

Core Facility Directors/Managers/Administrators

Brown Bag Luncheon Meeting Notes

December 5th, 2014

Moderator: Phil Hockberger, Executive Director of Research Facilities, Office for Research (OR)

➤ **Introduction of new CF administrative assistant ([Phil Hockberger](#))**

- [Sasha \(Aleksandra\) Mechetner](#) replaced Leah Seiffert as Phil's Administrative Assistant starting December 1.
- Sasha worked for the Office of Research Development in OR for the past two years.
- Since Leah and Sasha worked in the same office and had an opportunity to discuss upcoming events, we expect a smooth transition.

➤ **Update on IT support ([Phil Hockberger](#))**

- Aidan Dornan provides IT support for Centers and Core Facilities; she is a sophomore Linguistics major.
- Aidan works as part of a team of 13 work-study students in Weinberg IT.
 - Students range from freshmen to seniors and have a range of skills.
 - Some seniors on the team have accepted positions at Microsoft.
- They support new computer set-ups and repairs either remotely or on-site.
- Aidan will shadow Aaron and Todd to learn more about the networking issues experienced by Cores.
- **Aidan's availability Winter Quarter is:**
 - Tuesdays / Thursdays, 2-5
 - Fridays, 12-3
- Contact [Sasha](#) with a request for IT support; a form must be on-file before Aidan's time is reserved for the job.

Questions from the audience

Q1: Does Aidan support Windows XP operating systems?

A1: No. Weinberg IT does not support Windows XP systems as Microsoft no longer supports them.

Phil: Aidan does not support computers that are part of data acquisition systems. Cores must contact the system providers for maintenance and instrument support.

Q2: Can Aidan assist in building a network of 5 computers in NUANCE?

A2: Even though Aidan does not work with such issues currently, she plans on being able to help with networking issues soon.

➤ **Job Boards ([Phil Hockberger](#))**

- The Core Facilities website has a [Job Board](#), where open positions within cores are posted. If you have any openings and would like to post them through Core Facilities, please contact [Sasha](#).

➤ **New Core Facility search utilities**

FSM Search Utility ([Jeff Weiss](#))

- FSM website has a new search box employing the Google Search appliance that can be inserted on any NU webpage.
- The search box is linked to an index of websites of existing facilities at NU (including OR, FSM and Cancer Center).
- The search function provides results in an unstructured format.
- If your services are not found with this utility or you would like to include the search box on your webpage, please contact [Jeff Weiss](#).

OR Search Utility ([Phil Hockberger](#))

- Phil showcased an example of a structured search on the [Global Research Opportunities webpage](#).
- This search function will be available on the OR Core Facility webpage in March.
- Aaron: asked if the search box from the FSM/Cancer Center will be implemented on the OR site? Phil confirmed that this would be available soon.

➤ **OR Core Facility Website ([Phil Hockberger](#))**

- Version 1 was rolled out in 2012; Version 2 in 2014.
- Version 3 will roll out gradually between January and March 2015. Some highlights include:
 - Search Utility upgrade (see above)
 - Many content management updates, including:
 - A build-out of the Job Board, making it more professional, more attractive
 - Once logged in, the website will take the user to the appropriate website, based on his/her affiliation
 - The dashboard will implement AJAX paging, which will allow you to move between needed pages with ease.
 - Integration with NU Scholars
 - Many design feature updates, including:
 - keyword searches for mobile users
 - Updated slider and facility banners
 - Image aspect ratios improvement

➤ **Update on business continuity plans ([Phil Hockberger](#))**

- A big “Thank you!” to all for putting in the great effort.
- The business continuity plan was evaluated by a team in OR. There was much positive feedback, as everyone did a great job.
- The Office for Research + Cores + Centers were “guinea pigs” to complete the business continuity plan.
 - The schools at NU have not completed it yet. VPR Jay Walsh volunteered OR to complete the plans first.
- Going forward, all business continuity plans will be done online.
- There will be annual reminders to update business plans.

➤ **Financial administration issues ([UBI](#), [operating support](#), [NUcore](#))**

➤ **Operating Support for FY15 ([Aaron Rosen](#))**

- Claiming funds. If your facility has not done this yet, contact [Aaron Rosen](#) and he will help you.
- Questions regarding which account should be used:
 - Recharge 160 Fund – All Core Business, i.e. “Fee for Service”
 - E.g. salary support for new hire, claiming down time
 - Non-recharge 171/172 Fund – Ancillary, not allowed in Fund 160
 - Kellogg Core Leadership course
 - **Salary for grant writing (up to 5% salary and fringe/quarter)**
 - Make sure that the payroll and effort correspond
 - If you have any questions, [reach out to the cost studies team](#).

Questions from the audience

Q1: If we have additional questions regarding how to organize expenses between 160 v. 171/172, whom should we go to?

A1: [Aaron Rosen](#)

Q2: If a grant opportunity comes up that you were not anticipating and you end up spending the time to write the grant, what kind of financial support can be expected?

A2: As many grant opportunities are announced well in advance, we expect that most of the time, grant writing effort will be an anticipated project. In this way, we can provide funding at the beginning of the year.

However, if an un-anticipated grant comes up, the requests for financial support will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Q3: If a brand-new demo instrument comes out which a Core was not aware of when submitting requests for support, how is this handled?

A3: This will be handled on a case-by-case basis to see if the instrument is appropriate. Last year was the first year we implemented the funds. As of now, the process for this program is still being refined. Contact Aaron or Phil with questions.

➤ **External Revenue report (Aaron Rosen)**

- The report is Due January 9th.
- Money should be revenue that was **deposited** in FY 14.
 - Matters not when it was fulfilled, but when deposited.
 - NU Financials will show when the check posted.
- The direction for *deposited revenue* came from director of Accounting Services, Nancy Pinchar.

- Note that there is now an updated template, which asks for more detailed information. Make sure to look at notes in the red tabs when working with the template.

- There are two rates:
 1. Applicable external rate. E.g. selling a service at the *internal* rate to a CBC partner and at a different *external* rate to an outside customer. The rate varies based on the customer.

 2. Unsubsidized calculated rate – from the cost study. If you have any questions about how this rate works, talk to Aaron Rosen.

- **Clarifications on potential tax liability:**
 - In FY 13 and FY14, OR is covering the taxes.
 - For FY 15, you may have a tax liability.
 - In general, you may be charged taxes on commercial transactions: e.g. commercial testing or proprietary private research.
 - If the work on behalf of the commercial customer is in line with the mission of the university, the transaction may not be considered taxable.
 - If you have external, for-profit companies using your facilities, please calculate your FY2015 external commercial rate carefully:
 - You may owe an additional 30% tax on the “net profit” from some of these transactions (ie. (Applicable External Rate – Unsubsidized Calculated Rate) X 30% = Tax Owed
 - In addition to accounting for the possibility of the tax, you should at least be adding the indirect cost to your external commercial rates; in some cases the rates may be higher.
 - If you have not included a rate increase already, consult with [Jennifer](#) and [Sophia](#) to build these rates into your pricing.

Questions from the audience

Q1: We don't really have any external commercial users. We're only talking about commercial, for-profit users for taxes?

A2: Yes, usage from external non-profits is not taxable. It is only when companies use Core Facilities that the taxes may apply.

Q3: You mentioned moving money from 160 to 171/172 if it is above your operating rate?

A3: Phil mentioned the potential of moving excess revenue from 160 to 171/172. There is some complexity to that, but it can be done. This is only if your overall facility is having a net profit and will only apply to very special circumstances.

Q4: What about services provided to international customers?

A4: Not sure about that. The one international transaction I have seen was from a University in Australia and the transaction was included as taxable.

Phil: Any transactions with international partners should go through the office of Export Controls. Director is [Lane Campbell](#).

Q5: Is doubling the rate for external non-profits enough to cover the tax, which will be assessed on the transaction?

A5: I think that the figure that was discussed before was 2.2. This is for external commercial specifically, to cover the F&A piece. The math is \$100 x 1.6 for the F&A and x 1.3 to cover the taxes. This will be the rate on any given transaction. This is slightly aggressive because this formula assumes that you will be paying taxes on the entire transaction, which may not be necessarily true. We can look at it on a case-by-case basis. A facility should not charge rates that are exorbitant and scare the customers away.

Q6: Question about the issue of giving a quote in FY 14 and providing services in FY 15. This is worrisome.

A6: Since the cost basis is deductible, I can't imagine the tax liability in this case is high. We can discuss this issue further offline, if you have any worries.

Also, just because it's a corporate customer, does not necessarily mean that it is taxable. If you are doing research, which is NOT commercial testing and is in-line with the mission of the University, it may be a non-taxable transaction. This is the reason for which the template is so detailed now.

Q7: Anything charged above the cost base is profit? Does the F&A get deducted?

A7: If you charge an external customer F&A, your core gets to keep that.

- **Reminder from Aaron regarding external transactions:**
 - ***Take inventory of outstanding invoices***
 - Many invoices are forgotten. Implement NUCORE's accounts receivable function to run a report for outstanding invoices (30-60-90 days).
 - Contact those customers who owe you money and reconcile.

➤ **NUCore Updates (Todd Shamaly)**

- **Highlighting a few features from the new NUCore updates:**
 - Journal Totals
 - Disputed items
- Some features which you may not notice are:
 - **Bulk reassignment of payment sources**
 - When customers ask to reassign charstrings on orders.
 - The new feature allows for this to be done easily.
 - If you have any questions, contact [Todd](#).
 - **Assigning Rates**
 - When rates are not in place yet (beginning of fiscal year) and customers are putting in orders, the purple button at the top of the page allows to assign the new rates to orders placed by customers in bulk. Previously, you would have to assign prices on orders one at a time.
 - **Reconciling PO's** should be much easier now: removing items, deleting a PO features have been updated. If you have any PO's in the system which are not reconciled and are waiting for the ease of the new functionality, it is available now.
 - **Adding access for instrumentation** is also updated now. Instead of adding each person to each instrument, you can now go to each person's profile and give access to all or any instruments that are approved for them.
 - **Building Tab** takes a long time to load. If you are core which does large bulk imports, sometimes the lists get extra long. Long lists mean long loading time for reports. We are working right now on making the wait times shorter. For large bulk imports, we are looking to run the report in the background.
 - **Bulk Import** is a tool which allows you to order on behalf of customers. Bulk import can be set up for monthly, weekly, etc. ordering.
 - **Training Request lists** – will probably happen in the next quarter.
 - **Expanding Business Administrator Role**
 - Ability to create accounts in the system.

Meeting Adjourned