

## Working Effectively with Faculty

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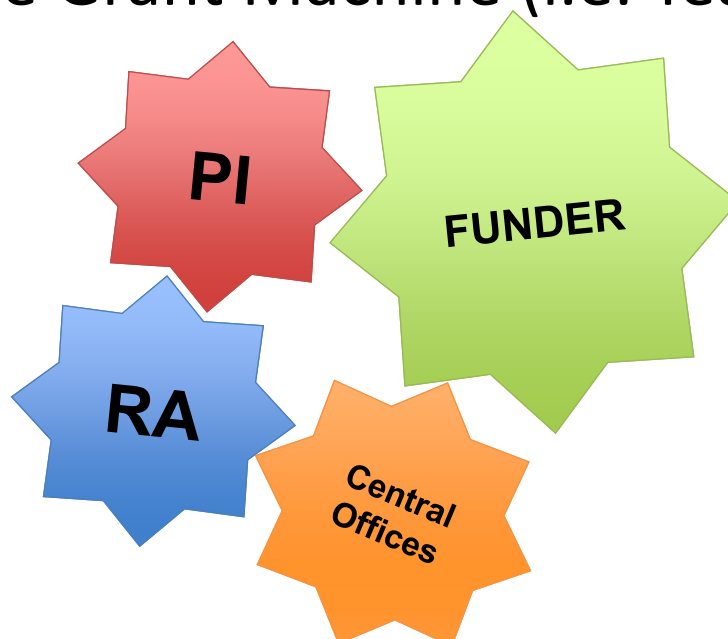
## Session Learning Objectives

- Understand perspectives of faculty and RAs;
- Identify keys to effective communications that can improve relationships with faculty;
- Identify tools and resources to reduce frustration and improve effectiveness.

## Terms to be used

- “technical” = business portion of the proposal
- “electronic” = Duke or funder systems
- “science” = main descriptions of scholarly activity

## The Grant Machine (i.e. Team!)



## Research Administrators & Faculty: Baseline Perspectives

- Research Administrators' perspectives
  - “One with” the Duke grant preparation systems, or funders' submission and reporting systems
  - Largely and sometimes entirely focused on financials (business aspects of budgets, expenditures)
  - May be unaware of or unfamiliar with the purpose of the research or grant in question.
  - Swamped
- Faculty members' “natural” perspectives
  - Wholly focused on the “science” – their scholarly activities and the parts of the grant that describe their plans.
  - Competing demands: teaching, administrative, mentoring, clinical care, etc.
  - Financials and budgets are almost never at the front of their minds.
  - Swamped

## PI “Knowledge Gaps”

- Duke rules
  - Internal due dates
  - System requirements
- Budgeting
  - Subcontractors vs. vendors
  - Costs that hit directs vs. indirects

## PI - Support from Research Administrators

- Timelines
- Complicated applications – outline of sections
- Assigning grant sections
- Letters of support
- Tables
- “Back” sections – templates/examples
- Strategizing on ways to assign costs across years

## Where is our common ground?

- Shared Goals
  - Everyone’s goal is to submit the highest quality application/proposal possible (read: the strongest “science” and compliant with funder and Duke policies/requirements)
- Expert guidance
  - Faculty are usually not expert in Duke’s or funders’ systems; they need **your** expertise.

## Principles of Effective Communication (I)

- Know your audience
  - Start your communication from shared understanding
  - Use shared goals to motivate
  - Make giving you what you need their easiest “to do”
- Know your “stuff”

## Principles of Effective Communication (II)

- Clear & complete
  - Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?
- Confidence
  - Expertise, concise language, carefully constructed emails
- Concise
  - Make every word work
  - Write, review, revise
- Consistent
  - Both your details and your message
- Community
  - Developing and sharing resources and tools

## Clear & complete

- **Who** will be responsible for which components
- **What** all is needed from each person
- **When** is each item due
- **Where** should the information be sent or stored
- **Why** – Providing additional information explaining the reasons behind things is a great way to inspire confidence.
- **How** each item should be done to ensure consistency

## Confidence

- Earn the PIs confidence by including supporting information when you answer their questions. This helps the PIs realize you've done the research and provided accurate information.

### Example

- Include the weblink to where the information is found.

## Concise

- Don't lose your audience: get to the point quickly and succinctly
- When sending an email, ensure that you are including only the essential message you're trying to communicate. Be mindful that you probably only have a minute or two of your faculty member's attention.
- When meeting in person, plan ahead. Know your subject matter and try to keep your faculty member on topic.

## Consistent

- Consistency is a building block of trust
- Put tools and processes in place and use them
- Provide the same level of service as often as possible; if you're not able to do so, make sure you discuss this with your faculty member so they are aware
- Be responsive



## Community

- Reach out to the larger Duke RA community for advice and guidance in handling issues
- Increase your knowledge base so that you can become a resource in your community
- Develop and share tools
- Use the RA resources available through Duke



## Tools – make the to-do easy

- Get it started: questionnaires and timelines
- Keep it moving: budget tools, tracking sheets, and research strategy templates
- Tailor tools for each need
- Develop your own tools based on need



## Available Resources

- SOM: Office of Research Development; departmental resources (DoM, DoS, Peds); ORA
- SON: Office of Research Affairs
- University: Joanna's counterparts in Trinity Natural Sciences/SSRI, Pratt (?), Nicholas School, Lemur Center; ORS
- All: Duke Office of Clinical Research (for human subjects research design, conduct, and advice); Office of Sponsored Programs
- Contract Proposal preparation guidance and advice: Taylor Nguyen & DCRI (tools), ORA

## Contact us!

- Joanna Downer: [joanna.downer@duke.edu](mailto:joanna.downer@duke.edu); 681-8272
- Esther DeMarco: [esther.demarco@dm.duke.edu](mailto:esther.demarco@dm.duke.edu)
- Taylor Nguyen: [taylor.nguyen@dm.duke.edu](mailto:taylor.nguyen@dm.duke.edu) (especially re: contract proposal tools)



## Conclusions

- Effective communication using these approaches builds & maintains relationships with faculty (and others!)
- There will always be difficult people, but using careful, effective communication and effective tools can reduce **your** frustration.
- Don't let negative situations or people steal your positive energy.



## Discussion