Coming Soon: Northwestern Research Portal, a One-Stop-Shop for Research Administration

Born out of faculty and research administrator feedback, the Northwestern Research Portal is a web-based tool that displays administrative information from multiple applications in a “one-stop-shop.”

Turn the page to read about all of its new features!
The Research Portal is designed to make administrative information for the research community easy to access. The first release of the tool is currently in a soft launch (beta) phase with a select group of PIs and research administrators. Scheduled for a **general release in mid-August 2016**, the Research Portal includes **financial data for sponsored and non-sponsored research accounts**, organized by project.

Additional features will be added over the next two years. Future phases will include tools for managing the people you pay from your projects, research subject compliance information, and effort reporting.

**First Release: Financial data for sponsored and non-sponsored research accounts:**
- A list of a PIs (or CO-Is) **sponsored and non-sponsored accounts**, including budget/award amount, direct cost balance, and end date, as well as activity, with the ability to drill down to expense information and to add projected expenses that are not yet encumbered
- A list of **pending proposals** with the ability to mark proposals as “not funded”

**Future Releases: Additional administrative tools for managing salaries, subcontracts, compliance, effort reporting, and biosketch support:**
- **Alerts/Approval Inbox:** A single list of alerts for items that require action/approval, such as proposals, purchases, timesheets, effort reports, protocol actions, etc.
- **Subcontract Management:** List all subcontracts for each award, including value, balances, and status in negotiation process; display of burn rate for each subcontract.
• **Salary and Compliance Training Status**: Ability to view all faculty and staff funded by a project, funding sources for each non-academic person funded, and their training compliance status

• **Research Subject Compliance**: Protocol Status and dates for relevant projects with links to protocols and award information

• **Effort Reporting**: Display of effort vs. plan by month or quarter

• **Other Support/Biosketch**: A view of all of the current and pending support required for federal submissions and reporting

**Faculty and Staff Access**
Faculty and staff will be given access based on their current activities and access to Cognos BI Reporting.

• Automatic access for all faculty with **current or pending research** and for staff with Cognos BI access to Research financial folders

• PIs see their own portfolios immediately upon login; all research administration staff will have access to all investigators’ sponsored projects

• Sensitive information like salary and non-sponsored/discretionary funds require the same **access restrictions** that are currently in place in other systems
Design Process
Faculty and research administrators from across Northwestern have helped shape the project’s features and priorities through design sessions and user experience testing in an iterative, feedback-driven design process. Soft-launch participants are now deeply involved in sharing additional feedback as we put the finishing touches on the application.

Some Early Feedback
“Thank you so much for sharing the soft launch of this portal. It is truly impressive and has great potential to help investigators better understand their account balances and even includes (for the first time ever!) a way to include grant projections to aid PIs in budget management.”
~ FSM Research Administrator

“Thank you for creating the research portal. I have been wanting something like this for the past 8 years. Now, I can finally access numbers quickly on my own.”
~ McCormick Faculty Member

Watch for more information later this summer!

Lora Ferraro is the Senior Project Management Specialist in the Project Management Office of NUIT Administrative Systems.

Marylou Novak is the Lead Communications Specialist in the Project Management Office of NUIT Administrative Systems.
Alphabet Soup: Understanding NDAs, DUAs, and MTAs

As a large institution with a robust research enterprise, Northwestern enters into numerous types of agreements with third parties for ongoing research efforts. Among the many types of agreements facilitating research are unfunded agreements, the most common of which are non-disclosure, data-use, and material transfer agreements. Though unfunded, these engagements are essential to conducting research and engaging with various types of organizations across all Northwestern campuses.

Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)
A non-disclosure agreement (or confidential disclosure, confidentiality, secrecy and proprietary information agreement) governs the exchange of confidential or proprietary information between two or more parties and ensures protection of sensitive information.

In the context of research the most common reason for an NDA is to enable the parties to share information in anticipation of a research collaboration (initial discussions, proposal submission, white paper, etc.). NDAs are also sometimes used on an ad-hoc basis for other purposes (site-visits, sponsor-specific information, etc.). Keep in mind that NDAs should only be used when information is being shared and not when formal work/funding is anticipated. If the scope of the engagement goes beyond sharing of information a different agreement mechanism may be required.

Despite varying language, each NDA generally includes (i) a definition of confidential information, which can be broad or limited depending on the engagement; (ii) the purpose of sharing information; (iii) which party will be sharing...
Data Use Agreement (DUA)

DUAs (or data sharing, data license or access agreements) are used for the transfer of research data (i.e. dataset(s), software, subject information) that is non-public and requires some restrictions on use by the providing party. DUAs are similar to NDAs in that both agreements protect confidentiality of certain information, however, DUAs generally permit the publication and sharing of results from data analysis (not the unmodified data, of course). In short, a DUA will almost always contain a confidentiality component, but an NDA will almost never provide for publication of any kind.

The most common parties we execute DUAs with are governmental entities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, State Governments, etc.) and commonly include educational records and statistical data. As is the case with NDAs, while the specific language may vary each DUA generally contains provisions addressing (i) limitations on use; (ii) obligations to safeguard data (location, security, information technology approval, etc.); (iii) liability for use of data as well as warranties with respect to the data itself; (iv) publication, including acknowledgement of data source; (v) confidentiality; (vi) the identifiable nature of the data (anonymized, de-identified, identified, human subject data, etc.); and (vii) the method of sharing (access to repository, data archive, hard drive, etc.). DUAs often have a human subject component (human subject, health information, etc.) and the Office for Sponsored Research (OSR) requires approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to executing any DUA relating to human
subjects. If the data is de-identified or is anonymized, the review is generally quicker, but if data is identifiable the review may take longer due to higher levels of scrutiny. Depending on the level of review required, IRB approval can oftentimes hold up signature, so it’s preferable for the IRB to be involved early and any approval be routed with the associated request.

Material Transfer Agreements
Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs) govern transfers of tangible materials (biological and research materials generally) between organizations and defines the rights and responsibilities of both parties, including rights in any derivatives. MTAs for both campuses are reviewed, negotiated and executed by OSR-Chicago so please contact Manny Robert or email mta@northwestern.edu if you have any questions.

Common Issues
While most unfunded agreements are easy to process, there are several common issues in routing, negotiation and execution of these agreements:
- **After-the-fact requests.** Prior to sharing or receiving confidential information from a third party confidentiality provisions should always be in place via an NDA or other agreement. The absence of such provisions could put NU at risk for non-compliance with the law (i.e. receipt of export controlled or classified information), subject Northwestern intellectual property to heightened risk, lead to incongruous expectations between the parties and could damage important relationships. In instances where information is shared prior to formal agreement on terms, Northwestern can request retroactive obligations to protect the information.
and our obligations. However, sensitive information or materials may have already been shared by either party and neither party is obligated to agree to any terms after-the-fact.

- **Unauthorized Execution.** Northwestern personnel without institutional signature authority (including faculty) should never personally sign an agreement for research that will be conducting in their role as an Northwestern employee. In these cases, such signature would make the agreement invalid and unenforceable against Northwestern and would potentially leave the signatory personally liable for any violations.

- **Incorrect Contract Mechanism.** The final common issue is when the agreement utilized doesn’t account for the exact nature of the engagement, or is inappropriate for a collaboration (i.e. NDA for sharing of tangible materials). While many terms in each type of agreement are similar, the absence of specific provisions may be problematic, so, to avoid problems, please ensure that the exact nature of the engagement is shared with the Office for Sponsored Research and departmental assistance is requested in the event you are unsure of which type of agreement would be best suited for any specific collaboration. To prevent delays, confirm full understanding of the collaboration and its purpose.

- **Personnel Involvement.** Generally, it isn’t problematic if NU personnel beside the Principal Investigator are involved in these engagements, however, institutional endorsement covers faculty, postdocs, graduate students and other
employed personnel - unemployed individuals (including students) are not covered. For that reason, OSR must be notified of any personnel as oftentimes we need to explicitly state “approved employees” in the agreement or work or include additional supporting documentation with the agreement. With special consideration to confidentiality, if non-NU personnel (including unpaid students) will have access to confidential information there are other issues that may need to be addressed to ensure compliance. By default, however, no confidential information should be shared with such individuals without explicit approval and documentation (again, this includes undergraduate students and other students not employed by Northwestern). If a student is involved in one of these types of agreements we will need to know the following: (i) the level (year, program, etc.) of the student, (ii) whether the student is funded (iii) percentage of students’ time being allocated to the work, and (iv) the source of the funding, if funded. All these questions are essential in ensuring compliance under federal or other sponsored projects.

- **Signature Authority.** The Office for Sponsored Research negotiates and executes all NDAs and DUAs related to research activities at each respective campus, and all MTAs are handled by OSR - Chicago. If related to technology licensing or intellectual property, please contact Innovations and New Ventures (INVO), and for all other NDAs please connect with your department administrators.

Michael Rynties is the Senior Contract Officer in Office for Sponsored Research (Evanston).
Core Facilities, Research Administration, and NUcore

Core facilities play an increasingly central role in the conduct of basic research at Northwestern. **Rather than requiring labs to set up expensive and duplicative instrumentation and techniques, cores offer these services on a fee-for-service basis**, maximizing efficiency by spreading cost and effort across a broad pool of users. Northwestern University is a leader among its peers in the level of support provided to core facilities. While the benefits of core facilities are clear, they also present a new set of challenges for Research Administrators in the departments that conduct basic and applied research. In addition to managing the expenses of many self-contained research groups, administrators are spending an increasing amount of time managing the expenses generated by centralized core facilities that service the needs of those groups. Northwestern is working to ensure that core facilities, end users—post-docs, grad students, research faculty—and the research administration community can **manage this increasingly prominent activity with effective tools**. For the past few years, all core facilities at Northwestern have been migrating to a central platform developed and supported by the Office for Research, the Feinberg School of Medicine, and the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center named NUcore. NUcore is the platform researchers use to purchase services.
from core facilities, and that in turn core facilities use to process end user fees. Research Administrators throughout Northwestern are likely familiar with the billing email sent out by core facilities inviting them to login and review charges initiated by core facilities. We on the NUcore Support Team would like to deepen the interaction between the Northwestern research administration community and the NUcore platform.

Recently, the NUcore Support Team implemented a new role in the system to help Research Administrators manage transactions generated by core facilities. Named the “Account Manager”, the role allows key department-level staff to both add and associate users and chart strings in NUcore. Proper use of the new role will ensure that research group members can only charge appropriate chart strings, that chart strings are shut down before any overspending occurs, and that reports highlighting all core facility spending in a department are readily available.

Actively managing this activity will help departments avoid after-the-fact cost transfers and budget overspend. While charges from core facilities does not rival payroll in total cost, the sheer number of transactions and the
numerous facilities that generate them create a unique management challenge for the research administration community. We will continue to refine NUcore to meet the needs of this important community.

If your department is interested in actively managing your portfolio of chart strings and users within NUcore, then please contact the NUcore Support Team for access at nucore@northwestern.edu.

Aaron Rosen is the Financial Administrator in the Core Facilities Administration Office.

Todd Shamaly is the Senior User Support Specialist in the Office for Research in the Feinberg School of Medicine.

Jeffrey Weiss is a Research Professor of Medicine-Endocrinology in the Feinberg School of Medicine.
Recently, RAP Up Co-Editor, Rachel Mugg, got together with Pam to reflect on her time here at Northwestern.

RM: How did you first get started in sponsored research?
PH: I got started working at a non-profit that received lots of city and local grants. This organization awarded grants as well, so I was able to gain experience as being both a recipient and a sponsor. My first job at Northwestern was in the Physiology department and that position evolved into working on grant proposals and submissions.

RM: How did you get to this point in your NU career?
PH: I got to this point by being thankful for what I do and sticking with it, by staying the course with sponsored research. I gained an appreciation for the dedicated faculty and the science they are doing and found a way I could be involved and help further their research.

RM: What are your duties now that you are the Acting Associate Director of OSR Chicago?
PH: Since becoming the AAD, I’m more involved with the university administration side of sponsored research.
For example, working with other central offices within the university to create and implement common guidance. I’ve also been a part of the new vendor replacement task force, helping to make recommendations about the proposal software that the university will potentially utilize. Lastly, I have had more interactions and communication with directors at peer institutions.

**RM:** What are some of the good experiences that you have had working in OSR?

**PH:** The best part is the team – we have great people here. We work together and communicate effectively with each other. It is wonderful being a part of an office where we have the same goals and focus.

**RM:** Do you have any advice for new/junior research administrators?

**PH:** Ask plenty of questions – don’t be afraid to ask, thinking that you should already know everything. Also, find a mentor. Mentorship is vital to being successful in research administration.

**RM:** What do you do for fun to destress?

**PH:** I attend my son’s basketball games and tournaments – I love to watch him play ball!

**RM:** What’s your favorite vacation?

**PH:** I like to go to resorts and do nothing, except watch the people and the landscapes. That is the best way to relax.

**RM:** Finally, what is something that most people don’t know about you?

**PH:** I absolutely am a die-hard Prince fan! DC and Marvel comics are also among my list of favorite things.
Pictured above from left to right: Pamela Shaw, Carrie West, Ishrat Fatima, Tasneem Uting, Michelle Suran, Margaret Schott, and Seletta Nichols.

Research Administration Staff Service Recognition

Congratulations to all the NURAP members that were honored at the 2016 Employee Length of Service and Employee of the Year recognition lunch! This lunch is for NU staff members who have dedicated many years of service and for NU staff that have been determined as finalists for the employee of the year for their outstanding contributions at Northwestern.

Though the weather was a bit dreary, it was warm and enjoyable gathering on May 10, 2016. NURAP was fortunate to have multiple members as awardees of the event including several Employee of the Year nominees and the Employee of the Year winner!
NURAP Members Honored at the 2016 Recognition Lunch

2016 Employee of the Year Winner:
Tasneem Uting, Feinberg School of Medicine-Preventive Medicine, NURAP member

2016 Employee of the Year Finalists:
Michelle Suran, Chemistry of Life Processes Institute, NURAP Steering Committee, Membership Subcommittee Co-Chair
Pamela Shaw, Feinberg School of Medicine-Galter Health Sciences Library, NURAP Member and 2015 NURAP Presenter
Seletta Nichols, Feinberg School of Medicine-Division of Allergy and Immunology, NURAP Member

Maudell Gaines is the Coordinator of Special Events, Employee Recognition Programs in Human Resources.

Melanie Mkrdichian is the Senior Finance Administrator in Surgery in the Feinberg School of Medicine. Melanie is the Co-Chair of NURAP’s Programming Subcommittee and is a RAP Up Co-Editor.
Haifei Wang is the Senior Research Administrator in Pulmonary in the Feinberg School of Medicine.

OSR-Chicago’s Appreciation Award

The Office for Sponsored Research, Chicago Campus has established an Appreciation Award to recognize departmental representatives who have demonstrated excellence in the highly collaborative process of research administration.

OSR-Chicago is pleased to announce the recipient of the first Appreciation Award is Haifei Wang, Senior Research Administrator in the Pulmonary Division of the Feinberg School of Medicine.

OSR-Chicago staff were asked to submit nominees and a winner was chosen by collective vote. The Appreciation Award is planned to be presented once every six months.

Among other prizes, the winner is invited to an OR Star event.

Our congratulations to Haifei and to all the other nominees!
Other Nominees
Lynnette Dangerfield, Research Project Manager for Vice Chair of Surgery, Vascular Surgery Division, Feinberg School of Medicine
Tyler Dorsett, Senior Research Administrator, Basic Sciences Administration, Feinberg School of Medicine
Tracy Mrowczynski, Research Administrator, Institute for Public Health and Medicine
Takelia Latrice Watson-Walker, Research Administrator, Physiology Department, Feinberg School of Medicine

Anna Omelcenko is a Grants Assistant in the Office for Sponsored Research (Chicago).
Apply to Join NURAP’s Steering Committee!

Like being a part of the research administration community here at Northwestern? Interested in contributing to NURAP’s CRA study sections? Want to have more of a voice in the NURAP at Noon presentations? Do you like networking with Northwestern RAs from different departments and across campus? Do you want to be an editor of this very newsletter that you’re reading right now?

Apply to join NURAP’s Steering Committee!

Complete the 2016 membership application form on the next page or download a copy at http://www.nurap.northwestern.edu/get-involved/.

E-mail the completed membership application form and your resume to NURAP (NURAP@northwestern.edu) by Friday, July 29, 2016.

For more information, visit http://www.nurap.northwestern.edu/about-us/.

If you have any questions, send an e-mail to NURAP@northwestern.edu.
NURAP Steering Committee Membership Application

Date: 

Name: 

Title: 

School or Major Unit: 

Building/Room/Campus: 

Phone Extension: 

E-mail: @northwestern.edu 

Notes about Steering Committee Membership:
- Steering Committee members serve two year terms, renewable for up to three consecutive terms.
- Candidates must have been a full- or part-time employee of Northwestern University for at least 1 year and are expected to receive supervisory approval for participation on the committee before submitting this application.
- Membership involves attendance at bi-monthly Steering Committee meetings, alternating between the Chicago and Evanston campuses, and participation in one or more subcommittees. The expected time commitment is 2 to 5 hours per month.
- Members are expected to develop, lead, and execute tasks to the best of their ability for their own subcommittee and for NURAP tasks as needed.

Briefly describe why you would like to join the NURAP Steering Committee (about 1-2 paragraphs).

New committee members are expected to join at least one of four subcommittees: Continuing Education, Information Team, Membership, and Programming. On which subcommittees would you be interested in serving? (about 1 paragraph).

Please visit the NURAP website (http://www.nurap.northwestern.edu) for more information on the four subcommittees.

☐ By selecting this box, I certify that I have been a full- or part-time employee of Northwestern University for at least 1 year.

Name and Title of Supervisor:

Please email this form and your resume to NURAP (NURAP@northwestern.edu). Thank you!