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Leveraging Multisector Support for Research and Program Growth

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Introduction & Objectives

- Identify and compare federal, corporate, and foundation funding priorities to effectively align research and program goals with sponsor expectations across multiple sectors.
- Apply proposal structuring strategies tailored to different funding models to successfully blend and sequence multisector support for innovation, growth, and scalability.
- Develop a practical framework for building diversified and resilient funding portfolios using case studies and planning tools to strengthen long-term program sustainability.

THE TRIAD OF SUPPORT



**The
Shift**



**RA's
Role**



**Session
Map**



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The Shift

WHY FEDERAL ONLY FUNDING IS A RISK; THE RISE OF "BRAIDED FUNDING MODELS.

The Shift

EXTREMELY SENSITIVE (CHANGES)

TIME-LIMITS/NON-RENEWABLE GRANTS (END)

RESTRICTED USE AND LIMITED FLEXIBILITY (RIGID)

REIMBURSEMENT CHALLENGES (REIMBURSE)

LAYOFFS OR CLOSURES (EGGS IN ONE BASKET)

Cliff Hanger Federal Funding





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The RA's Role

MOVING FROM "PROCESSING" TO "STRATEGIC FACILITATION" ACROSS
DIFFERENT SPONSOR TYPES

New RA Role: Strategic Facilitator



Early partners in proposal development



Advisors, not just reviewers



Translators of rules into options



Connectors across people, processes, and priorities



Help improve systemic process

More Strategic RA Roles

From

- Processing transactions
- Rule enforcement
- Late-stage involvement
- Individual proposals
- “No, because policy”

To

- Facilitating outcomes
- Informed guidance
- Early-stage engagement
- Portfolio-level thinking
- “Yes, if we structure it this way”

Session Map

	Federal Funding	Foundation Funding	Industry Funding
Primary Purpose	Advance public Mission	Advance a Foundation's Charitable or Mission-driven Goals	Support Company R&D, Product Development, or Strategic Interests
Typical Sponsors	NSF, NIH, DOE, DoD, USDA, DOJ, USGS	Private Foundations, family foundations, corporate foundations	Private Companies, startups, corporate R&D arms
Competition Level	Very high; formal peer review	moderate to high; varies widely	variable; often relationship-driven
Award Size	Small to very large (from <\$50k to multi-million)	Usually small to moderate	Moderate to large
Timeline (Idea to Award)	Long (6-18+ months common)	Shorter (2-9 months typical)	Often faster once agreement is reached
Compliance Burden	Very High	Low to moderate	Moderate (contractual rather than regulatory)

Federal Funding: The Bedrock of Scale



Landscape Trends




Administrative Heavy Lifting



Growth Strategy

Landscape Trends

Grants are moving to Multi-Center that require cross-sector partners. (P01, U54, NSF Engines, DOE Genesis Mission, CDC)



The move to more Multi-Center grants is helping and hindering the proposal submission process.

How Does this Trend Help

- Stronger Alignment with Funders' Stated Priorities
- Clearer Role Differentiation Strengthens the Narrative
- Risk Distribution and Institutional Buy-In

How the Trend Hinders

- Front-Loaded
Administrative Burden
- Sector Partners Don't
Understand Proposal
Mechanics
- Weaker Proposals when
Collaboration is Forced

Administrative Heavy Lifting



What is Administrative
Heavy Lifting



Why Administrative
Heavy Lifting Matters



The Challenge

What is Administrative Heavy Lifting

- Interpreting and applying sponsor & institutional requirements
 - Burden of Expanded Clearinghouse and Uniform Guidance (2 CFR200)
- Building Compliant, detailed budgets
- Managing timelines, routing and approvals
- Coordinating subawards, cost share, and documentation
 - Managing sub-awards complexity and "Flow-Down" requirements
- Ensuring audit-ready records and compliance

Why Administrative Heavy Lifting Matters

- It Protects the Institution
- It Shields Faculty from Administrative Burden
- It Enables Complex & “Mega-Proposals”
- It Supports Strategic Funding Diversification
- It Turns Process into Strategy

Shifting the Narrative



Administrative heavy lifting is not low-value work—it is high-skill work.



The shift is not about dropping it, but

Doing it earlier

Doing it more efficiently

Using it to inform better decisions

From Heavy Lifting to Strategic Leverage



Administrative Expertise is applied upstream:

Risks are shown sooner

Budgets support programmatic intent

Compliance informs strategy, not constraints

Faculty receive options, not obstacles



Administrative heavy lifting is the foundation-strategic facilitation is what we build on top of it.

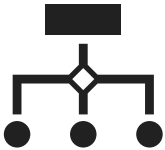


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Growth Strategy

Supporting Faculty in "Mega-Proposals" through scaling research growth through structured project management and administrative support.

Intentional Administrative Support



Shifting from the ad-hoc support to a repeatable model that provides:

- Dedicated Project Management
- Pre-configured administrative shells
- Early, sustained Research Administration involvement



This enables faculty to focus on vision, leadership, and scholarship.

RA Role in Mega-Proposal Support

- A) **Strategic facilitators** guiding structure and feasibility
- B) **Project coordinators** managing workflow and deadlines
- C) **Institutional translators** aligning vision with policy
- D) **Risk managers** identifying issues early
- E) **Trusted partners** for faculty leadership

Mega-proposals require more than great ideas —they require infrastructure, coordination, and intentional administrative strategy.

Foundation Support: Mission-Driven Growth



The Foundation
Mindset



The RA
Challenge



Growth
Strategy

The Foundation Mindset



Why do foundations care about "Impact" over "Indirect"?



Foundations are mission-driven, not systems-driven



They evaluate proposals by asking: "What will be different in the world if we fund this?"



Indirect costs don't directly answer that question, but Impact does.

Foundations

- They Answer to Donors
 - show dollars went directly to programs
 - funds benefited the identified population
 - outcomes are visible and measurable.
- Paying for HVAC, Central IT or general administration
 - looks less compelling than funding participants, services, deliverables, or pilots.
 - This is why foundations tend to cap or exclude F&A entirely.

The RA Challenge



How do we as RA navigate the challenges presented by these low and capped F&A (indirect) rates?



Encourage PI to explicitly connect every line item to impact.

Highlight participants, community reach, deliverables, and sustainability beyond the grant



Evaluate proposals to see if they align with institutional priorities



Structure budgets to minimize uncompensated administrative burdens



Manage waiver requests through established governance pathways

Handle these early in the process

Growth Strategy



Building "Gift vs Grant" checklist to ensure proper routing through your institution/company offices.



Purpose: Ensure funds are routed correctly through Advancement/Foundation Relations (Gifts) or Office of Sponsored Programs (Grants) to protect compliance, reporting accuracy, and institutional/company stewardship.

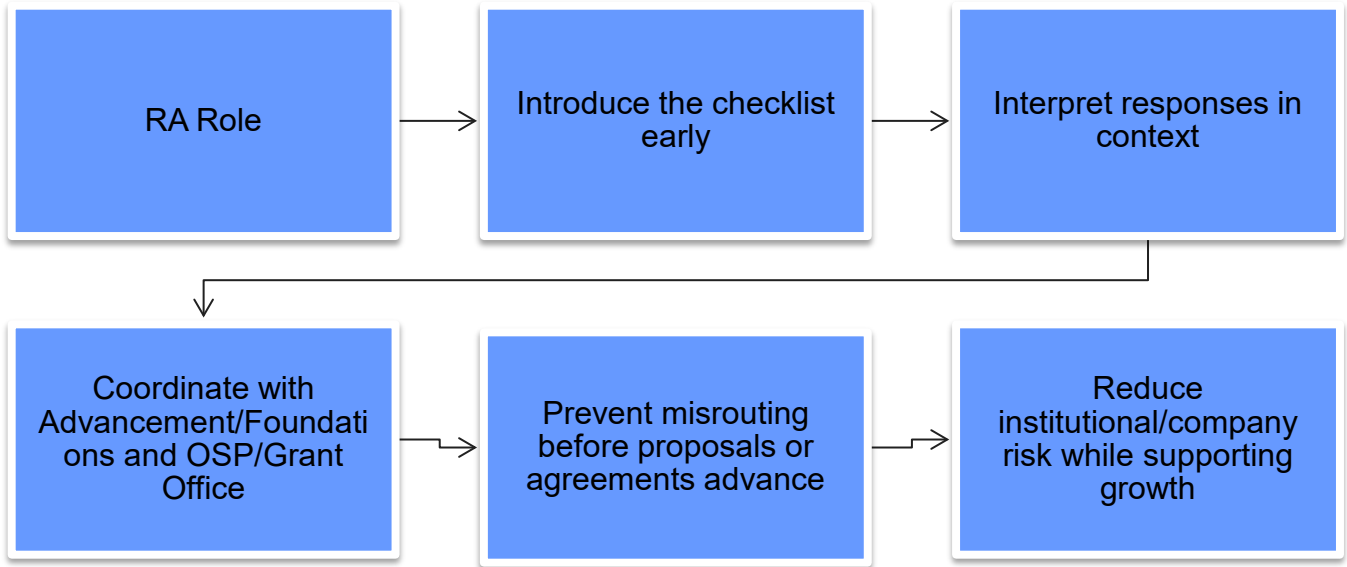
Growth Strategy Continued

A Gift checklist is a a short, structured set of questions that helps determine:

- Intent of the funding
- Level of sponsor control
- Reporting and deliverable expectations
- Appropriate administrative pathway

This is not intended to replace policy, but to operationalize it.

Growth Strategy Continued



Industry Partnerships: Speed and Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property Is a Core Asset for Industry

- **Universities Require:**
 - Institutional ownership of inventions
 - Non-exclusive licensing as default
 - Preservation of future research rights

Confidentiality vs. Academic Freedom

Universities want to:

- Limit confidentiality duration
- Guarantee right to publish
- Allow sponsor review—but not approval

Growth Strategy

- Growth Strategy: Using Master Research Agreements (MRAs) to reduce negotiation time from months to weeks.



Internal Rates vs. Market Rates

Internal Rates

- Direct costs (salary, basic materials)
- May exclude: Facilities (space, utilities) Administrative support IT, compliance, HR
- Designed to be affordable for internal users, not necessarily sustainable.

Market Rates

- Reflect the **true, total cost of delivering a service**, often aligned with external or industry pricing.
- Include **all direct + indirect costs**, such as:
 - Salaries + fringe benefits
 - Facilities & utilities
 - Administrative overhead
 - Equipment depreciation
 - Compliance and regulatory costs

The "Multisector" Integration: RA Managing the Mix

RA Managing the Mix

Compliance & COI

Effort Reporting

Data Silos

RA Managing the Mix

Regulatory
Hurdles

Proposal
Development

Strategy Mix

1

Use federal funding for credibility and long-term research agendas

2

Use foundation funding to seed ideas and build momentum

3

Use industry funding to translate research into practice or products

Key Points

Federal = Structure + Scale + Compliance



Foundation = Flexibility + Mission Alignment + Relationships



Industry = Speed + Resources + Risk (especially IP & terms)

Case Study

A University managed over 300 active awards across federal, foundation, and industry sponsors. The ORA has:

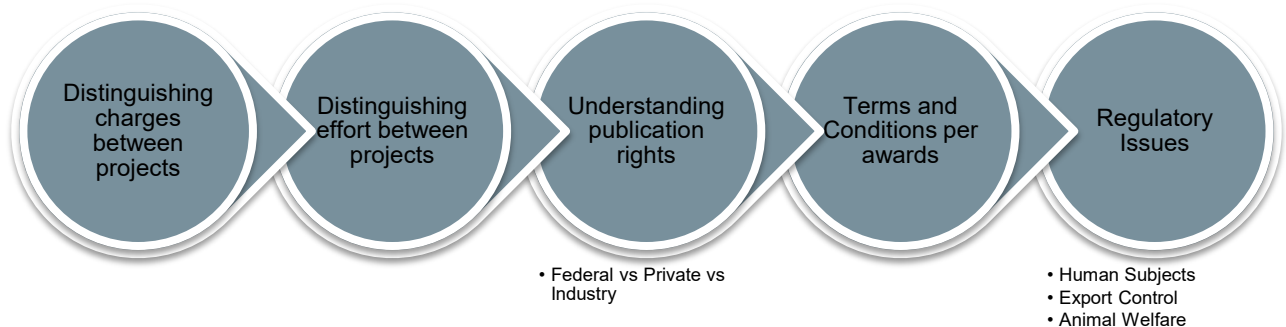
- ✓ Fragmented systems (grants, IRB, finance, HR),
- ✓ Manual tracking using spreadsheets and email reminders
- ✓ Missed or near-missed reporting deadlines
- ✓ Increasing audit risk under Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200
- ✓ Administrative burden on both staff and faculty

Impact:

- ✓ Compliance gaps
- ✓ Staff burnout
- ✓ Reactive management

Action Plan

Research Administrators CORE Strengths



Using AI

Compliance in Real-Time

- Awards at risk
- Upcoming deadlines across the portfolio
- Compliance gaps by department

Compliance Monitoring across awards

- AI scans award documents and extracts:
 - Key deadlines
 - Sponsor-specific requirements
 - Reporting frequency

Using AI

Automated Alerts

- Sends reminders to PIs and admins (e.g., 30/15/7 days before deadlines)
- Flags missing approvals (e.g., expired IRB protocol)
- Escalates non-compliance

Automated Reporting

- System generates sponsor-ready reports:
- Tracks effort certification and cost share automatically
- Produces audit logs for Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200 compliance

Impact Measured

- Missed Deadlines Reduced
- Efficiency Increase
- Faculty Satisfaction Increase

Thank You!

