Shared Services for Research Administration

Design, Implementation and Lessons Learned

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Audience Objectives

- What do you want to learn?
  - Interested in learning about Shared Services
  - Your Institution is considering Shared Services
  - Currently Implementing and want to get to ideas
  - Implemented and Evolving
Agenda

- Shared Services for Research Administration – Case for Change

- Yale University
  - Background of the Organizational Model
  - Design, Implementation and Benefits
  - Department Integration - Strategies for Success and Lessons Learned

- UConn
  - Institutional Background
  - Structure
  - Implementation
  - Growth and Expansion
Why a Shared Service for Research Administration?

- Federal Funding Decreasing and Volatile
- Volume and Complexity of work
  - More proposal submissions
  - More compliance requirements and need for specialized knowledge
- Staffing in Departments
  - Budget cuts
  - Turnover after lengthy investment in specialized training
  - No back-up during absences
  - Varying skill levels across departments
- Deadlines are disruptive to ongoing Business Office operations
- More Consistent, High Level Service to Faculty
Why a Shared Service for Research Administration?

Grow
- Simplify and demystify the proposal submission process.
- Faculty focus on developing strong and innovative research projects.
- Increase the number and quality of proposal submissions.

Support
- Provide exceptional award management.
- Ensure awards are compliant with all relevant policies and requirements.
- Reduce administrative burden to faculty to allow more time spent on research.
Institutional Overview - 2015

- Private Institution Founded in 1701
- Yale College – 5,532 undergraduate students
- Graduate and 13 Professional Schools – 6,853 students
- Multiple Museums, Galleries and Theaters
- Extensive Library system – ~15 million volumes housed in 15 libraries
- 3,585 Faculty (ladder and non-ladder) + 835 Research Faculty
- 1,996 Postdoctoral Trainees
- 9,455 Staff
- Total Operating Budget - $3.3 billion
- Endowment - $25.6 billion
- Sponsored Research - $673.7 million ($507.1 in Federal Funding)
Business Support Model

**Regions**

- **Business Operations**
  - Lead Administrator & Operations Manager
  - Staff oversight and development, coverage, financial management and budgeting, business service standards, manage shared services relationship

- **Academic Support Coordination**
  - Academic process and systems support to Director of Undergraduate Students and Director of Graduate Students, faculty, and local support staff.

**Local**

- Local Department
  - Administrative Staff
  - On-site administrative, academic, and business support to students, faculty, staff, and visitors

**Shared Service Centers**

- **Yale Shared Services**
  - Financial management and accounting, transaction processing, e.g. AP, EMS

- **Faculty Research Management Services**
  - Pre and Post Sponsored Award Support (non Med School)

- **Faculty Administrative Services**
  - Faculty search, appointment, promotion, and leave processing
Creating Faculty Research Management Services

Building on the earlier initiatives dating back to 2005, a project team of the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) and Business Operations representatives was formed.

Conducted a detailed *end-to-end* business process analysis for Pre-Award and Post Award.

Made the decision to house Pre and Post Award support activities within Business Operations but separate the activities. Goal: To reduce administrative burden for faculty and streamline business processes.

**For Pre Award**, committed to developing an integrated proposal submission process in which FRMS works with faculty to prepare proposals to be submission ready before hand off to Institutional Office. Provided major involvement with deploying new technology.

**For Post Award**, committed to building a more collaborative and integrated partnership between Institutional Office and Post Award operations to strengthen adherence to policies and overall grants management.
Foundational Principles

✓ Create a flexible organization which can respond to cyclical volumes and deadlines
✓ Develop standard jobs and roles aligned to skills
✓ Align to the Shared Services operating model incorporating service and quality management principles
✓ Develop clear accountability and handoffs to eliminate redundancies
✓ Share activities where appropriate to enhance service and reduce cost
✓ Develop deep expertise of grant policies and compliance requirements
✓ Develop strong working partnership with Office of Sponsored Projects

Guiding Principles

✓ Establish a client centric organization, with dedicated relationship management
✓ Enable higher levels of service to faculty and researchers
Faculty Research Management Services provides the faculty facing grants management support that departmental resources typically perform. Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) provides institutional oversight and approval and act as a source of expertise for FRMS. A strong, collaborative relationship exists between FRMS and OSP.
The FRMS Organization is structured with Pre- and Post Award teams located within Business Operations, with dual report to Provost. This setup:

- Establishes a team with specialized skill sets
- Encourages collaboration between Pre and Post Award team members
- Facilitates knowledge transfer between teams
- Enables PI-centric training and skill building activities across teams
- Creates a central point of contact to work through systematic issues and changes

Pre- and Post Award teams are structured as follows:

- **Pre-Award**
  - Associate Director
  - Grants Administrators
  - Grants Coordinator
- **Post Award**
  - Associate Director
  - Grant Portfolio Managers
  - Grants Portfolio Analysts
  - Grants Portfolio Financial Assistants

**Portfolio based assignment**
- Consistent service with back-up support
- Staff Co-located
- Close proximity to departments

Monthly Financial reports include **All** PI funds providing comprehensive portfolio view.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRMS</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td> Foster positive working relationships and establish credibility with faculty  &lt;br&gt; Develop strategies that drive client satisfaction and ensure proper controls are in place to mitigate risk and drive higher levels of compliance.  &lt;br&gt; Ensure faculty research support needs are met, and influence the faculty, staff and other key stakeholders to drive the growth of FRMS.  &lt;br&gt; Represent Central Campus for technology implementations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRMS</td>
<td>Associate Director (Pre- and Post Award)</td>
<td> Lead the overall design, delivery and effectiveness of grants management processes.  &lt;br&gt; Ensure high levels of client satisfaction and leverage metrics to ensure continuous improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Award</td>
<td>Grants Administrator</td>
<td> Provide expert direction, guidance, and assistance to PIs and client department(s) in the development of proposals.  &lt;br&gt; Ensure high levels of client satisfaction through strong client relationship management efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Award</td>
<td>Grants Coordinator</td>
<td> Provide administrative support through data management, metrics tracking, and customer service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Award</td>
<td>Financial Analyst</td>
<td> Provide comprehensive financial expertise, information, analysis, and guidance to PIs and departments to optimize use of research funds.  &lt;br&gt; Ensure high levels of client satisfaction through strong client relationship management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Award</td>
<td>Post Award Coordinator</td>
<td> Coordinate, prepare, analyze and process complex financial and administrative transactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-Award
- Grant eligibility determination & guidance
- Proposal Development System Expertise
- Budget Development
- Financial and non-financial document preparation
- Tracking PI Current and Pending Support
- Obtain Approvals (PI Status, Cost Sharing)

Post Award
- PI Financial portfolio planning, analysis and management
- Monthly financial review – university policy
- Enter budgets into budget tool
- Prepare and execute accounting transactions
- Effort fulfillment planning, reporting review and follow up
- Coordinate with PI, department and OSP (NCE’s, progress reports, FSR’s)
A Partnership Agreement details the services and performance measurements between FRMS and client departments.

Pre and Post Award have distinct Partnership Agreement templates.

Defines the scope of services for the client and the responsibilities required from each party.

Identifies performance metrics and service targets:
- Service offering details
- Metrics for monitoring the service
- Target performance levels
- Expected transaction volumes

Documents the “contract” between FRMS and client departments.
## FRMS Benefits

### University:
- Single unit to ensure compliance continuum
- Closely tied to OSP
- Build Strong Interface with Central Offices: Provost, Auditing, Controller

### Departments:
- Single unit with complete knowledge of the PIs portfolio
- Departments have a central point of contact and have conduit to OSP
- Enables PI-centric training and skill building

### Pre Award:
- Increased First Past Yield Rate
- Conduit between OSP and PIs/Departments
- Consistent Tracking of PI Current and Pending Support

### Post Award:
- Less Cost Transfers
- Effort Certification completed on time
- FSRs completed on time
- Identifying potential future funding concerns

### Routine and ad hoc services available to PIs and Business Offices:
- Accurate, Timely Reporting
- Burn Rate Analysis
- Forecasting
- Effort Fulfillment Planning
# Deployment Strategy

The growth of the FRMS take place over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation for Wave 1</th>
<th>Stabilization and Preparation for Growth (Wave 1)</th>
<th>Service Expansion (Wave 2)</th>
<th>Continued Expansion (Wave 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed <strong>business process review completed</strong> for both Pre and Post Award.</td>
<td>FRMS unit is operational with appropriate staffing and leadership in place.</td>
<td>FRMS increases number of clients served. <strong>Growth starts with smaller departments.</strong></td>
<td>FRMS continues to increase the number of clients served.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roles and responsibilities</strong> determined and designed for all jobs within Pre and Post Award.</td>
<td>Pre Award and Post Award serve <strong>current clients.</strong></td>
<td>Larger department approach is designed for 1 - 2 large departments.</td>
<td><strong>Pre-Award and OSP continue to partner</strong> – over time Pre-Award may assume greater responsibility for assuring the successful submission of standard proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruit</strong>, fill open positions, and train staff for Pre and Post Award to support Wave 1 scope.</td>
<td>New Pre and Post Award processes in place and utilized.</td>
<td><strong>Pre-Award &amp; OSP</strong> partner to ensure consistent practices – proposals submitted by Pre-Award to OSP are <strong>ready for submission to sponsors.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Post Award and OSP provide career development opportunities</strong> for resources across the units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborate with OSP</strong> for technology (IRES) and training.</td>
<td>Training for new Pre and Post Award employees will be done leveraging <strong>OSP</strong> training materials.</td>
<td>Post Award and OSP act as partners and own the growth and development of the post award process ensuring consistency, communication and seamless transitions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership agreements</strong> with metrics established for all current clients.</td>
<td><strong>Pre Award begins using New Technology Tools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Post Award provides full service departmental support to current clients.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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Department Integration

- **Begin Partnership through Relationship Management**
  - Meet with Department Administrative Leadership
  - Meet with Academic Leadership (Chair or Dean)
  - Achieve Faculty Buy-in
    - Partner with Chair for support
    - Attend faculty meeting
      - Putting a face to the name makes it easier to imagine
      - Build confidence by defining roles
      - A proven track record is a good selling point
  - Get Department Staff on board
    - Encourage staff to keep an open mind
    - Expect some resistance and anxiety
**Transition the work**

- Plan mapping of employees where applicable
- FRMS and Business Office staff meeting
  - Share Information about:
    - research
    - sponsors
    - faculty personalities
- Use the Partnership Agreement to clearly define roles and responsibilities

**Create social atmosphere – food eases tension**
Business Readiness Checklist

- Technical Activities
  - System Access
  - File Share
- Functional Operations
  - Contact information for Faculty and Staff
  - Monthly meeting Schedule
  - Create Timeline to Manage Expectations
- Emotional Management
  - More Anxiety
Strategies for Success
- Pre-Award is a logical first step
- Success breeds confidence and strengthens relationships
- Post Award – *Take it slow*
- Proximal location is optimal
- Primary Staff Assigned to Department with Secondary Back-up
  - Subject Matter Expertise
  - Responsive with Excellent Customer Service Skills
- This collaborative effort requires excellent communication and Mutual Support
Department Integration

- **Challenges**
  - Resistance to change
  - Anxiety over loss of control
  - Relationship Management
  - Enforcing compliance

- **Benefits**
  - Focused expertise
  - Depth of staff
  - Expanded resources
  - Confidence in quality and timeliness
  - Time for other tasks means better overall service to faculty
Anticipate Faculty Apprehension

Concerns:
- Proximity of FRMS Staff to PIs/Departments
- Consistency of staff as related to PI Portfolio
- Transferability of knowledge from one department to another
- One stop shopping for ALL matters

Responses:
- Offices are located across the street from the majority of science departments
- Assign staff to PI Portfolio, cross train staff and SOP’s
- Gain credibility through interactions
- We can’t solve all problems but work jointly with department staff
Institutional Overview

- Land Grant Institution founded in 1881
- 1,489 full time faculty
- Increased sponsored project activity since FY13:
  - 32% increase in proposal submissions
  - 14% increase in the number of awards received
  - 55% increase in the amount of funding awarded

![Proposal Submissions Chart]

![Funding Received Chart]
Why Shared Services at UConn?

- New Vice President for Research
  - Goal: Support Faculty
  - Goal: Increase Sponsored Project Expenditures

- The Office of the Vice President for Research committed to partially funding a shared service unit with the following goals:
  - Increase the number of and improve the quality of proposals
  - Increase the number of awards
  - Reduce faculty administrative burden during the award
  - Make research administration more efficient
  - Improve compliance
**Faculty Services Development and Structure**

**November 2014:** Shared Services piloted with the School of Pharmacy

**February 2015:** Director hired

**March 2015-December 2015:** 6 Schools agree to participate

**January 2016-June 2016:** Staff hired and schools onboarded

**July 2016-Present:** Procedures refined and documented reducing processing time, improving compliance and reducing faculty burden
Faculty Services Development and Structure

- Assigned portfolios
- Coverage during absences and vacations
- Co-located with central Sponsored Program Services (SPS) office
- Access to SPS files and electronic systems
Proposal Support Services

**Goal:** *To grow the research enterprise by providing excellent, consistent proposal development support for University faculty*

Proposal Support Services:

- Provides **exceptional administrative support** from proposal assembly to submission from expert resources
- Allows faculty to focus on the **scientific development** of the application
- A team of specialists ensures **support is always available** to faculty during University hours
- Helps faculty produce **higher quality proposals** in greater numbers
Award Support Services

Goal: To **support the research enterprise by providing excellent, consistent award management support for University faculty**

- Discuss changes in budget and award
- Ensure costs benefit award
- Approve transactions
- Complete effort certifications

- Provide regular reports and monitor awards
- Reconcile project ledgers
- Submit cost transfers
- Ensure costs are allowable
- Prepare budget revisions
- Assist in all administrative aspects

Award Support Services:
- Provides **exceptional administrative support** in award management from expert resources
- Allows faculty to **focus on the research** and spend less time on administrative requirements
- A team of specialists ensures **support is always available** to faculty during University hours

Partnership with Department Administrators:
- Work closely with transactions still handled by the department
- Develop strong working relationships to reduce faculty burden
Finding Efficiencies

Goal 1: Reduce the number of administrators who work on a single transaction
- Benefits: improved processing time, reduces administrative workload
- Considerations: removes additional levels of review

NIH Modular Proposal Example

Old Process

New Process

No cost extension Example

Old Process

New Process
Finding Efficiencies

Goal 2: Reduce administrative tasks
• Benefits: reduces administrative workload
• Considerations: co-location between central office and shared services may be required

Eliminated Tasks for Grant and Team Assistants
• Updating proposal files with new documents
• Sending final signed documents to department administrators
• Closing out submitted proposal records and files
• Processing revised budget requests
• Triaging post-award requests
Financing

• Jointly supported by the Office of the Vice President for Research and units receiving support.
• FTE support needs are evaluated over 3 fiscal years and rounded up to the next quarter to support continued growth.

Example: UConn Health School of Dentistry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Award</th>
<th>Post-Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual FTE Needs</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounded FTE</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Cost</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVPR Cost</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Support needs are evaluated annually.
• FTE costs are based on the average salary and current fringe rate.
• The pricing structure is updated annually
# Implementation

## Voluntary Program
Presentations and engagement with:
- Deans
- Associate Research Deans
- Department Heads
- Department Administrators
- Faculty

## Signed Memorandum of Agreement
- Mandatory six-month commitment

## Departmental and Leadership Meetings
- Faculty and departmental leadership
- 2-3 meetings prior to faculty implementation

## Faculty Welcome
- Explain the program
- Introduce support staff

- Word of mouth approach improves buy in
- Use successfully deployed departments as examples and references
- Aides initial development and growth
- Defines roles and responsibilities
- Helps ensure consistency of support across units
- Identify potential issues
- Increase confidence
- Explain program
- Answer questions and address concerns
- Introduce the team
Next Steps

Growth and Continuous Improvement at Storrs and Regional Campuses

• Hiring Team Lead for day to day management and continuous improvement including:
  • SOPs and procedures
  • Website development
  • General mailbox deployment
• Continued growth and expansion
  • Target departments and schools without support
• Partner with select departments and schools not supported by Faculty Services
  • Collaborate to flow down limited responsibilities to increase efficiency and faculty experience

Expansion to UConn Health

• Developing structure to support Faculty Services
• Eventual cross campus support and efficiency savings
Questions

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