SPARC Meeting Notes
September 17, 2012

Welcomes & Introductions Chris Brown, VP for Research and Graduate Education at UNCGA
Dr. Brown was the AVC for Research Development at NCSU and started at UNCGA in June. The role of his office at UNCGA has changed as graduate education is a recent addition to the position - All new graduate degree programs go through is office for the BOG review and approval process
FDP Meeting Update Julie Brasfield & Milburn Holbrook (NCSU)

- New ACMS system (National Science Foundation)
    - January 2013 (Live Pilot), March 2013 live for everyone
    - Have Cash as close to $0 as possible
    - Biggest Change, instead of drawing down monthly in aggregate, funds will be drawn on an award by award basis
    - If the system shows positive cash on hand, NFS will expect a check back. $300 leeway has been reduced to a dollar
    - Awards will financially close at 3 months – no opportunities for late draws (>90 days)
    - Still have 3 day rule (Can't draw more cash than you'll need for the next 3 days)
    - Will still have a download/upload capability and Will be able to put it into a template (upload and post to cash) and not have to key those in
    - ASU is also a pilot site (20 active NSF awards)
    - Payments are going through Treasury. If your organization owes a federal entity funds, your NSF payment could be reduced to offset the outstanding federal obligations.
    - Contact info: Mike Howe, NSF, NSF Section Head, 703-292-8255, bfadfmgcms@nsf.gov http://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Common/ACM$_FAQs.pdf
- COGR report on the Grants Reform Initiative – effort to consolidate the OMB circulars that apply to cost principles, administrative requirements and audits across all recipient types (i.e. the A-21 Task Force)
    - Expected proposed consolidated circular (6-8 weeks after Labor Day) – general consensus is universities will not realize any appreciable benefits from the consolidation and among other things; the notion of a flat F&A rate was unpopular.
- CCR Transition to SAM
    - System for Award Management for the federal agencies
    - Combines 8 prior federal systems
    - SAM.gov & create/register for account
    - Everything will transfer over BUT verify your data (not everything is accurate) & do an inventory of Dunn and Bradstreet numbers (see if you need to clean anything up)
    - D&B free helpline service - 1-866-705-5711

Government Transaction Services (John Marshall) Grant reporting Information Project – piloted out of the Recovery Board.

- GRIP – effort to consolidate and streamline Grant Reporting Process (Reducing redundancies)
- DATA Act (Digital Accountability and Transparency Act) has been passed by the House and is still in negotiation in the Senate (could impose ARRA style reporting on all grants)
- Participating Agencies & Grantees
    - EPA, USDA, NIH
    - Pilot participants – State, municipality and several universities
    - Would like to see a UNC campus included in the pilot
- Timeline - June planning session, Aug-Sept identify pilot participants, Sept finalize data sets, Oct-Nov System completed, Oct – Nov pilot reporting Starts
- What is the realistic timeline after the Pilot
    - Depends on success of pilot program.
    - Due to the proposed extra reporting burden, hoping that this model will reduce that burden. Will lower "fat-finger errors"
- Who has the authority to make this happen and what are the barriers?
    - Legislation & Administration (Depending on the election)
    - Not all agencies want to cooperate.
    - If this system does come to place, Grants.gov could be a place where it would be housed/integrated
    - The consolidated reporting system would be free – commercial tools to enable system-to-system feeds would be at a cost.

UNCW Test Results: EZGrantFiling and The Optimizer (see PPT slides on the meeting site)

- Discussion Notes – EZGrantFiling
    - The Image Now system and a document management system, not a filing system – you have to know the filing systems to find information (Frustrating trying to find things).
    - 425 filings would take 3-4 days before, but from what can be seen, it won't take nearly as much time.
    - Primarily for Post-Award program
    - Pulling the data directly out of Banner, so if your data is accurate, you won't have "Fat-finger errors"
    - Is there a flowchart for this?
        - Not currently, but could make one.
    - Discussion Notes - Optimizer
        - A question based system that pull regulatory guidance from OMB Circulars
        - Provides documentation of regulatory basis for expenditure approvals

- Can run reports & save them – can have distributed access for departments
    - Can supplement the regulatory guidance with local institutional regulations – including UNC FIT standards
- Easy interface with other systems (U-Shop (SciQuest)), so that when a purchase goes to the Purchasing Officer, they know that the purchase is allowed.

Subcontracting

- Subrecipient data Collection Peter (NCSU) Sponsored Programs & Regulatory Compliance – to satisfy FFATA reporting, A-133 certification and risk assessment – one record for each institution that has received a subaward, regardless of the number of subawards issues
    - System is answer-based and leads the user through a series of tabs: General Information, F&A, Fringe, Fiscal responsibility, Department, Audit Status, Contact
    - All fields except the contact information needs to completed for the annual renewal
    - If you have the data you need, it should only take a few minutes to fill out the information. Reminder notices (emails to the authorized official) are sent 2 weeks after the initial email.
- Subaward vs Contracted Services
    - Subcontractor is a hands on partner in the project while Consultant is advising
    - No campuses reported a minimum $$ threshold for subcontracts
    - Some campuses report they specifically list particular entities/people in the proposal/budget as consultants/contracted services and use the proposal citation as the basis for a sole source justification.
    - Information & definitions have been posted
- Subrecipient Risk Assessment – Draft Standards section III. Grant Management
    - Living document that can/needs to be revisited and edited to fit current needs
    - Edited to make terms that refer to financial systems more general (i.e. PeopleSoft vs Banner)
    - Still have a C&G Process Advisory Group (different members from original group)
    - Request: Spend 15-20 minutes with pre-award/post-award/compliance on campus to review updated standards
    - Two tools have been posted online to help guide risk assessment decision making
        - Campuses could use these or something like these
    - By October 1, any feedback, comments, concerns, edits, suggested tools are due to Sarah Smith

- Epigeum Demonstration - Drew Mahaffy (US Sales Manager) & Terry May from Michigan State
    - Epigeum is a supplemental web based educational system that can interact with campus online curricular platforms including Blackboard and SACCI – the content can be fully customized with campus-specific information
    - Used for Responsible Conduct of Research education