OSU Beaver Works
Operational Excellence Project

Oregon State University
Finance and Administration

Project Title: Sponsored Projects Administration

Project Sponsor/Owners: Tuba Ozkan-Haller, Heidi Sann

Recommended Stakeholder Groups to Engage: Office of Audit, Risk and Compliance, OSRAA including proposal review, contracting, award set up, business analysts, and representatives from financial and non-financial post-award, BC pre- and post-award managers, research faculty grantees (faculty), unit pre- and post-award managers, purchasers, PCMM (contracts), OCCD contract officers, Beaver Works Core Group, research faculty representatives, CARE group representatives (college proposal experts), college, research center personnel

Introduction/Background:

This project stems from comments collected in the focus groups about pre-award and post-award processes from the perspectives of the business centers, faculty/departments, and OSRAA. The purpose is to identify and address challenges and pressure points specifically related to the relationships, processes, and resources associated with pre- and post-award operations. The Associate Vice President-Research Administration and Development (AVP-RAD) has convened a cross-functional team to clarify roles and responsibilities. Coordination between both the AVP-RAD's team(s) and project teams associated with Beaver Works will be necessary to avoid contradictory solutions.

Problem Statement:

Current sponsored projects administration structures, processes, and systems are not well aligned with the growing research enterprise. There is a lack of transparency of processes and ineffective interactions/collaborations between the business centers, principal investigators, departments, and OSRAA, resulting in communication breakdowns, confusion around roles and responsibilities, and inefficiencies. Additionally, there is a lack of training and effective award management tools. All of the above results in a lack of confidence of all parties that diminishes morale.

Standard Operational Excellence Team(s) Expectations:

- Balance the business needs with security/compliance considerations (apply accepted risk tolerances)
- Identify and design consistent tasks, forms, processes, and systems
- Define ideal state roles and responsibilities and individualized training plans for those roles
- Identify and recommend an ongoing, structured, and consistent training plan that incorporates the full procurement cycle
- Assess current policies against proposed processes and make policy recommendations for modified or new policies that are easily accessible
- Propose possible IT/IS solutions to Steering Team for improved system functionality and multi-system integration
    - Note: if an IT/IS solution is to be proposed, the Team(s) MUST still re-design processes, revise policies, and propose a plan to implement consistent processes before an IT solution is adopted.
- Develop training and communication plans for the implementation of the proposed solution(s)

Specific Operational Excellence Team(s) Expectations:

- Recommend specific improvements for the transparency of process status through enhanced tracking mechanisms – include Office of Corporate and Commercial Development (OCCD) awards
- Develop and implement a strategy for improved and more collaborative communication to support research and award administration through the full life cycle including exploring the possibility of establishing a post award working group similar to the CARE (pre-award) team
- Identify availability of reporting tools for proactive problem-solving and propose solutions which can be utilized in support of research administration and grant management
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for initial routing, processing, monitoring and decision making
- Analyze the outcomes of defining roles and responsibilities and implementing process improvements to assess the impact on workloads and deadlines. Make recommendations on how ongoing metrics could be supported in this area