Cornell Research Administration

The goals and direction of Cornell research administration

Reorganization of the Office of Sponsored Programs

Faculty Senate
November 10, 2010
Research Administration

Vision and Mission

• Vision
  – Cornell’s research administration will achieve a level of effectiveness that is as superb as our faculty and the research results that they produce

• Mission
  – Support and facilitate the advancement of Cornell’s research while upholding institutional principles and adhering to external regulations
Cornell Research Scale and Scope

- $480M research expenditures (26% of Ithaca campus budget)
- 1,871 graduate students (GRAs only) and 3,940 personnel supported with sponsored funds (current)
- 1,906 new proposals last year
  - paper, dept. systems, Grants.gov, Fastlane; PI/RA mgmt of agency forms/rules, institution rates
  - manual routing, verification of compliance regulations
- 3,700 active awards; 608 active subcontracts
- 1,109 principal investigators with active awards (current)
- >225 department and college research administrators (RAs)
- 2,490 research protocols submitted for review
  - paper, web forms, eSirius
  - manual tracking, verification, reporting
Tactics

• Internal focus primarily to date
  • Enhance staff leadership and expertise
    – Leadership changes, reorganization, position and qualification redefinition, training, mentoring
  • Develop culture of service and quality; utilize risk-based decision making
    – Customer surveys, response standards, risk assessment, cost/benefit analyses
  • Obtain and act upon stakeholder input
    – Faculty/staff involvement in hiring, engage assoc. deans, faculty user groups, researcher participation in improvement projects
  • Measure and benchmark performance
    – Key performance indicators, peer comparisons
  • Conduct program Assessments
    – Animal care program review, communications study
  • Address internal compliance issues
Tactics, continued

• Moving to external focus
  • First step: Reorganize OSP to better serve internal customers (PIs) and external customers (sponsors)
  • Other steps pending – possible subjects of future reports
• Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)
  **JoAnne Williams – Director** (as of Dec. 2009)

• Realignment and Reorganization
  – Current State
  – Reasons for Change
    • Internal
    • External
  – View to the Future
  – Expected Outcomes
  – Metrics
  – Next Steps
• Customer dissatisfaction with services provided by Office of Sponsored Programs

. . . Why?

– Varying levels and quality of OSP support to Cornell PI’s and departments/units

– OSP Grant & Contract Officer (GCO) research administration skills and understanding of spectrum of sponsors are not “standardized” among GCOs

– PI’s and departments have incomplete understanding of scope of GCO role

perception is that OSP provides minimum added value to process

– Sponsors and PIs experience inconsistent terms and conditions in similar agreements

– Minimal feedback mechanisms between OSP and its customers - researchers and department administrators
Internal Reasons for Change

• Need to change perception of OSP from being a barrier to being a partner

• Need to provide a consistent high quality level of administrative sponsored program support

• Need to “standardize” OSP personnel core skills and knowledge and required continuing education

• Need to improve low morale and sense of contribution among GCOs

• Need to define, document, and disseminate sponsored program administrative processes and/or process improvements

• Need to help implement the Cornell Strategic Plan

    – Strategic Initiative # 5: Implement strategically focused, cost-effective enhancements to the infrastructure in support of research, scholarship, and creativity.
External Reasons for Change

• Increased, administratively burdensome federal and state regulatory compliance requirements
  – Over 40 sets of separate federal regulations that apply to OSP activities
  – At least 216 FAR clauses and 79 DFAR clauses (in addition to numerous agency specific clauses) that can be included in a contract.

• Increased complexity of:
  – Sponsor-driven requirements
  – Contracts and other transactions
  – Funding mechanisms

• Competition for research funds demands quality OSP administrative performance, and skilled negotiators to compete for the funds while consistently following Cornell policies
View to the Future: OSP Centers of Expertise

Federal Government
- Center of Expertise: Federal Government
  - Universities
  - Weill Cornell

State & Foundations
- Center of Expertise: NYS & Foundations
  - Other States & Local Gov’ts

Industry
- Center of Expertise: Industry
  - International Gov’ts
  - Subcontract/Subaward

Contract Support/Oversight

Administrative Operations & Support

Center of Expertise: Operations
- Customer Support
- Research & System Support
- Audit
- SOP & Policies
- Training/Event Coordination
- Metrics/Dashboard/Reporting
- Website
- Outreach
- Infrastructure Support

OSP Realignment
Center of Expertise
Functional Responsibilities

Federal Government

State & Foundations

Industry

Proposal & Pre-Proposal Review & Submission

Award, Sub-award and Out-year Action Negotiation; Subcontracts, & Other

Outreach & Education

Contract Support/Oversight

Administrative Operations & Support

Operations

Infrastructure & Office Management

Proposal Services & Award Services
Outcomes of Change

• Improved support to researchers and Cornell departments/units – *quality and speed*
• Improved relationships with Sponsors
• Increased level of skills and quality of OSP resources
• Business process improvements
• Improved team work within OSP
• Research system (EZRA) modifications will allow measurement of:
  – Cycle time for (examples only):
    • Proposal receipt to proposal submission
    • Award receipt to award acceptance
    • Other document receipt to conclusion
  • Response time to customer calls
  • Number of proposals/awards received and successfully processed
  • Research funds processed per GCO
  • Customer satisfaction survey
  • Establishment of OSP points of contact (liaisons) for each college
    – Attendance at department administrator meetings
    – Response time to departmental requests
  • Continuing professional education requirements