Organizational Excellence

Initiative Summary

Initiative Title: ResearchUVa / Research Administration Process Improvement

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Problem Statement

The current process for submitting grant proposals is a manual paper-based system that is cumbersome and in many cases requires people physically walking/driving paper from place to place to secure approval signatures. Presently, all the official proposal and award files are paper copies and stored in file cabinets in a central location. Due to limited access, duplicates and triplicates of these files are located throughout the University in schools and departments taking up space and resources. Countless hours are spent not only copying but filing and refiling and searching for pulled files. Such resources would be better served on the administration of grant proposals and awards.

In addition, faculty are frustrated with a process and technology that is complex and difficult to understand. They feel they are spending too much time on administrative work and not enough time in their research labs.

Research administration staff are frustrated with a process and technology that is not integrated causing duplication of effort and manual manipulation and comparison of data between Oracle and their other tracking systems. The data collected from this process is limited and often not detailed enough to provide useful reports.
Project Overview:

**Project Description**

The ResearchUVa web-based system will provide an electronic approval process and track the University research administration process from beginning to end. Collect more detailed data than is currently available enabling more meaningful and thorough analysis and reporting. This system will also be a portal to other key administrative systems that give the researcher and administrator access to information pertinent to individual proposal and awards, such as Recon@ for budget and expenditure information, and others such as Effort@ for effort reporting. Access to all of these systems will be consolidated into a single login.

ResearchUVa portal will be the one source for approving proposals and accessing research files. An individual faculty member will have access to his/her own files; Chairs will have access to their department’s files; Deans will have access to their school files; and Central offices will have full access to all files.

The redesigned process will eliminate a paper intensive process, remove redundancies such as copying and filing, and give researchers immediate access to their files and financial and related information from any computing device. Detailed process mapping of key research administration areas will identify additional opportunities for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the various processes, including pre-proposal preparation, research regulatory review, award project management, and award processing.

**Scope**

The scope for this initiative includes the University of Virginia academic division research administration and the five research schools which covers approximately 95% of the research dollars received: School of Medicine, School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, Arts & Sciences, Curry School of Education and the School of Nursing.

**Team members** include school research administration representative from the 5 major research schools as well as representatives of VPR, Provost office, Office of Sponsored Programs and Organizational Excellence (see the team chart on page 1). Research faculty are providing valuable feedback into the process and the systems being developed through individual interviews and school-based focus groups. Over 100 faculty will be asked to participate throughout the initiative.

**Project Goals / Objectives**

1. To streamline the process, provide transparency and real-time status about the proposal submittal and award management process, and improve efficiency and effectiveness in pre- and post-award activities.
   - Streamline the “Idea to Award Close-out” process. Informed by detailed process mapping
   - Provide a “Faculty Dashboard” of information for investigators and their support staff
   - Develop improved system integration and tools to automate transactions in research administration activities.
• Provide better data to support the University Financial Model and monitoring of the process

2. To eliminate manual, paper-based processes by imaging proposal and grant files through a custom developed interface and imaging system based on ease of use.

**Timeline** October 2013 – Winter 2015

**Phase 1: ResearchUVa - Faculty portal & imaging of active proposals and grants**

- **Summer ’14–Spring ‘15**
  - Finalize requirements (team)
  - Develop ResearchUVa system (ITS)
  - Engage and obtain feedback from Faculty and Research Administration
  - Conduct testing of ResearchUVa (team & key users)
  - Provide user training and implementation plan (key users)
  - Monitor and track performance metrics (OE, team, owners) Ongoing

**Phase 1a: ResearchUVa - Electronic Proposal and Budget Tool**

- **June/July ‘15**
  - Develop automated preparation and tracking of proposals on line
  - Develop automated budget tool to improve ease of entering and tracking budget, personnel, and expenditures

**Phase 2: Streamline Research Administration, Workflow and Integration**

- **Fall-Winter ‘15**
  - Complete the end-to-end process mapping of IRB, and Pre and Post Award (OE team)
    - Institutional Review Board: IRB-Health Sciences and IRB-Animal Care
    - Pre-Award: Grants and Contracts Negotiation, Account Create, Front Desk
    - Post-Award: Invoicing, Reporting, Accounts/Receivable, Collections, Unapplied Cash
  - Simplify / redesign the research admin process
  - Implement workflow to automate RA activities
  - Integrate Oracle and RA tracking systems
  - Engage and obtain feedback from Faculty and Research Administration
  - Monitor and track performance metrics (OE, team, owners) Ongoing

**Phase 3: Add additional functionality as identified from users**

- **TBD**

**Dates are estimates.**