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CUSP Submission: Research Administrators Meetings [1]

This submission describes a specialized peer group on the Boulder campus. The Research Administrators Meetings (RAM) is an informal group of employees who have come together to discuss relevant and timely issues related to administering sponsored research projects and contracts. It was started by Carolyn James, currently Director of Operations for the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, when she was with the Center for Integrated Plasma Studies. Carolyn continues as RAM's primary organizer.

Meetings often include a panel discussion with experts internal and external to the group. It has been fortunate to have the support of the Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG), Accounting and Business Services (ABS), Vice Chancellor for Research's office (VCR), Procurement Service Center (PSC), International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), and the Office of University Controller (OUC). Discussion topics have included demystifying DA-ICR, M-Fin reports, export controls, research faculty personnel issues, U.S. Visa options for foreign nationals, CU Marketplace, and intermediate Excel skills. Members also share best practices and discuss how they do things in their home units.

The RAM member e-mail list is available 24/7 for anyone in the group to pose a question. The list includes people with an invaluable wealth of knowledge and experience. Members of the list have been generous with sharing their ideas, successes, and lessons learned.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE UNIVERSITY?

This group provides added value at no additional cost to the University. RAM provides a sense of community for a disparate set of employees who may have felt isolated and alone struggling with complex issues. RAM provides a forum for mentoring, networking, and sharing among the various employees who administer sponsored grants and contracts.

Research awards on the Boulder campus totaled $380 million in fiscal year 2012. The need for expert administration of these awards is paramount and the ongoing activities and contributions of RAM help increase the level of professionalism within the ranks of research administration. The benefits extend to Principal Investigators and their departments, OCG and SPA, the university, and the sponsoring agencies.

RAM has developed ad hoc subcommittees. In 2011, the Boulder campus controller, Laura Ragin, reached out to RAM for volunteers to discuss issues and concerns regarding the Travel System piece in the Expense System, specifically with respect to sponsored projects. In February 2013, there was an internal movement among RAM members to create an ad hoc working group to meet and discuss the proposed changes to the OMB Uniform Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance in March and April.

• http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/financial/grant_reform... [2]

The discussions and comments are being summarized and submitted to Kathy Lorenzi, Associate Director, OCG Boulder campus. This collaboration between OCG and RAM will only strengthen the campus response.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The resadmin@lists.colorado.edu [3] list was created in October 2010 by Carolyn James and the group began meeting monthly in January 2011. Since then, the group has met 11 times per year, not meeting in December. Ideas for topics come from RAM members. Carolyn James contacts experts in the relevant topics and invites them to meet with the group. She then arranges the room reservation and any technology needed for the speaker/panel members. Meeting locations vary across the campus to make it convenient, accessible, and to enhance interest.

The group has continued to grow and thrive. In July 2011 there were 93 subscribers to the list and that has grown to 151 as of March 2013. This list includes department, institute, and center research administrators as well as our partners with ABS, SPA, OCG, and the VCR.

While RAM's focus is research administration, the overall concept can be utilized by others who recognize a need or benefit of getting together with a group of peers to discuss matters of mutual professional interest.

Please see the link generously provided by ABS: http://www.colorado.edu/abs/node/31 [4]

Feel free to join us on the list!

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Groups audience:
Controller

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/controller/cusp-submission-research-administrators-meetings

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/controller/cusp-submission-research-administrators-meetings
[2] http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/financial/grant_reform/proposed-omb-uniform-guidance-for-federal-financial-assistance.pdf [3] mailto:resadmin@lists.colorado.edu
[4] http://www.colorado.edu/abs/node/31