

2015 ACOR Fellows Executive Summary

The 2015 ACOR Fellows had the opportunity to visit two college research offices in addition to several research administration units across campus. In general, we learned that there have been improvements to processes and increases in automation across the various units. While there have been improvements, there still remain areas of need that have been consistently identified by previous ACOR Fellow cohorts.

The 2015 ACOR Fellows include: Diane Crebs (Research Accounting), Tiffany Cunningham (College of Education), Sarah Kronenwetter (Office of Sponsored Programs), Joyel Moeller (Office of Research Protections), Jim Taylor (Office of Research Information Systems), Deb Thorpe (College of Nursing), and Nicole Wolfe (Strategic Interdisciplinary Research Office)

The following is a summary of our recommendations.

Through this program, the Fellows have identified the need for additional trainings, increased consistency and improved systems. Having visited various units, we noticed that there will be a lot of retirements in the coming years, in some instances for positions which have only ever been held by one person. As such we recommend that there be improved cross training within the college and units in addition to a succession plan for such instances. It was apparent that the hosting units put significant effort into their presentations for the ACOR fellows program. We recommend that these materials be used to create introductory training videos for all new research administrators to provide a high-level overview of research administration and the roles of the offices and units involved. In addition, it became clear that increased consistency of Research Administration offices across the University would have many benefits including the ability to share resources among units, improved compliance, reduced audit risks, retention of research administrators, and standardization of systems. Standardization would also allow Research Administrators the ability to float among research offices to address temporary resource needs. As other ACOR Fellow cohorts have identified, there is a significant need for a standard post-award system. This tool would allow research administrators to track and report all financial activity related to the award. Additionally, other improvements are needed for key systems such as SIMS and my Research Portal.