Is a Shared Research Administration Model Right for You? Exploring a Collaborative, Creative, and Contemporary Approach to Research Administration

SRAI Annual Meeting

October 2019

Duke University School of Medicine
Deborah Martin, Grants and Contracts Manager
Chelsea Penumarthy, Grants and Contracts Manager
Dana Sanders, Director, Research Administration
Objectives

- Be able to identify when an opportunity for a shared services model can work at your institution
- Engage in an example of the creation of a shared services model at Duke University
- Understand challenges of a shared services model
- Understand the institutional benefits of a shared service model
- Identify opportunities to recruit employees into a shared service model
What is your role at your institution?
Does the majority of your staff (or you) do pre-award, post-award, or both?

- Pre-Award
- Post-Award
- Both
Who do your staff report to?

Faculty

Administration
What is your type of institution?
Duke School of Medicine

- $1.3 billion annual revenue (excludes clinical practice)
- ~70% of budget from sponsored funds; above 75th percentile among research intensive schools
- Ranked 9th in NIH grant funding ($384M)
- Ranked 13th in USNWR
- ~2,400 regular rank faculty and 7,000 staff
- 37 departments, centers, institutes reporting to Dean
- 2 million sq. ft. of total space
  - 1.1 million of research space
Institutional Environment

- School is decentralized in nature
- Research Administration Environment
  - Central Offices
  - Decentralized grant preparation
  - Centralized review and signoff
Challenges with the Environment

- PIs work across disciplines, schools, and centers
- Large volume
- Diverse sponsors and projects
- Standardization with research administration procedures
- Little career growth opportunities within departments
What is RASR?

- Research Administration Support Resource
- Centralized administrative unit reporting to the Dean’s office
- Short-term and long-term support
- Cradle to grave, portfolio driven support
- All sponsors
- All funding mechanisms
The Start of RASR

- SOM leadership was a driving force
  - Room for efficiencies, communication, risk management, training opportunities
  - Oversight group includes leadership from many areas
- Departments/Centers *volunteered* to participate
- Diverse recruitment strategies
- Expansion came quickly
- Expectation of cost savings?
Growth of RASR Team

2016 2017 2018 2019

Administrators

Management
Growth of RASR Team

Administrators

- Radiology
- Institutional Awards
- Orthopaedic Surgery
  - Dermatology
  - Neurology

Management

- Center for Comput. Biology
  - Biostatistics
  - Pathology
  - Heart Center
- Family Medicine
- Marcus Center
- OB/GYN
- Radiation Oncology
- Neurosurgery
- Population Heath
What does RASR look like now?

Director, Research Administration Support Resource

Sr. Grants and Contracts Manager

Sr. Grants and Contracts Manager
Why this model works

- Commitment to consistent, high level customer service
- Managed expectations
  - Departmental
  - RASR team
- Development of relationships
  - Departments
  - Faculty
- Community of administrators
- Portfolio and Project Management
How do we know it works?

*We see it...*

- Improved metrics
- Consistency in portfolio management
- Increased compliance/reduction of risk
- Increased demand from departments
### FY17Q2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Administration</th>
<th>Annual (with 2Q status update to be provided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular meeting with CRA leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Quality - Return for Changes</td>
<td>Green = &lt;20% returned for RFC changes; Yellow = 21-40% returned for RFC changes; &gt;40% returned for RFC changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Research - Internal Cost Assessment (ICA)</td>
<td>Green = achieving at least 3 out of 4 quality metrics on sample; Yellow = none; Red = &lt;3-4 completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAM Sample Validation (restricted codes)</td>
<td>Percentage of sample validated each month in quarter (restricted funds only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untimely Non-Salary Cost Transfer</td>
<td>90% submitted on time = green; &lt;10% = timely; &gt;10% = untimely or &gt;10% = 2 untimely = red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeout Backlog</td>
<td>0 codes &gt;120 days = green; 1-4 codes &gt;120 days = yellow; &gt;4 codes &gt;120 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Information for FY17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Salary Cost Transfers to Total Transactions</th>
<th>&lt;15% = green; 15%-25% = yellow; &gt;25% = red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Waivers</td>
<td>&lt;10% = green; 10%-20% = yellow; &gt;20% = red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unapproved CAS Charges</td>
<td>&lt;10% = green; 10%-25% = yellow; &gt;25% = red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAM Error Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeout - Clean Close Achievement</td>
<td>Clean Close Timelin &lt;5% = green; &gt;5% and &lt;10% = yellow; &gt;10% = red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Activity Payroll</td>
<td>0 = green; 1-3 = yellow; &gt;3 = red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Red indicates poor performance, yellow indicates acceptable performance, and green indicates good performance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RASR Metrics FY18/19</th>
<th>Pass Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Administration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeout: Past Due</td>
<td>≤ 15% reportable codes submitted on or before the closest due date. Includes: Pending extensions/modifications, PI Transfers, Sponsor and other institution decisions (extensions, modifications, reporting), or shortened deadlines (sponsor due date within 30 days of closing WISHE end date).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeout: Eff/Payroll</td>
<td>100% effort/paid cost distribution charges for all reportable sponsored projects completed in a timely manner. The objective is to ensure that no additional salary and fringe benefits paid after the WISHE end date. Measures of outstanding effort/paid for any individual belonging to org unit, regardless of ownership of the ending WISHE(s). Includes: Pending extensions/modifications, PI Transfers, Sponsor and other institution decisions (extensions, modifications, reporting).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Research - Patient Care Charge Financial Reconciliation and Validation</td>
<td>RESTRICTED (Costs &lt; 10%, Value &lt; 10%, Spend &lt; 10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial/General Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAM Sample Validation</td>
<td>100% of sample validated for each month by deadline in quarter (unearned funds only); must complete each month by deadline in at least 11 out of 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAM Error Analysis</td>
<td>Samples sizes expanded for 100% of failed samples (transaction category error rate &gt; 15%, unearned funds only) by monthly deadline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY19Q3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do we know it works?

*We hear it…*

- Positive feedback directly from faculty
- Enthusiasm from departments over improved collaboration
- Appreciation from school leadership over increased transparency with research administrators
“I don’t have enough words to tell you how much we all appreciate your efforts to keep us on track, your responsiveness, patience and of course great professionalism while working with our team in such a tight timeframe.”

“Let me jus say that I love Mark Ferguson and his energy. This is a homerun. Go with it. Thank you Mark.”

“I’d like to let you know that I’ve had a fantastic experience working with LaMonda during this cycle’s submission of an R21 and R03. She is efficient, quick to respond and has truly improved the processes for DPT within Orthopaedics.”

“Ashley, Thank you for working on this. You’ve been extremely helpful and committed.”

“I cannot tell you how much I appreciate all the help. It takes a true team effort to get these grants, and without your help, this would not be possible.”

“I have been extremely impressed by how quickly LaMonda has learned, her drive to get things done in an excellent manner, and the fact that she always has a positive attitude.”

“WOW – we are so thankful to have Kristie.”

“Whitney, thank you so much for being on top of things! It’s a pleasure to work with you.”
How do we know it works?

*We feel it*...

- Greater understanding of and appreciation for the mission of the University
- Increased collaboration
- Genuine internal support network
- Enhanced skill development
- Reduced frustration
- Decreased burnout
- Professional Development opportunities
External Challenges

- Managing departmental expectations
- Defining roles and responsibilities
  - Execution of “Service Level Agreement”
- Easing fears of a “centralized model”
Internal Challenges

- Rapid departmental growth
  - Recruitment
- Onboarding
- Timing
  - Weeks to months between initial request for help and ability to provide help
- Vast span of Research Administration workload
  - Can we possibly master it all?
- More Complex Portfolios
Lessons Learned

- Infrastructure
  - Must be a school or organizational initiative
  - Due to growth of group, needed more managers than we initially thought
Lessons Learned

- Recruitment
  - Specialized recruitment without taking away from current Duke resources
  - Identified talent from other institutions
  - Research Administration Fellowship program
  - Open to recent college graduates with an interest in the research field
  - Promote from within
Lessons Learned

- **Recruitment**
  - Don’t fill position with less than ideal candidate
  - Hiring multiple staff at once helped create a cohort approach to onboarding
  - Onboarding needs to be dispersed among management
  - Mix of backgrounds, levels of experience, and internal/external recruits was beneficial
Lessons Learned

- Culture
  - Heavy team building
  - Collaboration between RASR staff
  - Collaboration and proximity with Central offices
  - Professional growth opportunities
  - Variety of work resulted in increased collaboration
Lessons Learned

- Intentional distribution of resources
  - Dispersed this responsibility among management
  - Different approach to large vs. small clinical departments
  - Project management approach for complex portfolios
What are your questions?