

# Navigating to Research Success: The Research Administrator's Role in Project Management & Reporting

Jennifer J. Cory, Stanford University  
Csilla Csaplár, University of California, Santa Cruz  
Natalie Goodwin-Frank, Washington University in St. Louis

# Agenda

- Communication
- Your role in project management
- Reporting and deliverables
- Documentation
- Best practices
- Questions?

# Learning Objectives

- Understand the research administrator's role in managing award terms and deliverables.
- Learn how to navigate key reporting requirements, ensuring compliance with sponsor guidelines and institutional policies.
- Discuss tools and strategies for monitoring progress, managing deliverables, and troubleshooting common challenges in research project management.

# What is your institution type and role?

Using the **poll feature**, please tell us which best describes you:

- Large institution, central specialized role (e.g. pre-award contracting officer)
- Large institution, central generalist/life of award role
- Large institution, departmental role
- Medium/small institution, central specialized role
- Medium/small institution, central generalist role
- Medium/small institution, departmental role
- Medium/small institution, one-stop-shop role!
- Other

# Making Things Happen!

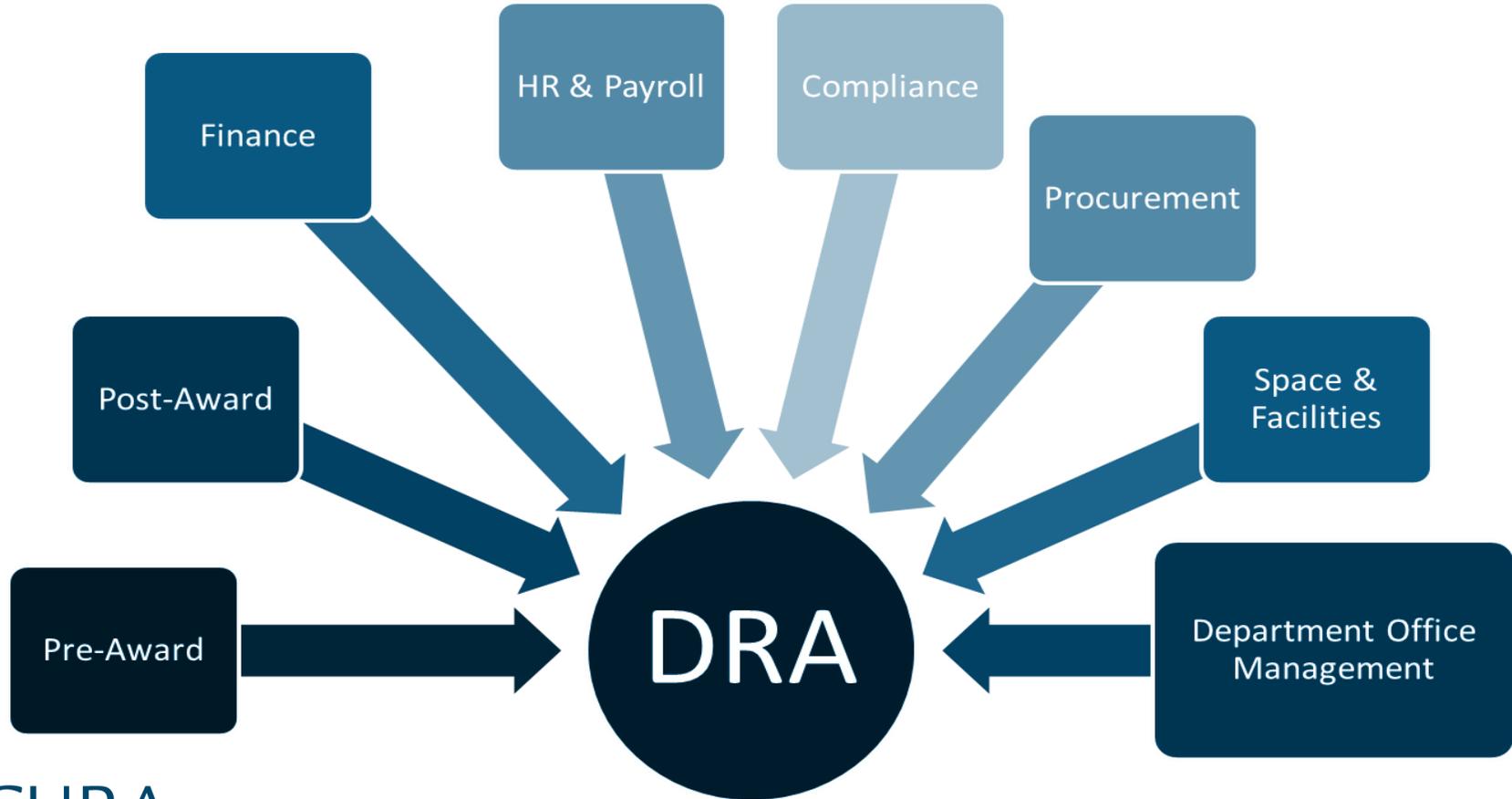
"Making Things Happen: Mastering Project Management", by Scott Berkun

*"The project manager is often responsible for consolidating each meeting and discussion down into key points and making sure conclusions reached are written in stone in a place the group can easily reference."*



# DRA Role

*“just translate project manager or PM to mean ‘person doing project management tasks, even though it’s not her primary job’”*



# Delegated Responsibilities from the PI

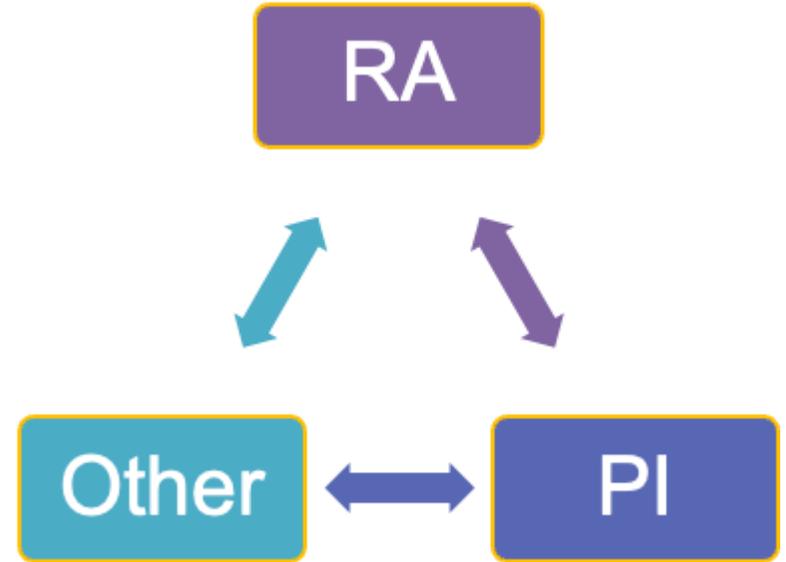
Whose responsibility is it?

- What tasks specifically?
- What does it mean?
- Who is really responsible?

Know what is outside your scope

- Authority to make decisions
- Signing documents (external, internal)
- Approving transactions

*“[The author’s] coverage of decision making focuses on three aspects: understanding what’s at stake, finding and weighing options (if necessary), and using information properly.”*

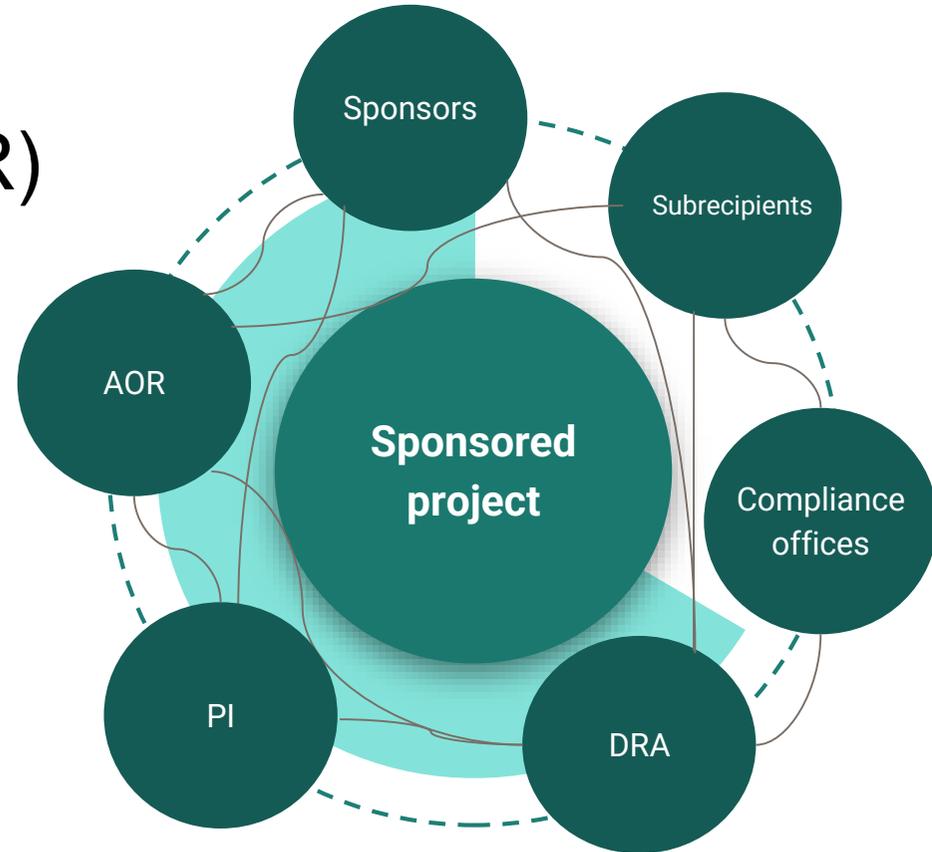


# Communication and Escalation

- Guiding/onboarding a new PI - what do they need to know?
  - Sponsor system set-up
  - Budgeting procedures
  - Internal process and forms
  - Compliance
- Who needs to be involved for what?
- Who contacts the sponsor?

# Communication: Working with Sponsors

- Inquiries and information
- Informal requests (non-AOR)
- What does the PI communicate vs. RA?
- Working with/through AOR
- Rules of thumb



# DRA Role in Project Management

- Pre-Award
  - Proposal and budget development
  - Compliance
  - Communication
  - Sponsor systems, forms, and terms

*“The larger and more complex the project, the more important schedules are. On larger projects, there are more dependencies between people, and decisions and timings have greater odds of impacting others.”*

# DRA Role in Project Management

- Post-Award project management
  - Budget oversight
  - Managing milestones and deliverables
  - Resource allocation
  - Project periods/phases
- Invoicing, closeout

# DRA Role in Project Management

- Reporting, Deliverables, & Compliance
  - Financial reporting
  - Technical reporting
  - Sponsor requirements
  - Audit readiness
  - Citizenship requirements



# Reporting: DRA Role in Financial Reporting

- Plan for financial reporting deadlines - regular review
- Who submits? Standard vs. non-standard requirements
- Do reports align with budget?
- Does your financial system have adequate controls?
- Carryforward, rebudgeting
- Working with your central office to ensure complete and accurate reporting

# Reporting: DRA Role in Other Reports

- Technical/Progress - who tracks, submits?
- Invention and Property - coordination, who submits, stores, signs?
- Other: Sponsor-Specific Requirements or Special Reporting
- Deliverables management: how does an RA ensure PI delivers?

# What's on your desk?

Using the **poll feature**, share what other research-related project management responsibilities you handle (check all that apply):



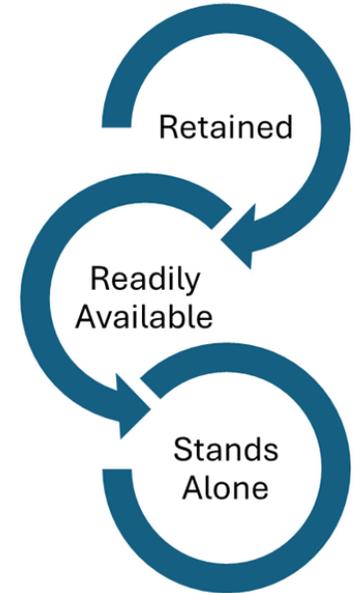
- HR, hiring, payroll
- Facilities/space management
- Property management
- Travel
- Shipping
- Visas
- Research-related agreements - consulting, service, confidentiality, etc.
- Department operational budget management
- Financial transactions
- Supporting incoming and departing faculty
- Other

# Other Project Management Responsibilities

- Adding foreign nationals to a project - approvals or forms needed?
- Salary or employment verification
- CUI and other cybersecurity requirements
- Data management
- Mentoring plan, training requirements, tracking trainees
- Export controls (travel)

# Documentation

- **Who** authorized it?
- **What** is the expenditure? What project?
- **When** was it authorized?
- **Why** is it necessary?  
Why does it benefit the project?
- **How much?**



*“Documenting the details of decisions offloads the burden of precision and recollection from our minds...”*

# Best Practices and Tools

- Project kick-off
- Write good goals - SMART
- Establish timelines and assign tasks
- Check-in meetings
  - Review all funds and end dates
  - Other support/Current & Pending
  - Effort and payroll
  - Subrecipients
  - Upcoming submissions
- Summarize meeting notes and action items

*“It’s common for smart people to be led astray from the real problems at hand because of the abstract qualities of their ideas.”*



Grid View Filter

	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
45	<b>Admin Shell/Budget</b>	47d	02/13/23	04/18/23
46	Draft Budget	9d	03/13/23	03/23/23
47	Year 1 Allocation Table Draft & Distribution Pie Chart Draft	5d	03/13/23	03/17/23
48	Draft Template for Partners Letters of Commitments	7d	03/20/23	03/28/23
49	Requests sent out to Sub-Ks	2d	03/23/23	03/24/23
50	Requests sent for letters of collaboration	35d	03/01/23	04/18/23
51	Draft of WashU letter of Commitment	5d	03/20/23	03/24/23
52	Review & Route WashU Letter of Commitment	5d	03/27/23	03/31/23
53	Draft Membership Agreement	23d	03/01/23	03/31/23
54	Review Membership Agreement	5d	04/05/23	04/11/23
55	Draft Data Management Plan	23d	03/01/23	03/31/23
56	Review Data Management Plan	5d	04/05/23	04/11/23
57	Draft Postdoc Mentoring Plan	23d	03/01/23	03/31/23
58	Review Postdoc Mentoring Plan	5d	04/05/23	04/11/23
59	Draft Facilities Section	23d	03/01/23	03/31/23
60	Review Facilities Section	5d	04/05/23	04/11/23
61	Collect WashU COAs, Biosketches, C&Ps	46d	02/13/23	04/17/23
62	Letters Due			04/18/23
63	Final Sub-K Packages Due			04/18/23
64	<b>Budget/Admin Shell Complete for Routing</b>			04/28/23
65	Upload to Research.Gov	3d	05/01/23	05/03/23
66	Full package review	2d	05/03/23	05/04/23
67	<b>Submit Proposal</b>			05/05/23

Standard Proposal Processing Timeline		
Minimum notification for proposal initiation form	4/19/2024	15 days
Final budget, justification, and draft SOW*	5/3/2024	5 days
Final non-technical documents	5/9/2024	1 day
Sponsor deadline	5/10/2024	<-- Enter date
*SOW = scope/statement of work (if WUSTL is the subawardee)		
Standard Proposal Processing Timeline + Subawards		
Minimum notification for proposal initiation form	3/8/2024	6 weeks out
Send subaward email request	3/28/2024	4 weeks
Final subaward budget, justification, LOI, and SOW	4/17/2024	2 weeks
Final budget, justification, and draft SOW*	4/23/2024	10 days
Final non-technical documents	5/6/2024	
Sponsor deadline	5/7/2024	

*“The secret here is that a schedule doesn’t have to be perfect ...Schedules need to be good enough for the team and the leaders to believe in, provide a basis for tracking and making adjustments, and have a probability of success...”*

# What are some best practices you employ?

Join us after the show and share project management best practices that work for you and your team!

# Questions?

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Join us for the After Show Q&A!



Jennifer J. Cory  
Director of Strategy and Operations  
Center for Definitive and Curative Medicine  
Stanford University  
jcory@stanford.edu



Csilla Csaplár  
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
NCURA Distinguished Educator  
csilla@ucsc.edu



Natalie Goodwin-Frank  
Director, Research Development and  
Administration  
Washington University in St. Louis  
frankn@wustl.edu