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In This Issue

In this third issue of the journal, we look at change from a variety of perspectives. In the opening feature, Engaging the Humanities? Research Ethics in Canada, Michael Owen addresses a major researcher and institutional transition issue we will all face over the next few years. This preliminary evaluation of Canada’s common set of guidelines for the treatment of human subjects in all research reflects the fact that humanities and fine arts faculty have not internalized change. The article presents a good synopsis of faculty and administrative concerns and reasons to resist change. This issue’s case study highlights an innovation from the SUNY system to improve the protection of human research participants through organized approaches and non-threatening peer review. The material is sufficient to assist others in thinking through possible applications of the approach to their institution. We will look forward to a longer-term evaluation of the effects of this voluntary and anticipatory program in a few years.

Our Shop Talk articles begin with a synthesis on change in the field of research administration from two leaders, Marcia Landen and Michael McCallister. The vast growth in the scope of responsibilities and new technological applications require our colleagues to diversify while many of our institutions are slow to change. Just as in the business world, we must plan for change; four keys to success are speed, specialization, competitive knowledge workers, and empowered employees. As part of the newer expectations for research administrators, many faculty and researchers expect and need guidance on proposal writing. Victoria Molfese, Karen Karp, and Linda Siegel summarize the key points that research administrators can share with proposal writers, department reviewers, and new faculty about the peer review process. This short article captures the major reasons why most proposals fail—poor project design and poor politics. In a similar vein, Ann Kratz describes a new approach to enable faculty to be more successful in planning for their research and other roles. Sparked by decreasing attendance at new faculty orientation, an Indiana university planning committee searched the literature, investigated information gaps, and repackaged materials. A tool to hook faculty, a Professional Development Planner covers knowledge and skill issues, institutional support services, internal priorities, and action planning strategies. The article discusses how the tool evolved.


With this issue we list new members of the journal team and recognize the contributions to this issue from out-going members Pamela Brown and Diane Watson.

Call for Papers

Share your research, knowledge, opinions, or a case study with SRA members. The deadline for manuscript submission for the spring issue is 3 January 2003. See the society website (www.srainternational.org) for information about manuscripts, author style guidelines, and submission forms.

Transmit materials to journal@srainternational.org
Announcing the Rod Rose Award for the Outstanding Paper of 2002

The SRA Rod Rose Award 2002 was given to Jerry Fife and Robert Forrester for Pricing the Services of Scientific Cores
Part I: Charging Subsidized and Unsubsidized Users
Part II: Charging Outside Users


The cash prize and award certificates were presented by SRA President Julie Cole at the Awards Luncheon on 28 October in Orlando, Florida.

The Society for Research Administrators International first awarded the Rod Rose Award in 1973 for the most outstanding paper accepted by the journal. The criteria used by the journal team—ERB and member editors—are the article's relevance, usefulness, degree of innovation in content, and readability. All original papers submitted by 15 September and accepted for publication during 2002 that met the criteria for consideration are listed by the editors for the ERB vote. Each member interpreted the articles using the following guidance:

Criteria
1. Relevance: needed (implying little written on topic), bearing well on issues at hand, distinctive, logical, precise
2. Usefulness: beneficial, serviceable, broadly applicable to the readership in performing their jobs
3. Innovation: introduces something new, creative
4. Readability: pleasurable, interesting, easy to read

There were several very good papers this year but Pricing the Services of Scientific Cores was innovative, well researched, and practical in its approach. We think it will be extremely useful to many research institutions, faculty, and administrators. SRA is also making quantity copies of this paper available for $150 for 50 reprints. A single copy of the entire journal can be purchased for $50 by contacting the SRA Executive Office. To order contact kjudge@srainternational.org.

Rod Rose was the first part-time Director of the SRA National Office. As chair of the Publications Committee, he produced the first edition of The Journal of the Society of Research Administrators. This award recognizes the value of publishing for peers.
Contributors

Colleen Donaldson, MA, CRA, Grants Development Director, Office of Academic Affairs, State University of New York College at Brockport has over 15 years of research administration experience in higher education. She is currently a grants consultant to a variety of governmental and nonprofit organizations. Ms. Donaldson has taught a one-credit grants writing workshop for 10 years. She has a MA in urban studies from the SUNY College at Brockport. She previously wrote for the journal and served on the ERB. Lorrie B. Anthony, MS, Director, Office of Grants and Contracts, Empire State College of SUNY, has 15 years of experience in research administration and technology transfer in the college environment. She held numerous positions in academia and in private enterprise. Her graduate degree is in instructional design, development, and evaluation from Syracuse University. Carol H. Berdar, Compliance Manager for Sponsored Programs, The Research Foundation of State University of New York, serves SUNY campuses by providing guidance, support, and interpretation on legislation and regulation impacting sponsored research, developing policy, and serving as liaison and advocate with federal and state government agencies in the regulatory/rulemaking arena. Ms. Berdar has a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration, with a major in public policy, from SUNY Empire State College. She has been active in NCURA at the regional and national levels.

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Corrections

Title Correction
In the article by Richard Thornley, Matthew W. Spence, Mark Taylor, and Jacques Magnan which appeared in The Journal of Research Administration, Volume XXXIII, Number II, 2002 under the title of New Decision Tool to Evaluate Award Selection Process (page 49-56), a correction to the title is required. The corrected title should be New Decision-Assist Tool for Evaluation of Award Candidates. Please note this change as it will appear corrected in the annual volume of author information for 2002.

Contributors Correction
In the Contributors section of Volume XXXIII, Number II, page 6, please note the following correction to the last sentence of the biographical sketch for Carole Wagonhurst. She has over twenty years experience in training and organizational development.

Volume XXXIII, Number II Correction
The last issue of the journal should have been numbered Volume XXXIII, Number II on the spine and title page.

Clarification

Journal Volume Numbering 2000-2002
As SRA members are aware, the peer-reviewed journal began in 1967 with the start of the association. Prior to the slight change in name and the new format of 2000, the journal had two name variations recorded with the Library of Congress over its 31 volume history. When the name was modified in 2000, a decision was made to begin renumbering issues starting at Volume 1. That decision was reversed when the current editor and staff learned that it was not necessary to change the volume sequence just because the journal name and ISSN were modified. Three issues were published between 2000 and 2001 and SRA renumbered them into Volume XXXII, Numbers I, II, and III. Thus the four issues for 2002 are continuing the long tradition of publishing a printed peer-reviewed journal for the field of research administration. In December we will mail the author index for Volume XXXIII, Numbers I, II, and III to subscribers. Libraries and other non-members should order their subscription to Volume XXXIV before 1 February 2003.
Engaging the Humanities?
Research Ethics in Canada

Michael Owen
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Abstract

Three national Canadian granting agencies jointly developed and promulgated a common set of guidelines for the treatment of human subjects in all research. These guidelines apply equally to humanists and social scientists as well as to clinical and biomedical researchers. This paper reports on the 2001 response to a national questionnaire to assess compliance of humanists to the new Canadian regulations, the impact of the regulations on humanists, and recommendations to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The preliminary findings indicate a gap in the knowledge of the humanities’ research community with regard to the policies and procedures of the ethical review of research involving human participants and the understanding of the Research Ethics Boards impact on the nature of research conducted by the humanities.

Introduction

In 1997, after four years of consultation with the Canadian academic community, Canada’s three national research funding agencies—the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Medical Research Council, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)—issued the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethics in Human Research (TCPS). The councils required that Canadian universities and health research institutions implement the policy framework by autumn 1999 and apply it to all research funded by these three groups. In 2002, the three councils established the Inter-Agency Panel on Research Ethics (PRE) to continue monitoring this process.

This paper reports the results of a survey on the impact of the TCPS on humanities scholars in Canada and raises questions about research practices in the humanities and the role of Research Ethics Board (REBs) also known as Institutional Research Boards (IRBs). The importance of this study is its findings about the lack of awareness of the TCPS or resistance to the application of what is perceived as a biomedical, clinical model to research in the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences. This resistance to the ethical review of their research activities...
amongst humanists is not unique to Canada and serves as an alert to IRBs and sponsors with regard to compliance issues.

**Standards for Ethical Conduct of Research In The Humanities**

**To 1997**

In 1977, the Canada Council, the precursor to SSHRC, issued a report entitled *Ethics: Report of the Consultative Group on Ethics*. The Consultative Group was to advise “on the application of general ethics principles that should be observed by researchers in the humanities and social sciences,” (p. iv) including the creation of “a common ethical code which institutions will be asked to apply.” It also was to address the composition of institutional committees and procedures to be used by these committees. The Consultative Group (1977, p. 1) struggled to strike “a proper balance” between “respect for the rights and sensibilities of the individual or collectivity” and “society’s need for advancement of knowledge.” The Consultative Group was prescient in its recognition that

the economist, linguist, demographer, political scientist, and criminologist—even the historian, biographer, and archaeologist … gather data through direct and indirect contact with people and can have an impact on their lives. It is not therefore the discipline that determines the presence or absence of ethical considerations, but whether or not the methodology employed results in the research having a direct impact on human beings. (p. 5)

The Consultative Group reinforced the principle that humanists must be alerted to the possibilities of ethical conflict in their work. This report became the basis for SSHRC’s policy on ethics for research involving human participants until 1997.

**1999 Tri-Council Policy Statement**

The TCPS on Ethics for Research Involving Human Subjects had a lengthy gestation period. The Medical Research Council, reflecting on the internationalization of standards of biomedical and clinical research, recognized a need to revise its research ethics policies and, since underlying ethical principles are common to all disciplines, convinced SSHRC and NSERC of the reasonableness of a common policy. After a lengthy consultation (Canadian Psychological Association, 1996), the TCPS was approved by the councils’ governing boards, administratively promulgated as a requirement for individuals and teams who received research funding from the councils, and implemented by institutions that managed the grants. Recipient institutions were required to have their policies compliant with the TCPS by the autumn of 1999. The TCPS secretariat reviewed these policies and advised the institutions whether they were in compliance or if modifications were required. By the autumn of 2000, most universities had complied.

SSHRC’s Standing Committee on Ethics and Integrity (CEI) and REBs became aware of the uneven implementation of the TCPS. Two communities—humanities and fine arts faculty—were conspicuous by their absence in the submission of research protocols to institutional REBs. Members of these scholarly communities objected to the imposition of alien regulations on the conduct of their research. In the autumn of 2000, the CEI contracted the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada (HSSFC) to assess the impact of the TCPS on research in the humanities and fine arts. The HSSFC and SSHRC were concerned that these scholars might be unfamiliar with or not understand thoroughly the TCPS or use of the ethics review processes. There was apprehension that REBs were less familiar with the traditional research practices of humanists and might apply the TCPS guidelines to humanities research without fathoming which research activities from these disciplines should undergo expedited reviews or be exempt from ethics review. The HSSFC consulted with the research community and REBs to define the boundaries and issues in humanities and fine arts disciplines: (a) as experienced by REBs, (b) as experienced by the researchers, and (c) as articulated by faculty, REBs, or others.
Methodology

The HSSFC established an expert panel to inform its consultation and to analyze the results of the survey. REB approval for the study protocol and instruments was obtained. Two questionnaires, each containing six items, were distributed either to chairs and members of REBs and other research administration staff, or to deans of humanities and fine arts, department chairs, faculty members, and presidents of the 35 scholarly associations representing disciplines in the humanities.

An introduction letter accompanying the questionnaire outlined the purpose of the study and stressed procedures in place for ensuring confidentiality of the data and anonymity of the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed by surface mail and via three electronic listservs (Canadian Association of University Research Administrators, National Council on Ethics in Human Research, and HSSFC). Over 300 unduplicated questionnaires were distributed. There was only one mailing without follow-up and a two-week timeframe for response. Eighty-six (86) responses were received. Thirty universities (43% response) responded to the REB chairs’ and research administrators’ questionnaire while the questionnaire to deans, chairs, faculty members, and presidents of scholarly associations received responses from nearly 40 different institutions but a response rate of less than 20%. Although these response rates are low and there was under-representation from francophone universities in Quebec, they are representative of the opinions of the research community at the time of the survey.

Findings

Question 1: Institutional Guidelines or Policies for Humanities Research

This question asked whether REBs apply the TCPS uniformly to all research involving humans within an institution or whether the REBs had created guidelines and procedures that were specific to disciplinary groups.

The overwhelming impression of responses from REBs and research administrators was that the TCPS is the universal standard and that REBs apply the TCPS guidelines to all disciplines. At the time of the study, few institutions placed any qualifications on the application of the TCPS to humanities and fine arts disciplines or had specific guidelines that addressed issues related to research in these areas.

REB chairs and administrators reported that institutional policies and procedures were developed in consultation with faculties and departments. Yet nearly one-fifth of faculty respondents contradicted this claim. One individual noted that humanities scholars were involved in the development of institutional guidelines “more in protest.” One administrator commented that while scholars in the humanities were solicited to participate in the research ethics committee, “there has been very little interest … by the humanities … in the work of the REB.”

Some respondents identified difficulties with the administration of the TCPS, while others reported on efforts to ensure flexibility and to ensure that the administration of the policy acknowledged that much of the research performed in universities is not biomedical. The creation of departmental REBs, with central oversight, made the implementation flexible in “ways relevant to specific disciplines.”

Question 2: Included and Excluded Research

The TCPS, Article 1.1 (c)(d) and Article 1.6 allow for REBs to exclude or provide expedited review of research protocols. The explanatory note on this article excludes research that “involves no interaction with the person who is the subject of public records.” Article 1.1 (c) states:

research about a living individual involved in the public arena, or about an artist, based exclusively on publicly available information, documents, records, works, performances, archival materials or third-party interviews, is not required to undergo ethics review. Such research only requires ethics review if the subject is approached directly for interviews or for access to private papers, and then only to ensure that such approaches are conducted according to professional protocols and to Article 2.3 of this policy. (p. XX)
REB chairs and administrators emphasized that the TCPS applied to all research involving human participants, without exception, but that researchers could communicate with the REB chair or research ethics administrator to determine whether a particular study required REB review. The experience of deans, chairs, and faculty members was more mixed. Most respondents reported that REB review was required for all research involving humans and were not aware of any exceptions.

Responses demonstrated that researchers normally submit applications to a REB before they learn whether a research study was exempt from review or if it qualified for expedited review. Some institutions published guidelines that described what types of studies were eligible for an expedited review. The practice across the university system demonstrates flexibility and sensitivity to institutional culture. However, faculty members’ responses revealed a lack of awareness of processes and a perception that the system was inflexible. Most faculty respondents were unaware of the process for expedited review while others indicated that they were able to consult with the REB chair or research administrators prior to submission of a protocol for approval. Some respondents adamantly maintained that their research did not require any form of ethics review.

REB responses demonstrated that expedited review of research is common and that the process facilitated the research of faculty and graduate students. At most universities, expedited review consisted of ethics review by the chair and/or up to two members of the REB. While chairs emphasized informal communications strategies, communication between faculty members and REBs is highly formal, with written responses from the REB, including identifying whether a protocol was deemed exempt or was given expedited review. The formality of communications reflects a concern for correct procedural practices, ensuring that both the REB and the research ethics administration, on the one hand, and the researcher, on the other, are fully cognizant of the issues involved and what modifications are required before a study is approved and may proceed.

**Question 3: Problems of Application of the TCPS to Humanities and Fine Arts Research**

Both REB chairs and faculty responses suggest that the TCPS has not had a significant impact on research in the humanities and fine arts. This implies a lack of interaction between the REBs and these researchers. Forty percent of REB chairs and administrators reported no or very little experience dealing with research protocols involving scholars in the humanities or fine arts. Alternatively, the responses may suggest that researchers in this area are blissfully unaware of the TCPS and its application to their research modalities, or are simply ignoring the TCPS and institutional policies.

Most deans, chairs, and faculty members responded “no”, “not so far”, or “did not know” to the question, “the application of the TCPS is troublesome or lacks clarity with respect to the kinds of humanities or fine arts research that require REB review and approval.” One theme emerged from these responses—the problems are not limited to the humanities but are also found in social science research. One associate dean argued that the TCPS “should be revised to include a more refined and up-to-date discussion of the methods commonly used by humanists, fine arts scholars, as well as those used by social scientists.”

Nearly one-third of REB chairs and administrators specified ways in which the TCPS could be made less ambiguous and more adaptable to humanities research. Respondents focused, however, on the lack of awareness of the TCPS among scholars in the humanities and fine arts and their resistance to the application of the TCPS. One respondent bluntly asserted that the TCPS is “completely inappropriate for research in the humanities and the arts.” Another claimed that the origin of the TCPS was fundamental to its rejection by humanists. The point is, biomedical (clinical) research is viewed as the norm and practices in the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences are viewed as exceptions and as such must be justified.

Humanities and fine arts scholars expressed the fear that research ethics reviews “prevent or circumscribe perfectly legitimate scholarly criticism or inquiry.” This fear underscored resistance to written informed consent as the gold standard and the need for detailed interview.
questions, which, in the view of some scholars, affected the relational dynamics between the researcher and interviewee or community. One scholar stated that in her research she interviewed scholars and artists without a set of preplanned questions because “we are having a conversation [that does] … not follow a set pattern, nor should it, since each person we interview has a different perspective and history.”

Many scholars focused on the qualitative and participatory nature of their research but rarely noted that these methodologies and the ethical issues arising therein have been addressed by other disciplinary traditions (AFS, 1988; OHA, 1992; IOH, 1997). Other problems identified included (a) no rationale for excluding public policy research; (b) biography projects involving third-party issues; (c) cultural issues related to research with seniors, First Nations Elders, and non-western cultures “where the use of a consent form to be signed would be culturally inappropriate”; (d) definition of naturalistic observation; and (e) the interpretation of undergraduate, course-based research and when it needs review.

Certain principles that are central to the TCPS need to be given greater thought in light of the different meaning and implications that they have in humanities and fine arts research. The principles identified are informed consent, minimal risk, vulnerable populations, confidentiality, and destruction of data, relationship between research and subject, and broader definition and conception of research.

Problems arise because of the ambiguous and sometimes contradictory wording of TCPS. Issues were related to methodological approaches representing areas of overlap between the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences. Research methodologies are not mentioned in the policy and their ethical implications are not discussed. The absence of articulated professional and ethical standards within many humanities disciplines was noted. The development and fostering of an ethical research culture within the discipline was recommended as a responsibility of academic or scholarly associations.

**Question #4: Experience With the New Ethics Policy and Review Process**

This question attempted to determine if there was any similarity between the experiences of humanities faculty members with the ethics review processes and the REB’s assessment of the impact of the process on humanists.

Of the faculty members who responded to the component of this question designed to solicit a measure of impact, nearly 62% identified the impact of the TCPS on their research as minimal, yet were more likely to assess negatively the impact of the TCPS on their colleagues. However, the low number of faculty respondents to this question (<40%) does not allow for a conclusive statement. REB chairs and administrators were more likely to assess the impact of the TCPS on colleagues in the humanities and fine arts as minimal or moderate. The ambiguity of responses may reflect the REB experience that few protocols emerge from these fields so the impact was minimal.

The researchers also sought information on “special issues or problems faculty encountered with respect to the REB process … and, from the perspective of the REB, what problems occurred most frequently when dealing with human research applications from the humanities or fine arts.” Research faculty, deans, and chairs most frequently reported no problems whereas some faculty members claimed that the ethics review process slowed down or interfered with their research. REB chairs reported a limited understanding of ethics review principles among humanists. One argued that more experienced researchers were less likely to have difficulty with the research ethics review process. Several commented that, in practice, humanities and fine arts disciplines traditionally have not required nor recognized that the SSHRC standards prior to 1997 required ethics review, and the implementation of the TCPS created problems. One termed this culture clash: “faculty in these disciplines aren’t accustomed to writing ethics proposals, to allowing time for review before a project start date, and to explaining their plans to other people on demand.” For example, one questioned whether the TCPS now required choreographers “to have their dancers sign informed consent forms” prior to conducting research on new forms of dance. To overcome this cultural divide, one administrator
encouraged researchers to identify aspects of their research “that may present ethical problems and discuss how they intended to deal with them.”

Reflecting an underlying antagonism to the TCPS, some deans and faculty members responded with strongly worded views on the imposition of an alien research ethics regime on their scholarship and questioned the need for the TCPS. Arguing that the TCPS emerged from a biomedical model, these humanists were irritated that “harmful intentions were being imputed into innocuous projects.” Others viewed the research ethics process as a bureaucratic hurdle that interfered with their research. One suggestion that humanists viewed the REB as “yet another policing institution” is particularly troublesome as it implies a high degree of cynicism and distrust.

A number of respondents argued cogently that the focus should not be on the disciplines but on the nature of the research. It is “the perception that discipline is the sole determinant of whether a proposal needs review, what is ethical, and how any review ought to proceed; rather it is the nature of the work that determines these things.” One REB chair vigorously asserted that that “we should aim to ensure that ethical principles are observed in ways appropriate to the research concerned.” Yet from the perspective of humanists, disciplinary concerns lie at the very heart of much of the debate over the TCPS.

**Question 5: Improvements to the REB Review of Humanities and Fine Arts Research and**

**Question 6: Ethics Education**

Only 25% of REB chairs argued that there were issues inherent in the humanities and fine arts that required special consideration by REBs. Less than one-third of the deans, chairs, or faculty responded to this question, so we know more exploration is needed in this area. Of those who did respond, new research methodologies, or research with participants from cultures other than one’s own, were identified as problematic issues. The responses demonstrate that humanists have a limited knowledge of the TCPS and are wary about its application to their research programs. While some REB chairs suggested that there were issues and practices about which humanities or fine arts faculty could benefit from some guidance, others reported confusion and resistance by faculty to the TCPS requirements for ethics review. This also suggests a need for better understanding of humanists’ research methodologies and practices by REBs, the need for education, and the need to clarify the application of the TCPS to these disciplines.

Moreover, issues discussed earlier were reiterated including the problem of applying the TCPS to specific research methods and practices, such as oral history, public archival material written by persons still alive, cultural inappropriateness of written informed consent, confidentiality issues, and open-ended interviews. What of disciplinary practices where participatory, feminist, or action research methodologies were the norm—methodologies that are akin to and ever-more incorporated into research of humanists and creative artists? Respondents questioned how the TCPS applied to disciplines and methodologies that had both scholarly and professional components. Did professional standards of conduct apply or did the TCPS apply (TCPS, 1.A, p. 1.2.)? For others, concerns that needed to be addressed focused on the research and creative methodologies in the arts.

For those who suggested areas of guidance for humanist or fine arts colleagues, several identified issues previously cited (ambiguity of informed consent, individuals in the public arena, oral history, cultural issues/analyses). Additional issues identified were (a) “permission of subjects to release information obtained by interview or archival research,” (b) copyright ownership of interview material, and (c) definitions of human subject and risk “must go beyond the physical.”

The increased demands of ethical review and opposition to these demands were highlighted. Faculty resisted “increased paperwork when [they did] … not see why their research now presents this additional demand”; the “theatrical tradition is in complete opposition to the philosophy behind the TCPS … ,” and “due to such widespread resistance, it will continue to be a tricky matter to provide guidance and to heighten sensitivity in an effective manner.” While some commented upon a lack of awareness of the TCPS and a “general confusion and ignorance about ethics issues,” others openly
urged the rewriting of the TCPS, and greater guidance for REBs and researchers from NCEHR on humanities and fine arts research issues. The creation of departmental- or faculty-based REBs helped to overcome the initial resistance to the implementation of the TCPS and ensured that it was a living document, adapted to the disciplinary needs of the researchers.

An underlying theme throughout this analysis is the necessity of educating REB members on the traditions and practices of humanists and conversely, educating humanists on the definition of research and the principles of research ethics reviews and the processes for protocol development and review. Nearly one half of the REB chairs and research administrators did not report any form of education or training activities at their institutions. None reported any information activity specific to the humanities and fine arts. Most researchers did not respond or were unaware of any educational or outreach activities. Of those who reported educational activities, most referenced programs offered through the offices of research administration or research ethics. Others noted that issues of research ethics were integrated into graduate courses such as workshops, seminars, and education on research ethics. Planned activities included interdisciplinary workshops to discuss methodological techniques and to share experiences, departmental workshops open to graduate students and faculty researchers, and greater consideration of other dimensions of ethics such as gender equity (that are not factored into the biomedical model), participatory and ethnographical concerns, other models of informed consent, and problems inherent in oral history, especially with native people and other non-Western cultures.

**Summary and Conclusions**

Canadian REBs are conscientiously executing their responsibilities to research participants, researchers, their institutions, and society to ensure that their procedures are both rigorous and efficient. REBs work hard to guarantee that review procedures are commensurate with risks inherent in specific research methodologies. Yet they have had little interaction with humanists and fine arts scholars. At those institutions where humanists and creative artists are engaged in the ethics review process, the institutional response has been to adapt policies and practices to become more inclusive as well as establishing faculty-based or departmental REBs. REBs noted the absence of protocols from the humanities and fine arts and the absence of humanists, other than philosophers and historians, on the REBs. Hence, the divide between the REBs and their understanding of humanists’ research methodologies, practices, and concerns with the implementation of the TCPS, and humanists and their understanding of the policies, practices, and issues that confront REBs continues to grow.

There is much REBs could do to overcome the resistance of humanists to the ethical review of their research. REBs must engage in a program of basic information sharing and education with all disciplinary traditions, and among researchers employing the breadth of research methodologies. Scholarly associations too must take an active role in the educational process and assist in overcoming resistance to research reviews among humanists. Associations have the ability to represent the interests of scholars and the principles embedded in the TCPS to disciplinary colleagues. Multiple outreach strategies are essential to reduce resistance in many disciplines. These and other recommendations were made to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. A follow-up study, focusing on the experience of REBs, was initiated in the autumn of 2002.

Although these initial findings are based on a small group of responders in Canada, this issue is of global importance. With the increasing demand for compliance, driven primarily by public scrutiny of biomedical research, humanists, and social science scholars will be affected and will be required to abide by ever-more stringent regulations. Recent consultations on behavioural research (National Bioethics Advisory Commission, 2001; Sieber, 2001) and the response from the American Association of University Professors (2000), I would argue, demonstrate that the issues identified in this Canadian study are common to those in American universities. As humanists adopt and adapt research methodologies that are common in the social sciences and as their research involves human subjects—e.g., interviews with living authors and dramatists, ethnographic histories of
holocaust survivors and immigration since the 1960s, and the use of new technologies for conducting humanist research—garner the attention of institutional review boards and federal oversight agencies, the encounters with human ethics review processes will lead to conflict and resistance. It is important to understand the scholarly culture of the humanists and their perceptions that IRB demands might be alien and an infringement of academic freedom.

Hence the responsibility of IRBs to engage the entire academic community has become critical. Without such engagement, advances already made will be in jeopardy as these influential, articulate, and numerous faculty confront and challenge not only the codes of research ethics but efforts to implement new compliance and accountability systems.

References


Case Study

A Creative Partnership to Improve Human Subjects Protection

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and Carol H. Berdar The Research Foundation of SUNY

Abstract

The Research Foundation of SUNY (RF) convened a Human Subjects Forum to provide a tool for organized communication among the persons responsible for human subject research protection at the diverse 30 SUNY campuses. Several statewide activities are now in place for the protection of human subjects in research including a unique new partnership between SUNY/RF and the federal Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP). This paper details the background, implementation, future, and impact on each of the members of this unique partnership.

Introduction

SUNY and The Research Foundation

This complex institutional structure is composed of two distinct entities—the State University of New York (SUNY) and The Research Foundation of the State University of New York (RF). SUNY is a highly diverse educational system that includes 64 campuses, with 30 conducting sponsored research through RF. All types of research are conducted at SUNY with a strong emphasis on both biomedical and social/behavioral sciences. Certain campuses within the system specialize; for example, the University at Buffalo has a fairly equal distribution of biomedical and behavioral research projects/humans protocols whereas Upstate and Downstate Medical Centers focus on biomedical research, and the university colleges concentrate on social/behavioral science research.

The Research Foundation of SUNY (RF) is a private, nonprofit educational corporation that administers externally funded contracts and grants for and on behalf of SUNY. Since 1951, it facilitates research, education, and public service at research campuses. RF carries out its responsibilities through an agreement originally implemented in 1977. The RF provides independence and administrative flexibility to meet the special demands of sponsored research in a manner that facilitates the scientific and technical aspects of academic research.

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To put the SUNY system in perspective, during FY 2002 approximately $565 million was awarded in federal and non-federal sponsored research, and 5000 active human research protocols were approved through 30 Institutional Review Boards (IRB).

History of the Partnership
The Human Subjects Forum (the Forum), established in July 2000, responded to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) policy notice requiring education for the protection of human research subjects for all investigators submitting NIH applications for grants or proposals for contracts for research involving human participants. Prior to establishment of the Forum, there was no organized method for communication among the diverse people (e.g., compliance officers, IRB administrators) responsible for human research protections at the SUNY campuses. The Forum provides structure and communication linkage.

Structure. The purpose of the Forum is to provide for collaborative discussion, dialogue, and pragmatic decision-making to ensure protections for human research participants and compliance with federal and state requirements. The Forum’s slogan is “Doing the Right Thing for the SUNY System.” It convenes primarily via facilitated conference calls (agendas are followed, issues/action items identified, and decisions made). Currently, there are 38 members, 35 represent the SUNY campuses and 3 represent the RF central office. Membership includes IRB chairs (7) and administrators, general faculty, principal investigators, vice provosts for research, associate/assistant vice presidents for research, directors of research compliance, and compliance officers/administrators. Approximately twice a year, SUNY campuses host the Forum for roundtable meetings where members benefit from sharing experiences with colleagues.

SUNY Proactive Response. The RF took a proactive position on behalf of the SUNY campuses and arranged for the Office for Protection from Research Risks (OPRR) Director of Education, Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, to conduct three educational workshops during the spring of 2000, prior to the announcement of the NIH policy notice issued in June and prior to establishment of the Forum. The workshops’ formats were well-received by faculty and a second round was held in the spring of 2001.

Initial Forum Activities. During the period of July-October 2000, the Forum took immediate action to respond to the NIH policy by implementing short-term education programs at the SUNY campuses. Given the complex SUNY structure and the diverse sponsored research and human research protocols at the university centers and colleges, the Forum opted to use the NIH Tutorial and comprehensive lecture formats. Immediately following implementation of the short-term education program, the Forum began discussion on a long-term education program focusing on education as a continuing process.

At an early 2001 Forum meeting, members began the discussion and decision-making for the best web-based education program for the SUNY community. Several existing products were reviewed and the Forum decided to add the University of Miami’s Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) to the education program by early 2002. Working closely with CITI, Forum members opting to use their program tailored the standard web pages to best fit the needs of each participating campus and type of research performed. CITI is an enhancement and an option to the educational programs. Some of the colleges with minimal research activity find it more effective for their faculty and students to participate in a lecture versus the online learning method.

OHRP Ambassador Visit. In October 2001, Dr. Gregory Koski, Director OHRP, made an ambassador visit to SUNY, speaking at the SUNY President’s Meeting and addressing the IRB chairs. The essence of Dr. Koski’s message was that “the bottom line is to do it right together, the emphasis is on together—it’s required by law and it’s the right thing to do.” He stressed that universities needed to get out of a compliance/oversight mindset and move toward focusing on the performance of the programs and the prevention of harms. He strongly emphasized that the IRB cannot do it alone—their job is to focus and assure the protection of human research subjects—the institutions need
to adopt a program-based approach to assure protection and compliance with the array of overarching federal requirements. Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, also engaged in a Town Hall Meeting with the IRB chairs. This was an opportunity for the audience to interact and the exchange was a stimulating dialogue. Common topics included IRB flexibilities, ethical principles vs. compliance, enhancement to the required education program, conflict of interest, audit, and oversight. The take-away points for a more effective IRB program/process were to:

1. Identify the unnecessary, institutional, and bureaucratic burdens IRB’s self-imposed and apply the flexibility provided in the current regulations without mitigating the quality of their human research protections.

2. Remove unnecessary duplication in the paperwork IRB’s require/maintain.

3. Improve communications (verbal, written) with principal investigators, clearly informing them what they have to do and why they have to do it.

With implementations under development, in spring 2002 the Forum began serious discussions on how to audit/evaluate the entire human subject protection program. Self-audit was a viable option to consider based on the expertise among the Forum members. The objective was to develop a mechanism for each institution to assess its own program and to make the necessary improvements. Several options to develop a self-audit program were explored but none were acceptable to a majority of Forum members.

**Implementing a Partnership SUNY/RF and OHRP**

In May 2002 the Forum received an invitation from OHRP to participate in a partnership to develop and implement a quality assessment/quality improvement program (QA/QI) for human research protection at SUNY. The vision was that a team of volunteers from the Forum with knowledge of the regulations would be trained by OHRP and, upon the invitation of SUNY institutions, conduct QA/QI assessments. The training would involve a one-day session with the QA/QI team members (and other interested members of the Forum), followed by consultation at two institutions—SUNY Albany (primarily social/behavioral research) and SUNY Stony Brook (primarily biomedical research).

The one-day training with two OHRP staff was held at RF central office in June 2002. The training included a review of the appropriate characteristics and qualifications of QA/QI team members, an overview of IRB policies and procedures each institution should have in place, an introduction to the newly developed draft OHRP Quality Assurance Self-Assessment Tool and a possible site visit schedule for consultation. The outcomes of this training were two recommendations; first, voluntary consultation should be conducted in a collegial and non-threatening way, with an informal but professional approach and second, barring any potentially dangerous situations, all information gathered should be confidential since this is an assessment, not an audit.

Consultations took place shortly after the training at SUNY Albany and SUNY Stony Brook. Prior to these visits, team members received each institution’s policies and procedures manual, copies of IRB minutes, institutional organizational charts, and materials needed to understand the nature of the human subjects protection program of the institutions. Both consultation sessions included meetings with the human subject protections’ staff to discuss office operations/procedures and to review the physical facilities such as database and office support. The QA/QI team consisted of three OHRP staff members and three or four Forum members; they reviewed protocol files, compared them to the minutes, and checked for compliance issues. The team met with institutional officials to determine the culture of the institution with respect to concern for human research subjects and federal compliance. They also met with the IRB chair, and separately, with members of the IRB committee to assess their commitment and understanding of the issues and regulations. Finally the team met with faculty members who perform human subject research and interact with the IRB, to discuss their opinions on how
well the institution addresses human subjects protection. Each consultation visit ended with an exit interview with the appropriate institutional officials and other interested parties to discuss the team’s findings.

Both voluntary institutions had well-grounded programs and committed people so suggestions for improvement focused on how the program staff could simplify their work in the long run. Ideas included (a) more faculty education to improve protocols, (b) more expansive use of electronic tools, and (c) greater use of the flexibility built into the federal regulations.

**Future Plans**

Participating members of the QA/QI team from the Forum remain enthusiastic about the team approach and acquired ideas and resources to implement improvements at their own institutions. SUNY now has the foundation to develop a program that fulfills the initial Forum idea expressed in early 2001, a program that allows for a non-threatening, continuous review and improvement of an institutional human subject protection program.

The Forum has several additional activities planned for this academic year.

1. Hosting an OHRP videoconference on social/behavioral aspects of human subject protections to be broadcast on SUNY campuses in October 2002.

2. Formalizing the QA/QI team, developing and implementing the QA portion of the program in partnership with OHRP.

3. Arranging for additional volunteer QA/QI consultation visits to other SUNY campuses.

4. Implementing local changes to human research protection policies and procedures from lessons learned during the campus QA/QI consultations.

**A Win-Win Experience**

The QA/QI partnership enabled each of the partners to achieve their mission. The SUNY/RF Forum members found the training and consultations to be a cost-effective mechanism to improve the quality of human subject protections on diverse SUNY campuses because the team members have a unique understanding of the resources, federal and state regulations, and the SUNY-wide issues that Forum members share despite differences in structure, staffing, research emphasis, and size. The visits enable the partners to make suggestions and recommendations for improvements based upon existing resources. Forum members have an opportunity for their own professional development. The QA team will generally be more welcome at SUNY campuses because the Forum volunteers are there to assist their peers to improve the process.

Additionally the Forum, especially the QA/QI Partnership, is an effective process to assist the SUNY campuses to gain increased positive recognition from their campus administrators and from SUNY senior staff as to the importance of promoting a culture that focuses on protecting research subjects on each campus. The SUNY system as a whole benefits because the Forum’s activities assist the SUNY chancellor to achieve his goals for the system by having SUNY campuses work together as a system and recognizing SUNY for being the first educational institution in the country to partner with OHRP to establish a QA/QI program for human subject protections.

The OHRP was able to pilot a train-the-trainer program and a team approach to QA/QI consultation in fulfillment of their new, proactive focus on performance and prevention of harms.

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Policy Notice OD-00-039, 5 June 2000.
Evolution or Revolution? Examining Change in Research Administration

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Abstract
Researchers and sponsors expect and demand different things from the research administration office—some expect traditional services and some require a more professional partnership. Changes over the last decade including technology, responsibility and accountability, and research itself profoundly influence the work of the research administrator. Yet systems, processes, and policies of the research office, more often than not, still reflect the menu of services that has traditionally been provided. Menus do not work anymore and one size no longer fits all. Research administration must realign work, resource allocation and fundamental assumptions in order to succeed in a world that is changing daily.

Introduction
Research administration is changing on many levels, most markedly in the types of work we do to meet our responsibilities. While we are still involved with activities that promote and nurture research activities, the functions that we perform are evolving in response to technological change, client expectations, and institutional needs. We must continually review our use of limited resources to best support the research missions of our institutions. This article examines some of the changes we face and the adaptations we must consider.

What is Driving the Change?
Several major changes over the last decade are profoundly influencing our work lives. These catalysts include the following:

1. Technology continues to change the way we work and the tools we use—from the computers on our desks to the types of software we use, to the electronic interfaces with colleagues, researchers, and sponsors.

2. Responsibility and accountability continue to intensify. We are increasingly responsible far beyond our early,
traditional roles of approving proposals and monitoring expenditures. Compliance, both financial and non-financial, is the growth industry in research administration, with responsibility for compliance being integrated into the jobs of central and departmental administrators. We are also being invited to the discussion table more frequently to participate in policy development in the institutional, federal, and international arenas.

3. Research itself is changing as the boundary between disciplines blur. The collaborative nature of contemporary research increases our administrative burden as more individuals, departments, institutions, and sponsors are involved in one project, thereby multiplying the complexity and risk for our institutions.

Our clients, including researchers and sponsors, expect and demand different things from us. In some situations we are partners, meaning that we are part of the research team with the ability to provide administrative guidance that identifies or prevents potential problems. Other clients expect us to provide services as we historically have, meaning that we handle data (e.g., budgets, reports, analyses) and sign forms. The way we deliver services and products differs depending on the needs and expectations of our clients. An example is the way documents are handled—completely paper based, completely electronic, or some combination. Few clients expect or need the same things, requiring not only flexibility on our part, but actual staff, budget, and other resources to meet their real but disparate needs.

Along with differing expectations and demands for services, our clients and our bosses also have an expectation for timeliness, and frequently, for immediacy. The ever-changing business model is increasingly expected by managers to light our way to efficiency, competitiveness, and growth. Yet, stalwart academics and other non-profits are openly critical when research institutions adapt overt business practices. The search for management models that are at once efficient and responsive while remaining tolerable to the academic community is a continuing quest.

Societal expectations regarding research (and, by implication, its administration) are also changing, leading to more public scrutiny, growing demand for public accountability, and more threat of litigation when things go wrong. This trend is not particularly new, but it is being applied in new ways as societal needs and interests change. Expectations are now for research to provide results that have a more immediate impact or, short of that, an immediately understood application, to the problems society is addressing. Research on health, defense, education, as well as research and development for industry is expected to show a result that is obvious in its utility, both to the sponsor and increasingly, to the public.

The demand to change and its multiple drivers are certainly here. In fact, research administration is changing. The demographics of the profession have changed from predominantly male, to a female majority, with Baby Boomers retiring and GenX’ers becoming our leaders with responsibility to nurture the next generation of researchers and research administrators. Our employers have greater expectations of our administrative skill, and we must prove that we add value to the institution’s research program. This is a real challenge as all these different, sometimes competing, expectations come together in the workplace.

The consequence of this fluctuating work places a greater demand than ever before on institutional resources, including physical space for the growing research administration function, professional development needs, and financial demands of changing technology as well as the cost of providing mandated programs and oversight. And as change continues and accelerates, the cost of managing change increases. Consider that even if an institution’s award rate is flat, the institution is still subject to burgeoning administrative requirements and increasingly complex projects, both of which require new or redirected resources. How many institutions plan for that? Change is not going away, it is not going to slow down, and we can not wait it out, no matter how much we would like to do just that.
Evolution or Revolution?

Research administration is at an interesting stage in its evolution. Only 50 years old as a profession, research administrators find themselves still seeking a clear definition of their work while the work modes and responsibilities constantly change. In general, the field still has not changed from the old services model where we provide a static set or menu of services to everyone. We have adapted somewhat to the changing workplace by adding to the services menu when mandates are handed down or new tools become available, but we still resist major change. Research itself is becoming increasingly problem-centered, as opposed to the more traditional discipline focus. Projects require teams of researchers, working to solve complex and multi-faceted problems. The teams are unique to the needs of the sponsor as expressed in the research undertaken. Therefore, the services for those teams are likely to be unique, too. Yet our systems, processes and policies, more often than not, still reflect the traditional menu of services we provided when the majority of our work was for the single-investigator project. Menus do not work anymore and one size no longer fits all.

Ervin Laszlo discusses a concept he calls macroshift (2001). In effect, he suggests that systems reach a point of instability in the face of change and must either break through to a new mode or break down completely. Consider how his four phases of the macroshift process might apply to research administration.

1. The Trigger Phase—An innovation, such as computer technology, occurs.

2. The Transformation Phase—The innovation impacts some aspect of a system. In this case, the ability to process and communicate large amounts of information quickly and efficiently changes the amount and quality of work that research administrators can do.

3. The Critical or Chaos Phase—The changes in productivity challenge the traditional organization of research offices, calling into question the usual staffing and service model. In addition, researchers and agencies change their expectations, desiring quicker and more accurate responses, information, etc.

4. The Breakdown Phase—Research offices that do not adapt find their human resources misallocated and their interactions with researchers and other clients reduced to constant firefighting. Or,

The Breakthrough Phase—The research office literally evolves by reallocating resources, reorganizing staff, and changing services to better serve the needs of clients.

Research administration is approaching Stage 4 of Laszlo’s macroshift and must realign work, resource allocation, and fundamental assumptions in order to succeed in a world that is changing daily. What can the current, technology-driven marketplace tell us about how we can adapt to this constant change? It can tell us about the expectations of our clients and our employees and how we must manage our activities so that they will mesh with the new expectations.

Consideration of the following four concepts may enlighten the research administration workplace as it seeks to break through:

1. Speed—New technology makes possible fantastic increases in the way that we record, store, access, and manage information. Databases, electronic communications, and financial management systems allow researchers and research administrators to do an amazing number of things to increase efficiency and accuracy in administrative tasks, from routing and submitting proposals, to web-based training, to financial reporting that can be endlessly customized. More and more, our researchers and our sponsors are facile with technology and their expectations are that we can move as fast as machines and software allow.

2. Specialization—Better quality tools allow for greater understanding and facility with tasks, both in the research field and in research management. We
have found that research administrators, long the one-stop generalists of administration, must be increasingly specialized in Institutional Review Boards (IRB), technology transfer, legal implications, contracting, biohazards, and many other subspecialties. As more and more is known about smaller subsets, sponsors and researchers are more particular in what they require from us, and more and more people with specialized knowledge must be involved.

3. Investing in Employees—Just as in other knowledge-based industries, research administration is about what our professionals know and apply—their intellectual capital. In response to specialization and the need to use ever-evolving technologies, as well as in response to the sponsors’ needs and requirements, research administrators must constantly develop their skills and abilities by attending professional meetings, classes, and specialized seminars, and participating in on-the-job training and mentoring.

4. Control of Work and Tools—Research administration is a field that requires both education and talent. Our colleagues are hired from a variety of fields, sharing characteristics of the helper personality. Each person brings a particular set of experiences that might include technical skill, leadership qualities, analytical ability, communication talent, or something else deemed necessary for the successful conduct of a particular job in a particular setting. After gaining sufficient technical and procedural knowledge, professional research administrators are encouraged to make use of the tools at hand to create their own methods of doing their work.

**Conclusion**

These four concepts form the basis of a systemic breakthrough in the profession of research administration. By considering how to achieve speed yet retain accuracy, find efficiency in specialization, invest in our employees’ intellectual capital, and enable employees to control their work processes and tools, research administration can evolve. Evolutionary theory implies that surviving species are those that are most successful in their position in the environment. These species are more efficient, competitive and suited for the role they play in the overall system in which they live. While evolutionary theory refers to adaptation in species almost as if it were a conscious choice, it is not. The species or individual organisms that develop environmental responses that make them more effective than others are the ones that survive.

In research administration these adaptations are conscious choices. Those who resist change will be those left behind as less effective and viable to face the inevitability of extinction. As a species, research administration is a young organism. How we manage our own evolution will determine if we are to be remembered as fossils or vital and healthy components of our organizations.

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Shop Talk

Recommendations for Writing Successful Proposals from the Reviewer’s Perspective

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Abstract

Creating successful proposals involves two components to accomplish the author’s goal: support for an important project and communication of the goal to the reviewers. Success often hinges on avoiding common mistakes that distract the reviewers from the best features of the proposal. This article reflects the experiences and advice of three individuals who have been successful in obtaining grant funding and who have also acted as reviewers for funding agencies. Examples of lessons learned are presented in hopes that research administrators will find the information beneficial.

Making a Match

All funding sources require an application or proposal with similar requirements. Good project ideas have to be well-expressed and must fit into the sponsor’s high priority areas for funding. Proposal writing fits into the metaphor of the Diving Contest. First, just like great divers who must be ready to perform according to the rules, well-practiced and informed in their field, and with a strong desire to win, so too must proposal writers’ principal investigator (PI) be well-prepared. It is essential to know which project ideas get the best marks, that is part of knowing the rules and recognizing what the reviewers’ value. Which of the state-of-the art project ideas is the one that will generate the most enthusiasm? What are the reviewers looking for? Who are the reviewers? And where, strategically, should the most important material be placed? Should it be up-front or should it appear later? The strategic submission of a proposal to a funding agency and the strategic placement of essential information within a proposal are essential parts of creating a competitive proposal.

Not all agencies require the same types of applications. For example, proposals to some Canadian agencies are only six pages long. That is the good news. The bad news is that the six pages must describe the entire project, including methods, significance, references, and what the investigators have done in the past. Canadian proposals must be succinct to get the point across. The shorter Canadian applications have the advantage of increasing the feasibility of getting good reviewers because even busy

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people can read six pages. Reviewers find that the shorter proposals also result in better reviewing because the information in the proposal is more focused and authors do not have space to digress. But shorter proposals also place a lot of trust in the reviewers to determine whether the PI has the skills to be able to do the research since many of the details normally included in a proposal are simply not there. Although proposals to U.S. funding agencies are typically longer than six pages, the principle of writing a focused, well-organized and succinct proposal that follows the agency guidelines is a sound one.

The Abstract—Idea In a Nutshell
A proposal’s central idea must connect with the agency and the reviewers. The proposal must represent a novel idea, a new approach, method or tool, or must address a critical issue that has not been well-studied in the past. There must also be a compelling reason to fund it. The importance of the project must be captured throughout the proposal but is especially critical in the abstract. Reviewers who are assigned as first, second, or third reviewers will read the entire proposal but other reviewers may read only the abstract. Therefore, the abstract needs to be carefully crafted. The abstract as well as the body of the proposal must hook the reader with an interesting and well-articulated idea and a feasible plan of study so that all the reviewers on the panel will be able to understand the merits of the proposal.

Project Design—A Slippery Slope
Reviewers often single out the quality of the project design as the main reason a proposal makes or misses the funding cut. Many proposal writers focus on the literature review and seem to attend less to the quality of the project design. The design must fit the project goals and be methodologically sound. Regardless of the type of proposal, the methods, measurements, procedures for evaluating the project’s goals, hypotheses or research questions, and the time line for completing the project must be complete and carefully described. The reviewers, many of whom are experts in their areas, spend much of their time examining the project’s design. Reviewers also examine the expertise of the investigators for executing the methods and the promise of the approach for revealing new information.

For U.S. agencies in general, but particularly for Canadian funding agencies, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the investigator’s research record. Past publications count a great deal, so it is essential to include details on findings from past research projects that are relevant to the project. This information shows that the investigator has the capability to conduct the proposed research and assures the reviewer that findings will be translated into peer-reviewed publications. This is, of course, a disadvantage for new investigators or those switching to a new field but often special consideration or special grant competitions are available to new investigators.

Because the research design is so important, proposal writers need to get all the help they can in writing this section. For this reason, we suggest that proposal writers have their protocols reviewed by appropriate individuals or local committees before submission. This way, proposals may get helpful feedback for strengthening the methodology, avoiding a critical oversight that makes a project impossible to execute. Pre-submission reviews need to be timely and constructive and applicants should submit their proposal sufficiently before the deadline for the pre-proposal review.

Proposal Strategies to Avoid Annoying the Reviewer
Reviewers are busy people and are often faced with a large number of proposals to review in a short period of time. The review duties come on top of the other work reviewers have as part of their daily jobs. Therefore, efforts directed at making the review process easier are worthwhile. Several problem areas follow.

Non-professional appearance. One of us (TM) reviewed a proposal with a handwritten cover sheet and budget pages. This proposal did not look professional. Appearances are influenced by different font styles and sizes but in the end the reviewers must be able to easily read and understand the text. Many reviewers are at the age where they have to wear glasses to read; tiny letters serve to remind reviewers of their age. Making the proposal text easy to read is critical.
Disorganized proposals. Reviewers are not sympathetic toward proposals that do not follow the agency’s format. Reviewers are looking for certain key sections or proposal elements, either because they are going to have to write a review that critiques those sections, or because they are key pieces of the proposal. For these reasons, headings and subheadings are very important. Page numbers and accurate references to pages in the Table of Contents, and references to figures and tables within the text are important. Finally, if you say “the information is in the Appendix,” it actually should be there. Sometimes proposal writers get so rushed at the end of the proposal process that they can forget to change the text. Reviewers expect accurate information.

Incomplete proposals. It is hard for proposal writers to attend to every detail but reviewers do expect proposals to be complete. If the agency asks for a dissemination plan, one must be described beyond “I’ll publish an article.” Reviewers tend to be compulsive and they look for things such as whether all the references are included, especially if they read a section with an interesting citation. They note incomplete text, especially when the text notes “Bill, put something important in there.” Reviewers examine the proposal in detail to determine that all information required is there.

Sparse justification. The entire proposal must be reasonable and logical. Reviewers are not impressed when: (a) important details are omitted or only vaguely specified, (b) the PI devotes little time to the project, (c) the budget is not realistic because it reflects plans to completely equip a lab for the project, or (d) funds are not well-justified. Missing material, such as letters of support from consultants, collaborators, or other cooperating agencies is also noted by reviewers because it substantiates the project’s feasibility.

Untested measures. A classic non-starter for reviewers is a lengthy list of measures to be developed or identified after the project is funded. Developing a valid and reliable instrument or implementing a complicated technique is difficult and time-consuming. Projects relying on complex techniques or critical measures are jeopardized when techniques and measures are unknown and the PI lacks expertise in their use. Reviewers are not trusting about uncertainties in these areas.

No alternative approach as backup. Reviewers usually are looking for leading-edge approaches but they may also worry that the leading-edge approach will not work as proposed. If the proposal does not work out as planned, then what? Reviewers can be reassured when investigators combine their approach with a more standard approach so there is a fall-back position.

Reviewers as Human Beings

In general, reviewers are overworked, Type A but caring individuals, although they can also be malicious, vindictive, and self-serving. Thinking about the reviewers as individuals may help the process of successful proposal writing. Find out, if possible, which panel, study section, or subcommittee is likely to review the proposal and who the members are. Ideally, none of the members will be the intellectual or personal enemy of the investigators.

The composition of the review committee may influence how the proposal is prepared. For example, if mathematicians will be included on the review panel, the proposal should be written from their perspective. The word math is an abbreviation and it irritates mathematicians, so the word mathematics should be used throughout. The reviewers also are likely to be prominent in their fields and chosen for a review panel because their expertise is relevant to the proposals under review. Their work should be cited in the proposal where appropriate because they will look for citations to their work. Finally there may be differences of opinion between experts about theory, methods, and interpretations of findings. Knowing this, proposals should be written to explicitly consider these differences and to use evidence to justify the proposed approach. The reviewers may not change their opinions but at least they can not fault the proposal for ignoring opposing views.
Conclusion

Research administrators play an important role in the development of successful proposal writers. Few people are born with excellent proposal writing skills, but all people can learn to write successful proposals. Research administrators can be helpful in communicating information about the proposal review process, such as the information in this article, to proposal writers. Research administrators can identify proposal elements that are needed to support the proposed project. For example, ideas about budget elements (costs to include and exclude), reasonable bases for justification of budget elements, inclusion of a time line for the proposed work, and seemingly naïve but helpful questions such as, “Does this work differ from that of others in the field?” “How does this project address the agency’s funding priorities?” “What will we really learn if this project is successful?” Finally, research administrators can encourage proposal writers to resubmit an unsuccessful proposal using information contained in the review. Reviewers spend a lot of time on and give a lot of thought to their reviews. The intention of the reviewer is to provide a critique of the proposal and to also offer suggestions for improvements. Research administrators should encourage proposal writers to share their reviews and to continue working together to develop the proposal in light of the reviews. Many ultimately successful proposals were initially rejected by agencies. But when re-written with consideration of the reviewers’ comments, these proposals can result in grants. Furthermore, comments from reviewers even on proposals that are funded can be critical for future funding. Projects submitted for renewal are sometimes re-reviewed by the same people who reviewed the initial application. These reviewers remember what was suggested to improve the project during the initial review and if these suggestions are not followed, the renewal application could be jeopardized. Therefore, it is important for research administrators to help proposal writers to understand the importance and helpfulness of the reviewers’ comments.
Shop Talk

The Professional Development Planner

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Abstract

Program planners combined feedback from previous orientation sessions and relevant literature to determine a new framework to support faculty career development. The Professional Development Planner is based on the traditional three-part role of the faculty (teaching, research, and service). The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the rationale for such a product—an inside look at the process leading to the selection of specific materials and the explanation of how the tool led to immediate changes in the training initiatives of both the research office and the faculty development office.

Introduction

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) has nearly 1,600 full-time and 800 part-time faculty members. Each year, nearly 200 individuals, new to academe or new to the specific institution, arrive shortly before the fall semester begins. An annual fall orientation session prepares these individuals for their new roles in teaching, research, and service; an unknown environment; and the possibility of conflicting sets of performance expectations they may encounter.

Each year, a planning committee composed of professional staff, faculty, and administrators meet throughout the year to develop the orientation day’s activities, arrange for speakers, and locate valuable resources. On the day of orientation, invited speakers offer a wide range of plenary and concurrent sessions covering topics from Preparing a Syllabus to University Grant Funding. Feedback from the last few years indicated that attendees appreciated the information, but frequently felt overwhelmed. Attendance rates began to dip below target levels. School deans and department chairs occasionally scheduled local orientation sessions coinciding with the campus-wide event, further diminishing attendance.

In addition to looking for ways to improve the experience for attendees, planning committee members also sought ways to encourage broader participation and increased levels of personal commitment that would...
extend beyond the single event. Thus, in September 2001, committee members reviewed basic literature available on the topic and brainstormed ideas for fall 2002 and beyond.

**Preliminary Methods**

Led by the nationally-recognized faculty development expert, Dr. Nancy Chism, planning committee members debated the merits of a formal, pre-printed, personal plan. As explained by Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders (2000, p. 116), “an annual plan keeps new hires moving toward their goals …, keeps both the faculty member and the department chair apprised of the new member’s progress …, and is a way to overcome the ambiguity of what new faculty should do to accomplish personal, professional, and departmental goals in the first year and beyond.”

Gmelch and Miskin (1993, p. 70) reinforce this approach. “Individual faculty goals must also meet the criteria of measurability, clarity, challenge, attainability, and feedback-orientation. … What better way to encourage faculty activity than to focus on their faculty-initiated individual goals?”

At this point, the planning committee constructed a basic grid or matrix using the following headings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Responsibility</th>
<th>Skill, Knowledge Involved</th>
<th>Feelings of Competence (low, medium, high)</th>
<th>Possible IUPUI Support Mechanisms</th>
<th>Development Plan in this Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

However, the final version had only four headings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Skills and Knowledge</th>
<th>Possible IUPUI Support Mechanisms</th>
<th>Priority to Me (low, medium, high)</th>
<th>Action Plan/Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In addition, committee members sought the input of academic deans, departmental chairs, faculty leaders, administrators, and recent hires for appropriate categories to include in the grid. Following extensive review, the major categories under which choices would be listed were chosen as (a) teaching (b) research (c) service (d) library performance, and (e) general professional development.

Next, the planning committee consulted with specific units on campus having primary responsibility for supporting development in the above areas in order to determine what entries should be listed under each major category. The final Professional Development Planner and Resource Guide was jointly compiled and published by the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Research and Graduate Education, The Center for Service and Learning, the Indiana University School of Medicine, and the University Library.

**Methods for Grid’s Research Section**

For purposes of this discussion, the focus is only on the creation and dissemination of the research-related portion of the Professional Development Planner since it is assumed to be the most relevant section for the majority of research administrators. A two-member subcommittee representing the Indiana University Associate Vice President for Research prepared the Research Matrix based on a working draft of the Indiana University document, the *Roles and Responsibilities Grid*. It plots the roles and responsibilities of 21 different individuals or offices at the institution related to research administration. These range from the principal investigator to the dean, from purchasing to the vice president for administration, from the internal auditor to the department chair and beyond. The *grid* is currently being edited and prepared for inclusion in the Indiana University Research Gateway at http://www.research.indiana.edu but see Table 1 as a sample.

Even though the final printed planner numbered nearly 20 pages, it contained only five discrete major entries in the category of research. These were listed in the sequence in which they generally occur:

1. Establishing a Program and Securing Funding
2. Complying with Responsible Conduct in Research/Standard Operating Procedures
3. Managing Awards
4. Managing Projects
5. Reports
6. Other
Distribution and Initial Use of the Materials

Following an introductory presentation by Nancy Chism, Associate Vice Chancellor for Professional Development, representatives from each of the units involved in developing the planner participated in a panel discussion at the annual New Faculty Orientation event in August 2002. They explained how to use the planner, suggested when and where to enroll in training courses for access to specific skill-building expertise, and encouraged personal consultation sessions. Faculty participants were encouraged to begin completing the Professional Development Planner during the course of the day, and resource personnel from the appropriate offices were available to offer guidance, make appointments, and establish personal contacts.

One particular area that generated significant discussion was access to the online Human Subjects Training Module and the need to be certified via the required examination prior to the submission of any external grant proposals. This module may be accessed at http://www.indiana.edu/~rschinfo/humans.html. Other areas that attendees immediately identified as of great importance to their development were assistance in using electronic tools to identify potential funding sources and in writing grant proposals. Preliminary oral reports by attendees at the workshops offered in October 2002 by the Office for Professional Development on Grant Searching for Faculty and Proposal Writing for Faculty indicate that attendees had identified these workshops through the information resources available in the Professional Development Planner.

In addition to online course modules and workshops, faculty who have expressed a need for assistance in award management skills have access to individualized instruction by staff from the Office of Contract and Grant Administration. Typical discussions have included the topics of cost sharing, hiring research staff, and effort reporting requirements.

Departmental chairs are also being instructed on the use of the planner as a coaching tool for

<p>| Table 1 |
| Research Section of the Professional Development Planner |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Skills and Knowledge</th>
<th>Possible IUPUI Support Mechanisms</th>
<th>Priority for Me</th>
<th>Action Plan/Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Establishing a program and securing funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a research focus</td>
<td>Contact department/division chair</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Meet with chair 10/8/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify collaborators</td>
<td>Use Community of Science Faculty Expertise Database</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Submit first proposal to NIH by 2/1/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit a proposal</td>
<td><a href="http://www.iupui.edu/~resgrad/spon/conflict.htm">www.iupui.edu/~resgrad/spon/conflict.htm</a></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Submit online form to school dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complying with responsible conduct in research/standard operating procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document conflict of interest/commitment</td>
<td><a href="http://www.iupui.edu/~resgrad/spon/guide.htm#proute">www.iupui.edu/~resgrad/spon/guide.htm#proute</a></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Enroll in Finance Workshop 4/18/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Managing awards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand expenditures</td>
<td>fdrs.fms.indiana.edu/cgi-bin/pdw/Welcome.pl</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Enroll in Finance Workshop 4/18/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Managing projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate additional lab space</td>
<td>Contact department/division chairs</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Discuss with chair before final draft of proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand requirements and audits</td>
<td><a href="http://www.indiana.edu/~iuaudit">www.indiana.edu/~iuaudit</a></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only limited examples are included
their faculty through the Administrative and Organizational Development unit of the Office for Professional Development. Since chairs meet monthly to discuss topics of mutual concern, identifying resources to support faculty needs has been a valuable outgrowth of their conversations. These newly identified resources are frequently being added to the online version of the planner and faculty are being encouraged to use the online version in addition to their original print version.

Other data is being analyzed to determine whether the planner and the new focus of the fall orientation session were on target. Preliminary analysis of the participants’ evaluation questionnaires and data gathered from ad hoc comments made during the day and immediately following the event are generally positive. Additional analysis will be conducted by members of the planning committee during the fall 2002 semester. A questionnaire is under development for completion through direct contact with individuals who attended the initial orientation session. Questions as to usability and value of the planner and the process will be further explored.

Conclusions

One of the most significant findings that arose from developing the planner was realizing that it was frequently difficult or impossible to fill in the information section of the Grid related to Possible IUPUI Support Mechanisms. Frequently, websites had to be located or created, in-house courses developed, and resource people identified who could provide the necessary support to faculty in their personal quests for professional development. It also became apparent that the department chair and/or a faculty mentor are essential to providing extensive, ongoing support and for the success of the faculty member for whom they have responsibility. Thus, in addition to the development of courses and resources for new faculty, efforts are underway to develop additional resources for department chairs and mentors through the Office for Professional Development. For example, newly appointed and continuing department chairs meet monthly to talk about the challenges of heading a department and to share ideas about making the work of chairs more efficient and more rewarding. Teaching mentors, identified through the university-wide Faculty Colloquium for Excellence in Teaching (FACET) organization, volunteer to work with new faculty on developing syllabi, classroom presentations, handling ethical issues, as well as personal coaching.

Also, it is apparent that the work is not done. The planner was designed to be a personally customizable tool (Chism et al., 2002) “for use in conversations with department chairs or mentors … preparing annual reviews or compiling a C[urriculum] V[itae], professional portfolio, promotion and tenure dossier, or awards nomination.” However, it is clear that the planner is not finished and probably never will be. It is a work in progress. Faculty who received the planner in its initial year will be queried for feedback on its usefulness, suggestions for changes, or the need for enhancements. The planning committee will be revising the material to keep abreast of institutional changes to be reflected in the online version and for next year’s new faculty orientation program. In addition, requests from other faculty to provide them with a customized Professional Development Planner are now being received as they learn of the value of this tool, and a version for established faculty is anticipated.

References


Research-related section, Professional Development Plan is available at http://www.iupui.edu/~resed/ceresearch-intro2.htm
Unlike other volumes that critically assess the linkages among researchers, universities, and industry, *Innovation U: New University Roles in a Knowledge Economy* champions the contributions that such linkages make to the fulfillment of an expanded mandate for universities to contribute to regional and national economic development. Through 12 case studies of exemplary institutions, the authors analyze conditions that enable universities and faculty to develop effective linkages and use these external partnerships to improve regional economic development. The institutions selected as case studies were Carnegie-Mellon, Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), North Carolina State University (NC State), Ohio State University, Pennsylvania State University, Purdue, Stanford, Texas A&M, University of California-San Diego, University of Utah, University of Wisconsin, and Virginia Tech. Georgia Tech was identified as the most advanced of the institutions in activities tracked by the authors. There is no one model of effective university-industry collaborations, but there are common features or environments that enable universities and empower faculty to develop strong and productive linkages with external partners.

The authors convincingly argue that universities have a mandate to go beyond the education of the next generation of scholars and educated citizens. This mandate is critical to the development and enhancement of a knowledge-based society and its economy since it is the university sector that provides societies and economies across the globe with highly qualified personnel who are key to innovation in science, government and industry. Thus, the authors set out two central objectives; first to describe what constitutes university engagement in terms of technology-based economic development and second to describe how the exemplary institutions do differently from their peers in terms of specific practices, policies, and programs.

Building upon their expertise in benchmarking, the authors grouped 10 domains of institutional behaviour into 3 broad groupings: (a) mechanisms, (b) institutional enablers, and (c) boundary-spanning structures and systems. These groupings assisted the authors to differentiate each institution from one another and the whole spectrum of universities that are actively engaged in partnerships with industry and economic development authorities.

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The content of the article, its interpretation, and any errors or omissions are the author's alone and do not represent the position of the HSSFC, the SSHRC, or his colleagues. Contact Dr. Owen, Director, Office of Research Services, Brock University, 500 Glenridge Avenue, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1 or by Email: mowen@spartan.ac.brocku.ca
Interpreting the Findings

Best practices for universities, state/federal governments, agencies, and foundations are developed from the analysis. An enabling environment is the most critical factor and includes: (a) clearly articulated mission and/or vision statements that underscore the importance of collaborations with regional government and industry partners; (b) consistent and visible commitments among institutional leaders to partnerships; (c) effective and efficient infrastructures, policies, and procedures that facilitate collaboration and partnerships; and (d) receptor capacity in the region.

The case studies underline the importance of institutional leadership and champions who consistently deliver to faculty and external communities and reinforce the importance of external partnerships and academic entrepreneurship. For example, the mission statements of NC State and Ohio State demonstrate the effectiveness of clearly articulated vision and goals. However, it is equally, if not more, important that these statements of vision and goals be implemented at the operational level.

Innovative universities have policy and procedure frameworks that are, for the most part, consistent with the articulated vision of partnerships. The core policy issues identified include conflict of interest, conflict of commitment, laboratory space, intellectual property management, and participation in spin-out companies. The reward structures—tenure and promotion, ability to participate in spin-outs, etc.—must be consistent with the employer’s articulated vision. In addition, infrastructures such as the sponsored research, university-industry liaison, and technology transfer offices must be faculty-friendly, accessible, knowledgeable, and efficient as well as innovative and entrepreneurial. The importance of highly skilled, knowledgeable, and innovative personnel in these administrative offices is often underestimated. These individuals are the key to much of the knowledge-mobilization processes that contribute to effective collaborations with local and regional industry.

While an institutional environment that supports innovation and knowledge mobilization is one key factor of success, an enabling external environment is equally important. The authors identify lessons that inform state government roles and policies. Governments may introduce research programs that require partnerships, enable universities to retain or attract researcher stars, and facilitate links to local receptor capacity that are free from pork-barreling. Moreover, drawing on the experience of the 12 universities, support for science parks with incubator or accelerator capacity, provides opportunities for entrepreneurial researchers to spin-out new companies and mature companies to expand their research base by locating near universities with quality educators and graduates.

Application

Tornatzky, Waugaman, and Gray have contributed much to our understanding of the factors that enabled these universities to become innovative and to contribute to regional and national economic development. Moreover, the advice that they provide is transferable. Medium-sized and small universities can draw upon the lessons outlined herein. However, the focus on technology-based innovation may be viewed as limiting. Innovative universities, critics might argue, are institutions whose focus is broader than university-industry collaborations because they seek ways to mobilize the knowledge of research faculty in all disciplines, including the social sciences and humanities. The rhetoric of partnership and collaboration needs enhancement to recognize the social and cultural capital of the research within our institutions as well as the ways in which knowledge is generated and transferred among disciplines. University research should improve the quality of life of our local, regional, and national communities and economies. This criticism in no way detracts from the contributions of Innovation U to our understanding of the key factors that provide an enabling environment for universities and their research faculty to become more centrally engaged in the economic and social development of their communities.