

Core Facility Directors/Managers/Administrators

## **Brown Bag Meeting Notes**

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 12-1 PM

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

### ➤ **Announcements**

#### ✓ **Billing:**

- A number of cores on both campuses have been billing late. While extenuating circumstances are noted, it is important to communicate billing delays to both Central Administration and Users. Your users cannot manage their sponsored projects if billing is not processed in a timely fashion. Communicate early and often. Bill your users on a monthly basis.
- When a core updates its rates, this should be communicated to users; the core's website should contain up-to-date rate information. Best practice is to send an email to users to notify them of updated rates

#### **Questions from the audience**

**Q:** At the end of the Fiscal Year, our facility realized that there were a lot of unresolved PO's, approximately \$20K-worth. We tried very hard to resolve the PO's, but could not, and we are unsure of the process by which to deal with this issue still.

**A:** This issue is best resolved off-line but the first thing to do would be to determine which bills have been paid and which bills are outstanding. This can be done using a combination of NUCore and NUFInancials.

#### ✓ **ABRF Meeting Reminder**

- The ABRF Meeting will take place 3/28-3/31 in St. Louis
- On Saturday, 3/28, NIH (Sally Rockey) is running a workshop specifically on Core Facilities. More information can be found [here](#).

#### ✓ **Kellogg Course – Fall '15**

- 19 People participated in the last course.
- A second course will be offered 11/16-11/19, 2015.
- More information can be found [here](#)

#### ✓ **CF Website – Management Tab**

- The Core Facilities website has a Management Tab, which contains meeting notes, annual report information and other pertinent documents.
- To view this tab, a user must first log-into the website, click on the *Management tab*, and select *Manager Documents*

### Questions from the audience

**Q:** Is there a reason why this tab is NetID protected?

**A:** In 2011, the NSF asked Phil to remove grant information listed on our website from the public domain. External researchers were using our website as the source of announcements about new grant opportunities (rather than annual alerts). Phil decided to place other institutional documentation behind a firewall to protect our privacy and avoid misconstruing our best practices as standard policies.

### ✓ IT Support update

- A reminder that Core Facilities has a work-study student (Aidan Dornan) who can provide low-level administrative IT support. She is part of the WCAS IT pool.
- WCAS IT would like to hire her full time in the fall. If we don't increase our use of this service, then we will likely lose her.

### Comments from the audience

- Although not a free service, if there is a need for IT support on instruments, Jon Dieringer at the Electronics and Laser Systems Core (ELSC) is available for assistance. Contact Andrew Ott or Jon Dieringer.
- There is still a need for Linux support, network infrastructure support and network security.
- Aaron Rosen is working with Joe Paris on the aforementioned outstanding issues. If there are any suggestions for resolution of these issues, please contact [Aaron](#).

### ✓ Program Review

- The Program Review guide has been revised and is now available on the Core Facilities website by logging in and clicking on the **Management tab**, selecting *Operations* and scrolling down to *Program Review*.

### ✓ NUCore Tech Talk

- Save the Date: Thursday, 4/23/15, 12-1 PM in Evanston – Tech A230.
- **NUCore Tech Talks** are a new forum for NUCore managers to learn about new and “under the radar” features of the program and to ask questions of the NUCore Support Team.
- Meetings will be scheduled quarterly on alternating campuses. Participants will be able to attend in person or connect online via webcast.

### ➤ **External Customers Risk and Safety Management ([Leland Roth](#), Office of Risk Management)**

- **Non-academic/non-governmental visitors doing business with NU must provide proof of insurance that meets University standards.**

- Minimum Insurance Coverage Combined Single Limit Per Occurrence / Aggregate is \$3,000,000 / \$3,000,000
  - If the visitor has a small exposure, there are opportunities to accept less than the Occurrence/ Aggregate with ORM approval
- Cores need to communicate to Risk Management the following information:
  - What is the nature of the visitor's work?
  - What is the potential exposure of the University to un-insured losses?
    - Without this information, Risk Management relies on \$3,000,000 per occurrence/ \$3,000,000 aggregate
    - For a lot of small businesses, this is a rather high number.
- The reason why Col's are being discussed is because it became clearly evident in the past year, after 2-3 incidents, that it is crucial to have this document on – file.
  - **Example:** A service contractor was working on a piece of equipment on the Chicago campus. The key that was operating the instrument was turned and bent. This resulted in all of the samples in the freezer spoiling. It was very difficult to collect on the loss because there were no witnesses to the machine being turned off. So, it is imperative to always have someone in the lab be present at the time of the service call and watch over the service rep to make sure equipment or resources are not compromised.
- You must assume a gatekeeper role and be vigilant about the variety of people who come into your facility.
- The Core Facilities website, under the External Customers contains a list of requirements which need to be fulfilled before bringing people to campus.
- The bulk of this presentation is just a reminder of best practices, since this information has been on the Core Facilities website since 2011.
- An improper installation of bolts by a contractor resulted in \$118K worth of damage. As a result a shelving unit collapsed, causing damage and the facility lost funds as a result of not being able to rent out the space.
  - However, since the Col was on file, the costs were recovered.

**Questions from the audience**

**Q1:** Do government employees and other academics have their own insurance?

**A1:** The assumption is that they do have their own insurance, but the main focus is on the private industries, which do business at NU and the importance of their certificates of insurance.

**Q2:** Are tour visitors exempt from providing certificates of insurance?

**A2:** Yes.

**Q3:** Are Col's needed for service calls?

**A3:** Yes and if the company does not meet NU's limits, risk management must be contacted to discuss what instrument will be serviced, how valuable it is, and how much it will cost the facility if the instrument is non-functioning.

**Q4:** If there is a representative who is coming to NU to conduct a short training session on an instrument is a Col needed?

**A4:** Yes

**Q5:** Even if there is service contract for that instrument, the Core must ask for the Col from the servicing company?

**A5:** If a service contract exists, the Col must be on-file already. This is because most service agreements will have extended terms and conditions that are reviewed by the Office of General Counsel. At the time of review by OGC, certificates of insurance are requested from the company.

**A Col is required for all non-service agreement related service calls.**

**Q6:** Is a Col needed for a demo?

**A6:** A demo may be considered a sales call and, therefore, a certificate of insurance is not needed, although it is good idea to have one on file just in case.

**Q7:** If the service order was placed through Purchasing, can't the Col issue be handled at that time as well, before the contractor makes it to NU's campus?

**A7:** To protect yourself, as an employee of NU, at the time of placing the purchase order, make sure that you have a certificate of insurance on file and run it through the Risk Management office.

**Q8:** What is Risk Management's turnaround time like? If there is an emergency service call, how fast can Risk Management reply to reviewing the Col?

**A8:** Risk Management's turnaround time is in a matter of minutes most of the time. For lab service agreements, this can take up to a day or two, depending on VPR's schedule. If the VPR is not available, he has a back-up to sign. Overall, the turnaround time is fairly fast.

**Q9:** Does Risk Management keep any Col's on-file? Can OR reach out to the top 50 most used vendors by Cores (on both EV and CH campuses) and make sure that those businesses provide a Col and that OR keeps it on file?

**A9:** Risk Management will have a new Director starting March 30<sup>th</sup> and this issue can be discussed. In reference to OR keeping the certificates on file, this task is double-sided: on one hand, OR can help keep a database of Col's, however, it is the responsibility of the individual cores to make sure that the people who are arriving on campus are trained and understand the risks and are insured, so that the Core is not liable.

**Q10:** If a rep from a certain company has provided the Col once, does that coverage apply to all subsequent reps from that company?

**A10:** Generally, this is true. However, sometimes restrictions of coverage are noted in the *Special Operations* section of the certificate

**If you have any questions for Risk Management, please contact Leland directly:**

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➤ **ReLODE Program (NEW!)**

- Research Loan for Old or Duplicative Equipment
- This program is complementary to the existing Equipment Grants program
- With this program, there are now 6 types of funding requests through the internal grants program, information can be found on the Core Facilities site, under the Management tab, Grants, Internal Grant Program:
  1. Requests for new equipment costing less than \$100,000
  2. Requests for new equipment costing \$100,000 or more
  3. Loans for replacement of old equipment costing less than \$500,000
  4. Loans for replacement of old equipment costing \$500,000 or more
  5. Loans for duplication of existing equipment costing less than \$500,000
  6. Loans for duplication of existing equipment costing \$500,000 or more
- Earmarked for Core Facilities that have demonstrated a robust user base capable of paying back the loan.
- The duration of the loan is tied to the anticipated lifetime of the instrument.
- Town Hall meetings on the Evanston and Chicago campuses will be held on 3/9 and 3/12, respectively.

**Questions from the audience**

**Q:** Can a Core apply for both programs (grant AND loan)?

**A:** No, this is a judgment call that needs to be made. Part of the reason why the ReLODE program was created was the fact that those cores who applied for replacing old or acquiring duplicative instruments did not score as well as those who were requesting new equipment.

➤ **LED Replacement Bulb Program**

- This program relates to microscopes that use mercury arc lamps.
- For environmental and cost-effective purposes, we would like to replace the mercury lamps with LED lamps, as the LED's are now sufficiently bright to replace mercury.
- Core facilities are encouraged to submit their requests as a single "equipment" proposal for the Spring competition – due April 15.
- OR is working with the Purchasing Dept on a bulk order to get a price reduction .The new bulbs will come with housing and fiberoptic coupler.

**Questions from the audience**

**Q1:** Should the core submit a cost estimate from a supplier?

**A1:** No, OR will select the best deal from 3 suppliers, which are currently willing to work with us.

**Q2:** Does the company who wins the bid install the LED? If the replacement is for a Nikon microscope, will the installing company be Nikon?

**A2:** The companies that provide replacement bulbs are third party companies that make attachment parts for different manufacturers, Nikon included.

**Q3:** Concern was raised that replacing light sources on microscopes using a third party vendor may void the manufacturer's warranty. Even though Nikon may allow a replacement bulb to come from a third party supplier, the manufacturer may require a service technician to install it. Otherwise, if the microscope malfunctions as a result of the new light source, then Nikon may not replace compromised parts as part of their service contract.

**A3:** Replacing mercury lamps with LED lamps is a fairly trivial upgrade and the aforementioned issue is not considered an impediment for this initiative.

➤ **NIH Instrumentation Grants**

- Same deadline for HEI and SIG this year, 5/29/15.
- The internal letter of intent is due 3/31/15.
- NIH Shared Instrumentation Grant (SIG): lower limit has been reduced to \$50,000
- High-End Instrumentation Grant (HEI): lower limit has been reduced to \$600k, which eliminates the gap between the SIG and HEI programs.
- New process for Letter of Support: will require annual usage data for all instruments funded over the past 3 years.

- OR will provide this data from NUCore

### **Questions from the audience**

**Q1:** Can core facilities charge for administrative services? Why are users “paying” for the managers to write annual reports?

**A1:** The NIH-FAQ mentions that anything already covered by F&A cannot be included in recharge rates. Nevertheless, there are some administrative activities in cores that are not covered by F&A, and are therefore appropriate to charge users (e.g., managing staff, reports, purchasing/billing etc.). Please check with Aaron or Phil if you have specific questions about what is allowed.

**Q2:** Why is the amount of salary offered to write a grant only 5% in a quarter? It takes more than 5% effort to write an instrumentation grant.

**A2:** OR Senior Administrators discussed the appropriate rate for writing a grant. The rule has been 1-1.5% of the salary over an entire year. However, grants are not written over an entire year, so a panel of experienced grant writers decided the closest estimate to the annual figure would be 5% of a quarter.

It is understandable that if it is the first time that the grant is written, it might take more effort. If you are writing the grant for the first time, discuss this with Phil.

**Q3:** Instrumentation grants are highly competitive. There are very labor-intensive parts to make the application compelling (e.g. research descriptions). It can be argued that 7%-10% (for an experienced investigator) is actually a more appropriate quarterly rate for writing such grants.

**A3:** Phil will take this recommendation back to his Advisory Board (Research Deans and AVPRs) to discuss.