


NCURA PEER REVIEW: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

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WHAT IS A PEER REVIEW?

- An Assessment of an Institution's Sponsored Programs Administration.
- Conducted by NCURA Members
 - Research Administrators from Institutions Across the Country.
- Based on Standards
 - COGR: "Managing Externally Funded Research Programs: A Guide to Effective Management Practices"
- Differences between Peer Review, Audits, and Consulting.



WHY WOULD I WANT A REVIEW?: THE REVIEWERS' PERSPECTIVE

- Change in Campus Leadership
 - "This isn't the way we did things at my old institution—we should look at changing things here."
- Concerns about Current Processes
 - "It takes too long and it's too hard to manage sponsored projects—we should change things here."
- Assessing the Current State
 - "We've been doing it this way for a long time—does this process still work in today's environment?"
 - "We just started getting into this process—are we doing things appropriately and effectively?"



WHY WOULD I WANT A REVIEW?:

A CAMPUS PERSPECTIVE

- Considerable growth in last 10 years
- Changes in Key Leadership over last 2-3 years
- Concerns about Current Processes
 - How can we do more with the same amount of staff (or even less staff)?
 - How can we eliminate silos within our organization?
- Assessing the Current State
 - Are our current procedures sufficient?
 - What are other universities doing?
- Concerns about increasing regulations
 - With more rules, how can we make sure we are keeping up?

GETTING A REVIEW: HOW ONE CAMPUS DID IT

- Research the NCURA program
- Made recommendations and obtained support from upper administration to proceed
- Formed a steering committee from all areas of research administration and compliance

PRE-REVIEW PREPARATIONS: THE REVIEWERS

- Training on the Standards
- Research the Institution:
 - Type of Institution (Public vs Private, PUI, Land Grant, Research-intensive, etc.)
 - Types of Research and Sponsors (Medical school, Federal vs. Non-federal, hard sciences vs social sciences, etc.)
 - Research Administration Structure (combined Preaward/Postaward, department or division delegation, etc.)
 - Policies and Procedures (web links and hard copies provided by the Institution)
 - Previous Audits and Reviews
 - Electronic Systems

PRE-REVIEW PREPARATIONS: THE CAMPUS

- Pulled together documentation & background material for peer reviewers
 - all 99 points
- Prepared briefing book
 - 487 pages
 - (maybe wrote a few key policies ☺)
- Included complete information on university, org. charts, policies, current procedures, structure, training, compliance, etc.

PRE-REVIEW PREPARATIONS: THE CAMPUS (CONT'D)

- Developed a charge letter:
 - Evaluate our current processes
 - Identify best practices and identify areas needing improvement
 - Provide a point of reference for compliance activities and how they integrate with overall research administration
 - Assess current research data collection and reporting processes and provide recommendations on how to enhance

CAMPUS TIMELINE:

- January 2009 – began initial planning & preparation
- July 6, 2009 – charge letter and draft itinerary due to NCURA
- August 3, 2009 – printed materials due to NCURA
- August 17, 2009 – conference call
- September 8-10, 2009 – on-site review
- November 6, 2009 - final report received

THE ON-SITE REVIEW: THE REVIEWERS

- Meet with All Parties Associated with the Research Enterprise
 - Senior Campus Management
 - Central Office (Management and Staff)
 - Division/Dean (Management and Staff)
 - Departmental Administrators
 - PIs
 - Compliance Offices (IRB, IACUC, Biosafety, etc)

THE ON-SITE REVIEW: THE REVIEWERS (CONT'D)

- Interviews Typically Over 2-3 Days
 - Length of 30 minutes to 2 hours each
 - Generally Held in One Location
 - May Occasionally Visit the Offices of a Unit
- Between the Interviews, Reviewers:
 - Share Quick Impressions with Each Other
 - Begin putting the pieces together on processes and roles and responsibilities
 - Add questions to the list for subsequent interviews

THE ON-CAMPUS REVIEW: THE REVIEWERS

- What Do We Ask?
 - Processes
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Hand-offs and routing
 - Communications
 - Training
 - Performance measures
 - What's working well?
 - What could be improved?
- We don't ask about specific individuals' performance.
- We don't ask about specific transactions.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND COMMENTS: THE REVIEWERS

- Consolidate Interview Responses into Themes and Observations
- On-site Wrap-up Meeting with Campus Management to Discuss.
 - Broad bullet points.
 - Preliminary suggestions/recommendations
 - Try to identify any quick wins vs. longer-term areas of focus.
 - Set Timeline for Final Report



REPORT PREPARATION: THE REVIEWERS

- Each Reviewer is Responsible for Preparing Specific Sections and Recommendations.
 - 30-day target
 - Lead Reviewer Responsible for Version Control and Connecting the Sections into a Cohesive Report.
- Final Draft Report is Sent to the Institution
 - Corrections of Factual Errors.
- Final Report Submitted to the Institution.



FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO CAMPUS: A CAMPUS PERSPECTIVE

- A total of 64 recommendations were made
- Were organized into 4 broad themes:
 - Organization of Research Administration
 - Communication and Education
 - Compliance
 - Risk Assessment and Management
- Only 5 recommendations did not fit into these broad themes and they were issues outside of our control



FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO CAMPUS:
A CAMPUS PERSPECTIVE – (CONT'D).

○ Organization of Research Administration

- Research Administration reorganization
- Clarify roles & responsibilities
- Establish career paths
- Encourage cross-training between units



FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO CAMPUS:
A CAMPUS PERSPECTIVE – (CONT'D).

○ Communication and Education

- Increased and more effective communication internally
- Improve communication with centers/departments
- Faculty based initiatives
- Increased communication with campus research support staff



FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO CAMPUS:
A CAMPUS PERSPECTIVE – (CONT'D).

○ Compliance

- Integrate compliance at all levels
- Improve electronic tools
- Create checklists to improve consistency



FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO CAMPUS:
A CAMPUS PERSPECTIVE – (CONT'D).

○Risk Assessment and Management

- Adopt formalized risk assessment process to identify, assess and manage areas of compliance and financial risk
- Create risk assessment team
- Continue to standardize policies and practices



INTERESTED IN NCURA PEER REVIEW?

- http://www.ncura.edu/content/peer_to_peer_review/index.php
- Email: peerreview@ncura.edu
- Call Peggy Lowry at NCURA: (503) 364-1847