Workshop Title:
Best Practices in Leading and Managing a Sponsored Research Office: Culture, Staffing, Training and Communication

Workshop Overview:
The success of a research administration organization is highly dependent on the performance of its staff. While this workshop will address the components for a high-performing central office, its values and practices could be applied in any setting.

Hiring and recruitment will also be addressed, including what skills to seek, interview best practices for evaluating candidates, and non-traditional assessment techniques (such as writing or contract review exercises). Equally important is the development and training of staff. Attendees will learn best practices for on-boarding, initial training, refresher and on-going training, and testing (such as signature authority). In addition, this workshop will discuss various methods for effectively communicating with faculty and disseminating information to department administrators to ensure the campus community is informed and current on ever-changing rules, regulations, policies and procedures in research administration. We will also address tools for information management and maintenance.

Learning Objectives:
Attendees will learn about leadership and key elements for building an office culture that continually sets high expectations and provides strong customer service while delivering quality work; and l how some leadership and culture elements commonly seen in the private sector can be applied in academia.

Experience level/target audience:
The target audience is leaders and managers who are looking for ideas to improve the service, productivity, and/or quality level of their research administration functions. This workshop will be a combination of lecture and group discussion. Prior knowledge or experience of research administration is recommended for this workshop to be meaningful to the attendee.

Workshop Presenters:

Katherine Ho, JD, is the Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) at Stanford University. Katherine regularly presents at conferences throughout the United States. She also serves as a research administrator instructor at Stanford and at her previous institution – the University of California, San Francisco. Katherine presents on diverse topics such as international subcontracting, global research risk management, contract negotiation, research administration training programs, financial management of sponsored research, complex research collaborations, working with corporate sponsors, and clinical trial agreements. She also presented on financial management practices to an international audience at Peking University in 2013.

Jennifer A. Ponting, is the Director, Pre-Award Services in the Office for Sponsored Programs at Harvard University. In addition to University-wide compliance responsibilities, she oversees a diverse group of research administrators, negotiators and operations staff that manage and provide pre-award services for a total portfolio of over $300 million dollars annually. Prior to joining Harvard, Ms. Ponting was a Senior Contract Officer at Columbia Technology Ventures, the tech transfer and licensing office at Columbia University. She also served as the Export Control Officer and Contract Specialist for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ms. Ponting received her Bachelor of Science from the University of New Hampshire and her Juris Doctor from Northeastern University School of Law.

Theresa Tom, JD, is the Assistant Director of Pre-Award, OSR at Stanford University. She regularly presents at meetings in the US, and also serves as a research administrator instructor at Stanford. She has presented on topics related to working with the European Union's FP7 Programme, Federal contracting and negotiation, grants with special conditions, and working with US National Labs. She is a regular presenter at Stanford-UCSF-UC Berkeley collaborative trainings on topics such as Negotiations and Troublesome Clauses, Federal Case Studies, Communicating with Principal Investigators, and Data Security. In addition, Theresa is in the process of developing a formal onboarding and training program for pre-award research administrators.