

I-Team: Research Management

October 16, 2017

1Q PROGRESS REPORT

Background: The gap between the University's investment in world-class faculty -- with the concomitant exponential growth in extramural funding for research -- and the much more incremental investment in staff and infrastructure to support the university's "powerhouse" research enterprise, has resulted in recognized shortfalls in research support. The current deficiencies in the research management infrastructure, including in automated tools and systems as well as personnel, threatens not only our forward progress, but also our continued ability to achieve excellence in targeted use-inspired interdisciplinary research. There is increased dissatisfaction among faculty about the support they receive in preparing their proposals and managing their research awards. This long-standing concern¹ continues to undermine the University's strategic research goals. On June 29, 2017, the Senior Leadership Team appointed the inaugural integration team (I-Team²), led by the Senior Vice Provost for Research, to identify and recommend initiatives designed to provide responsive, effective and integrated research management services and tools for investigators.

The I-team kickoff meeting was held on July 25, 2017; at that meeting the Provost issued the charge and discussed 3 immediate priorities: a transparent application to track, coordinate and report transactions managed by Research Administration, a post-award fund management system and the development of a professional training program for College grant and contract administrators. See attached **Executive Summary: Recommendations for Short-Term Initiatives**.

To date, the I-team has met at least twice monthly and has requested additional assistance from David Navick and Don Stewart (Budget) and Diana Danelian (Decision Support).

The team identified the following long-term priorities that will inform the development of a strategic plan, include a long-range financial plan, for research infrastructure:

- I. **Funding Research Infrastructure:** The University's current hybrid budget model does not provide sufficient resources to support the capital and operating costs of managing research. The team invited David Navick and Don Stewart to explore potential strategies for quantifying current deficiencies (the "gap" between current and necessary support levels). One measure proposed is the development of a formula to calculate the total costs for each new faculty hire (i.e., include all costs of conducting research: salary, startup packages, space, core facilities, administrative support, etc.) and to identify projected facility and administrative costs of expanding the current research portfolio. **Next Step:** Survey central administrative offices to identify resources dedicated to research management support and what additional resources are needed based on the University's projected goal of \$200m in research funding by 2022. Communicate that information to David Navick and Don Stewart.

¹ 2008 Huron Report; March 2017 Deans Memo

² Members: Art Kramer, SVPR; David Budil, CoS/Faculty Representative; Dana Carroll and Joan Cyr RA; Jeff Seo, RC, Barbara Healy Smith, OGC; Stephanie Trowbridge, ITS; and Terri Waggett, RF.

II. Current Capacity: In the 3 core central research management units (Administration, Compliance and Finance) there exists significant personnel gaps (either because existing positions are not currently included in the operating budget or are new initiative requests that were not funded in recent FY budgets). Both Administration and Finance have experienced significant “churn” in personnel – the volume of activity creates unmanageable workloads has led to loss of personnel, which in turn has impacted recruitment. The I-team has identified FTEs needed to fill the current gap. Adequate staffing is an immediate priority and new initiative request before the SLT, see Executive Summary: I-Team Recommendations for Short-Term Initiatives. **Next Step:** Secure SLT authorization/funding.

III. Workflows, Systems & Reporting: The I-Team has identified the development and acquisition of research management applications as a short-term priorities, these requests reflect recommendations originally included in the ITS Research Strategic Plan (2016) and see Executive Summary: I-Team Recommendations for Short-Term Initiatives. This request includes funding for the development and support of an expanded electronic proposal and award workflow system (ePAWS) for non-financial administrative matters and implementation of Priority One software, which was selected by the Colleges for post-award fund projections/management. **Next Step:** Secure SLT authorization/funding.

IV. Capacity/Organizational Models: The effectiveness of local research management support within the respective Colleges and departments varies considerably – from the College of Engineering’s high-function Administrative Resource Center (ARC) to many Colleges that have little or no dedicated support for research management. The lack of local skilled support needed to assist faculty in the preparation of their proposals or the management of their research funds severely impacts the central offices, which are themselves significantly under resourced. **Next Steps:** The I-team working in conjunction with Diana Danelian will be surveying the respective Colleges to identify current local support levels and determine the optimum distribution of tasks as between central units and the colleges and what delegation of authority will be required .

V. Roles and Responsibilities: The I-Team has identified specific tasks/transactions throughout the proposal/award lifecycle and has begun the development of a matrix to establish primary responsibility for each task. **Next step:** Develop a communication plan to disseminate roles/responsibilities information to the respective individuals (e.g., PI/College Administrators/Central Administrators).

VI. Training: Research Compliance and Research Management training is an I-Team short-term priority; resources needed to implement a comprehensive training program are included in the short-term, new initiative request before the SLT. **Next Step:** Secure SLT authorization/funding.

VII. Faculty Engagement: Given the high level of dissatisfaction with research management support at Northeastern, the I-team, working in conjunction with Diana Danelian, will be hosting a Town Hall for faculty. At that structured Town Hall meeting real-time polling will be used to survey the participants. **Next Step:** Prepare agenda and polling questions; set date.