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UAHuntsville

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

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UAHuntsville Cost Policy Update

To ensure compliance with 2 CFR Part 220 and 2 CFR Part 215 (formerly known as OMB Circulars A21 and A110) Paragraph 7.0, Cost Transfers of our Cost Policy has been updated by Robert Leonard, Controller and Interim Director, C&G Accounting to read as follows:

7.0 COST TRANSFERS *(revised May 19, 2010)*

It is the responsibility of all departments and operating units to have in place internal controls that provide for the charging of all cost to the appropriate accounts. Therefore, transferring cost between accounts is considered legitimate only when necessary to correct an error, properly allocate charges between accounts involving closely related work, or redistributing charges in those few cases where the university's billing systems will not allow for charging the appropriate amount to the proper accounts upon original posting.

In all cases, cost transfers must be made promptly. In this context, "promptly" means that the cost transfer should be made no later than 90 days of the original transaction. Requests for cost transfers to be processed between 91 and 120 days must be signed specifically by the principal investigator and must also be approved by the applicable department chair. If under some rare circumstances, it should be necessary to make a cost transfer beyond 120 days, then the applicable dean's signature will be required in addition to the signatures of the principal investigator and department chair. Requests for late cost transfers should include an explanation of the extenuating circumstances which prevented the transaction from being made earlier.

The revised policy is effective immediately and will be strictly adhered to. If you have questions about UAHuntsville Cost Policy and/or this revision, please contact Mr. Leonard at X2233 or Robert.Leonard@uah.edu.

The Office of Sponsored Programs, Contracts and Grants
Accounting and Research Security
3rd Annual Organization Day
is Friday, June 18, 2010 Noon—5:00PM
Behind VBRH (OSP)

MENTORING: AN IMPRECISE ART

By: Dr. Gary Zank[1]

Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research (CSPAR)

-and- Physics Department

When asked to write an article about mentoring, I was both flattered and nonplussed. While it's always nice to be held up as a positive role model of some sort (this does not happen very often to me), I realized that I had never given much thought to mentoring as a process. Despite its evident importance, it is difficult to find clear guidance on the delicate art of mentoring, at least if one is searching for a reasonably practical, down-to-earth approach. And perhaps this is as it should be, because, despite the various articles that I tracked down on-line, mentoring represents a highly individual compact between two colleagues that is not easily characterized and turned into a process. I use the word "compact" deliberately because mentoring demands responsibilities and standards of behavior from both parties. There has to be a willingness on the part of the younger colleague to be mentored. This is not as simple as it seems. We all pay lip service to the notion of learning from our more senior colleagues but all too often ego, personalities, respect, and a myriad other factors intrude. Being mentored requires an implicit acceptance of an essentially unequal social construct between two people, and this can be especially difficult for a young person to accept (as anybody who has had teenagers can attest to). In recalling past experience (from both sides of the fence), the honest and committed willingness to be mentored is probably the most critical step in the mentoring process. For the mentored, this sometimes means relearning to listen and accept criticism and advice (often rather difficult for a newly minted PhD). The converse is of course that the mentor has to accept the corresponding and complementary responsibilities that his/her position entails. There is no obvious way to forge a relationship between the mentor and the mentored except to recognize that it is similar in some respects to building a friendship, albeit with obvious differences – having interests in common, a generosity of spirit and a high degree of trust, mutual respect and kindness, and so forth.

Below, I shall focus exclusively on mentoring in an academic setting, for which there are two identifiable components to consider. The first is mentoring as a department and the second is mentoring as an individual.

Mentoring as a Department

Within a university setting (academic department, research institute), having common research interests is, in my experience, crucial to a successful mentoring relationship. Shortly after I was hired as an assistant professor, my department hired a second assistant professor in a research area that was not represented in the department, with the expectation that he would build up a new research area that was then very much in vogue. Not surprisingly, it was an unmitigated disaster for everyone – no proposals were funded and few research papers were published despite a sizable start-up package. After three years it was apparent to all involved that neither tenure nor a new field of research in the department was forthcoming. I saw a very similar situation occur when I moved to my second university position, with similarly unhappy results. Colleagues of mine have described related histories in departments elsewhere in the country. In all cases, it was not possible to put into place effective mentoring for the new hires because there was nobody in the department with an adequate background in the research field of the new assistant professor. The departments set the new faculty up for failure and completely wasted their own time, effort, and resources.

A cardinal rule that I have since developed is that a department should never hire junior faculty with the expectation that they will develop fundamentally new areas of research in the department. Almost invariably, it is a recipe for failure and a corresponding waste of scarce resources. Assistant professors need to be hired into areas of departmental strength, broadly defined, where they can draw from a pool of potential mentors. Although rarely done when making new junior faculty hires, a good department chair and search committee must address the question of mentoring, especially in concert with the expectations the department has of the new hire. To build new areas of research excellence within a department requires the hiring of outstanding mid-career or senior scientists, who will then often bring with them an established research group as part of a cluster hire.
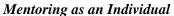
Assuming that there is a pool of potential mentors for a new assistant professor, the department still has several mentoring responsibilities. As a department, our actions must be geared towards ensuring the success of our new faculty – they are the future of the department and university. We typically invest considerable time, effort, and resources in hiring an assistant professor, and then all too often turn them adrift in a sometimes bewildering and threatening academic world, peopled as it is with a multitude of personalities and agendas. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that a new hire finds a mentor in the department as soon as possible. We must expect of our senior faculty that they accept the role of mentor and that they will champion the new assistant professor both within the department and university and in the broader research community. Mentoring should become part of the departmental evaluation metrics against which senior faculty are measured. In evaluating the assistant professor, as is done at least annually in most departments at UAHuntsville, the mentor should provide detailed input to the appropriate committees and departmental chair.

The committee and chair can then provide feedback to both the mentor and the mentored. Furthermore, the departmental reports evaluating assistant professors have to be written in a way that is fair, balanced, and constructive, focusing on laying the foundation for a successful career.

Another element of departmental mentoring is in having very clear documented expectations and criteria for superior performance, reappointment, advancement, and tenure. An assistant professor should, after an honest self-assessment, know with a high level of certainty whether s/he is meeting departmental expectations for tenure, etc.

Finally, as a department, we should not expect excessive levels of university service, especially on contentious committees, or even teaching from our new faculty. Their focus should be on developing their research reputation and teaching skills with as few distractions as possible. By laying a strong foundation in these two areas, we make the probability of success for a young faculty member that much greater.

Mentoring as an Individual

Unlike mentoring at the departmental level, where certain procedures can be developed, mentoring at the individual level is driven very strongly by the personalities of both the mentor and mentored. Nonetheless, there are several fundamental traits that can be identified in a successful mentor. Probably the most important is that a mentor cannot be too insecure! A good mentor will promote the work of the protégé throughout the research community, will nominate his/her charge for invited talks or to write review papers, recommend that s/he organize special sessions at national and international conferences, will enable him/her to organize conferences and edit the proceedings, will nominate for awards and prizes, etc. This requires that the mentor suppress some of the instincts and habits that made him/her a successful academic, ceding attention and limelight to a younger up-and-coming colleague, and sometimes surrender control. Besides the "wise and trusted" counsel provided by the mentor, the mentor has to learn to have trust and confidence in his younger colleague. All of this can be difficult for a mentor and it is why mentors are typically senior, well established, and widely recognized scholars and academics. It should by now be evident that the mentored are themselves placed in a complicated position, trying to build their career and reputation, while being nurtured by a mentor with aspirations of his/her own. This can be a delicate balance and, not surprisingly, there have been some "spectacular" ends to a mentoring relationship, and some famous scientific feuds can be traced to such a breakup.

Another important element to look for in a mentor is in how busy that person is within his/her research and academic community. A person's activity typically reflects their standing and status in their research community, and hence their ability to draw their protégé deeply into that community. This is clearly critical to a new faculty member's eventual success because it is here that one establishes and cements a reputation amongst one's peers and leaders, and it is this group of people who will eventually evaluate research papers and proposals, provide invitations for invited talks, etc. Similarly, a mentor must provide introductions to people critical to the grant and contract systems, to those engaged in major projects, and occasionally act as protector.

Finally, it cannot be stressed enough but a mentor has to take the time to promote the mentored. It takes effort and time to write letters and involve oneself in the various committees that are necessary to promote new faculty. It is an unfortunate fact that people who should win prizes often do not because no one has taken the trouble to nominate them!

In concluding, what has so far not been mentioned are the tremendous rewards that accrue from mentoring. Mentoring can be a lot of work and involve a great deal of time. For me, it has been a distinct privilege to work with gifted young people over many years, to participate in their successes and be part of their struggles, to share in the exciting discoveries that they have made, and to see them develop as leaders themselves in their own fields. It would not be possible for me to have explored so many and such varied interests were it not for the wonderful young scientists with whom I have worked and continue to work. This is one of the great joys of scientific research and it derives directly from the opportunities that mentoring brings.

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1. In his nearly two years at UAHuntsville, faculty and scientists in the research group that Gary Zank brought with him as part of a cluster hire have won two NSF CAREER Awards, a US Air Force Young Investigator Award, an international IUPAP Award for young scientists under 36 years of age, a Poincare Fellowship, a Quest for Excellence Award, and two Ralph E Powe Faculty Development Awards. This is in addition to the award of numerous grants, the publication of many research papers, and three books.

Why Must I Submit My Proposal To OSP Three Working Days Prior to the Agency Due Date?

Each month, the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) staff reviews, signs and submits 70 or more proposals and this number continues to grow. Since both the Principal Investigator and the Institutional Official signing the proposal are personally responsible for the accuracy of the information it contains we must have sufficient time to review the proposal for accuracy.

To gauge whether or not the three (3) working days requirement to UAHuntsville OSP is realistic, I asked members of the Research Administration List Server (RESADM-L) to provided me with their policy as it relates to their institutions. I received the following responses:

Texas A&M University—5 days prior to due date	**Purdue University**—10 days prior to due date
University of Pittsburgh—4 days prior to due date	**Georgia Tech**—4 days prior to due date
North Carolina State University—8 days prior to due date	**Auburn University**—7 days prior to due date
University of Arkansas—5 days prior to due date	**University of Cincinnati**—5 days prior to due date
University of Central Florida—3 days prior to due date	**University of Alabama**—5 days prior to due date

Insufficient time may result in inadequate time for appropriate review, correction, and certification. Therefore, an internal deadline is required to allow sufficient time to assure that the institutional review and certification is accurate, and the proposal complies with University, 2 CFR Part 220 (OMB Circular A21), and Sponsor policies.

The Office of Sponsored Programs understands that there may be mitigating circumstances for late preparation of a proposal. In these situations we will examine the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and will make every effort to work with you.

Proposals are to be submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs at least 3 working days prior to agency deadlines. Failure to meet this deadline may jeopardize the on-time submission of the proposal. Although proposals received by the Office of Sponsored Programs less than 3 business days prior to the Sponsor due date may be reviewed, we cannot guarantee proposal accuracy, nor can we guarantee timely submission of your proposal.

Proposals not meeting this deadline shall be submitted with conditional approval only. In these cases, the PI shall be responsible for making appropriate changes to the proposal or the proposal will be withdrawn by OSP at a later date if subsequent review reveals that the proposal is incomplete, contains errors, inaccuracies, misrepresentations, or does not conform with University, 2 CFR Part 220, or sponsoring agency requirements.

We appreciate your respect of the three (3) working days submission policy.

NEW AWARDS: February—May 2010

Principal Investigator	Department/ Center	Title
Dr. Gary Zank	CSPAR	F/NASA/SMD/SMD High-End Computing (HEC) Resources
Dr. Christina Carmen	MAE	F/NASA/KSC/NASA Exploration Toolset for Optimization of Launch and Space Systems
Dr. Sara Graves	ITSC	F/DOD/MSIC/JRACC Communication Configuration Analysis
Dr. Gang Li	CSPAR	O/ORAU/Faculty Enhancement Award/Current Sheet Structures in the Inner Heliosphere
Dr. Sivaguru Ravindran	MA	F/NASA/MSFC/Network Flow Modeling in Multi-dimension using GFSSP
Dr. Leland Cseke	BYS	F/USDA/Development of Molecular Diagnostic Tools for Invasive Plant Identification
Dr. Daniel Cecil	ESSC	F/NASA/SSC/Precipitation Processes and Retrieval Challenges in Intense Mesoscale Convection Systems
Dr. Katherine Taconi	CME	F/NSF/Collaborative Research: Investigating and Improving the Production of Butanol
Dr. Robert McFeeters	Chemistry	F/DHHS/NIH/ARRA/Novel Pattern Specific Isotopic Labeling of Aromatic Amino Acids
Dr. Ross Burrows	CSPAR	F/AF/OSR/Space Weather Effects Due to Particle Acceleration at Shocks
Dr. Vladimir Florinski	CSPAR	F/NSF/CAREER: Computational Space Physics for Research and Industry
Dr. Qiang Hu	CSPAR	F/NASA/SSC/Non-Force Free Extrapolation of Coronal Magnetic Field from Vector Magnetograms
Dr. Massimiliano Bonamente	PH	A/SAO/X-Ray Circumnuclear Star Formation and Feedback in Nearby Normal Galaxies
Dr. Richard Miller	PH	A/University of Colorado-Boulder/Lunar University Node for Astrophysics Research (LUNAR) Exploring the Cosmos from the Moon
Dr. Julie Fortune	CMSA	F/NASA/SSC/Statistics for NASA
Dr. Dawn Bardot	MAE	F/NASA/MSFC/Pellitized and Structured Sorbents
Mr. Ted Rogers	CAO	A/University of Wisconsin-Madison/Design and Fabrication of Fixtures for LC Plates
Dr. Rahul Ramachandran	ITSC	F/NASA/MSFC/Instant Karma: Applying a Proven Provenance Tool to NASA's AMSR-E Data Production Stream
Dr. Jonathan Campbell	CAO	A/USRA/Planetary Science and Technology Research

CHARGE ON!

UAHuntsville ARRA Report as of April 2010

ARRA Dollars Awarded	ARRA Dollars Available	ARRA Dollars Expended	Jobs Created/ Retained
$11,277,475	$2,109,659	$2,589,875	41.83

VP's Corner

Dear Colleagues:

I hope these words find you well.

Maybe some of you have a similar ritual, but I have (finally) completed my annual Spring rite with my kids; namely, getting out in the back yard, turning over a few dozen square meters of soil, and letting them stick as many seeds as they can physically plant into the ground, in the hope of growing a garden for the summer.

Of course, being kids, they are most interested in the harvesting. They have almost no interest in actually turning the soil, nor in making sure it gets watered, and certainly no interest in pulling weeds. All of that is hard work. But with a little bit of luck and some well-timed rain, in a few months, our effort, investment, and attention will yield some visible (and edible!) results.

Spring is indeed a time for planting, and for tending investments of all kinds. What is true in the garden at home is also true here at UAHuntsville and in the OVPR in particular. We have been striving to get as many of our assets as possible out of "idle," and into a posture where they are working for us, in strategic directions, aligned with the stated priorities of the University, to yield a similar set of nourishing results.

Like our Nation, and indeed the world, UAHuntsville finds itself at a unique position in history. We all want to grow. We are willing and able. We have a remarkable research and academic record. We are located in a developing, high-technology corridor, in one of the most flourishing communities in America, at least according to Forbes, Kiplinger's, USAToday, and other external observers. Our students, faculty, and staff compare favorably against any other ensemble in the Nation.

And yet at the same time, we are vulnerable. We are experiencing incredibly large budgetary challenges (not unlike all state-funded Universities). Our economy is sour. We have extraordinarily thin infrastructure. How do we successfully respond to these challenges and yet grow at the same time?

One answer is to "grow our own food"; to invest wherever possible in those activities and endeavors that scale, are relevant to the community and its objectives, and are aligned with existing or growing strengths at UAHuntsville, and stand to benefit students, faculty, and staff. In short, we can plant – and are planting – a garden.

Some of this garden-planting investment from OVPR began last December, in a series of 'quad-chart' investments, and the emerging growth from these investments is beginning to show. Other investments continue to be developed. They are to be found not only in research, but across the University.

Investment is, and will be, our posture, as a response to the need to grow ourselves beyond our current challenges. A portfolio of investment is markedly different from a portfolio of spending. To a greater extent than the garden my kids enjoy, the fruits of the return on our investments will be enjoyed by those whose labor helped generate the positive outcome. A garden is not a stimulus package.

In our UAHuntsville research garden, we are trying hard to grow three kinds of investments, both by our own efforts, as well as by aligning with the efforts of others in pursuit of our University's strategic objectives. They are: Relationships, Opportunities, and Infrastructure.

Building more and better Relationships – UAHuntsville cannot grow, and cannot thrive as an isolated entity. In fact, our growth and level of excellence will be directly correlated to the extent and nature of our relationships. These relationships are both external as well as internal. And their success depends equally upon all parties. We are investing in building faculty relationships with NSF, our first OVPR-sponsored faculty trip coming in May 2010. Dr. Williams will be signing a cooperation agreement between UAHuntsville and Universität Rostock in Germany in June, for faculty/student exchange, joint research, and academic programs not only in science and engineering, but also business, language, and culture. We seek to bring the best and brightest leaders in the world to campus for visiting lectures, workshops, commencement, including the noted American author, Tom Wolfe, this May. We are building on-campus relationships with the Oak Ridge Partnership Office and with Pratt-Whitney/Rocketdyne. We have signed a collaborative memorandum of understanding with BizTech. We are working to deepen the relationships we have with our students, in an attempt to retain more of them, and graduate those we retain more efficiently. And we seek to integrate those into our team, faculty and staff, who bring with them a deeper connectivity to parts of the world where we need to be connected, but are not, or cannot become as meaningfully connected in any other way. A focus on collaborations, interconnectivity, branching out, extending our network; these are all hallmarks of one version of investment in our future to grow the University.

Cultivation and Pursuit of Opportunities – With positive, aligned relationships comes the ability to cultivate and pursue opportunities. These are opportunities to solve a problem, to learn something new, to introduce a student to something that could become her life's passion, or to otherwise interact within our network of relationships for the purpose of generating some jointly-shared positive outcome. It is the execution of these opportunities that yields the growth in our University. We are putting in place new opportunities -- for students to study for eight weeks abroad in Panama, or to deliver a paper at the 2010 International Astronautical Congress. The University is instituting new MS and PhD programs, for example, in Information Assurance and Modeling & Simulation. We are establishing collaborative/cooperative research agreements and student internships with local companies. We are providing new opportunities for students in flight test engineering, and delivered for our community the first musical production on campus within recent memory. Opportunities are not unlike experiments; not all opportunities will end successfully. But 100% of the opportunities we do not pursue will not be realized. The challenge here is not one of quantity – there exists more opportunity at UAHuntsville to be cultivated and pursued than we could hope to ever embrace. By focusing on those opportunities that are best aligned to our strategic direction, that can be cultivated and pursued within our means and within our relationship network, we grow the second leg of our garden of investment in UAHuntsville.

Infrastructure Enhancement – The third crop in the garden is the improvement of our infrastructure, as it pertains to physical assets, human assets, and procedural assets. People are the most important part of our infrastructure. Key hires, informed by the nexus of our relationships within our internal and external communities (such as the recent process to hire Dr. Caron St. John as the Dean in the College of Business, or Dr. Shankar Mahalingam as the Dean of Engineering, driven with the help of high-technology, leading, and successful entrepreneurs from our community), illustrate the kinds of improvements we seek. We also seek ways of improving business processes to make them more compatible with the external environment, such as the installation within OSP of an automated proposal development process in 2010. And wherever possible, we are seeking resources to improve the capital infrastructure of the University; from aggressive cost-sharing in research infrastructure proposals, or enhancing the budget within the University Research Infrastructure Investment (URII) program. Gmail, video conferencing in Shelby Center 160, a new dorm, athletics on campus; all of these physical, human, and procedural improvements are an important third crop from which we can draw nourishment. Here, as with the field of opportunity, we are unlikely to find a shortage of improvements that we can make, while still recognizing the reality of limited financial resources.

Relationships, Opportunity, Infrastructure: These are the three crops in our garden of investment, designed to help UAHuntsville grow and further nourish itself in a time of economic challenge and extreme change. Some of the fruits are already beginning to sprout. Their eventual maturation is not assured, and their growth is still vulnerable to inattention, or even simple trampling, through malice or carelessness. Even with the best stewardship, a few will not grow as we expected or hoped. Others will challenge us to keep them from taking over the garden.

No single seed can be invested with a 100% guarantee that it will grow into maturity and yield fruit. But we also know with certainty that when planted, seeds do indeed grow, mature, and deliver a harvest. Thus with some care, appropriate watering, diligent attention, and extensive labor, we can help provide ourselves a balanced set of resources to offset challenges from our environment, to open new avenues of growth for our students, and make our University better than ever. It will take time, hard work, many days in a hot sun, and patience.

From my back yard this summer, I hope for some nice tomatoes, a bit of corn, sunflowers, cucumbers, and watermelon. I look forward to seeing what your garden and your constructive labor will yield for your table this summer, and for our University community in the future.

John M. Horack, Ph.D.
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UAHuntsville Research Security Administration

Employees that currently hold a Department of Defense (DoD) Security Clearance with UAHuntsville are aware that it is a requirement per the National Industrial Security Procedures Operating Manual (NISPOM) that you complete a minimum of one security refresher training per year.

This year our office is establishing a database to track security training requirements. This should help us track the exact date and how the employee completed the training. A computer generated email will be sent out to the UAHuntsville email address to notify the employee with a security clearance of the compliance expiration for their training requirement. Make sure you are checking your email account or that you forward your UAHuntsville emails to the email account you check most frequently.

We will continue to provide a speaker(s) onsite for training as well. An email will be sent notifying you of upcoming security briefings we have scheduled. I advise all cleared employees to attend the speaker presentations when possible. These briefings provide an opportunity to ask questions and to obtain additional information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Delores Newton, UAHuntsville Research Security Administration, X 6444, Delores.Newton@uah.edu.

Compliance Corner

Marilyn Thomas
UAHuntsville Chief Compliance Officer

This article is the first in a series related to the implementation of an effective compliance program. While there are many components and much coordination needed to ensure effective compliance activities within an organization, this quarter, we will focus on those most agreed-upon throughout the compliance profession. The following listing is adapted from Chapter Eight of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines issued by the U.S. Sentencing Commission. The Office of Compliance is in the process of developing a comprehensive compliance program that addresses each element.

Keys to developing an effective compliance program:
1. Written and promulgated institutional code of ethics and conduct;
2. Explicitly stated institutional compliance policies, procedures, and standards;
3. Continual training for all employees on code of ethics and compliance policies and standards;
4. Training for affected employees on law and regulations related to their jobs;
5. Investment of adequate resources and systems to permit compliance;
6. Development and maintenance of a confidential process to encourage anonymous reporting of alleged noncompliance;
7. Protection for employees who lodge reports;
8. Regular monitoring and auditing process to test compliance;
9. A mechanism to enforce rules and to discipline violators;
10. Management commitment to take initial corrective actions and follow-up to ensure effectiveness of corrective actions;
11. Establishment of Institutional Compliance Steering Committee, staffed by personnel from key compliance areas; and
12. Adequate reporting to Executive management.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at Marilyn.Thomas@uah.edu or X6845.

OVPR Norms

1. Communicate openly, directly, and truthfully, with respect for the views of others.

2. Show support for our team, for others at UAHuntsville, and promote the University and its decisions.

3. Find solutions, not just identify problems.

4. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

5. Trust the motives of our colleagues.

6. Celebrate our successes, and learn from both successes and failures.

7. Hold ourselves and each other accountable to our commitments.

8. Put the global success of the University ahead of local or parochial concerns.

9. Treat everyone as a professional, with courtesy, dignity and mutual respect.

10. Balance our personal and professional lives.

11. Be stakeholder oriented, clarify mutual expectations up front,

WELCOME TO UAHUNTSVILLE

Gwen Britt has over four years of experience in sponsored research activities. Gwen was a Fiscal Analyst II at Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN. She has an extensive working knowledge of OMB Circular A133, 2CFR Part 220, 230, 215 and 225 as well as cost analysis and justification in the pre and post award process. Gwen joined the Office of Sponsored Programs in March 2010.

Gwen is the Contract Administrator for: Provost (OIP, AA, ISED, PCS), College of Nursing, College of Liberal Arts, Humanities Center, College of Business, (CMOST, CMER, SBDC) VP for Research, Laboratory for Structural Biology (LSB), and the NASA Cooperative Agreement (22A).

Please join me in welcoming Gwen to the UAHuntsville Community. Please stop by and introduce yourself. Gwen's office is located in VBRH E23. She can be reached at X2658 or Gwendolyn.Britt@uah.edu .

Proposals should Emphasize "Vision", and Not "Methods"
Charles Howard, Jr., Ph.D., (GrantsCrafter Consultancy in Seattle, WA)
Principal Investigator Advisor, Volume 1, No. 2, March 2010

An experience grant counselor encourages PIs to focus on their goals and visions, instead of methods. The emphasis, says Charles Howard, Jr., Ph.D, should be on why you are conducting your research. "Plan first, then write. The question you need to ask are: What is my research about? What is my short-term and long-term vision? Vision is important. Once you have your vision, everything flows from that."

Estimating that fewer than 10 to 15% of proposals get read completely by reviewers, Howard presents what he calls the 12/12/12 Rule which says that at twelve o'clock midnight, proposal reviewers have already read twelve proposals and yours is at the bottom of the pile. "They may be drinking coffee or wine. If you can get their attention at that point, you're doing good." He expresses that most reviewers start with 100 points and start subtracting points for "stumbles," which can be typos, missing transitions, or inconsistencies throughout the proposal. "It is not the reviewer's fault. It is you. You have to take full responsibility."

Howard states that one way to get the reviewer's attention, even at midnight, is to focus on three sentences. 1. What is the problem or need? 2. What is the significance of your proposal? 3. Why are you the person or group who can resolve the need?

Within the context of a typical proposal, there are three primary initial components: goals, objectives, and outcomes. He states that none of these refer to "methods," which comes later. "Goals are overall plans for work are generally not measurable. They're a mindset. However, objectives typically are measurable."

Howard further states that "outcome is really where your aim is. You need to be thinking about this from the beginning. I consider a proposal circular, not linear. When you write something in the opening sentence, it will appear throughout the proposal, in the budget, outcomes, and it must all tie together."

Howard urges PIs to not criticize colleagues and peers in the submission. Although you can point out similar research, you should tell how you would approach it differently and why, not slam their approach. "Your colleagues may be reviewing your proposal, so make sure you treat them well. Speak logically about how you can help advance your field as well as their field."

And finally, after putting your vision down on paper, you can turn to the "how" aspect of the proposal, your procedures according to Howard. Howard suggests questions you should ask yourself: "Are you being innovative? Original scope of work? Have they been tested and tried? If they're new lab methods from other sources, are they working okay?"

At the very end, it's time to write the abstract/summary. Howard says, "write it after the whole process. It contains all the elements of the proposal, which is why you write it last."

Howard states the budget narrative is one of the most important parts of the proposal, because "at this point you are explaining and clarifying the direct costs in the budget. They must match those previously reported and mentioned in the narrative."

Howard suggest you get to know the project officers. "They want the facts and they want a well written proposal. They are highly intelligent and want to do the best they can in dispersing their monies to everyone else."

Finally, Howard notes, from time to time, all researchers will get rejected. He says you can learn from these experiences. "A rejection is a chance to start over. Use that information to revamp the proposal. Talk to the project officer."

This article and many more helpful tips are printed in the Principal Investigator Advisor, a monthly subscription located on the OSP Website.

UAHuntsville
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

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PROPOSALS AND AWARDS

October 2009—April 2010	FY2010		FY2009	
	Number	**Value**	**Number**	**Value**
Proposals (YTD)	493	$139,934,468	382	$111,225,715
Awards (YTD)	834	$54,581,330	629	$35,573,744
*Expenditures (YTD)		$43,813,239		$36,608,466

Expenditures do not include construction.

National Institute of Health (NIH)

NIH will no longer accept paper progress reports after August 1, 2010. All SNAP reports will be required to be submitted electronically through the NIH Commons at that time. The SNAP provisions are hereby expanded to include the following:

1. SNAP Progress reports will be due 45 days prior to the next budget start date instead of 60 days.

2. IRB and IACUC approval dates will not be required as part of each progress report submission. However, it remains an institutional responsibility to ensure that these reviews are conducted in accordance with all Federal requirements.

3. The grantee may delegate authority to the PD/PI to submit the progress report directly to NIH. This is an optional delegation authority available in the eRA Commons eSNAP tool.

For additional information please go to: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-093.html

Funding Opportunities Resources

Community of Science
Looking for potential funding opportunities? Have you tried Community of Science (COS)?
COS is the leading global resource for hard-to-find information critical to scientific research and other projects across all disciplines.
To access COS from the OSP Website, under the PROPOSAL TAB "Funding Sources"
http://www.uah.edu/research/resadmin/index.html
To learn more about COS, please contact **Steve Parker** at 2654 or parkerjs@uah.edu

Grant Advisor
http://www.grantadvisor.com/tgaplus/

Weekly Funding Bulletin
The OSP Weekly Funding Bulletin is an abstract of funding opportunities from various agencies such as NASA, DOE, DOD, NIH, NSF, Private Foundations, and State Agencies. If you would like to receive the Funding Bulletin, please send an email to:
ospweeklyfundingbulletin@uah.edu, or contact **Susan Phelan** at 3747 or Susan.Phelan@uah.edu

The Office of Sponsored Programs' (OSP) mission is to support three distinct groups: 1) UAHuntsville faculty, students and research staff; 2) UAHuntsville administration; and 3) our funding sponsors.

OSP strives to maintain balance among these groups by reviewing proposals to external funding agencies, proper fiscal management of funds received, and oversight of compliance matters related to external agencies and the federal government.

OSP's role is to support the faculty, staff, and administration of UAHuntsville in effectively seeking, obtaining, and managing their research and scholarly activities to enhance their educational role.