I-Team: Research Management

July 20, 2018

FINAL REPORT

During the period April 1 – June 30, 2018, the I-Team focused on its short-term mandates and deliverables. As explained below, the team moved forward on the two identified research management application/tools: Priority One (RF) and ePAWS and completed a research roles/responsibility matrix.

I.   Updates on Accomplishments:

- **Priority One BA** software has gone live as of July 3rd and is in use by College Administrators. The functional team will review and address any post production issues throughout the summer.

- **ePAWS Phase 1:**   Programming of the ePAWS software application began in May– the project is going well; project milestones have been pushed out by 6 weeks, as the team took additional time in April to update the scope of work to include high-level requirements for 2 additional University-wide applications – agreement contract tracker (ACT) and electronic conflict disclosures (eCD) both of which will integrate with ePAWS.

- **Roles & Responsibilities Matrix:** In order to improve communications and accountability across all units responsible for research management support services and in conjunction with college administrators, the I-Team completed a detailed Roles & Responsibilities Matrix (attached).   This matrix reflects specific steps/tasks in the research management process, and the roles played by the various individuals and units responsible for correctly completing actions as well as collaborating/ consulting business units. College administrators participated in its development and there is broad consensus and agreement although also some dissent related to individual tasks.

II.   Incomplete Initiative: Because the complex, interrelated dependencies in preparing proposals and managing awards in an environment as heavily regulated as research, the professional development, education and training of administrators at the local department and college levels are pre-requisites to improving the quality and efficiency of research support services at Northeastern.

The SLT's charter to the I-Team, dated June 27, 2017, recognized this an authorized resources, including "financial support for new staff hires"; however, the I-Team's requests for 2 critical, new positions -- the Director, Research Integrity Training & Education, and Research Administration/Research Compliance Coordinator -- were denied.

Dependent on allocation of FY2019 funding authorizations these will be resubmitted for approval. **The I-Team strongly recommends these 2 FTE positions be funded.**

II. Incomplete Initiative *continued*

Federally-funded research is heavily-regulated and the University's diverse, increasingly complex research portfolio demands that all research administrators and faculty have a basic understanding of the norms and standards that govern extramurally-funded research. Quite simply, the continued growth and success of Northeastern's research enterprise depends upon their familiarity and compliance with those standards.

For example, failure to meet the FCOI reporting requirements can lead to costly investigations and fines; accordingly, the University's resources for managing financial conflict disclosures needs to keep pace with the University's entrepreneurial culture and growth in faculty research.

Similarly, administrators and investigators must have advanced training about specific regulations impacting their research projects, not only those funded by NSF and NIH, but also the more demanding requirements of DOD-funded contracts and rigorous DFARS terms, conditions and standards.

Prioritizing training resources will minimize the risks of noncompliance and loss of research funding.

Dedicated resources that develop and deliver educational materials and training to the research community are critical to the University's strategic goals and integral to promoting a culture that supports the university's reputation for excellence.

III.   Actions Need by SLT:

1. The I-Team requests that the SLT endorse the proposed Roles & Responsibilities (matrix). If approved, RA will widely disseminate this guidance to the research community.

2. Secure funding for the Research Compliance/Training related 2 FTEs.

IV.   I-Team Recommendations:

A.   **Retire the I-Team.** This I-Team has fulfilled its short-term mandate and, particularly in light of the separate project to reorganize and consolidate Research Administration, Research Compliance and Research Finance, which presumably will address similar long-term goals, the I-Team should be retired. In the course of our work, however, we have identified additional mission-critical activities that we believe warrant further attention, which are outlined below.

B.   **Convene Focused Working Groups:** Because there are specific areas that have University-wide impacts, which have not yet received focused analysis, the I-Team recommends that four working groups be tasked to study and address, through specific recommendations, the following:

- **Long-Range Financial Planning for Research Management & Facilities**:
  Charge: Identify University sources of funding for research and existing deficits, quantify the cost of research, recommend distribution of research related revenue to support the University's strategic research goals and recommend optimal operating and capital budgets for the University's research management and support services infrastructure. ***Suggested members:*** David Navick (lead), Geoff Trussell, Anthony Rini, Eric Stewart, Breean Fortier, Jasmine Sun (CoE).

- **Research Management Support Services at the Local Level:**
  Charge: Identify optimal organization models and alignment of research administrative functions at the local (department/college) level; recommend models for implementation. ***Suggested members:*** Dana Carroll (lead), Jerry Hajjar, Kirsten Gilbert (AVP Budget & Planning), Virginia Davis (CoS).

- **Research Administration and Compliance Related Training, Education and Professional Development:**
  Charge: Develop and implement training and professional development programs for administrators and research compliance and responsible conduct of research training for investigators. ***Suggested members:*** Jeff Seo (lead), Barbara Smith, Amber Kestner (HR), Lindsey Sudbury (ATS)

- **Strategic plan for Research Management Support Services and Facilities:**
  Charge: Draft a strategic plan that will be used to build a world-class infrastructure and that supports and fosters a balanced, sustainable and global research ecosystem at Northeastern. ***Suggested members:*** Emery Trahan (lead), David Luzzi, Mark Patterson (CoS), Andy Curtin or Jen Lynch-Boyle (CRI)

In conclusion, and on behalf of the entire I-Team and the many members of the research community who contributed to its success, thank you for this opportunity to further advance research here at Northeastern.

Sincerely,

Art Kramer, PhD, I-Team Chair
I-Team members: David Budil, Dana Carroll, Joan Cyr, Carey Rappaport, Jeff Seo, Barbara Smith, Alex Tran, Stephanie Trowbridge