



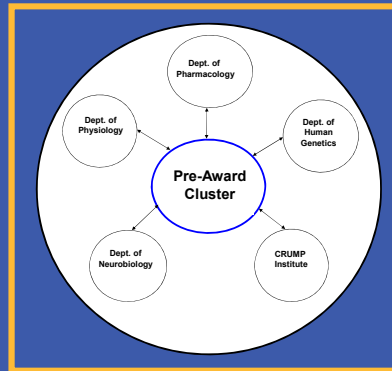
DEVELOPING A BASIC SCIENCE PRE-AWARD CLUSTER



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Abstract

The national trend in research administration is in optimizing efficiencies between pre- and post-award functions. Historically, these responsibilities have been combined as a “research fund manager.” Recently, the trend has been to separate these functions, each focusing on specialized tasks. A pre-award “research administrator” is responsible for agency guidelines & ensuring grant proposals are submitted appropriately. A post-award “fund administrator” is responsible for the accounting-based functions. The two diverse skill sets do not naturally align – one requiring more organizational skills while the other more analytical skills. At the DGSOM at UCLA, this disparity was recognized; a pre-award cluster among 5 units has been initiated to improve functionality.



Methods

In initiating a pre-awards cluster, all stakeholders were invited for discussions, starting with the basic science department administrators and department Chairs. Departmental faculty were later vetted to assess needs. Larger depts on campus were interviewed to vet the proposed cluster and review their practices. Feedback from other national public institutions was taken into account. Weekly meetings among department administration was key. Negotiation, shared governance, and best practices were all discussed in depth. The intent was full participation by stakeholders and partners to ensure full information and disclosure was achieved. Finally, the pre-award research administrators were brought in to help develop the operations, roadmap, and crosswalks with the current processes.

Process

The basic science pre-award cluster was formally launched December 1, 2018 after beta-testing of shared services. The immediate success was in bridging the variable practices among departments as well as developing fellowship among administrators and dept Chairs. A tracking tool was developed, as well as trafficking guidelines for the cluster lead. We anticipate over 150 proposals to be submitted in the first year, with 2.5 co-located FTE initially assigned. Administrators continue to meet to assess the progress, as well as track the metrics. A comprehensive review is planned at the six month mark to reconfigure as needed. Cost model is based on a formula founded on weighted volume of proposals submitted.

Overview

The goal of this pre-award initiative was to improve efficiencies, create economies-of-scale, develop “best practices,” create back-up systems, reduce the time-to-submit, and develop a “cohesive” unit among the basic sciences. The development of this cluster was arduous, requiring reorganization of staff and functions, realignment of processes on the pre-award side, building consensus among department administrations, navigating faculty skepticism and resistance to change, and ultimately identifying maximum functionality.

Research Admin	Department	PI Name	Sponsor Due Date	Preaward Due Date	OCGA Due Date	Proposal Status	FOIPA	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Award Type	Proposal Type
Jenny Yi	Neurobiology	Rogach, Daric	12/7/2018	Yes	Yes	Pre-Proposal Submitted	NSF 18-533			Grant	Preliminary Proposal
Jenny Yi	Neurobiology	Dorlea, Jeffrey	12/8/2018	Yes	Yes	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	PA-18-471	7/1/2019	6/30/2021	Grant	Resubmission New
Jenny Yi	Neurobiology	Trautnerberg, Joshua	12/11/2018	Yes	Yes	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	RFA-NS-18-019	6/1/2019	5/31/2023	Grant	New
Cortney Wlanski	Pharmacology	Sun, Ren	12/17/2018	No		Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	PA-18-484	9/1/2019	8/31/2023	Grant	Resubmission New
Cortney Wlanski	Pharmacology	Sun, Ren	12/17/2018	No		Withdrawn	PA-18-858	7/1/2019	6/30/2021	Grant	New
Cortney Wlanski	Neurobiology	Brecha, Nicholas	12/21/2018	Yes	Yes	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor				Subcontract	Resubmission New
Jenny Yi	Neurobiology	Shao, Xuesi Max	1/5/2019	Yes	Yes	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	PA-18-576	4/1/2018	3/31/2019	Subcontract	New
Jenny Yi	Neurobiology	Schweizer, Felix	1/8/2019	Yes	Yes	Pre-Proposal Submitted	NSF 18-533			Grant	New
Cortney Wlanski	Pharmacology	Heath, James	1/9/2019			Proposal Submitted to Sponsor					
Jenny Yi	Neurobiology	Shao, Xuesi Max	1/11/2019	N/A	N/A	Award Received	LLU Andrit	12/1/2018	11/30/2019	Subcontract	Mod/Amendment
Cortney Wlanski	Neurobiology	Brecha, Nicholas	1/16/2019			Proposal Assigned for Review	VA IPA				Mod/Amendment
Jenny Yi	Physiology	De Biase, Lindsay	1/15/2019	N/A	N/A	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	NARSAD	1/15/2019	1/14/2021	Grant	Transfer (In)
Jenny Yi	Human Genetics	Suchard, Marc	1/15/2019	Yes	Yes	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	Scipps R01 Sub	9/1/2019	8/31/2024	Subcontract	New
Cortney Wlanski	Pharmacology	Sun, Ren	1/22/2019	No	No	Withdrawn				Grant	New
Iya Kisel	Pharmacology	Nathanson, David	1/25/2019			Proposal Submitted to Sponsor				Subgrant	New
Iya Kisel	Pharmacology	Clark, Peter	1/30/2019			Proposal Submitted to Sponsor					
Jenny Yi	Physiology	Abrahamson, Jeffrey	1/31/2019	Yes	Yes	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	PAR-17-504	1/1/2020	12/31/2024	Grant	New
Jenny Yi	Physiology	Canon, Stephen	1/31/2019	Yes	Yes	Proposal Submitted to Sponsor	MDA RG	8/1/2019	7/31/2022	Grant	New
Cortney Wlanski	Pharmacology	Graeber, Tom	1/31/2019			Proposal Submitted to Sponsor				Grant	New

Conclusions

The initial phase of development and launch of this cluster was successful. Outlining challenges in development a multi-departmental cluster, rightsizing a unit and retrofitting departmental needs, the importance of consensus and shared governance, and developing an efficient cost model are all key concerns in assessing the next phase of this cluster. Assessment of the economies-of-scale created are anticipated to be a key driver in the future growth of this unit. We will follow up with report of the phase II growth of this initiative next year.