Recommendation Report March 13, 2019
UAA Chancellor's Task Force on Research Administration

Chancellor Sandeen initiated the Chancellor's Task Force on Research Administration in November 2018. The task force was charged to investigate, assess, and recommend how research administration operates, performs, and could improve. The task force membership includes Associate Deans, Directors, Faculty, and college level research Support Staff. The task force separated into five subcommittees to address specific aspects of research administration. The committee convened three full task force meetings while each subcommittee worked independently outside of these meetings. This report provides the findings and recommendations of these subcommittees as well as selected general recommendations.

Current State Analysis
UAA follows a predominantly decentralized research administration model. This is graphically illustrated in Figure 1. Each academic unit, centers within academic units, and non-academic units maintain research administration staff that operates independently while under the oversight/approval of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP). OSP operates within the Office of Research and the Graduate Studies (RGS) under the leadership of the Vice Provost of Research maintaining the role of Authorized Official Representative (AOR) and Contracting Official. The number of research administration staff (represented as fractions of full-time equivalents, FTE) within academic units, centers within academic units, and non-academic units typically correlates with research activity. Research activity is defined as preparation and submission of proposals, and management of research awards. Research administration staff have multiple supportive functions, such as facilities, travel, procurement, human resources and other VCAS administrative functions, resulting in fractions of FTE dedicated to research for most positions. It does not appear that any academic units, centers within academic units, and non-academic units benchmark research administration staffing from the pre- or post-award prospective based on research activity due to the multiple roles of individuals.

Review of Practices of Peers
Through conversations with research office officials and website research of six universities from the UAA self-study list of peers, it was determined that UAA maintained greater research activity. This is likely due to UAA's growth as a research institution The peer submitting the greatest number of proposals annually submitted less than half that of UAA. It appears that our self-study peers are not parallel and often practiced research administration methods that UAA moved away from years ago. These practices included separate pre-award and post-award offices that reported to different administrative units, pre-award support provided at a centralized level, and post-award supported jointly by the central and unit staff.

The committee identified aspirational peers, all ranked as Carnegie High Research Activity, but was unable to open a line of communication via phone or email. Online information gathering from these institutions' websites revealed a high level of staffing (11-30 FTE, total) in pre- and post-award and it was unclear the relationship with academic and non-academic units. Each of these institutions appeared to have pre- and post-award report to the same administrative unit.

Recommendations:
1) *Create a list of realistic "research" peers and aspiring peers. Perform subsequent full review/comparison*
2) *Create research activity FTE benchmarks (with consideration to individuals performing duties outside of pre- and post-award) and perform staffing evaluation*
3) *Define a level of research activity where unit level research administration is necessary over and above a well functioning OSP.*

Combining Relevant Functions
While this task force focused discussion on research administration, other university led non-academic business ventures stem from or lead to research. At UAA, research administration, economic development administration, and commercialization/technology transfer administration co-exist in some units and are isolated in others. For example, each of these administrative functions is performed under the purview of RGS while BEI performs economic development function outside of RGS purview. To date, the units and RGS jointly perform commercialization/technology transfer administration. The separation of these administrative functions at UAA is the result of initiatives and staffing with units. Centralized administration models necessitate an administrative leader (e.g. VPR or equivalent) who is highly skilled in each area with the ability to manage these activities at appropriate levels within the universities abilities and aligned with the universities vision while providing room for growth.

Recommendations:
1) *Chancellor or designee to define a* research/economic development/commercialization/technology transfer guiding vision *to enable the hire of the VPR to enact.*
2) *Prioritize operational & applied research/fundamental research over commercialization/technology transfer*

Indirect Cost Recovery
Through receipt and performance (i.e. charging for services), grants and contracts at UAA receives funds to support facilities and administration, often called indirect cost recovery. The distribution of indirect funds is distributed among a variety of units at variable distribution proportions. These include Statewide Administration, Consortium Library, Physical Plant, OSP, IT Infrastructure Services, VC Administrative Services, and the Unit. When these funds are returned, the "color" of money changes. This means that indirect funds received from award sources external to the university (fund 2) are converted to funds that are expended similar to tuition return and state appropriation (fund 1). Fundamentally, these funds are recovered to support the infrastructure (human, infrastructure, supplies, etc.) required to perform and grow research/economic development/commercialization/technology transfer and should carry forward across fiscal years.

Recommendations:
1) *Utilize an existing fund type (e.g. recharge centers, match accounts) where indirect ONLY is stored to align with funding source (i.e. not swept at fiscal year)*

2) Consider development of reporting requirements for entities receiving indirect disbursements to guide justification of expenditure that supports research function.

Policies and Streamlining

Numerous policies and procedures from a variety of administrative units are used to enable research functions at UAA. Some of these were developed for research activities while others were developed for other purposes and subsequently applied to research activities. Policies/practices that pertain to research but were developed for other purposes include, but are not limited to, human resource functions regarding the hiring of students/employees, procurement, and the IT functions. It is often these repurposed policies/practices that are most problematic or incongruent with research activities. Research specific policies and procedures are maintained on OSP's website. Policies and procedures regarding training and onboarding of staff/faculty are limited or non-existent resulting in significant inefficiencies in application and in maintaining standards. Further, overall methods of research related transactions on campus lack modernity, likely due to UAA's growth as a research institution. Often transactions are no more modern than using digital means to transmit static files completed by hand or fillable PDF. It is often unclear who is responsible for and how policies are updated/revised to ensure they are necessary, manageable, and have efficient means of implementation.

Recommendations:
1) Purchase and implement research administration and management software. Our recommendation is Cayuse.
2) Purchase and implement a research opportunity database (e.g. pivot).
3) Enable salary encumbrances in banner.
4) Create a Research Cabinet
   a. Prescriptive membership (e.g. IRB chair, IUCUC chair, Research Administrators, Fiscal Manager, Research Faculty, Research Support Staff, etc.)
   b. Responsible for developing and maintaining research policies, including compliance
   c. Address faculty/staff research concerns (i.e. public testimony)
   d. Review and modify procedures related to hiring, procurement, export control, etc. as it pertains to research activity.
   e. Review and anticipate future trends in research.

General Recommendations
1) Assess RGS functionality and staffing. Focus on efficiency and effectiveness of function and procedures, visioning to be performed when permanent positions are placed.
2) Permanent VPR needs to embody campus wide research development and promotion with a focus on external opportunities, which requires obtaining funding information from UAA researchers.
3) Create a culture of respect, responsibility, and responsiveness at all levels of research administration and researchers.
4) Assess and improve research onboarding and re-occurring training that is required of research administration and researchers.
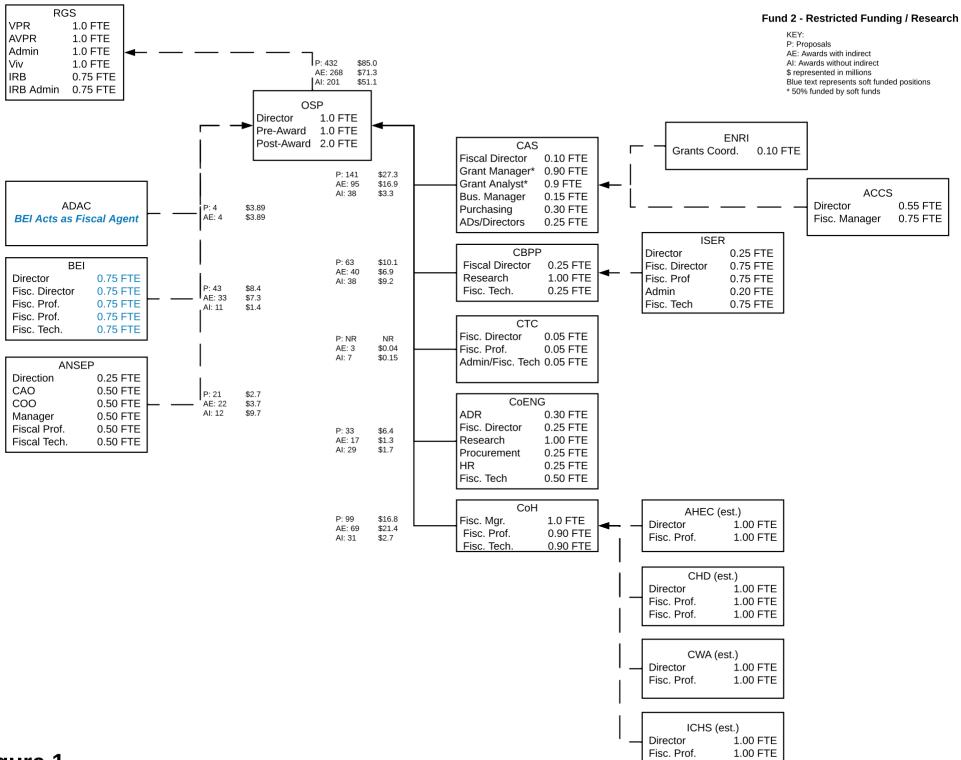
Figure 1

RGS

VPR	1.0 FTE
AVPR	1.0 FTE
Admin	1.0 FTE
Viv	1.0 FTE
IRB	0.75 FTE
IRB Admin	0.75 FTE

OSP

Director	1.0 FTE
Pre-Award	1.0 FTE
Post-Award	2.0 FTE

P: 432 — $85.0
AE: 268 — $71.3
AI: 201 — $51.1

ADAC
BEI Acts as Fiscal Agent

P: 4 — $3.89
AE: 4 — $3.89

BEI

Director	0.75 FTE
Fisc. Director	0.75 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	0.75 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	0.75 FTE
Fisc. Tech.	0.75 FTE

P: 43 — $8.4
AE: 33 — $7.3
AI: 11 — $1.4

ANSEP

Direction	0.25 FTE
CAO	0.50 FTE
COO	0.50 FTE
Manager	0.50 FTE
Fiscal Prof.	0.50 FTE
Fiscal Tech.	0.50 FTE

P: 21 — $2.7
AE: 22 — $3.7
AI: 12 — $9.7

CAS

Fiscal Director	0.10 FTE
Grant Manager*	0.90 FTE
Grant Analyst*	0.9 FTE
Bus. Manager	0.15 FTE
Purchasing	0.30 FTE
ADs/Directors	0.25 FTE

P: 141 — $27.3
AE: 95 — $16.9
AI: 38 — $3.3

CBPP

Fiscal Director	0.25 FTE
Research	1.00 FTE
Fisc. Tech.	0.25 FTE

P: 63 — $10.1
AE: 40 — $6.9
AI: 38 — $9.2

CTC

Fisc. Director	0.05 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	0.05 FTE
Admin/Fisc. Tech	0.05 FTE

P: NR — NR
AE: 3 — $0.04
AI: 7 — $0.15

CoENG

ADR	0.30 FTE
Fisc. Director	0.25 FTE
Research	1.00 FTE
Procurement	0.25 FTE
HR	0.25 FTE
Fisc. Tech.	0.50 FTE

P: 33 — $6.4
AE: 17 — $1.3
AI: 29 — $1.7

CoH

Fisc. Mgr.	1.0 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	0.90 FTE
Fisc. Tech.	0.90 FTE

P: 99 — $16.8
AE: 69 — $21.4
AI: 31 — $2.7

ENRI

Grants Coord.	0.10 FTE

ACCS

Director	0.55 FTE
Fisc. Manager	0.75 FTE

ISER

Director	0.25 FTE
Fisc. Director	0.75 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	0.75 FTE
Admin	0.20 FTE
Fisc. Tech.	0.75 FTE

AHEC (est.)

Director	1.00 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	1.00 FTE

CHD (est.)

Director	1.00 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	1.00 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	1.00 FTE

CWA (est.)

Director	1.00 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	1.00 FTE

ICHS (est.)

Director	1.00 FTE
Fisc. Prof.	1.00 FTE