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| Afternoon Concurrent Sessions |
| Navigating Onboarding for New Departmental Research Administrators  |
| There is always something new in research administration – and that includes people who are new in their administrative roles, be it new to the University, or moving to a new office on campus. This session promises some tips and tricks, explores key resources, highlights crucial relationships and best practices – for quickly integrating into research administration. Learn key principles to assimilate new staff members to departmental sponsored research administration!  | **Dana Mor,** *Grants and Contracts Associate, Astronomy***Susie Zukosky,** *Assistant to the Chair, Astronomy* |
| Red Pens and Zen: Finding Peace in Creating Proposals When All You See is Red |
| Proposal preparation can feel chaotic, but it doesn’t have to. This session will break down how faculty, units, and SPA collaborate to get proposals out the door—clearly, calmly, and on time. Learn how to navigate common hurdles and reduce stress in the process with practical tips and a little Zen. | **Hannah Gorrie,** *Proposal Coordinator, Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA)***Stephen Johnson,** *Senior Sponsored Research Business Analyst, School of Molecular and Cellular Biology*  |
| From the Headlines: Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Sponsored Programs  |
| Using a few recent higher education examples, we will offer a case study-style analysis of fraud, waste and/or abuse of sponsored projects funding.  How can we spot red flags?  Do we have safeguards at Illinois or in our departments?  In the current funding environment, these past examples can impact how we administer sponsored programs going forward.  | **Jessica Hoppe,** *Associate System-wide Audit Director, Office of University Audits***Teri Travis,** *Senior Associate System-wide Audit Director Office of University Audits*  |
| Putting the “Self” in Self-Care for Research Administrators  |
| Research administrators often juggle complex demands and tight deadlines, making intentional self-care not just beneficial, but essential. This interactive session offers practical strategies specifically designed to address the unique stressors of the profession. Participants will explore techniques for managing stress, setting healthy boundaries, and cultivating overall well-being to enhance both personal resilience and professional performance. | **Jerald Kimble,** *Coordinator, Audit & Compliance, Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA)*  |
| Firefighter, Superhero, or Survivor Champion: A day in the life of a Research Administrator  |
| In this session, we will share practical tips and strategies to navigate the diverse opportunities and challenges we face daily in the dynamic field of research administration—a profession that demands adaptability, precision, and collaboration.  We will also explore how our team fosters effective communication and collaboration in a remote work environment.  By leveraging digital tools and nurturing a strong team culture, we’ve been able to achieve results all while doing our best to meet the evolving needs of our customers—our researchers, departments, and institutional partners. | **Missy Beck-LeFaivre,** *Director, Grants and Contracts, Engineering Business Service Center***Geoff Dehler,** *Assistant Director, Grants and Contracts, Engineering Business Service Center***Andrea Vogel,** *Research Administration Manager, Grants and Contracts, Engineering Business Service Center* |
| Evolving with myResearch: Portal Enhancements and What’s Next |
| Join us for an inside look at the latest updates to the myResearch Portal, designed to make research administration more intuitive and efficient. We’ll highlight key improvements to the project view page and offer a sneak peek at upcoming features as part of our ongoing modernization efforts. Learn how these enhancements aim to better support your work and streamline sponsored project management across campus. | **Bryan Bachman,** *Senior Assistant Director, Data & Systems, Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA)* |
| Deadlines Matter! Enforcing SPA Policies at the Department Level  |
| Now that SPA is strictly enforcing its four-day submission policy, it’s more essential than ever to help researchers submit their materials in a timely fashion. With content drawn from a variety of experiences, this breakout session will offer lessons learned and best practices developed when aligning departmental policies with university requirements. We will also share resources and new tools that support proposal preparation and submission and motivate researchers to provide early notice of their intent to submit.  | **Alaine Martaus,** *Research Development Coordinator, Proposal Development Office, National Center for Supercomputing Applications*  |
| Department Roundtable Discussions |
| **Table #1** Managing Competing Priorities in the Proposal World The busy life of a research administrator is filled with competing priorities. Discovering organizational strategies that suit your style is essential. In our discussion, we’ll inspire one another and share various approaches for managing multiple priorities while staying on top of deadlines. There are no bad ideas – only creative starting points for something even better.  | **Naomi Armstrong,** *Research Administration Coordinator, Siebel School of Computing and Data Science*  |
| **Table #2** Empowering Research: OPD’s Role in Research and Proposal Development Join us for a round table discussion on the Office of Proposal Development (OPD). Learn about OPD’s services and how we support large-scale, multidisciplinary proposals. Engage in conversation about key considerations for successful collaboration and explore how OPD can assist with research and proposal development efforts in your unit. | **Sowmya Anand,** *Director, Office of Proposal Development*  |
| **Table #3** Grant Storms: Weathering Uncertainty in Sponsored ResearchThis discussion will center around navigating unexpected challenges in research administration including sharing unit-level proactive strategies as well as lived experience responding to unanticipated changes. Learn from other departments what approaches worked for them and what they’d do differently next time. Find common ground, learn about resources, and understand that you’re not alone in weathering the storm. | **Yvonne Shaw,** *Director of Budget and Resource Planning, School of Social Work*  |
| **Table #4** Risk-averse Budgeting: Tips for Creating Accurate, Transparent, and Flexible BudgetsDuring the last days of a submission when unexpected challenges arise, it is difficult to quickly revise a budget that is not transparent, accurate, or consistent. Attend this roundtable to learn how to develop budgets that allow flexibility. We’ll discuss unit-level strategies for effectively planning for unforeseeable events and the mitigation of rework.  Participants will be encouraged to share their personal stories and insights gained, as well as their hard learned lessons related to budgeting. | **Kirk Branch,** *Senior Research Administration Coordinator, Mechanical Science and Engineering*  |