BACKGROUND

The University of Kentucky’s (UK) Markey Cancer Center (MCC) is a premier cancer research center and patient care facility. Markey’s basic, translational and clinical research supports its mission to reduce cancer incidence and mortality in Kentucky, where cancer rates are extraordinarily high. Cancer center programs include research, treatment, education and community engagement, focused on the underserved population of Appalachian Kentucky.

In support of this wide-ranging mission, the Research Communications Office (RCO) was created in 2009 to help cancer researchers obtain grant funding and publish material in support of their research. Since its creation, RCO’s scope has grown to encompass pre-award and grant funding and publish material in support of their research. Since

The framework and philosophy of this centralized research administration infrastructure serves as a case study on efforts to enhance faculty productivity.

RCO STAFF AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MCC RCO Staff and Responsibilities.

Manager

• Daily management of personnel and budget
• Serve as the key point of contact for the office, often helping initiate new projects and communicate RCO skills and expertise
• Lead project coordinator and manager for proposal development, especially for multi-college and/or multi-department interactions
• Manage the solicitation and peer-review process for all MCC developmental research projects/pilot funds
• Lead tracking and routine reporting efforts for the cancer center (for example, membership and publication output)

Pre-Award Specialist

• Liaison between MCC and UK College of Medicine Sponsored Research Administrative Services and UK Office of Sponsored Projects Administration
• Assist researchers in identifying funding opportunities
• Ensure compliance with funding opportunity guidelines

Editor/Designer

• Editing grants and manuscripts for grammar, content and compliance
• Creation and editing of images and figures
• Project management for small grants

Web Editor

• Maintenance and content creation for MCC website and social media
• Design and distribution of newsletters
• Web project liaison to UK HealthCare Marketing and Public Relations

PROJECTS

PRE-AWARD

2010 2015

9% Abstracts Books Dissertations
4% Website / Newsletters
25% Manuscripts
26% Grants
11% Other

2016 Trending up

CAMPUS DIVERSITY OF RCO USE

9 of UK’s 16 Colleges used RCO services between 2010 – 2015.

35 UK Departments used RCO services between 2010 – 2015.

LESSONS LEARNED

Secure critical buy-in from leadership.

Long-term success of institutional research communication services is dependent on the support of leaders at the highest levels of the organization.

Use metrics and quality measures to reveal areas of unmet need.

Metrics and quality measures provide important insight about services offered, as well as gaps in those offerings.

Emphasize a team-oriented culture.

Hire staff who excel with individual challenges but also fully embrace highly collaborative environments.

CONCLUSIONS

We have presented a case study of our infrastructure that successfully enhances research productivity at our institution. Based on our experiences, we believe the ability to provide research communication services, and to grow and meet identified needs among researchers, is a unique opportunity for other institutions.