

**Programmatic and fiscal compliance:
Obtaining Standards of excellence in
sponsored programs administration**

The Future of Successful Research Administration

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Based on: A Conceptual Framework for the Future of Successful Research Administration, Lintz, E.M.; J
of Research Administration, vol 39,(2): 2008

SRA International

- **Research administrators** may work in:
 - research administration or research management
 - contracts and grants management
 - financial management
 - intellectual property and technology transfer
 - training and educational programming
 - human resources management
 - regulatory compliance
 - ethics and IRBs
 - information services

SRA International Code of Ethics

- **Balance** the dual obligations and interests of my employer and funding agencies and seek to negotiate terms of sponsorship which are in the best interest of all parties.
- Follow the letter and the spirit of the **laws, regulations and sponsorship agreement** affecting research administration responsibilities.
- **Inform** individuals who are associated directly or indirectly and with my services of those policies, procedures and regulations impacting conduct of research and research administration.

SRA International's Body of Knowledge

- Public Responsibility

The research administrator must not only **understand** the relevant regulations, but must also **identify resources and strategies** to establish and maintain compliance programs.

Beyond these policy requirements, **issues of ethics, accountability, and costs** move the research institution from areas of hard science to hard choices.

Research Administrator's Role

- **Historically,**
 - Reactive to their environment
 - Reviewed proposal, rather than create them
 - Chanelled proposals rather than “champion” them to award status
- **Recently**
 - Key participants in funded research strategic planning
 - Leaders at department, college, & university levels in attracting and managing research dollars

- Expanding nature of research administrator is attributable to increases in sponsored research dollars, competitiveness, complexity of meeting sponsor funding requirements and **accountability for managing research dollars.**

To achieve success, research administrators...

- Must be knowledgeable in
 - Accounting
 - Law
 - Technology
 - Academic content
 - Clinical trials
 - Economic trends
 - Public and social policy
 - Global issues

Institutions must recognize...

- Research administrators as valuable assets
- Be willing to incorporate non-academics into the top levels of institutional strategic planning.

Conceptual Framework

- Six cornerstones essential to pre- and post-award research administration:
 - Mission
 - Information
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Transition or Transformation
 - Outcomes

Mission

- Central to the function of any entity
- Single or multiple components
- In Institutions of Higher Education: address the changing nature of society and the communities they serve.

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Education and critical inquiry
- Research
 - Research administrators should help investigators create proposals, and ensure the accurate and efficient processing of awards from initial receipt to final closing.
 - Study trends in funding, legislation and policy to expand the knowledge base of investigators and help them focus on appropriate funding sources.

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Civic responsibility
 - Institutions of Higher Education are expected to contribute to questions facing society and to develop superior technology.
 - Research administrators:
 - play a crucial role in ensuring research compliance with federal, state and local regulations as well as sponsor requirements.
 - have a proactive approach to problem solving.

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Information
 - Pre-award: info is more than RFP release dates and due dates. Info must be obtained, tracked, and analyzed on several fronts: federal and local political climate; legislation and policy; sponsor funding priorities and trends; and needs of global community.
 - Post-award: trends toward greater accountability, outcomes of funded projects and programs, lessons learned.

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Communication
 - Research administrators should rely on several methods of communication:
 - E-mail
 - Face to face contact: essential to maintain a true sense of collaborative teamwork and common purpose and eliminate “us-versus-them” attitudes among themselves and between research administrators and investigators.

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Collaboration
 - Faculty and administrators should collaborate to advance research agendas; to ensure pre and post-award systems operate smoothly.
- Transition or Transformation
 - Transition: minor, involving relatively little movement from one level to another.
 - Transformation: complete reframing of ideals, structure, goals, use of human capital & resources.
 - It is more cost-effective to transition slowly than to transform in a hurry.

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Transition or Transformation
 - Perception of research administrators, principal investigators and other players in the research arena.
 - *“Research administrators need to view themselves outside the process of proposal-submitting, and become involved in the science proposed by investigators.”*
 - *“Investigators need to view research administrators as active supporters of their research, rather than policy-driven roadblocks.”*

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Outcomes
 - Quantitative results
 - Number of sponsored research dollars/FTE; # of graduate students and postdoctoral students supported; # of proposals submitted; dollars requested; # of awards

One or two high numbers are not necessarily a sign of success.

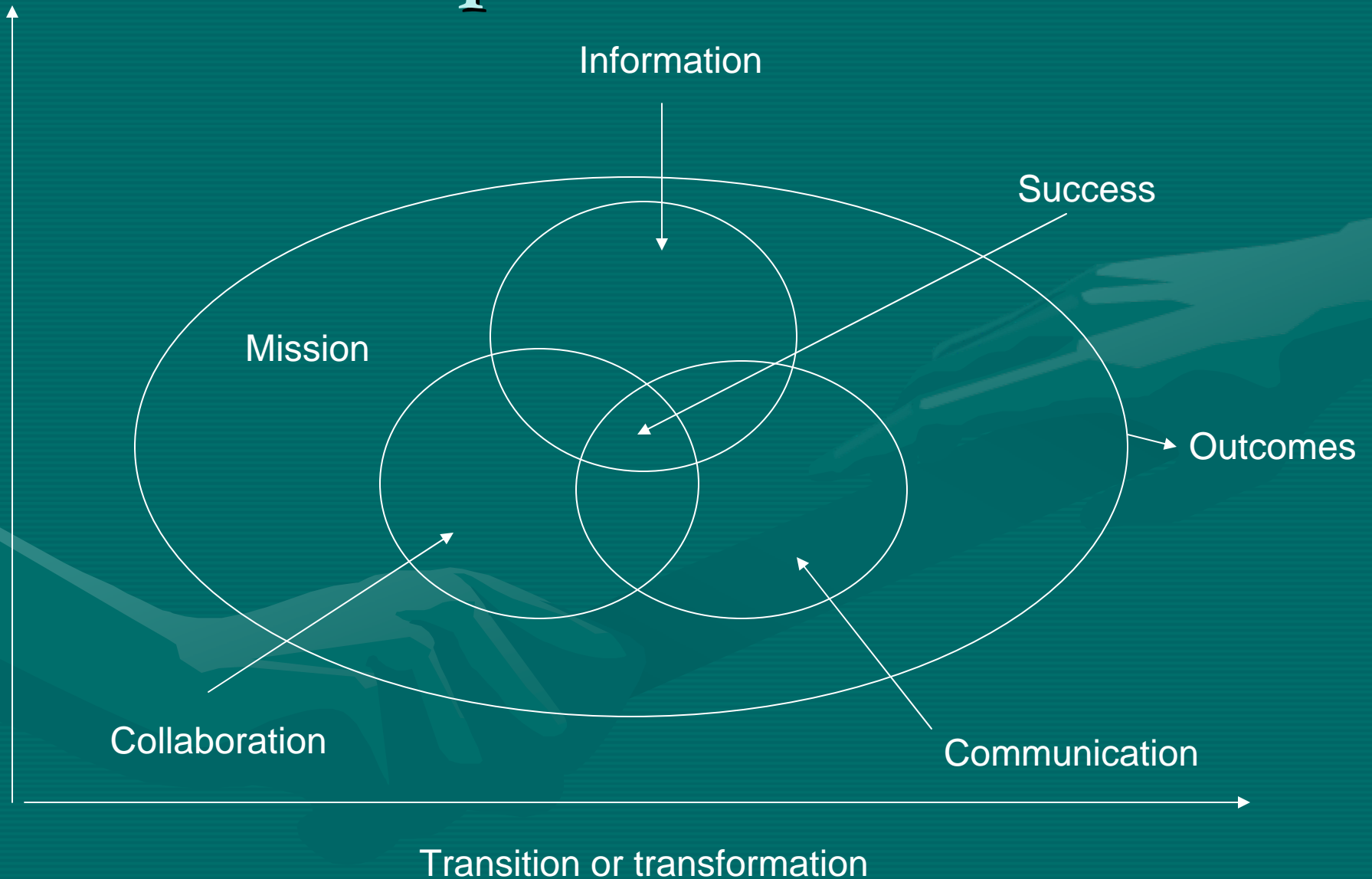
Institutional administrators must seek additional measures of efficiency. The level of support expended (pre-award) should relate to level of return (post-award).*

Essential Components of Modern, Progressive Mission

- Outcomes
 - Qualitative measures
 - Perception, satisfaction, level of engagement or investment. (surveys, focus groups)

In a transformative stage, institutional administrators should learn how satisfied their stakeholders are in their current positions, their perception of the changes, and what is needed to make the changes successful.*

Conceptual Framework*



Operation

- Needs assessment

Research administrators should conduct a needs assessment during strategic planning to determine what resources are required to achieve stated goals at level of campus, college, department, faculty member and proposal.

- Key Strategies

Tools in day-to-day operations (free listservs, professional development courses and certifications)

Key Strategy —————> Level of resource or investment

Evaluation

- Components come from the original questions in the needs assessment
 - Were needs properly identified?
 - What were expected outcomes?
 - What worked/needs improvement?
 - Were services and information effectively and efficiently disseminated?

*Improved performance will bring increased trust and respect from faculty and other peers.
In research administration one must continually seek to improve knowledge, skills and performance.*

Evaluation

**Needs
Assessment**

Conceptual Framework

Strategies



“Sociedad Administradores de Investigación”

XI Annual Conference 2010

- **Programmatic and fiscal compliance: obtaining standards of excellence in sponsored programs administration**
 - Budgeting
 - Regulatory Committees: Authority and Autonomy
 - Effects of non-compliance on sponsored projects and the responsibility of the sponsored programs office
 - Fiscal compliance: What to expect in a federal audit

Conclusion

- The conceptual framework was developed to assist research administrators with improving their approach to research administration as a whole.
- If the field of research administration is to grow, and gain wider acceptance and respect, then research administrators must take action and help a unit move beyond the status quo and be valuable stakeholders in promoting a unit's success.

References

- Lintz, Elizabeth M.; A Conceptual Framework for the Future of Successful Research Administration, *J of Research Administration*, vol 39,(2): 2008.
- Waugaman, P.G., Kirby, W.S., & Tornatzky, L.G. (2006), Performance measurement. In E.C. Kulakowski, & L.U. Chroniser (Eds.), *Research administration and management* (pp.137-147). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
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What is a research administrator?
Code of Ethics