticipated to introduce additional functionality and potentially enhance user experience. It is important to note that the Foundation requires the system to function across all auxiliary corporations and processes, not solely focused on sponsored program funding. Despite these efforts, there is a prevalent reliance on shadow books, primarily maintained on Excel spreadsheets. Through interviews with various users and relevant parties across the campus, it became evident that nearly everyone involved in sponsored programs keeps a second set of books. This widespread practice has led to significant redundancy and duplication of effort across the enterprise as individuals have developed different tools for bookkeeping. Leadership made note of the challenges impacting their desire for improved reporting for the Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey.

Fresno State has made strides in utilizing electronic tools to aid research administration; however, these efforts have been inadequate, with documents often duplicated across various electronic storage platforms and in hard copy. This duplication, coupled with the manual distribution of paper copies across campus, underscores the urgent need for process improvement.

The Vice President/Chief Information Officer (CIO) at Fresno State is relatively new to the role but demonstrates a commendable enthusiasm and eagerness to collaborate in improving processes, especially by integrating IT into research discussions. By acknowledging the crucial role of IT in research and research administration, there is a firm commitment to gathering metrics that can accurately measure outcomes and provide valuable insights for decision-making purposes.

- **<u>Notable Practice</u>: The Vice President/Chief Information Officer is strategically integrated as a partner within Research and Sponsored Programs and throughout the research enterprise.** Collaborating closely with Foundation/auxiliary IT, IT endeavors to leverage the system upgrade to streamline financial data synthesis campus wide.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Dean of RSP and Director of Foundation Financial Services should require that all teams supporting sponsored programs include Information Technology (IT) in activities around process improvement and system updates or training.** By collaborating with users, the IT team can identify opportunities to optimize existing tools and assess requirements for updates.

There is no direct resource for IT available for research administration so the continued relationship between the campus IT team and RSP will continue to be essential. The IT team's talent and expertise are available to enhance the evolution of Fresno State for research.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The GRAB Task Force should work with RSP and IT to jointly establish a framework for advancing research administration at Fresno State.** Acknowledging the ongoing transformation and growth in research culture, both departments should jointly take steps to develop processes, coordinate onboarding, integrate IT solutions where feasible, implement change management strategies, and involve relevant parties in goal-setting and metric development.
- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Vice President/CIO should empower the IT department to collaboratively explore potential data utilization opportunities leveraging existing talent, skills, and expertise. In partnership with Research and Sponsored Programs, they should identify centralized experts proficient in Kuali and JD Edwards systems who possess comprehensive knowledge of each system's data and available reporting functionalities.** By involving IT, new insights can be gained on data access and tool creation, enabling campus-wide utilization of standardized systems, thus reducing the need for individual creation of workarounds.
- **<u>Recommendation</u>: Building on the previous recommendation, the IT exploration needs to expand all resource-gathering activities to include center, college, and departmental administrators involved in sponsored program activities.** This could include sharing resources and best practices for all aspects of the sponsored project lifecycle and creating channels for feedback to central research administration. This would encompass all tasks in the sponsored project lifecycle from the central level down to PI and those performing the sponsored project work.

As Fresno State continues on this evolution to expanding research with teaching and service, process improvement, planning, and change management will enhance the future.

XIV. STANDARD for Institutional Management of Research Administration Data and Generation of Metrics.

> Accurate and accessible data on sponsored projects activity and management are maintained, and the data covers areas that relate to efficiency and research management metrics, such as submissions, awards, and turnaround times. Data is collected regarding institutional actions, such as indirect cost (F&A) waivers, and sponsor requirements, such as personnel training. Trends in activity over time are tracked and appropriately reported. As appropriate to the institution, research administrative data also includes clinical trials, clinical research, and other externally sponsored activities.
>
> Data and reports are presented in a manner that is easily understood by investigators and staff.

Metrics are crucial for strategic planning and effective research administration operations. They provide valuable data that helps assess performance and areas of need. The institution can use metrics to benchmark peer institutions. They can also inform decisions on resource allocation, staffing, or program development around areas identified in the University's strategic plan.

Metrics on research administration operations are provided annually to executive leadership. These metrics will be essential in assessing progress toward the University's strategic goals for research. Annually, the Division of Research and Graduate Studies posts a Submission and Awards Report (SAR) on its website. The Dean for Research and Graduate Studies also provides an annual report on the accomplishments of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. This report includes highlights and metrics on proposals and awards (numbers and amounts), Principal Investigator characteristics, training and outreach programs, and risk areas to the institution.

- **<u>Notable Practice</u>: The Dean of Research and Graduate Programs is commended for providing an annual report to executive leadership.** These reports demonstrate the value that the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs brings to Fresno's research enterprise. They also provide transparency and accountability to investigators and executive leadership.

The following data can be extracted and compiled by Research and Sponsored Programs for reporting purposes:

- Proposal submissions by PI and sponsor (number and amount)
- Awards by PI and sponsor (number and amount)
- Data required for FFATA (Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act) reporting
- Principal investigators

- Sponsors

Data on Subawards/contracts, financial status, and financial reporting are available from Foundation Financial Services. The systems for pre-award management do not connect with those for post-award management, so determining the success rate by sponsor would be a manual process.

The Foundation financial system, JD Edwards, does not provide robust reports or metrics easily understood by faculty investigators. Faculty cannot make budget projections or determine burn rates without developing parallel systems for determining these metrics. Post-award grant analysts meet as requested by investigators to discuss award metrics such as financial status burn rates and budget projections.

- **Recommendation: The Foundation should meet with IT to implement a platform for providing faculty investigators with access to award metrics.** Access to real-time data and award metrics is essential for effective award management. Award metrics provide data to track progress toward project goals and aid investigators in project management.

Neither the pre-award office nor the post-award office uses metrics to assess the volume of activity per staff member. The importance of reviewing and balancing workloads is discussed under Standard I: Institutional and Research Planning.

Systems are not being used to track turnaround times for receipt of proposal to submission, receipt of award to set-up in the accounting system, or length of contract negotiations. There is currently no way to pull data into a comprehensive report from Kuali.

There were no reported issues with the turnaround times from proposal receipt to submission. However, it was reported that turnaround times from award receipt to set-up and subaward issuance were excessive. Investigators reported lost funding and collaboration opportunities due to excessive time for issuing a subaward/agreement.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should explore access to Kuali Negotiations or a similar tool that can provide transparency into time to set up an award and subaward agreement/issuance.** Transparency into this data can provide insights into common sticking points and the average time for issuing an award and subaward/agreement.

Fresno State is using Kuali modules for compliance reviews associated with COI and review of human and animal subjects' protocols. These systems are designed to provide central-level reviews and reporting. At Fresno State, human and animal protocol reviews are decentralized, and associated oversight committees are frustrated with the current systems. As such, metrics are not being provided from these systems on the number of protocols reviewed nor on data to support personnel training requirements.

The recommendation under Standard III: Research Administration Organization to create a compliance office with the staffing necessary to run a robust compliance program will be crucial for supporting the use of and reporting from the Kuali compliance modules. This recommendation will also be crucial for documenting and reporting on training for the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR).

Institutional Sponsored Projects Partnerships and Associations

XV. STANDARD for Institutional Research Partnerships with Other Organizations.

The institution has established standard agreements and policies for all long-term affiliations or relationships with other organizations that are participating or collaborating in research activities (e.g., hospitals, institutes, agencies). All parties understand which organization submits proposals. These agreements are periodically reviewed. These relationships apply to research and other sponsored activities flowing in from, as well as out to, the partner(s). Additional relationships include research-related institutional services (e.g., oversight for regulatory compliance areas, such as human or animal research) provided to other organizations.

Agricultural engineering stands as a focus of a significant portion of Fresno State's endeavors. Currently, the University's partnerships in sponsored program activities are limited and are mostly in the agricultural domain. Collaborations exist with select Cal State University campuses concerning federal funding support for agricultural initiatives. While Government Relations leadership plays a role in agricultural funding, Fresno State lacks formal affiliations, agreements, or institutional research partnerships overall.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Director of RSP should create a policy and procedure for developing, documenting, implementing, and delivering partnerships with affiliated entities at Fresno State.** The Director should reach out to other California State University schools or the CSU legal counsel for templates to be prepared should a partnership develop. This could include:
  - Sponsor billing and accounts receivable
  - Post-approval monitoring

- Control of confidential information
- Use of facilities
- Application or distribution of Indirect Cost Recovery
- Distribution of PI effort
- Ownership of Intellectual Property
- Coordination of regulatory compliance
- Proposal submission
- Review of affiliation agreement

XVI. STANDARD for Research Policy for Non-Employed Individuals.

> The institution has clear definitions for relationships with individuals who are engaged in conducting sponsored projects but who are not employees. Such individuals include paid and unpaid visiting scholars, courtesy faculty, adjunct faculty, emeritus faculty, and other individuals who are afforded space and responsibilities associated with institutional research or sponsored project activities.

Fresno State administers roles for affiliates who are non-employees, all of whom are registered through University Human Resources and overseen by the hosting department. Human Resources manages the vetting and approval process in accordance with established compliance procedures. a policy exists addressing activities related to sponsored programs, concerns have been raised regarding its inconsistent application for adjunct faculty and a lack of notification regarding the status of named PIs at FSU. The policy references that those not automatically eligible to be a PI may seek an exception.

- **<u>Notable Practice</u>: RSP adheres to a standing policy governing affiliated individuals and their involvement in sponsored project activity.**
- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Dean of Research and Graduate Programs shall direct a review of policy implementation and enforcement to identify areas of non-compliance for non-affiliated individuals.** Additionally, they should educate campus users on policy, how and when to obtain exceptions, and strengthen the review process to ensure full compliance or sufficient documentation when there is an exception to the policy.

Research Development Operations

XVII. STANDARD for Research Development.

> The institution has created a strategy for developing critical research partnerships both within the institution and with external partners. As part of partnership development, the institution focuses on research team building, federal relations building, and ensuring necessary resources are available and maintained.
>
> The institution focuses on research capacity building, with special attention on identifying and nurturing areas of institutional strength.
>
> The institution supports faculty in grantsmanship development by providing monetary resources, educational opportunities, and support services.

Research development initiatives at Fresno State are divided between University Initiatives and the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. University Initiatives focuses on Provost-directed initiatives. The Executive Director of University Initiatives has experience with grant writing and assisting investigators with complex, multidisciplinary proposals. As recommended in Standard III: Research Administration Organization, it would be beneficial to have all research development services co-located under Research and Sponsored Programs.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs offers standard research development services, including funding opportunity identification and targeted dissemination, proposal development services, outreach activities, training, and targeted development activities for junior faculty. Additionally, RSP has a newly launched faculty fellows' program to mentor faculty in grant writing.

- **<u>Notable Practice</u>: The Office Research and Sponsored Programs has launched a program designed to mentor faculty in grant writing.** Grant writing is an important skill for new faculty wanting to establish a research career. Successful grant writers can provide valuable insights into the grant-writing process and advice on aligning investigator and sponsor goals.

As Fresno State's research and scholarly portfolio grows, it will be beneficial to add expertise in proposal development. Staff knowledgeable and dedicated to research development can become proactive and strategic partners for faculty, providing services such as:

- Matching faculty research and scholarly interests with targeted funding opportunities and with others who share similar interests

- Sharing opportunities for faculty investigators to connect with sponsors (e.g., upcoming NIH/NSF Regional Conferences)
- Bringing awareness to institutional resources such as seed funding, specialized equipment, and shared facilities
- Developing narratives on institutional resources and capacity
- Analyzing the appropriateness of funding opportunities

    - **Recommendation: The Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs should support staff in gaining expertise in research development.** Knowledgeable, dedicated staff in research development can contribute to the institution's long-term research and scholarly goals by guiding faculty through crafting competitive proposals, identifying faculty with complementary research interests, and strategically aligning faculty research interests with funding priorities.

      Training and education on research development is available through NORDP (https://www.nordp.org/).

Each college/Dean creates opportunities for faculty to build relationships with sponsors. As noted in Standard VIII: Outreach Efforts and Programs of Education, the Executive Director of Government Relations is available to share with research faculty how to communicate with a program officer regarding project fit with a sponsor's funding priorities.

In addition to connecting faculty with sponsors, it is important to connect them with other faculty investigators. Providing forums for faculty to discuss research and scholarly interests is useful for developing new collaborations and ideas while leveraging strengths and resources.

    - **Recommendation: The Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs should work with the college Deans to establish forums for faculty research. Examples include formal research groups focused on specific themes, organized seminars where faculty present their research, and informal research gatherings.** Providing opportunities for faculty to share their research and resources and connect creates a collaborative research enterprise.

Access to seed funding helps support the initial stages of research and scholarly activities. Researchers can explore novel questions and generate the preliminary data necessary to be competitive in the extramural funding environment.

As mentioned previously, seed funding is available through the Chancellor's Office for research, scholarship, and creativity activities. Additionally, the California State University Agriculture Research Institute (ARI) provides competitive awards for research that aligns with the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) priorities.

Fresno State also has two awards to support the research and innovation:

- Claude C. Laval Jr. Award for Innovative Technology and Research: Supports the development of innovative technology and research; and
- Claude C. Laval III Award for Commercialization of Research, Innovation, and Creativity: Supports activities focused on commercialization of intellectual property, innovation, and creativity.

XVIII. STANDARD for Sponsored Project Funding and Proposal Services.

> The institution provides faculty/investigators access to information on prospective sponsors (e.g., governmental agencies, local sponsors, corporate sponsors, private foundations, and international agencies). The institution periodically assesses the quality of usefulness of its sponsor information resources.
>
> Stakeholders are provided resources, tools, and assistance, as appropriate to the culture of the institution, the level of activity, and the relative importance of research in strategic goals. Appropriate to the size and needs of the institution, assistance is extended to support investigators and research personnel in responding to funding opportunities and preparing letters of intent, pre-proposals, and proposals.
>
> Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all level of staff engaged in sponsored project funding and proposal services at central and unit levels.

Sponsored project funding and proposal services help faculty identify funding opportunities based on their research interests. Assistance includes guidance on proposal and budget development and adhering to sponsor guidelines. Collaboration with proposal service staff can help strengthen the proposal quality and competitiveness. Project funding and proposal services are available to Fresno State investigators through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

RSP hosts a subscription to Pivot and the Grants Resource Center (GRC) funding search engines. Funding opportunities are also published in the monthly RSP newsletter. Metrics are available on the use of funding information systems via Pivot. However, there is no dedicated staff time to track these metrics or to provide outreach to investigators on using Pivot to find funding opportunities or potential collaborators.

- **Recommendation: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs should designate a Pivot administrator.** The Pivot administrator can manage funding opportunities and aid users with system functionality for matching funding opportunities with expertise. Additionally, they can share targeted funding news and information and work with investigators on building their profiles to boost the visibility of expertise across campus.

RSP administrators are aware of an intent to submit via the Intent to Apply (ITA) process. An ITA form is submitted to RSP at least fourteen business days before the proposal is due. The form is required thirty business days before the due date for collaborative proposals. This form requests information about the Principal Investigator(s), the funding opportunity announcement title and link, and the sponsor deadline. The ITA process provides the RSP Research Administrator time to analyze the funding announcement to determine eligibility and programmatic fit and to talk with the investigator about atypical requirements.

- **Notable Practice: The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has developed a process to provide pre-award administrators with advanced notice of an investigator's intent to submit a funding proposal.** Advanced notice allows the RSP administrators to review the funding opportunity for programmatic fit, eligibility, and specific sponsor requirements.

The RSP Research Administrator works with the investigator or applicable program manager to develop the proposal's budget and administrative sections. Research and Sponsored Programs staff have functional knowledge consistent with their responsibilities. Because RSP administrators are assigned by colleges and schools, they are cross-trained on multiple sponsors and programs.

Both ORSP and University Initiatives provide assistance with the development of complex and multi-disciplinary collaborative proposals. However, as Standard III: Research Administration Organization recommends, having all funding and proposal services co-located under Research and Sponsored Programs would be beneficial. Co-locating provides a single office for investigators needing assistance and allows for a concentration of expertise in interpreting sponsor guidelines, budgeting, and compliance.

Sponsored Project Operations

XIX. STANDARD for Proposal Review and Submission

> The institution has an established process to review proposals prior to submission to ensure conformance with sponsor requirements and institutional policy. Proposal review includes budgeting, cost sharing/matching, and adherence to specific sponsor policies. Proposal review includes processes for needs of special solicitation requirements and voluntary waivers of indirect costs (F&A).

The roles and responsibilities associated with the proposal review and submission activities are clearly understood by all stakeholders. Management systems and the proposal review process interface smoothly with compliance processes/systems. There is a clear process for subrecipients in both proposals and awards. The institution clearly distinguishes sponsored projects from gifts. The institution has clearly defined and communicated internal processes for sponsors that restrict the number of applications. Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all level of staff engaged in sponsored project proposal review and submission at both central and unit levels. The central and unit-level staff have adequate understanding of submission requirements for electronic and non-electronic proposal submissions.

Proposal review and submission begin with the Intent to Apply (ITA) form. The ITA form requests information about the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, funding opportunity announcement title and link, and sponsor deadline. It is at the intent to apply stage that proposals are identified as gifts, assistance awards (grants and cooperative agreements), or contracts. The Fresno State Foundation serves as the responsible entity for philanthropic gifts and grants. There is a clear distinction between gifts, assistance awards, and contracts. In addition to the Gift Acceptance Policy, the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Associate Director of Post-Award Administration have a checklist to distinguish gift funds from restricted funds. If there is uncertainty, the two offices will discuss and come to a resolution.

- **<u>Notable Practice</u>: The Fresno State Foundation has a Gift Acceptance Policy and process for making an upfront determination between gifts and restricted funds**. Distinguishing between gifts and restricted funds ensures proper management and reporting of funds.

For programs that limit the number of submissions per institution and/or PI, a limited submission process is detailed on the RSP website. Pivot alerts, mailings, newsletters, invitations, and web searches identify limited submissions. An internal competition is hosted on InfoReady approximately 90 days before the submission deadline. Investigators and the proposals selected to move forward are announced in the RSP Newsletter and on the RSP website. The review team comprises the applicant's Deans, the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, and ad-hoc committee members.

- **<u>Notable Practice</u>: A limited submission process, including a timeline, is delineated on the RSP website.** A coordinated review of proposals for limited submission competitions provides a fair and transparent process for proposal selection. Internal competitions maximize the institution's chance of securing funding and may encourage collaborations and strategic allocation of resources.

The ITA form does not explicitly ask about external collaborators. Early identification of external collaborators allows for sufficient time to gather letters of collaboration, data-sharing agreements, and collaborator scopes of work and cost proposals.

- **Recommendation: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs should have a question added to the ITA asking if the project will involve personnel or entities external to the University.** Location information (domestic and foreign) and contact information should be included. Identifying external collaborators early in the proposal stage allows for an efficient, coordinated, and compliant submission process.

Submission deadlines are clearly articulated in the ITA form and the Internal Proposal Deadline Policy. Deadlines are restated in the "Pre-Award Principal Investigator Handbook" and included in the Research and Sponsored Programs administrative staff's email signature.

- **Notable Practice: The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has articulated and communicated the expectations for proposal submission.** An internal deadline policy improves proposal quality by allowing time for thorough proposal review for accuracy and compliance with sponsor and institutional regulations. It also allows RSP staff to manage their workload more efficiently.

The Research and Sponsored Programs Administrator works with the investigator or applicable program manager to develop the budget and administrative sections of the proposal. A Project Information Form (PIF) collects information about the PI, co-investigator(s), sponsoring agency, budget, compliance areas, and other needs (e.g., space, equipment installation, etc.). The RSP Research Administrator works with the PI to gather required proposal components, including appropriate documentation (e.g., scope of work, cost proposal, and compliance approvals) from subrecipients. Determining whether a third party will be a subrecipient or contractor is at the Principal Investigator's and RSP staff's discretion. Failure to properly classify an entity as a subrecipient at the proposal stage can lead to inaccurate budgeting, delays in setting up the award appropriately, and non-compliance with federal regulations.

- **Recommendation: Research and Sponsored Programs should require a completed subrecipient determination/classification form for proposals with external entities.** The classification form should be maintained in the proposal record and shared with Foundation Financial Services in the award package. Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.331) requires pass-through entities to make a case-by-case determination if a party receiving federal funds is acting as a subrecipient or contractor. Completing a subrecipient determination form documents that an appropriate upfront determination was made.

Examples of subrecipient versus contractor determination/classification forms are available from:

- East Carolina University: https://rede.ecu.edu/ora/wp-content/pv-uploads/sites/462/2019/07/Subrecipient-or-Vendor.pdf
- George Washington University: https://sponsoredprojects.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5831/files/downloads/Sub_vs_Contractor_Checklist.pdf
- Georgia Institute of Technology: https://osp.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Subrecipient%20vs%20Contractor%20vs%20Vendor%20vs%20Employee%20Checklist.pdf

Proposals are reviewed for compliance with sponsor guidelines, such as page limits and other restrictions. Budget review includes requests for reimbursed release time, academic year overload, summer pay, cost sharing or matching, negotiated fringe benefits, and an indirect cost waiver in lieu of full indirect cost recovery.

Only some colleges have program managers who assist with proposal and budget development. This means that often the RSP Research Administrator both develops and then reviews the budget for compliance. As such, errors may go undetected.

- **Recommendation: Research and Sponsored Programs should realign roles and responsibilities so that the person who develops the budget is not the same person who reviews the budget.** This may translate into having one Research Administrator develop the budget and another review the budget. Alternatively, the Pre-Award Coordinators could be assigned the role of budget development, with the Research Administrator providing oversight and review. Strengthening internal controls around budget development and review can minimize associated risks and provide an opportunity to cross-train staff. The current structure creates a gap in internal controls with the same person creating, reviewing, and submitting the budget.

The University has processes and forms for requesting reductions in indirect costs via the Indirect Cost Reduction Approval Form and a policy on voluntary cost sharing. Voluntary cost share is offered when strongly encouraged by sponsors. The Dean and either the Provost or the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies must approve requests for reductions in indirect costs. Units approving an indirect cost reduction are charged an amount equal to the difference between the amount of IDC requested and the amount allowed by the funding agency. The difference is deducted from the amount of IDC recovery to the unit. The Review Team heard that IDC was routinely waived even with this policy. It is in the University's best interest to collect as much indirect cost recovery as possible by limiting routine approvals of indirect cost waivers.

Alternatively, units might consider charging full indirect costs and using the recovery to directly support the project or unit.

- **Recommendation: The Provost should task the GRAB Task Force to implement a process to track all indirect cost waiver requests and analyze their impact on the University's effective rate.** Tracking and analyzing IDC waivers assess the impact of not recovering full indirect costs on colleges/schools and the University. This data can be used to make informed decisions on future requests for IDC waivers.
- **Recommendation: The Provost and Dean of DRGS should jointly write a memo to the research community stating the importance of reducing voluntary cost sharing, collecting full indirect costs, and recommending alternatives to indirect cost waivers.** By implementing alternatives to voluntary cost sharing and waiving indirect costs, the University can increase its effective rate, thus increasing support for research resources.

During proposal routing, Principal Investigators certify in the Proposal Person Certification Questionnaire regarding:

- Accuracy of information in the application
- Potential, perceived, or actual conflicts of interest
- Lobbying activities
- Debarment and suspension
- Compliance with the federal Procurement Integrity Act
- Nonpayment or disallowances incurred by the Foundation from the sponsoring agency
- Involvement of human or animal subjects
- Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems
- Use of radiation or toxic chemicals
- Space or Renovation/Construction needs
- Equipment requiring space or installation
- Additional technology support
- Potential Export Control issues
- Student employment or training

Adding a question regarding international travel for project personnel is beneficial for determining if travel visas will need to be obtained and if the Export Control officer needs to be notified. Obtaining visas and export approvals are time-consuming processes. Also, additional insurance coverage may be necessary, and some sponsors have limitations on funding international travel.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The Director of Research and Sponsored Programs should have a question added to the Proposal Person Certification Questionnaire regarding international travel.** Understanding international travel needs at the proposal stage provides the time to manage the logistics and potential risks associated with internal travel.

RSP Research Administrators review proposals for compliance approvals in the Proposal Person Certification Questionnaire. Because the Compliance Officer position is vacant, there is no follow-up mechanism when an investigator identifies issues in the Certification Questionnaire. As recommended in Standard V: Research Administration Staffing and Staff Development, the University must prioritize filling the vacant compliance position. This position is critical for ensuring the institution adheres to ethical and regulatory guidelines and has the proper assurances for conducting human or animal research.

After a proposal has gone through the review process, proposal submission is authorized by the PI, co-investigators as applicable, associated department chairs and budget analysts, the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs, and the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. Per California State University Executive Order 890, the President (or their designee) and the Chief Financial Officer (or their designee) must approve all the proposals. At Fresno State, per the Academic Policy Manual (APM) 501, the President designates this authority to the Provost, and the Provost further designates it to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. The CFO retains the responsibility to approve. All approvals are processed through Kuali Research (aka GrantLaunch).

Due to significant delays with proposal authorizations, a process was established in which only proposals classified as high-risk (those exceeding $100K) required CFO authorization. The Review Team heard that there are still significant delays with proposal authorization. As such, proposals are submitted without CFO authorization, and award set-up is delayed. Recommendations for streamlining the review of proposals and delegating signature authority for proposals are made in Standard XXIV: Award Management Support.

The Fact Sheet on the Division of Research and Graduate Studies website lists authorized signatories for grants and contracts. RSP signatories are knowledgeable in reviewing proposals for compliance with institutional and sponsored regulations and reviewing and responding to associated terms and conditions before proposal submission.

Following authorization, the RSP Research Administrator generally submits the proposal. If the Principal Investigator submits the proposal, a copy of the submission is provided to Research and Sponsored Programs. RSP keeps the institution current on electronic research initiatives, including maintaining all requisite institutional registrations, profiles, and roles. Research and Sponsored Programs staff have functional knowledge consistent with their responsibilities, including proficiency with myriad electronic systems for research administration.

The Review Team noted two issues related to proposal submission: proposals submitted without proper authorization and submitted by University Initiatives without going through the compliance review provided by RSP as noted in Standard III: Research Administration Organization.

- **Recommendation: The Provost should have a policy written that requires all proposals for extramural funding to undergo a review process by Research and Sponsored Programs before being submitted to sponsoring agencies.** A policy that all external proposals are reviewed and authorized by the same office provides a clear, consistent process for ensuring proposals have been reviewed for compliance with institutional and sponsor guidance before submission.

XX. STANDARD for Award Review and Negotiation.

> The institution has a consistent process to review the terms and conditions of grant, contract, and cooperative agreement awards, including the relationship to the original proposal budget. Incoming subagreements are reviewed for the terms of the subagreements and the flow-through terms of the prime award. Processes include routine communication with PIs.
>
> The institution evaluates all awards for sponsor restrictions on such items as the use of funds, appropriate project personnel, publication rights, or intellectual property to ensure compliance with institutional policies that govern the research activities of the institution.
>
> Processes are in place for ancillary agreements, such as non-disclosure agreements or data use agreements.
>
> Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all level of staff engaged in sponsored project award review and negotiation at central and unit levels.

Award notices are directed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Award notices are added to GrantLaunch and are accessible by RSP and Foundation staff. RSP Research Administrators review awards for technical aspects (e.g., grantee, grantee address, contacts, budget and project periods, standard terms and conditions, and congruency with the proposed budget and scope of work). RSP staff work with investigators if a budget or scope of work amendment is needed.

Following the RSP review, the award package (PIF, award notice, and RSP award review notes) is shared via email with the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, associated Deans, relevant budget analysts, post-award managers, and post-award analysts. Post-award analysts in Foundation Financial Services review the legal and financial aspects and negotiate contract award terms and conditions.

- **Notable Practice: There is a dual review process of award information involving RSP and Foundation Financial Services.** This dual review process, in which RSP focuses on technical aspects of the award while the Foundation focuses on legal and financial terms, provides an internal control for identifying errors. Additionally, it ensures a comprehensive review of the award.

In addition to the scanned copy of the award package that is emailed to the grant analyst, a hard copy file is also hand-delivered.

- **Recommendation: Pre- and post-award should eliminate the need for a hard copy by transitioning to a fully electronic review of information by the Foundation.** Eliminating the hard copy will improve efficiency, reduce paperwork, and provide Foundation staff with more immediate access to project information.

Grant and Contract Accounting post-award staff negotiate award terms and conditions in Foundation Financial Services. There is no formal onboarding and training guide for new post-award staff. Staff are provided on-the-job training with seasoned members of the team and access to internal and external offerings, such as webinars and shadowing with colleagues in the California State University System.

Due to recent staff turnover, the post-award grant analysts are relatively new to their roles. As recommended in Standard III: Research Administration Organization, having a roles and responsibilities matrix would clarify the functions of pre- and post-award staff in receiving, reviewing, and negotiating awards. It can also be used to cross-train pre-award and unit staff. The matrix should indicate who is responsible for a given task and who needs to be consulted and informed. During award negotiations, it is important to have ongoing communication between the pre-award office, units, and faculty investigators. Consulting with faculty during negotiations ensures that the award agreement aligns with their project objectives and fosters collaboration and trust within the organization.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should develop a communication feedback process that includes faculty investigators during award negotiation. This process should be documented in the post-award roles and responsibilities matrix, indicating faculty as consulted and informed during award negotiations.** Ongoing communication with faculty investigators during award negotiation increases transparency in the process and can lead to a more informed approach.

Post-award staff would benefit from a staff onboarding and training guide. An onboarding and training guide can clarify roles and responsibilities while providing a structured plan for introducing new hires to the systems and tasks necessary to be successful in their roles.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should develop a new hire onboarding and training guide.** An onboarding and training guide provides a clear, consistent roadmap for managers and new hires by outlining key information, procedures, and expectations. A well-designed guide helps orient new hires while making them feel supported and valued.

Post-award staff who review agreements would benefit from having a comprehensive list of acceptable and unacceptable terms and conditions. The list should be tailored to Fresno State's policies and risk tolerance. It should be used in conjunction with the expertise of legal counsel for complex negotiations. Foundation Financial Services staff currently consult with outside counsel for assistance with complex terms and conditions and issues related to intellectual property rights.

- **Recommendation: The Foundation should work with external and/or University Counsel to develop a list of acceptable and non-acceptable agreement terms and conditions that includes institutional contacts as appropriate.** A checklist provides a pre-defined list that aids reviewers in identifying potential concerns and provides a standardized approach to contract review. A checklist can serve as a training tool for new staff and improve the contract review process by mitigating risks and protecting Fresno State's and its faculty's interests.

  Examples of contract and agreement checklists can be found at:

  - Abilene Christian University: https://cdn01.acu.edu/content/dam/community/documents/Administrative%20Offices/University%20Procurement/2018-01-04-substantive-checklist-for-departmental-review.pdf
  - Princeton University: https://contracting.princeton.edu/additional-contracting-resources/checklists
  - University of North Carolina at Charlotte: https://legal.charlotte.edu/legal-topics/contract-checklist
  - University of North Georgia: https://doas.ga.gov/assets/State%20Purchasing/Stage%203%20Documents/SPD-SP060ContractingwithStateEntities.pdf

Ancillary agreements, such as non-disclosure, confidentiality, data use, and material transfer agreements, are reviewed by Deans in consultation with their faculty investigators and are signed by faculty. The University does not have a technology transfer or compliance office for consultation on matters related to agreement terms. Boilerplate information is provided by the Division of Research and Graduate Studies for IP and publication rights as needed. Management of confidential data is the responsibility of the Vice President for IT/Chief Information Officer.

- **Recommendation: Direct ancillary agreements through Research Compliance for a review of award terms and conditions.** Reviewing ancillary agreements at a central level helps to protect intellectual property, mitigate risks, and ensure compliance with institutional policies before being signed.

XXI. STANDARD for Award Acceptance.

> The institution has a process in place that allows the formal acceptance of a sponsored award by designated individuals or offices. The award acceptance process interfaces smoothly with processes for proposal submission and award management.
>
> Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all levels of staff engaged in sponsored projects award acceptance at both central and unit levels.

Award notices are directed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Following a technical review, the award package is prepared and delivered to the Research Compliance Officer, who reviews the award documents to identify any compliance-related items (e.g., export controls, congruency with animal protocols, conflict of interest). As recommended in Standard V: Research Administration Staffing and Staff Development, the University must prioritize filling the vacant compliance position. This position is critical for ensuring the institution adheres to national and sponsor regulatory requirements as part of the award acceptance process.

Grant awards are reviewed and accepted by ORSP and sent to the Fresno Foundation to manage. The Fresno Foundation reviews, negotiates, accepts, and manages contracts for Fresno State. The institution does not have documented procedures for the review of final award documents before acceptance.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should document the step-by-step procedures for reviewing final award documents before award acceptance.** Documented procedures outline the tasks and criteria used to review award documents and reduce the risk of overlooking terms and conditions that could lead to non-compliance issues. Additionally, documented procedures can be used to train new staff in award review and acceptance.

The award acceptance process is outlined in the "Post-Award Principal Investigator Handbook." Faculty investigators and unit administrators must be provided opportunities for input and regular communications throughout award review, negotiation, and acceptance.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should add faculty as consulted and informed to the post-award matrix for award acceptance.** Indicating who is 'consulted' and 'informed' ensures investigators know about issues impacting award acceptance and pending award establishment.

Final award documents are maintained electronically and in hard copy by the Foundation. The Director of the Foundation Financial Services has the authority to sign awards, agreements, and contracts on behalf of the Foundation. Additional signatories include the President, the Dean of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, and the Executive Director of the Fresno State Foundation. Authorized signatories have functional knowledge consistent with their responsibilities for award acceptance. The "Post-Award Principal Investigator Handbook" outlines expectations for signature authority for expense approvals, transactional requests, and sponsored agreements.

XXII. STANDARD for Award Activation and Notification.

> The institution has a defined process to place a sponsored award in the accounting system and to make funds available to the investigator for expenditures. The institutional notification process for award activation is timely and clearly conveyed to appropriate personnel (e.g., investigators, researchers, unit-level research administrators). Notification includes appropriate documentation to investigators and others.
>
> The institution has considered the use of pre-award spending accounts. The institution understands risks associated with advance spending accounts and faculty have the opportunity to discuss research start dates.
>
> Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all levels of staff engaged in sponsored projects award activation and notification at both central and unit levels.

Awards are established in the JD Edwards financial system. This system does not interface with the proposal or compliance management systems. The proposal package, including the award notice, is emailed to Foundation Financial Services. Because the Compliance Officer position is vacant, there is no mechanism for ensuring compliance requirements have been met before the release of funds. As recommended in Standard V: Research Administration Staffing and Staff Development, filling the vacation compliance position should be prioritized. Post-award grant analysts must check for compliance with regulatory requirements (e.g., approved animal and human protocols, COI disclosures, and required training) before the release of funds.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should create a new award establishment checklist that includes a check for regulatory compliance before the release of funds.** Post-award grant analysts should be required to use the checklist when establishing new cost centers. A new award checklist during award review and establishment provides a standardized approach for ensuring all necessary information is reviewed and recorded during account setup.

  Examples of new award checklists can be found at:

  - Harvard University: https://research.fas.harvard.edu/resources/award_setup_checklist
  - Yale University: https://your.yale.edu/policies-procedures/other/new-award-checklist

Award terms and conditions, including cost-sharing and reporting requirements, are distributed to faculty investigators through the Notification of New Cost Center form. The "Post-Award Principal Investigator Handbook" explains the award setup process and purchasing criteria and processes.

- **Notable Practice: The California State University, Fresno Foundation has a "Post-Award PI Handbook" readily accessible on their website. The handbook provides information on award set up, management of expenditures, and post-award management.** A post-award manual guides investigators in managing post-award activities.

In addition to the information in the New Cost Center form and "Post-Award Principal Investigator Handbook," investigators new to the University or sponsored programs would benefit from a new award meeting with the post-award grant analyst and associated budget analyst. A new award meeting allows the grant analyst to orient new investigators to the award terms and conditions and the Foundation's processes and resources for award management.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should task Grant Analysts with establishing a new award meeting with faculty investigators (and their budget analysts, as applicable) new to Fresno State, new to sponsored programs, or new to a sponsor/award type with complex terms and conditions.** This process can help the investigator better understand their roles and responsibilities in award management and is an opportunity for relationship building between post-award staff and faculty investigators.

A Principal Investigator may request a pre-award/advance spending account via the Sponsored Programs Advance Account Spending Authorization form. This form requires a justification for requesting advanced spending, a letter of award intent, an itemized budget, and a Proposal Intake Form (PIF). The Foundation Executive Director (or designee) and the college/school Dean must certify the form. If the award is not received, the Dean agrees to commit funds for incurred or unallowable expenses.

Faculty investigators contact their grant analysts as needed for award information. The Review Team noted that investigators are not always provided their cost centers in a timely manner. Due to the lack of communication and delays in establishing a cost center, investigators may erroneously request an advance spending account or begin expending on awards before the cost center establishment.

- **Recommendation: Post-Award Administration leadership should review the processes for award set up to identify the issues contributing to delays**. Identifying the issues resulting in award setup delays will provide the data needed to mitigate those delays. Mitigating delays will result in fewer requests for advance accounts and fewer cost transfers. As mentioned in Standard XIV: Institutional Management of Research Administration Data and Generation of Metrics, Kuali Negotiations is a useful tool for identifying where delays occur (e.g., sponsor communication delays). It provides visibility into when an action started, how long it took, the individuals involved, and when an action or activity was completed.

XXIII. STANDARD for Subagreement Management and Monitoring.

> Outgoing subagreements are written, reviewed, and negotiated to reflect sponsor flow-through requirements, including federal award identification, when applicable and institutional policy.
>
> Subagreements made from federal funding are evaluated for risk of non-compliance and for determination of appropriate subagreement monitoring. Dependent upon the assessment of risk, monitoring strategies are effective and appropriate. The institution confirms that subagreements made with federal funding are audited in accordance with 2 CFR 200.
>
> Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all levels of staff engaged in sponsored projects subagreement responsibilities at both central and unit levels.

Subagreements under sponsored programs at Fresno State are currently experiencing a state of flux. High turnover within the post-award area has been challenging. There is a new individual recently appointed to manage this responsibility. However, this individual is still undergoing training and onboarding.

Furthermore, the process for assessing subaward risk and oversight appears to be lacking. Interviews conducted on this matter were limited, with a representative from human resources providing answers on behalf of the post-award team while lacking direct knowledge and experience in post-award activities. Additionally, the individual tasked with managing subawards is new to the role and still in the training phase. As a result, there seems to be a lack of clarity regarding high-risk subawardees and an absence of a well-understood process within the team.

The determination of whether a portion of the sponsored program results in a subagreement or a procurement is typically made by the Principal Investigator (PI) at the proposal stage, sometimes with support from Research and Sponsored Programs. If needed, RSP collaborates with post-award to make this determination, and the set up and vetting of subawards are managed by post-award personnel. However, there is no formal process outlined that originates in RSP and is deployed in post-award. As recommended in Standard XIX: Proposal Review & Submission, Research and Sponsored Programs should require a completed subrecipient determination/classification form for proposals with external entities.

Subrecipient monitoring is conducted by post-award, with the PI required to review detailed documentation accompanying invoices. If necessary, post-award would perform a desk review for subcontractors.

Feedback from various campus constituents has highlighted significant issues with subawards. Subawardees are often hesitant to commence work due to delays, and even straightforward low-risk standard subawards may take months to be created and executed. Addressing these challenges will require a coordinated effort to streamline processes, enhance communication, and provide adequate support and training for personnel involved in subaward management.

- **Recommendation: In conjunction with prior recommendations, the Director of Fresno State RSP and the Director of the Foundation Financial Services need to collaborate to review the lifecycle of sub-award and vendor procurement process under sponsored programs for process improvement, policy update, and training for the campus.**
    - Indiana University: https://research.iu.edu/awards-agreements/research-agreements/subaward-agreements/subrecipient-vendor.html

  Collaboration on this effort is vital to ensure that processes are well-understood and followed for each of these steps:

    - Subaward and vendor determination

- Risk assessment
- Agreement development and execution
- Policy compliance
- Subrecipient monitoring
- Compliance approvals
- Transparency for tracking and reconciliation
- Closeout

XXIV. STANDARD for Award Management Support.

> The institution provides support for award management appropriate to the size and scope of the institution. The support includes assistance with spending projections and with meeting reporting and close out requirements. Support staff have access to and are aware of resources across campus to assist in effective award management. Support staff know how to identify ethical issues and how best to direct questions related to these issues.

Management of PI sponsored programs portfolios is handled inconsistently on the Fresno State campus. Post-award management in the Foundation provides central research administration functions for research portfolios; however, due to delays and challenges in the JD Edwards financial system and the heavy turnover in the staffing, and as previously discussed, most all on the campus run a shadow system for projects. Non-financial transactions, such as rebudgeting and extensions, are handled by the RSP team. Due to the lack of communication and continuity in business processes, there is no single source of records nor any source that contains all transactions. This is incredibly frustrating to the campus community members.

One of the primary grievances highlighted during the Peer Review process pertained to significant delays in obtaining approvals, particularly for the Project Information Form (PIF). PIF approvals are typically conducted post-submission for proposals, leading to further delays in the event of awards. It is essential to subject the PIF procedure to a process improvement review and delegate signature authority to ensure timely and knowledgeable review processes.

- **<u>Recommendation</u>: The GRAB Task Force needs to review the Project Information Form process to streamline it, ensuring that each step and signature adds value and eliminates unnecessary approvals or delays.** They should review the current risk level for factors such as award type (assistance or contract), sponsoring agency, if there are multiple subrecipients, and award amount. They should also assess whether post-submission reviews and signatures are essential and consider shifting to pre-submission reviews and signatures if appropriate. The President and Foundation Executive Director may then delegate review authority to ensure timely completion if current reviewers cannot meet deadlines.

Engaging with IT leadership could offer solutions for delays, as skilled IT staff could collaborate with research administrators to develop campus-wide tools, streamline processes, and integrate financial information from existing systems.

- **Recommendation: As discussed earlier, it is imperative that Fresno State RSP, the post-award team, and campus research administrators collaborate to review the lifecycle of the award from initiation through completion under sponsored programs for process improvement, policy update, and training for the campus. The Dean of RSP and Director of Foundation Financial Services should appoint committee members to oversee this effort.** Collaboration on this effort is vital to ensure that processes are well-understood and followed for each of these steps:
    - Post-Submission Activities prior to Award
    - Award Review and Negotiation
    - Award Setup and Initiation
    - Deliverables and Calendaring
    - Reporting
        - Technical
        - Financial
        - Other
    - Extensions
    - Rebudgeting
    - Closeout

Through process improvement, redundancies may be eliminated in favor of timeliness of transactions and consistent service across the research administration enterprise.

The Research and Sponsored Programs team is recognized as the authority on sponsor policies and relations, although valuable expertise also exists within the post-award side. However, the inconsistent and duplicated support for awards suggests potential knowledge gaps. Moreover, while there are pathways for reporting non-compliance that include whistleblower protections, discrepancies exist between the Foundation and campus procedures, with no standardized code of conduct or training for understanding sponsor policies or addressing ethical concerns. Limited access to interviews with post-award team members restricted direct insight into these matters.

- **Notable Practice: There are whistleblower protections at Fresno State.**

As noted in Standard III: Research Administration Organization, it is imperative that Fresno develop, update, and align all policies and procedures related to sponsored program awards. This would include a matrix of roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in the sponsored program administration lifecycle.

Regular meetings with PIs are not initiated unless prompted by the Principal Investigator themselves. Consistent feedback to the Review Team indicates widespread dissatisfaction with the post-award process and a perceived lack of support. High turnover and low compensation contribute to a perception of inadequate staff knowledge, exacerbated by the departure of well-trained team members once they attain independence. Inconsistent or nonexistent support from post-award leads to ad-hoc, reactive responses rather than proactive, scheduled support. Many PIs and faculty report allocating research time to compensate for deficient research administration services on campus.

At the time of the review, there were no established processes to engage faculty in reporting, whether interim or final. Invoicing and progress reports are bundled, with communication centered around these deadlines. Follow-up on final reports occurs only upon request, and there is no shared repository for documentation, resulting in scattered information across various locations. Ad hoc reporting is limited due to financial system constraints, which lack integration with other systems like Kuali for pre-award and protocols. Reporting is provided reactively when audits or issues arise, reinforcing the perception of Fresno State's reactive approach. Compliance reports, effort or payroll confirmation reports, and projection or burn rate reports are unavailable, which may be contributing to Fresno State's low expenditure rate. Closeouts are backlogged, with no regular reporting on progress updates. There is optimism that once post-award in the Foundation is adequately staffed, followed by comprehensive training and onboarding, improvements will be seen in efficiency and uniformity.

- **Recommendation: RSP and the post-award teams should actively seek opportunities to integrate user-friendly tools into their operations.** Creating modern and accessible financial platforms for relevant participants will alleviate administrative burdens for PIs and enhance oversight capabilities. Collaborating with internal IT resources to develop such tools would be advantageous.

XXV. Sponsored Projects Fiscal Management.

> The institution's internal control environment provides reasonable assurance regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of operations, reliability of financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The institution maintains internal controls through processes, systems, and tools to ensure compliance with institutional and sponsor guidelines and requirements. Fiscal data is readily available through published reports, queries, or integrated systems for transaction processing, review and tracking of activities, and reporting.
>
> Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all level of staff engaged in sponsored projects fiscal management at both central and unit levels.

As outlined in various sections of this report, the existing systems, particularly the JD Edwards financial accounting system, face significant challenges in meeting the demands of externally funded projects and their transactions. There is a disconnect between the proposal system, Kuali, and the award system, leading to a potential for discrepancies in data between the two platforms. Additionally, the documentation supporting external proposals and awards is managed inconsistently, with electronic and paper records lacking a shared or centralized repository.

Although Fresno State has established policies and procedures for financial management, the manual is outdated, dating back over ten years. While there are intentions to update the manual, ongoing challenges in the post-award arena have led to delays, with higher priorities taking precedence. Overall, the post-award management team claims to possess a general understanding of cost allowability consistent with cost principles and applicable sponsor standards.

- **Recommendation: The Director of Financial Services must prioritize the review, update, and development of written policies and procedures for financial reporting.** This includes indirect cost recovery, cost sharing and matching, budget and expenditure review, re-budgeting, effort reporting, fiscal controls, general cost principles, cost transfers, cash management, program income, recharge centers, procurement, and closeout. These would include roles and responsibilities.
    - CSU San Marcos: https://www.csusm.edu/corp/sponsoredprojects/spahandbook.pdf

There is a lack of regular monthly financial reports for PIs regarding the fiscal status of external awards from a centralized unit. Instead, monthly financial management occurs at the local level, typically managed by the PI, or delegated to individuals within centers, schools, or colleges. Financial reporting relies on shadow systems, which track spending, encumbrances, and other financial details. This decentralized approach to financial reporting leads to a lack of transparency, making it challenging to consolidate funding information for planning purposes.

The current system limitations only allow for viewing one award at a time, further complicating financial management and decision-making. Delays in paperwork processing result in financial transactions often being months behind schedule. Additionally, there have been instances of awards being closed prematurely without clearing all expenses, leading to unnecessary costs.

Upon investigation, it was discovered that shadow systems are widely used across Fresno State, exacerbating redundancy issues. Addressing these challenges with existing systems is imperative to streamline financial processes and improve overall efficiency.

XXVI. Sponsored Projects Administrative Management.

Clear policies and procedures exist for implementing award requirements, such as record retention, property control, or data retention. The institution has established systems for management of non-financial aspects of awards and the administrative management functions interface with those requirements. The institution has established processes to monitor and report program performance. Clear expectations exist for training appropriate to responsibilities for all level of staff engaged in sponsored projects administrative management at both central and unit levels.

Fresno State has in place written policies that are available on their website and include general guidance for activities and management of the research enterprise. The central staff are knowledgeable, proficient, and willing to seek answers when something new arises.

As noted earlier, there is a lack of cohesive compliance oversight, so there are reviews and checks in some places, but inconsistently applied. As previously recommended, a compliance oversight structure is needed.

Fresno State is currently involved in sponsored programs that entail low risk and do not necessitate special handling. Additionally, there are no faculty members surpassing the salary cap, nor are they engaged in any restrictive programs in other areas. Furthermore, there are no identified risk areas related to controlled technologies, nor are there any gifts requiring additional compliance oversight. However, it is crucial for Fresno State to be prepared for future growth in the research enterprise, which may involve projects with inherent risks or requiring special handling. Therefore, proactive measures should be taken to ensure preparedness for such eventualities, such as:

- **Establishing Clear Protocols:** Develop clear protocols and procedures for handling sponsored programs with varying levels of risk. This includes defining criteria for identifying high-risk projects and outlining steps for enhanced oversight and compliance.
- **Training and Education:** Provide comprehensive training and education programs for faculty and staff involved in sponsored programs. This should include training on compliance requirements, risk management strategies, and best practices for project management.
- **Risk Assessment:** Conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential areas of concern within the research enterprise. This could involve evaluating the nature of research activities, funding sources, and compliance obligations.
- **Enhanced Oversight:** Implement mechanisms for enhanced oversight of controlled technologies and restricted programs. This may include establishing review committees or appointing designated individuals responsible for monitoring compliance in these areas.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Foster collaborative partnerships with sponsors and other research institutions, especially those in the CSU system, to stay informed about emerging trends and regulatory changes in research compliance.
- **Investment in Infrastructure:** Allocate resources towards enhancing research infrastructure and support services to accommodate future growth in the research enterprise. This may include investing in technology, facilities, and personnel to support increased research activities.
- **Regular Review and Updates:** Regularly review and update policies, procedures, and compliance frameworks to ensure alignment with current regulations and industry standards. This process should be ongoing to adapt to changing circumstances and mitigate new risks.

By implementing these proactive measures, Fresno State can better prepare itself for future growth in the research enterprise and effectively manage projects with inherent risks or requiring special handling.

Reporting and deliverables are followed up by the post-award office and done in conjunction with invoicing. The record retention policy states that reports must be stored centrally; however, as noted earlier, no shared repository exists on campus for all records relating to sponsored programs. Correspondence with the sponsor is the responsibility of RSP and that is widely understood on campus. However, again, with no shared documentation repository, the records across campus may not be fully updated, which could create confusion or administrative burden on the PI. This would be necessary to outline in the recommended Roles and Responsibilities Matrix.

The Dean for DRGS oversees research misconduct and serves as the Research Integrity Officer. There are policies that address the issue easily and readily available.

Overall, Fresno State demonstrates a dedicated commitment to achieving its research goals as it grows and expands. This Peer Review report serves as a testament to that commitment. The campus boasts abundant talent, and with concerted efforts towards process improvement, compliance management, internal control enhancement, collaboration, and communication, coupled with decisive leadership actions and an ongoing focus on research integrity and ethics, there exists tremendous potential for success.

Appendix A: Standards for Effective Sponsored Program Operations

The National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) developed these Standards to represent the institutional baselines that provide a supportive environment for conducting research and other sponsored activities as well as the broad operational and core functional areas of sponsored programs management.

Unlike an audit, this Peer Review assesses your research administration “program” that goes beyond merely highlighting deficiencies in the process. The assessment contains three interrelated features: senior and experienced research administrator Reviewers, the Standards, and a philosophical approach that provides consistency in the review process with an understanding of institutional culture. These key features result in an assessment of the ***effectiveness*** of sponsored research environments at the institutions undergoing Peer Review.

Experienced and senior research administrators use the NCURA Standards to assess the effectiveness of the research administration program. While recognizing that institutions differ in organizational structure and institutional priorities, these Standards reflect how the institution integrates the research enterprise with its institutional goals and expectations and operationalizes effective sponsored programs administration. The Standards allow Reviewers to assess how closely that integration relates to institutional and stakeholder goals and expectations. The Standards contain a list of over 165 features utilized by the Reviewers during their assessment and used as the basis for the written report.

Appendix B: NCURA Peer Review Team Bios

PEER PROGRAMS
PEER ASSISTANCE BY RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS FOR RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS

CSU Fresno
Reviewer/Advisor Bios

The National Council of University Research Administrators offers a formal system of assessment for sponsored programs and research compliance (Peer Review) and focused assistance (Peer Advisory Service). Both programs provide information on effective practices, techniques for success, and models of excellence. Setting standards and identifying quality of organizational performance are expected functions of all organizations.

Sam Westcott, TEAM LEAD
Number of Years in Research Administration: 32
Institutions: Northwestern University, University of California (UCLA and UC Irvine), Children's Hospital, Los Angeles, and California Institute of Technology (Caltech)

Sam Westcott supports the Office of Research at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. She joined the team in the summer of 2022 and serves the leadership teams in all aspects of research administration from training, strategic development, faculty support, proposal submission, award review, financial oversight and supporting the Graduate School in their efforts supporting the entire research enterprise. Prior to coming to UWM, Sam was the Sponsored Research Manager for the Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy at Caltech where she led a team of Grant Managers supporting millions in research funding supporting researchers through the entire lifecycle of awards funding and portfolios that included sponsored research, gift, endowment, and general budget funding. She was also responsible for research compliance and policy development and implementation for the Division. Her career includes 10 years at Caltech as a Grant Manager in the Division of Biology. She provided leadership in research administration including the Clinical Trial Administration and Research Compliance teams at Children's Hospital, Los Angeles and worked in research administration leadership at the University of California for both the Irvine and Los Angeles campuses. Her career initiated at Northwestern University where she worked at the department and central levels in research administration. At each institution, she worked extensively and closely with faculty, Chairs, and senior leadership, as well as departmental administrators and administrative offices. She served on numerous university/faculty committees, created/implemented university-wide policies, and engaged in department-central research administrator networking groups. Sam has extensive experience in team building, recruitment, training, and retention in the field.

Sam is consistently sought out and requested as a trainer for content development and delivery in research administration. She has given national, regional, and local presentations and workshops. She has served on numerous national NCURA committees and on the Board of Directors. During her career she served as a NCURA national workshop faculty for Departmental Research Administration, has been the Chair of the Nominating and Leadership Committee, and served on the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force for NCURA. In 2016, Sam received NCURA's national Award for Distinguished Service in Research Administration in 2016 and the Award for the Region VI Distinguished Service Award. In 2019 Sam was recognized by NCURA as a Distinguished Educator.

Sam has performed an evaluation for the testing of accreditation for research administration and has taught national workshops on multitudes of topics in research administration. She is a published author of multiple articles in NCURA magazine, has led and contributed to multiple webinar sessions and NCURA TV, as well as YouTube Tuesday videos.

NCURA Supporting Research...together™
National Council of University Research Administrators
1015 18th Street NW, Suite 901 | Washington, DC 20036
peerreview@ncura.edu | http://www.ncura.edu
Peer Assistance by Research Administrators for Research Administrators

Tricia Callahan

Number of Years in Research Administration: 23
Institutions: Emory University, Colorado State University, Miami University, Western Kentucky University, University of Louisville

Tricia Callahan is the Associate Director for Strategic Operations and Research Training at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. As part of the senior leadership team in the Office of Research Administration, Tricia is responsible for analyzing training needs, developing curriculum, and delivering courses related to administrative functions, utilization of system applications, and general industry knowledge.

Prior to her role at Emory, Tricia was the Senior Research Education & Information Officer at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. At CSU, she led a training team dedicated to the analysis, development, design, implementation, and evaluation of campus training initiatives related to sponsored projects administration, including fiscal and regulatory compliance.

Before transitioning into training and strategic operations, Tricia was the Director of Proposal Development at Miami University in Oxford, OH, and the Assistant Director of Sponsored Programs at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, KY. In her roles, she was responsible for proposal preparation, budget development, proposal submission, award acceptance and negotiation, and subaward preparation and oversight. Additionally, she provided oversight for WKU's internal programs for seed funding, managing pre-and post-award activities.

Over the course of her career, Tricia has worked extensively with faculty, staff, students, and senior leadership keeping abreast of policy changes impacting research administration operations. Additionally, she has focused on improving internal efficiencies and streamlining processes in research administration, such as assisting in university-wide software implementation for system-to-system proposal routing, submission, and reporting.

Tricia received her B.A. in Psychology from Miami University and her M.A. in Experimental Psychology from the University of Louisville, where she taught as an adjunct instructor in the Department of Psychology and in the Kent School of Social Work. It was at the University of Louisville where she began her career in research administration in 1998, providing pre-award support for the Speed School of Engineering and the School of Medicine.

Tricia has been an active member of the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) since 1999. Since then, she has regularly served as a presenter and co-presenter on workshops and concurrent sessions at regional, national, and international levels. Additionally, Tricia has led numerous discussion groups and has served on regional boards and program committees for regional and national conferences. In 2004, Tricia took part in the second annual Leadership Development Institute and is a 2016 graduate of the NCURA Executive Leadership Program.

Tricia is currently the Vice President of the Select Committee for Peer Review and serves as a Peer Reviewer and Traveling Workshop Faculty for NCURA's Fundamentals of Sponsored Projects Administration. She is a recipient of a 2015 NCURA Global Fellowship to the University of Luxembourg and served as a Eurasia Foundation Special Exchange Participant to Russia in 2016. Tricia was the leadership chapter editor of NCURA's "Sponsored Research Administration: A Guide to Effective Strategies and Recommended Practices" and co-chair of the NCURA Global Collaborate Community. She has served on three Presidential Task forces and is a former at-Large Member of the NCURA Board of Directors. In 2020, Tricia received NCURA's Julia Jacobson Distinguished Service Award.

Tricia can be reached at tricia.callahan@emory.edu.

NCURA Staff Assisting with this Engagement

Mary Louise Healy
Years in Research Administration: 35
Institutions: Johns Hopkins University, Towson University (formerly Towson State University)

Mary Louise Healy has been a research administrator since 1988, at both research-intensive and predominantly undergraduate institutions, public and private. Since November 2011, she has led the research administration staff of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences (KSAS) at Johns Hopkins University, first as Associate Director and currently (since August 2013) as Director. As such is responsible for pre- and post-award administration of all awards for the School, totaling approximately $78 million per year. She serves as advisor to the Vice Dean for Natural Science on all matters relating to sponsored projects, including funding trends and policy formulation. Prior to her position in KSAS, she worked at Towson University for 21 years, first as Assistant Director of the Office of Research Administration (1990-1994), then as Director of that office (1994-2007), and finally as Assistant Vice President for Research (2008-2011). At Towson University, she was responsible for all pre- and post-award activities of the University, including financial post-award and compliance functions.

During her tenure at Towson University, sponsored projects funding increased steadily each year, most years by 10% or more. As sponsored funding increased, so did compliance issues and thus staffing needs. The office grew and was reorganized several times under Mary Louise's tenure, to ensure continuing compliance without sacrificing customer service and individualized research development services to investigators.

At Towson University, Mary Louise was the IRB administrator; had responsibility for committing and tracking institutional cost share funds; administered three separate internal funding programs; and was responsible for research and sponsored projects communications as well as for the day-to-day management of proposals and awards.

Prior to joining Towson University in 1990, Mary Louise served first as Research Services Assistant then as Sponsored Projects Specialist at Johns Hopkins University Homewood Research Administration, first concentrating on identifying funding opportunities then moving into day-to-day proposal and award management.

Mary Louise is a long-time member of NCURA and is currently a member of the Board of Directors. She has served as Chair for Region II, co-Chair for the Pre-Award Research Administration conference in 2014, Chair for the Region II Spring Meeting in 2013, co-Chair for the Region II Spring Meeting in 2012, and as a member of the Region II Leadership Development and Nominating Committee (2013-2015). She is currently serving as a member of the Region II Steering Committee, a mentor in the Region II Cheryl-Lee Howard Mentor Me Program, as co-Chair of the Mentor Me Committee, and as a traveling workshop faculty member for Region II. She has presented extensively at national and regional meetings. Mary Louise is a graduate of the NCURA Leadership Development Institute and Executive Leadership Program.

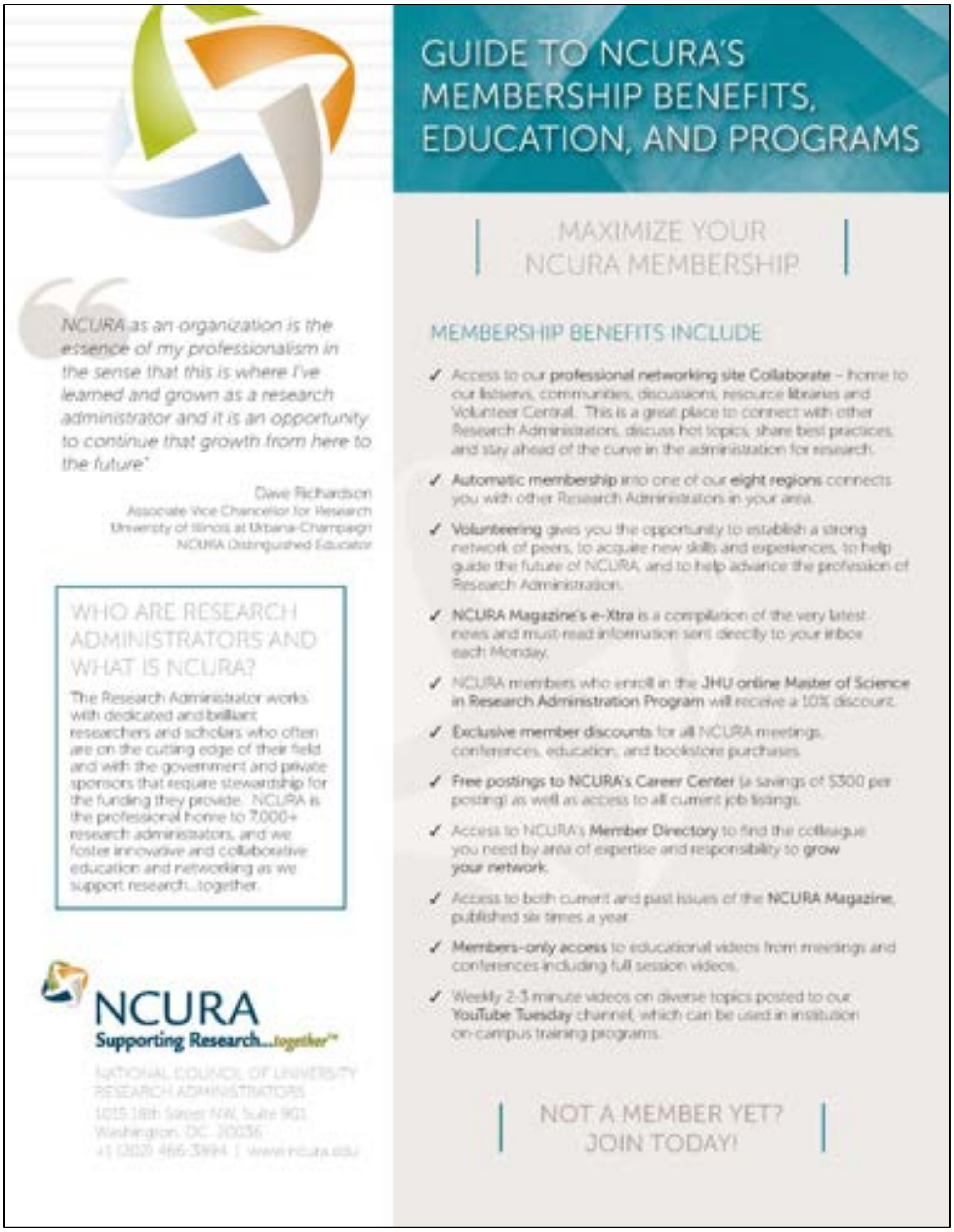
Additionally, Mary Louise is an adjunct faculty member at the Community College of Baltimore County where she teaches a non-credit course on proposal writing and an adjunct faculty member at Towson University, where her courses have included Grant Writing in Education (graduate course), Using Information Effectively, and Seminar in Media and Medicine (undergraduate courses).

Appendix C: Site Visit Itinerary

Day 3 of 3		Stakeholders	Location
Transportation Pick-up Information			
Location of Day's Meetings (all meetings in one location)			
Time	Meeting		
8:00-8:30	Grants and Contracts Accounting (staff and positions listed)	Linda Christian, Analysts, Assistants, Coordinators	[illegible]
9:00 - 9:30	Executive Director of Auxiliary Services (HR) Director of Financial Services (California State University, Fresno Foundation), Executive Director (California State University, Fresno Foundation)	Debbie Adishian-Astone, Executive Director, Keith Kempis, Director of Foundation Financial Services, Nicole Lane, Executive Director of Auxiliary Services (HR)	[illegible]
10:00 - 11:00	Faculty (list all names and departments)	Karine Gaucel (Biology), Cory Brooks (Chemistry), Joel Slade (Biology), Katy Tarara (JCAST, Animal Sciences), Lara Brillantes (JCAST, VERC), Lalita Oka (LCOE, CGE), William Wright (LCOE, CGE), Wei Wu (LCOE, Const. Mgmt), Patricia D. Lopez (CAL, KHOHHD), Omar Vega (Math/CSM), Kristina Ross (Kremen)	Thomas Administration Building, Room [illegible]
11:00 - 11:30	University Initiatives	Gil Harootunian & Angelica Lopez	Thomas Administration Building, Room [illegible]
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch and Executive Session		Thomas Administration Building, Room [illegible]
12:30-1:30	College grant support staff (list names and colleges)	Mark Rodriguez (Kremen), Julie Watson (COSS), Nancy Gerwer (CSM), Carlos Valentine (CAH), Allyson Bakka (JCAST) Lisa DeLaCerda (CSM), Thalia Romero (CCCHW)	Thomas Administration Building, Room [illegible]
1:30-2:00	Academic Senate	Ray Hall (Senate Chair), Andrew Cantrell (Senate Vice Chair), Forrest Ferguson (Chair, University Research Committee)	Thomas Administration Building, Room [illegible]
2:00 - 3:00	Interim Dean of Research and Graduate Studies & Director of Research and Sponsored Programs	Dr. Jay J. Guss & Doug Carey	Thomas Administration Building, Room [illegible]
3:00 - 3:30	Executive Session		Thomas Administration Building, Room [illegible]
3:30-5:00	Exit Meeting President / Provost / Executive Director / Associate Provost	Saul Jiménez-Sandoval, Xuanning Fu, Debbie Adishian-Astone, Alvin Hanson	[illegible]
Transportation Pick-up Information			

Day 3 of 6		Stakeholders	Location	
Transportation Pick-up Information				
Location of Day's Meeting (all meetings in one location)				
Time	Meeting			
8:30 - 9:00	Vice President for University Advancement	Brady Couch	Thomas Administration Building, Room 1[illegible]	[illegible]
9:00 - 9:30	Assistant Vice President	John Fugal	Thomas Administration Building, Room 1[illegible]	
9:00 - 11:30	Open Call-Back		Thomas Administration Building, Room 1[illegible]	
11:30 - 12:00	Executive Lunch		Thomas Administration Building, Room 1[illegible]	
[illegible] — 1:00	Exit Meeting President / Provost / Executive Director / Associate Provost	[illegible] / [illegible]	[illegible]	
Transportation Pick-up Information				
	[illegible]			
	[illegible]			

Appendix D: NCURA Resources



GUIDE TO NCURA'S MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS, EDUCATION, AND PROGRAMS

NCURA as an organization is the essence of my professionalism in the sense that this is where I've learned and grown as a research administrator and it is an opportunity to continue that growth from here to the future"

Dave Richardson
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
NCURA Distinguished Educator

WHO ARE RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS AND WHAT IS NCURA?

The Research Administrator works with dedicated and brilliant researchers and scholars who often are on the cutting edge of their field and with the government and private sponsors that require stewardship for the funding they provide. NCURA is the professional home to 7,000+ research administrators, and we foster innovative and collaborative education and networking as we support research...together.

NCURA
Supporting Research...together™

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS
1015 18th Street NW, Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036
+1 (202) 466-3894 | www.ncura.edu

MAXIMIZE YOUR NCURA MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE

- ✓ Access to our **professional networking site Collaborate** – home to our listservs, communities, discussions, resource libraries and Volunteer Central. This is a great place to connect with other Research Administrators, discuss hot topics, share best practices, and stay ahead of the curve in the administration for research.
- ✓ **Automatic membership** into one of our **eight regions** connects you with other Research Administrators in your area.
- ✓ **Volunteering** gives you the opportunity to establish a strong network of peers, to acquire new skills and experiences, to help guide the future of NCURA, and to help advance the profession of Research Administration.
- ✓ **NCURA Magazine's e-Xtra** is a compilation of the very latest news and must-read information sent directly to your inbox each Monday.
- ✓ NCURA members who enroll in the **JHU online Master of Science in Research Administration Program** will receive a 10% discount.
- ✓ **Exclusive member discounts** for all NCURA meetings, conferences, education, and bookstore purchases.
- ✓ **Free postings to NCURA's Career Center** (a savings of $300 per posting) as well as access to all current job listings.
- ✓ Access to NCURA's **Member Directory** to find the colleague you need by area of expertise and responsibility to **grow your network**.
- ✓ Access to both current and past issues of the **NCURA Magazine**, published six times a year.
- ✓ **Members-only access** to educational videos from meetings and conferences including full session videos.
- ✓ Weekly 2-3 minute videos on diverse topics posted to our **YouTube Tuesday** channel, which can be used in institution on-campus training programs.

NOT A MEMBER YET? JOIN TODAY!

| MEETINGS & CONFERENCES |

NCURA HOSTS 3 NATIONAL MEETINGS A YEAR

Annual Meeting of the Membership

The annual meeting of the membership is held in August each year in Washington, DC. Over 2,000 of our 7,000+ members attend. We begin with a full day of workshops and senior level seminars which are a supplemental training program open to all registrants of the annual meeting. This in-depth, targeted training and professional development includes offerings for those new to the profession to our most senior level members.

We then embark on two and a half days of presentations, discussions, open forums and networking opportunities spanning all areas of research administration including, but not limited to, Pre-Award, Post-Award, Compliance, Departmental, Intellectual Property, Contracts, International, Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions, Electronic Research Administration, and Medical Center/Hospital Issues. This also includes our Sunday and Tuesday evening events, dinner groups, regional networking events, and numerous volunteer activities that create the opportunities for you to meet and connect with your colleagues and create your peer network. In addition to the education and networking opportunities provided, our sponsor and exhibitor partners will be available to share information on the products and services to support you and your institution.

Financial Research Administration (FRA)

Join over 1,000 members for this special topic conference on post-award issues, held every year in a new location between February and late March.

Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA)

This conference of over 600 participants is held back to back with the FRA conference noted above, covering in-depth pre-award sessions and discussions.

TRAVELING WORKSHOPS

NCURA offers 7 different workshops that are 2 or 2 ½ days and travel around the country throughout the year. And, with a commitment of 60 participants, NCURA can bring one of these 7 workshops to your campus!

- Contract Negotiation and Administration Workshop
- Departmental Research Administration Workshop
- Export Controls Workshop
- Financial Research Administration Workshop
- Level I: Fundamentals of Sponsored Project Administration
- Level II: Sponsored Project Administration: Critical Issues in Research Administration
- The Practical Side of Leadership: A Senior Level Workshop

NCURA Workshops: Global Edition

NCURA has hosted workshops in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia focused on the fundamentals and advanced topics of research administration. These workshops also serve as venues for forming research collaborations and partnerships while also enabling research administrators to develop their professional networks. Workshops can be customized to fit the needs of your institution. Previous workshop topics have included:

- Funding Opportunities
- Successful Grant Proposal Preparation
- Financial Management
- Regulatory Compliance

For more information on how you can bring this workshop to your country, please contact Claire Chen at chen@ncura.edu

I greatly enjoyed the dynamic employed by the presenters, who were all clearly collegial and comfortable with each other's differing styles. The depth and breadth of their knowledge and passion for the subject matter was clear, yet they were still accessible and entertaining."

Michael Gouin-Hart
Director, Office of Sponsored Programs
Grand Valley State University

| ONLINE LEARNING |

NCURA 10 WEEK ONLINE TUTORIALS - LEARN AT YOUR OWN PACE!

These primers are intended for those new to each area or who have had very limited exposure.

A Primer on Intellectual Property in Research Agreements
A broad introduction to the basics through actual research and licensing agreements, plus negotiation tips.

A Primer on Subawards Under Federal Assistance Awards
An overview of the complex process from drafting and negotiating through review.

A Primer on Federal Contracting
Understand the federal contracting process, regulations, negotiation and risks.

A Primer on Clinical Trials Management
Focused on Clinical Trials Management, including key administrative, financial and regulatory issues that arise from planning through close-out.

REGISTER TODAY AND START THE FIRST LESSON anytime that works for your schedule. You will have ten weeks, from the first time you login, to complete the course.

WEBINARS

1. License to use as onboarding training or include in your existing campus training
2. CEUs available for all participants
3. Registrations include on-demand viewing and MP4 downloadable copy

Recent Topics Include

- Research Terms and Conditions
- Effort Reporting
- Data Security
- Regulated Research Data
- The Revised Common Rule
- Cost Sharing
- Data Transfer and Use Agreements
- Developing Policies and Procedures
- Managing Risk in an International Environment
- Communication Strategies for International Collaboration
- Communication with PIs
- Internal Controls
- Single IRBs
- Public Access Policies
- Diving Into Contracting

LIFE CYCLE SERIES

The Life Cycle video webinar series covers the major components of the research project life cycle. The webinar recordings, case studies, forms and supplementary resources can be incorporated into your institution's on-boarding and continuing education programs.

- Compliance – 2 Part Series; Two hours each
- Award Monitoring/Award Management – 2 Part Series; Two hours each
- Award Negotiation and Acceptance – 3 Part Series; 90 minutes each
- Pre-Award / Budgeting – 3 Part Series; 90 minutes each
- Proposal Development – 3 Part Series; 90 minutes each

NCURA WEBINARS AND LIFE CYCLE OF THE AWARD SERIES ARE YOURS TO KEEP!
Registration includes a license for your institution to download, post and embed the webinar in your institution's internal training systems for continuous use on your campus!

Available at onlinelearning.ncura.edu

| PUBLICATIONS AND PROGRAMS |

PUBLICATIONS

Need to expand your knowledge? Visit the NCURA Store online for more information and to purchase these affordable resources!

- Compensation – Personal Services: Managing and Reporting Effort
- Cost Sharing: An Overview
- Facilities and Administrative Costs in Higher Education
- Establishing and Managing an Office of Sponsored Programs at Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions
- A Primer on Clinical Trials for the Research Administrator
- A Primer on Intellectual Property
- The Role of Research Administration
- Writing and Negotiating Subawards
- Regulation and Compliance: *A Compendium of Regulations and Certifications Applicable to Sponsored Programs*
- Sponsored Research Administration: *A Guide to Effective Strategies and Recommended Practices*
- Uniform Guidance Desk Reference

On-demand Downloadable Publications

- How to Manage a Financially Focused University Research Audit Effectively
- A Primer on Export Controls
- *Additional topics coming soon!*

Research Management Review (RMR) – NCURA's Online Scholarly Journal

As the scholarly journal for NCURA, the RMR is concerned with the broad range of issues affecting the administration of research and the changing research environment at the national and international levels.

NCURA Magazine

NCURA's magazine is published six times a year with cutting edge pieces on management, perspectives on federal policy written by members and non-members, and the latest information and explanations on topics of interest to Research Administrators.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

NCURA Fellowship programs are a joint initiative between NCURA and our sister research administration organizations as well as between our U.S. Regions and the International Region. These programs are intended to reduce barriers to global research administration and create an administrative framework conducive to global research collaboration. NCURA currently offers 5 different Fellowship programs a year. The Fellowship programs have two underlying objectives: (i) the training of research administrators, and (ii) enhancing global research collaboration. These Fellowship programs will provide an opportunity for research administrators to travel to another country's research organization and to immerse themselves in a program of mutual learning and knowledge exchange.

PEER REVIEW PROGRAM

Are you looking to enhance your sponsored programs operation or to engage leadership in a discussion about research administration? In a confidential process similar to an academic program review, NCURA matches a team of senior research administrators to your institution. The review uses Standards that represent the core and vital functions of sponsored programs, regardless of size and type of institution. After reviewing background materials you provide, the Reviewers conduct 360-degree interviews with institutional stakeholders during a site visit. At the completion of the review, the institution receives a detailed written report that provides valuable feedback addressing program strengths and areas for improvement. Use NCURA Peer Review for risk management/compliance, enhanced faculty service, operational efficiencies, business process improvement, and improved communications.

PEER ADVISORY SERVICES

NCURA Peer Advisory Services assist institutions in planning research administration infrastructure and priorities, as well as with addressing specific areas within the institution through deep analysis or education on specific topics.

- Research Administration Planning
- Focused Analysis
- Directed Education

For more information visit:
www.ncura.edu/institutionalprograms/peeradvisoryservices