Research Administration Improvement Project

Academic Senate Division Meeting
May 3, 2017

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Strategy

- **Process Improvement → end-to-end review of RA processes**

- **Service Delivery → Regional Service areas**

- **Culture**

Process Improvement

- Faculty and staff have identified various processes requiring improvements

  - Proposal Development & Submission
  - Award Set Up
  - Award Closeout
  - Other: Subawards, Purchasing, International Awards

- Award Set Up and Proposal Development & Submission Process Improvements currently underway

- Next, we will focus on the Subaward Process which is planned to start in May followed by the Purchasing Process slated for later in the Summer

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Award Set Up Process Improvements

The **Award Set-up** process was selected last semester as an area for improvement. The first set of more than 21 planned enhancements, include:

Improved communications to keep you informed about your award set-up:
- Starting this month, an automated email will be sent from Contracts & Grants Accounting (CGA) to PIs and RAs when your Award Set-up is complete and funds are available to spend.
- Coming in May, an automated email will be sent to PIs and RAs when the Sponsored Projects Office receives a notice of award from your proposal sponsor. The notice will include next steps as well as links to information about how to process a *Fund Advance* if you'll need funds before the award set-up is complete.
- A dashboard is online that depicts award processing time by common sponsors and research categories. The current dashboard reflects the time needed to negotiate awards with sponsors; planned enhancements for a new dashboard will depict dates when the notice of award is received from the sponsor, the award set-up is complete, and when your project funds are available.

Better transparency into how your award set-up is progressing and anticipated next steps:
- ***Phoebe Search*** allows PIs to monitor their Award Set-up status and view summary details for all awards. Status categories have been introduced to inform you the stage in which your award set-up is.

Process improvements to help get you started when your sponsor's notice of award is received:
- The **recruiting process** has been streamlined with CSS HR to help you initiate a personnel search before your Award Set-up is complete. The chartfield string is no longer required until the offer of employment is made, allowing you to initiate the search and hire process simultaneously to your award being set-up.
- Improvements have been made to ***Fund Advances*** which can provide you with access to funding while your award negotiation is in process.

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Proposal Development & Submission Process Improvements

These improvements are currently being developed:

- New Proposal Development and Submission Checklist for PIs with clear instructions on deliverables required for the proposal, who's responsible i.e. RA vs PI for the deliverable, and when it's due

- Increasing knowledge, skills and abilities of Research Administrators through improved training, guidelines on what constitutes a complete proposal, establishment of a WIKI for RAs, etc.

- Improved SPO proposal review and feedback presentation to PIs by breaking down comments into three categories: a) issues that put the university at risk, b) comments to enhance the success of proposal, and c) other less crucial or more cosmetic comments

- Standardization of templates e.g. budget and budget justification template

- PIs & Co-PIs now automatically have the ability to view and edit their proposals in Phoebe

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Faculty / PI Service Satisfaction Survey

- Survey of Faculty and other PI satisfaction with RA services conducted in February, 2017.

- First annual survey will serve as a baseline and to identify areas needing immediate attention. Annual survey will measure effectiveness of improvement efforts.

- Survey was sent to 2,051 Faculty and other PIs and was open from February 8-22. 408 completed responses were received.

- When asked about overall satisfaction:
  - 57.6% of respondents were "Dissatisfied" or "Somewhat Dissatisfied."
  - 34.6% of respondents were "Satisfied" or "Somewhat Satisfied."
  - 7.8% were neutral

- More than 700 qualitative comments were received and are being reviewed to prioritize improvement efforts.

- Results will be communicated to campus this month.

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Regional Model

College of Chemistry and L&S MPS Division volunteered to pilot a new management structure for research administration. Goals include:

- Reestablishing partnership between academic units and research administration staff at all levels. Deans with management, faculty with staff, MSOs with CSS managers, …

- Culture of continuous improvement

- Insuring the RA staff identify themselves as part of the success of the faculty/units they support (and that faculty identify the staff as part of their team)

- Emulating the elements of ERSO that make it a comparatively successful service delivery model. Recognize that people and management are the most important element of that success, not just better tools.

- Attend to the survey results as a baseline

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Regional Model

Process:

- Develop testable, reproducible models for organization, management and governance that support partnership between RA and academic units

- Build electronic tools that support faculty and staff. A web portal that will consolidate key information in one place and allow streamlining and simplifying some processes (e.g. hiring GSI/GSR) is in process.

- Develop methods for standardizing the many ways we do things across different departments.

- Build in metrics to evaluate success from the beginning.

- Take small steps so it is not painful to start over.

- Make retention of talented staff a high priority throughout the process.

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Culture Project

The project goal is to promote and foster a campus culture of respect and civility between faculty, staff and students, and between academic and administrative units.

- Our approach will be to integrate work on culture into all RA Improvement projects.

- We will be consulting with faculty in relevant fields to inform our work.

- We are starting with a review of the survey results to identify themes

- Jennifer Chizuk appointed April 2017 to lead efforts

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Thank You

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