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Building Collaborative Work Structures Within and Across Units

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Introduction

● Karen Bone

- 10 Years Experience Research Administration
- 2022 SRAI Future of the Field Honoree
- 2022 SRAI Hartford-Nicholsen Awardee
- Central Proposal Administrator
- College Grant Coordinator
- Central Post Award (non-financial)

● Amanda Seymour

- 16 Years Experience Research Administration
- 2022 Future of the Field Honoree
- Departmental lifecycle
- Central Post (financial)
- Some central lifecycle

Objectives

- Identify pathways to implement collaborative work environments with cross-functional teams
- Provide participants ideas to bring back to their current team members and leaders on how anyone can identify common gaps and pitfalls to eliminate tasks slipping through the cracks and not having true owners.

Agenda

- Current landscape of research administration
- Roles and Responsibilities
 - Current vs. Expansion
- Collaboration within your unit
- Collaboration across units
 - Breaking down the silos
- Tools for building and strengthening partnerships



Current Landscape of Research Administration

- Increased administrative burden due to increased regulations
- Increased turnover
- Growth in Research Activity/Increased Volume
 - Proposals, Negotiations, Awards and Financials
- Expanding Roles and Responsibilities



Before We Jump In...Let's Talk Structure

- Proximity – Physical Location
 - Same office, Remote, Hybrid, Across campus
- Proximity – Organizational Structure
 - Research Accounting under Finance while Pre-Award falls under Research
- Both present different challenges for each institution

Hot Potato! Roles and Responsibilities

- Ideally, these would be:
 - Clearly defined within your unit
 - Written down and shared internally and externally
 - Reviewed annually to see if needs to be updated
 - Reviewed when any major restructuring takes place
- Who has clearly define roles and responsibilities? Are they shared with the broader campus community? Are past the annual review date?

It's Me - Hi - I'm the Problem It's Me Them: Roles and Responsibilities

- Toxic Traits
 - Not in my inbox.
 - Not my job.
 - It's their fault.
 - All mine.
 - Above my paygrade.
 - We don't do that in our office (and not provide the correct POC).



Roles and Responsibilities

- Expanding Roles and Responsibilities
 - New Regulations/Processes
 - Who identifies new material and how?
 - Who is responsible for managing training over the new material?
 - Tasks
 - Who is responsible for owning new tasks?
 - How is this ownership decided?

Collaboration Within your Unit (Where Everybody Knows Your Name...)

- What is your structure?
- Who meets with who and when/how often?
- How is information disseminated?
- What are the checks and balances?
- Is there cross-training among team members?
- Are you intentional with building a positive culture/relationships?



10

Q&A Time! Within Your Unit - Pick One:

- How do you disseminate information?
- What are your checks and balances?
- What is your office culture?



Collaboration Across Units (Us vs. Them, Yikes!)

- What is your structure?
- Who meets with who and when/how often?
- How is information disseminated?
- What are the checks and balances?
- Is there cross-training across units?
- Are you intentional with building a positive culture/relationships?
- Are you open to/encourage feedback from other units?

Q&A Time! Across Units – Pick One:

- Who is your “other” unit?

AND

- Do you have routine meetings?



Building and Strengthening Relationships – Taking Ownership

- Transparency
 - Ticket System
 - Keeping logs
 - TALK to each other!
- Mutual Accountability
 - Shared ownership across outcomes
- Collaborative Spirit
 - We are on the same team competing for awards



Additional Tools and Resources

- Personality Assessments
 - DISC
 - Big 5
 - Myers-Briggs
- Establish routine across-unit meetings
 - Informal and formal

Summary

- Willingness to engage is at the heart of collaboration
- Collaboration across units is an investment for the future

Thank you!!

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