



SOCIETY OF
RESEARCH
ADMINISTRATORS
INTERNATIONAL

Centralizing Post-Award Research Administration

Weighing the Pros and Cons

Introduction

Your Presenters



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- 3 yrs - State of Michigan
- 6 yrs - Michigan State University
- 2 yrs - State of Connecticut & University of Connecticut



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- 16 years higher education professional
- 14 years Michigan State University

Summary

- Purpose of Session and Learning Objectives
- Current Climate in Research Administration
- Organizational Models in Research Administration
- Michigan State University Case Study
- University of Connecticut Case Study
- Centralizing Administrative Functions – Research Overview
- Implementing Change
- Conclusion and Questions

Current Climate in Research Administration



BLOCKING RESEARCH

NIH Funding Is at a Standstill. This Professor Is Tracking the Delays.

By [Stephanie M. Lee](#) | February 26, 2025

More than half of the NIH grant-review meetings that were supposed to take place this year have been canceled, she says. "Without these meetings happening, nothing can get funded."



Government Science & Research Policy

NIH Moves to Consolidate Grant Peer Reviews to Save \$65M

Although university researchers don't believe the change itself poses a clear risk to the scientific review process, ongoing chaos at the agency is fueling a degree of skepticism.

Quick Takes

Over \$250M of \$400M Cut to Columbia Is From NIH, Agency Says

Over half of the approximately \$400 million in grants and contracts that the Trump administration said on Friday it's cutting...



Q&A

'Let's Not Overreact': How One College's Head of Research Is Navigating Uncertainty Under Trump

By [Megan Zahneis](#) | March 3, 2025

Dean R. Madden, of Dartmouth, is trying to balance concerns about the administration's actions with a desire not to engage in unhelpful speculation.



Government Science & Research Policy

Colleges Restrict Graduate Student Admissions After NIH Proposes Rate Cut

College officials say the pause is necessary while they determine the impacts of the potential federal funding cuts.

Trump administration cuts threaten UW-Madison ag studies, state farmers

Nearly 80% of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' research budget is federal funding

BY [LIAM BERAN](#) MARCH 14, 2025 11:15 AM



DATA ANALYSIS

Trump Plans to Shutter USAID. Here's What That Could Mean for Higher Ed.

By [Dan Bauman](#) | March 11, 2025

Cuts at the agency could result in the early termination of at least 140 contracts and assistance programs awarded to higher-ed organizations.



Business Cost-Cutting

More Colleges Freeze Hiring Amid Federal Funding Uncertainty

The latest wave of cost-cutting measures comes after the Trump administration pulled \$400 million from Columbia University and \$800 million from Johns Hopkins.

Organizational Models in Research Administration

Research Administration Structures

Organizational Structures

- Duties as assigned to existing administrative/financial staff
- Department level RA offices
- College level offices
- Fully centralized offices

Organization of Responsibilities

- Separation of pre-award and post-award
- Cradle to grave support through a single office
- Some responsibilities centralized while others given to colleges/departments/individuals

Case Study:

Michigan State University

Case Study: Michigan State University Post Award Grant Management

Post Award Grant Management

HOME > POST AWARD GRANT MANAG...



Welcome to PAGM

The Office of Research and Innovation is excited to announce the launch of Post-Award Grant Management Unit (PAGM). We are launching this new shared services model for PAGM to support research administration efforts on campus in alignment with the 2030 strategic plan. This model is designed to support units that may need assistance with managing larger or complex Post-Award processes.

PAGM works collaboratively with academic units to ensure cohesive management of the principal investigator's portfolio. This is an investment in the research infrastructure in alignment with 2030 strategic plan, aiming for \$1B in research expenditures.

Case Study: MSU PAGM

- **Strategy**

- New research awards to university, bandwidth isn't always available
- Provide a landing pad for award to be managed
- Soft launch early 2024

- **Projects PAGM supports**

- Multiple principal investigators across the university
- Multiple subcontractors
- International collaboration
- PIs in departments without bandwidth/experience for award management

- **Services that PAGM provides**

- Monthly reporting
- Transactional support
- Limited human resource activities

Case Study: MSU PAGM

- **Logistics**

- Memorandum of Understanding
 - Bookkeeping credit
 - Clarifying responsibility for functions, ensure collaboration is managed well and expectations roles and responsibilities are clear

- **Learned lessons**

- Front end financial investment, F&A bookkeeping credit
- Bookkeeping credit for large awards
- Taking on new awards vs established awards
- Financial risk (hardship accounts, unallowable expenses, overtime)

- **Future development**

- Scaling up, is there a tipping point?
- How is work managed?
- What is a hard launch going to look like?
- Short term assistance for gaps?

Case Study:

University of Connecticut

College Level-Centralization

- University of Connecticut's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
 - Large research college
 - About 30 departments/institutes
 - 800 faculty
 - ~\$60 million in annual research spend across approximately 500 active awards
 - Currently staffed at 13 employees (1 Director, 3 managers)
 - Grew from 6, which included shifting department research admin positions to the college office
 - Research admin functions were primarily handled at the department level
 - Increasing workloads/complexity led to need for centralization
 - Pre-award and post-award compliance and monitoring centralized into a college-level office

College Level-Centralization

- Steps for centralization and re-organization
 - RACI Matrix to identify tasks/responsibilities and who is:
 - Responsible
 - Accountable
 - Consulting
 - Informed
 - Evaluate pros and cons of different organizational methods
 - Identify paths of getting to the ideal structure
 - Communication, transparency, and adaptability are key

Overview of Administrative Centralization Research

What does the research say?

- **Centralization and Decentralization: Balancing Organizational and Employee Expectations (Jaehee Jong and Sue R. Faerman, 2021)**
 - Definitions: Centralization refers to concentrating power and decision-making authority at the highest levels of the organizational hierarchy, while decentralization involves power sharing and delegation of decision-making authority to lower levels.
 - Benefits and Drawbacks: benefits of bureaucratic characteristics, such as standardized procedures for accountability, and the drawbacks, such as reduced employee motivation and creativity.
 - Balancing Act: The authors emphasize the importance of balancing centralization and decentralization based on societal culture, the nature of the work, and employee characteristics.

What does the research say?

- Not Too Much, Not Too Little: Centralization, Decentralization, and Organizational Change (Hala Altamimi, Qiaozhen Liu, Benedict Jimenez, 2023)
 - Moderation Matters: The study finds that moderate levels of centralization and decentralization have distinct influences on different types of organizational changes.
 - Strategic Behavior: Public organizations demonstrate strategic behavior in choosing their decision-making structure to adapt to environmental and organizational contingencies.
 - Challenging Conventional Thinking: The findings challenge the binary view that one structure is always better than the other, supporting the idea that a balanced approach is more effective.

Implementing Change

Implementing Change: Organizational Theory

“No single formula is possible for the great range of situations leaders encounter”

(Bolman & Deal, 2021, p. 357)

Structural

- What does the org chart look like?

Human Resources

- Humans first.

Political

- Relationships and analysis.

Symbolic

- Culture and making meaning.

Implementing Change: Business Process Reengineering

Early models of Business Process Engineering (BPR) were originally used to refine processes toward reducing costs, time required and improve efficiency for a more traditional product-based business.

BPR in higher education can improve efficiency and reduce workload by eliminating or refining outdated processes

- Requires involvement across the organization at all levels of hierarchy
- Diverse array of stakeholders involved
- First goal is efficiency, potential for secondary impact of improving organizational culture

Implementing Change: Tools

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
INTERNAL		
	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
EXTERNAL		

THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY 4-D CYCLE

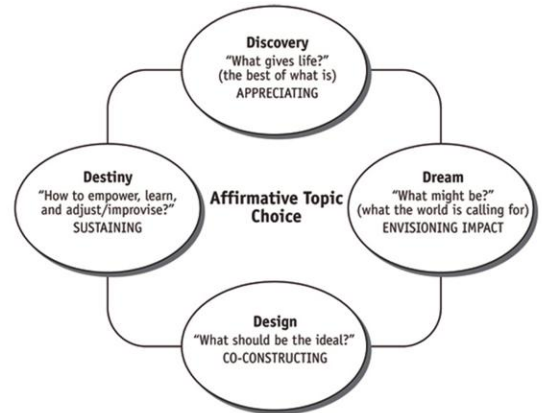


Figure 13. Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle

Questions?

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