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To: "oruba"
Subject: [Oruba-L] a new way of research administration
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Shelley's White Paper ☺

Currently administrative support costs for ORUs (those on FTEs) are part of the calculation for indirect costs and thus it is difficult to direct charge administrative support to grants (unless the proposal can be defined as a major project). It has been very difficult for ORUs to fund adequate administrative support for research labs with lots of small federal grants.

With the recent cuts to ORUs (6% plus furloughs), most ORU FTEs are now only partially funded on university funds. According to Bill Brophy, if a position is less than 95% funded on University funding, it cannot be included in the indirect cost calculation we use to set the rate. Two years ago the Sponsored Research Unit of CRL/INC/KIBM had 3 full FTEs devoted to research allowing UCSD to use \$220,000 (plus benefits) in calculating its IDC rate. Because of recent cuts, all 3 FTEs are now funded less than 95% on University money and none of the \$220,000 can be used in the next round of calculations. If this is true in the other ORUs, the rate of indirect cost recovery will go down.

And we find it very difficult to fund these admin FTEs from contracts and grants due to the way UCSD currently calculates IDC.

If we proposed to exclude research administrator salaries from the indirect cost calculations we could then place research administrative support on grants more easily and also exclude these costs from the Modified Total Direct Cost base (like tuition remission). These salaries (mostly Proj. Asst. III and Admin. Specialist positions) range from \$30-\$50k per year. This change would make it easier for agencies and PIs to welcome administrative salaries on their grants and contracts.

ORUs that focus on managing contracts and grants (after initial start-up) could eventually be reduced to a .5 FTE for an MSO (who manages two units for a full FTE) and some S&E for unallowable costs (in direct proportion to their contract & grant activity); the ORU could require a pro-rated % of support from all their grants for the admin. FTEs which may be required to get the job done in this risk-averse research environment of increased reporting (ARRA, ECERT, etc.).

Some ORUs focus on programmatic activities and not research grants and a different formula of funding would be used for them.

This change would also help Academic departments with high contract/grant activity because they could have a specialist and maybe Proj. Asst. III devoted to C&G and funded entirely on external funds. As the contract/grant activity ebbs and flows, so would the soft money support for research administrative help.

The alternative, to reduce administrative support to research projects overall, is to ask the PIs to roll up their sleeves and do this increased administrative work themselves (to become proficient in Finlink, PPS, and other online systems) in addition to carrying out the research. >From my recent experience with the Temporal Dynamics of Learning Center, this can lead to burnout on the part of the PIs and reluctance to propose new research.