How to Successfully Manage an “Inherited” Sponsored Project

The Tale of the Very Special Grant: A Post-Award Success Story

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Research Administration Support Resource (RASR)
School of Medicine
Research Administration Support Resource

- Central office in School of Medicine
- Began in 2016
- Provide full service research administration services
  - Centrally located
  - Permanent, turn-over, short term
  - Develop consistency, implement best practices, provide hands on customer service
How might you inherit a sponsored project?

- Hired into a new department
- Switch roles within your department
- Filled vacancy
- Transfer from another institution
Half way through the project, it lands in your....

LAP

You are...
- Responsible
- Accountable
- Point person
Now that you are the proud owner....

1. Access to Sponsor Systems
2. Access to Duke Systems and supplemental sources
3. Identification of key personnel
4. Action Plan
Sponsor Systems

- NIH:

- NSF:

- pcori:

- Foundation:
Duke Systems

- Sponsored Project System:

- Grants Mgmt Tab:

- SAP:

- Maestro Care:
Supplemental Sources

• Duke BOX files

• Departmental shared drives

• Emails, other documentation
Key Personnel

- Principal Investigator (PI)
- Business Manager
- Lab Manager
- Pre-award Office Contact (ORA, ORS)
- OSP Liaison (Master Data)
- Departmental SPOCs
- Sponsor Contact
  - Program Officer, Grants Management Specialist, etc.
ACTION PLAN...

- Identify the details of the project
  - *What is this in my lap?*

- Assess the current situation
  - *Where are we now? (Snapshot of financial status)*

- Retrace history
  - *How did we get here?*

- Communicate issues

- Resolve problems
The Tale of the Very Special Grant

A Post-Award Success Story

Once upon a time...
Disclaimer

Although portions of this story are derived from real events, some details have been added or altered for dramatic purposes, or to protect the privacy of certain individuals.
Characters

- **PI(s)**
  - SOM
  - Dean’s office
  - Trinity A/S

- **Staff**
  - Program Director
  - Postdoc
  - Administrative Asst.

- **Students**
  - Grad students
  - Undergrads

- **Duke Faculty**

- **NIH Program Officer**

- **Research Administrator (you!)**
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Chapter 1
What Is This In My Lap?
Notice of Award -
What did the sponsor provide?
What are Terms and Conditions?

Application -
What did we request?

Budget -
How are we planning to spend the award?

SPS Record -
What is the history of this project?
**Personnel:** Individuals participating in the design and implementation of the research education program may request salary and fringe benefits appropriate for the person months devoted to the program. These expenses must be itemized in Sections A and B, as appropriate, of the Research & Related Budget.

Salary support for the PD/PI (or combination of multiple PDs/PIs) is limited to up to 2.25 person months during the academic year and 0.75 person months in the summer, depending on person months devoted to the administration of the program. Program coordinators are allowed as long as their role in the program implementation is clearly defined and significantly different from the roles of the PDs/PIs. The duties and responsibilities of the program coordinators with a strong justification must be included in the budget justification.
Participant Costs: Salary support is allowed for undergraduate students participating in a research internship, as long as there is an employee-employer relationship between the student and the institution. The undergraduate student is not supported for more than 15 hours per week during the academic year and not more than 40 hours/week during the summer, and (c) student participation in the specific developmental activity is not a curriculum requirement for graduation. A justification must be provided if the requested support for undergraduates is more than $12 per hour.
Other Program-Related Expenses:
Consultant costs, equipment, supplies, travel for key persons, and other program-related expenses must be justified as specifically required by the proposed research education program and must not duplicate items generally available for educational programs at the applicant institution. These expenses must be itemized, as appropriate, in Sections C. (Equipment), D. (Travel), and F. (Other Direct Costs) of the Research & Related Budget.
**Unallowable Costs** include:

- Undergraduate student tuition, housing, food, foreign travel, or recruitment expenses.
- Graduate student housing, food, foreign travel, or recruitment expenses.
- Undergraduate or graduate student support in the form of a stipend (note: stipend differs technically from salary/wages described above, which is allowable).
- Support for either graduate or undergraduate students not matriculated at the applicant institution.
- Costs for textbooks, incentives (including laptop computers), memberships, or subscriptions to Internet services or journals.
- Costs of workshops or courses with a limited focus of preparation for a specific test, including GRE and MCAT.
**Specific Aims:**
Promote student development at both the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Academic Support
- Community Engagement

**Supporting Programs:**
- Summer research opportunity
- Colloquium
- Research internships
- Workshops
- Travel to conferences
- Introductory research program

**Other activities ...**
- Student Retreat
- Support Groups
- Monthly Dinner Events
- Dessert Socials
- Bi-Monthly Social
- Open Door Lunches
- Community Building Workshops
- Research Club
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committed Cost Share</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Grad School</td>
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<td>Trinity</td>
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<td>Pratt</td>
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Salary/FB
• PIs
• PD
• Postdoc
• Asst

Travel
• PI(s), PD

Participant Costs
• Student Salary
• Students Travel
• Tuition Remission

Other
RESTRICTION: This award provides funding to support the following number of IMSD participants:

Undergraduate: 9  
Graduate (Ph.D.): 19

Student Appointments: Electronic Statement of Appointment forms (Form PHS 2271) must be submitted for all student participants through the xTrain system.
2011 - Applied
2012 - Awarded
2013 – New Fund Code
2013 - PI change
2014 - Program Director Change
2014 – Another PI change

Two Fund Codes:
302-1234 - Parent
302-4321 – Child
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Chapter 2

Where Are We Now?
• Salary
• Parking
• Copying
• Space Rentals
• Professional Services
• Contract work
• Temporary Employment
• Meetings
• Public Relations
• Tuition Remission
• Interdepartmental Svcs
Why is there such a huge balance?
ACTION PLAN...

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Chapter 3
How Did We Get Here?
Two codes...

Expenses across multiple g/ls...

Huge balance

How did all this transpire?
Salary ...
Work study ...
Professional Services ...
Consultants ...
Travel ...
Interdepartmental svcs...
Contract work ...
Space Rentals ...
Freight ...

Public Relations
Meetings
693200 Public Relations and Social Expenses (Valid For: Univ, DUHS) This account is used to record the cost of (1) all activities for the purpose of public relations, development, fund raising, promotional, etc., (2) all expenses where purpose is entertainment, (3) all expenses related to memberships or dues to social clubs, token gifts, social functions or social hours, recreational activities, seasonal parties, and (4) meals and lodging for visiting dignitaries, officials, etc. Meals of a "casual" nature (i.e., not preplanned, no agenda, or no specific business objectives) should be charged here. Any function or meals where alcoholic beverages are served must be charged in total, to account 693200.

These costs are not allowable, either directly or indirectly, in support of Federal programs and therefore are excludable from Federal grants and/or contracts and indirect costs.

Note 1: A meal or food related expense served as part of an approved research function (served to research participants or human subjects) is classified as 6960 Meetings: Business Related.
696000 Meetings: Business Related (Valid For: Univ, DUHS) This G/L account is used to record the cost of holding meetings, symposiums, etc., conducted to further the educational, research, and/or patient care function of Duke. In order for a meeting to be considered "business related", the meeting must be properly planned with a specific agenda and defined business objectives.

Federally Funded Projects:
In addition to the above, this G/L account is used on federally sponsored projects only if the costs of the meeting and conference - the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of technical information - are allowable. This includes costs of meals, transportation, rental of facilities, and other items incidental to a planned meeting.

Incidental meals, travel and related costs (such as impromptu project staff meetings) even if accompanied by an agenda, are unallowable unless specifically budgeted, described and approved by the federal sponsor.

Due to audits, some sponsors have specifically disallowed charging the costs of meals or refreshments to their awards. Care should be taken when charging these costs, and the specific agency guidance should be checked prior to charging.
• Support Groups
• Monthly Dinner Events
• Dessert Socials
• Bi-Monthly Social
• Open Door Lunches
• Community Building Workshops
• Research Club
What Is Going On?
Explanation of the huge balance – carryover from the first year (certainly enough to rebudget between categories...)

Detailed descriptions of the various programming events.

Plus....

There was CAS rebudget done approved that moved funds to Public Relations and Meetings to cover the cost of food.

WHEW!
HRBATCH <hrbatch@eccprd.oit.duke.edu>
OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION
What was on the original budget justification?

Salary/FB
- PI(s)
- PD
- Assistant

Travel
- PI(s), PD

Participant Costs
- Student Salary
- Students Travel
- Tuition Remission

Other
Specific Aims:
Promote student development at both the undergraduate and graduate levels
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Supporting Programs:
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COST SHARE?

Looked like institutional funds were not recorded as “cost share” onto the fund code.

Some went directly to a separate research code.

Some went to a departmental code.

Some went into a departmental code, then into the research code.

Some expenses were billed internally.

$$$ Find the money $$$
CIRCUMSTANCES

- Changes in leadership
- Changes in grant management
- Miscommunication
- Confusion over sponsor requirements
ACTION PLAN...

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- Retrace history
  - How did we get here?
- Communicate issues
- Resolve problems
Chapter 4

Being the Messenger
OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION
COMMUNICATION

- Appropriate
- Honest
- Professional

- Humble
- Clear
- Constructive
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Chapter 5
Finding and Implementing Solutions
STEPS TO BE TAKEN

- Transfer off unallowable expenses.
- Request prior approval for certain expenditures.
- Communicate change in scope to sponsor.

- Document cost share cash flow.
- Improve reconciliation process.
- Schedule monthly status meetings with PIs.
- Streamline reports provided to key individuals.
GOOD NEWS / BAD NEWS

- Departmental code had to absorb unallowable costs.
- Request prior approval was denied.

- Change in scope approved.
- RPPR completed (on time!)
- Built solid working relationships.
Moral of the Story...

- Read everything
- Ask questions
- Assume nothing
- Think like an auditor
- Discover the details
- Utilize your resources
- Communicate well
- Keep sight of the big picture
The End
QUESTIONS?

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