



The

GrAAPvine

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From the president's desk

by Elaine McIntosh



Are you ready for Orlando? I am! As this very long and cold winter winds down, I hope you are all planning to celebrate the coming of spring by attending the AAP Conference at Disney Contemporary Resort in Orlando on March 29. We have a great line up of presentations for the AAP conference that focus on specific topics of interest to psychiatry academic practices. This is an opportunity to network with fellow psychiatry administrators and to discuss common and important

issues to your practice. If you need information to register for the AAP conference, contact **Steve Blanchard** (U Iowa) via email (steve-blanchard@uiowa.edu). The AAP conference will be just prior to the MGMA Academic Practice Conference from March 30 through April 1. If you need registration information for the MGMA Academic Practice Conference, you can obtain this information on line by accessing www.mgma.com/apa2008. There is also a registration form included in this issue of *The GrAAPvine*.

In addition to the educational conference on March 29, we will also be holding our annual business meeting. This is a vital event where bylaws changes are presented for your approval and is the forum to discuss important business aspects of our organization. The new officers for the coming year are also elected during the business meeting. This year's Nominating Committee includes **Jim Landry** (Tulane U), **Pat Sanders Romano** (Albert Einstein COM), and **Dan Hogge** (U Utah). The Committee has put together recommendations for officers to serve on next year's Board of Directors. This recommended slate of officers will be sent to the general membership during February and will be voted on at the business meeting. The business meeting is an important function for the continuance and regeneration of our organization.

The spring conference brings to a close the current AAP administration and is the beginning of a new administration. Looking back at the past year, the experience of being the AAP President



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Comings and goings

Please feel free to call new members and personally welcome them to our organization. One of the things that makes AAP special is its friendly members! The hospitality offered by a personal contact will surely be appreciated.

AAP wishes to extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Zorislav (Rick) Guitelman

SUNY Downstate (Brooklyn, NY)
rick.guitelman@downstate.edu
(718) 270-2137



Candy Legeai

Tulane University
clegeai@tulane.edu
(504) 988-5247

Betty Slavicek

New York University
betty.slavicek@med.nyu.edu
(212) 26307628

Bronson Troyer

Indiana University
btroyer@iupui.edu
(317) 274-2364

Spring AAP conference approaching Contemporary issues In psychiatry

By Steve Blanchard, President-Elect and Education Committee Chair

The Spring AAP Conference will be held March 29, 2008 at the Contemporary Resort located in the Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida, preceding the MGMA Academic Practice Assembly conference. Winter in Iowa has been extended and cold; I personally look forward to the opportunity to be in the sun and warmth.

Information regarding the hotel and the APA meeting can be found on the MGMA web site <http://www.mgma.com/pd/default.aspx?id=13798>. The convention hotel rate is \$209 per night. Ground transportation to the hotel can be arranged through the Contemporary Resort.

As indicated above, the spring meeting will be a one day format. The William Newel speaker is **Dr. Vaughn McCall**,

DEO for the Department of Psychiatry at Wake Forest University. His presentation is entitled: "What does Scientology have to say about Psychiatry?" **Sam Muszynski** of the American Psychiatric Association will address the group on "Reimbursement Maximization: Are You Leaving Money on the Table?" **Lee Fleisher** will join our group and speak to us following lunch. Lee is a retired department administrator and past President of AAP. The conference will conclude with the "Take 2 Minutes" round table discussion.

The AAP annual business meeting will take place during lunch. This is a time to update members regarding the general activities of our group and to recognize those that have contributed to the on-going successes of AAP as well as to

vote on next year's slate of board members.

Registration materials will be distributed electronically via the listserv. If you have not received the registration materials, please contact Steve Blanchard via email (steve-blanchard@uiowa.edu) or by phone 319-356-1348.

Looking ahead, the fall 2008 conference will be held in Sacramento, California. The projected dates are October 16 and 17, 2008. This conference will be formatted as a one and a half day event similar to last fall's conference in Utah. Program suggestions are welcome at any time and can be forwarded to Steve Blanchard.

Here's to spending time in the warmth of the Florida sunshine, enjoying the magic of Disney and learning from one another.

Strategic planning update

by Margaret Moran, Member-at-Large for strategic planning

AP has typically developed a strategic plan with a three to five year span. Our last strategic plan was written in 2004 and updated in 2006. In recent times, both **John DiGangi** (U Massachusetts) and **Paul McArthur** (U Rochester) expended a great deal of time and energy in the development of our plan to the point where its periodic review and update is simple and straightforward. The newest version of the strategic plan should serve as a guide for our organization for an additional three to five years.

In coordinating the review

and update of the plan, two areas required remarkably little attention: the environment in which academic administrators operate, and the values of our organization. We continue to strive for a balance between research, education and clinical care, and continue to seek to achieve both mission and margin. The updated version of the plan also includes additional attention to membership services and the use of technology. We would likely see these changes in our respective organizations' strategic plans as well.

Many times, organizations put a lot of time and effort into

the strategic planning process yet only partially achieve the desired objectives due to ineffective execution. The Board of Directors has incorporated a strategic plan reference into each board member's report, and has developed a matrix to assign responsibility and timelines to each objective. Thus, the strategic plan becomes an instrument used throughout the year by board members, rather than a periodic exercise in thinking and writing.

Please watch your email between now and the spring conference for the revised strategic plan and updated bylaws.

What's magic about Magic Kingdom - and other Disney trivia



The Magic Kingdom was dedicated on October 25, 1971. The Contemporary Resort (one of the two Disney resorts to open at that time - and the hotel at which AAP will be staying) had a dedication hosted by Bob Hope. The Grand Opening Celebration included 5000 performers, 500 doves and a parade with a band with 1,076 members (including 76 trombones).



Every fifteen minutes throughout the day, the Epcot Center Innoventions Plaza Fountain, located between Innoventions East and West, presents a spectacular water ballet set to music. The "Fountain of Nations" took its name from the fact that when Epcot first opened, nations from around the world took water from their country and poured it into the fountain as a symbol of global unity.



Bob Hope was present again at the ribbon cutting at the inauguration of Disney Hollywood Studios on May 1, 1989.



Disney's Animal Kingdom, the largest of the four Walt Disney World theme parks at over 500 acres, contains over 300 species of animals, consisting of more than 1700 birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, amphibians and fish. At over 500 acres, Disney's Animal Kingdom is large enough to fit the Magic Kingdom, Epcot, and Disney Hollywood Studios in it - combined! The Safari alone is over 100 acres - that's just a little less than the entire Disney Hollywood Studios. (And no, Bob Hope wasn't present at the dedication!)

Suggested reading

by Radmila Bogdanich

Which CEO Characteristics and Abilities Matter? by Steven N. Kaplan, PhD,* Mark M. Klebanov, PhD,** and Morten Sorensen, PhD*, Preliminary report, June, 2007. From research supported by the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the Olin Foundation.



Three faculty from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and the National Bureau of economic Research (NBER) conducted a study to determine which CEO traits are most important for outstanding leadership and running a successful enterprise. The researchers gleaned their data from a database that houses detailed assessments of over 300 CEO candidates. Each assessment ranges from 20-40 pages and includes detailed quantitative and qualitative biographical information on the candidates from childhood to their current employment.

The researchers looked at 40 specific characteristics and classified them into seven general areas: leadership, personal, intellectual, motivational, interpersonal, technical and specific/functional. These areas were then defined as being “soft/team related,” “neutral,” or “hard/individual capabilities.”

Soft/team related characteristics included things like: “treats people with respect,” “integrity,” “listening skills,” “creativity,” “persuasion,” “open to criticism,” and “team work.” **Hard/individual** capabilities included “efficient,” “organized,” “aggressive,”

“analytical skills” “detailed,” “follows through,” “persistent,” “moves fast” “work ethic” “proactive,” “sets high standards,” and “holds people accountable.”

The researchers findings were surprising. They found that success and performance are more strongly correlated with “hard/execution” skills than with “soft/team related” skills. They also found that incumbent CEO’s are no more successful than outside candidates, holding talent constant.

The study findings may be biased to specific types of corporations since the data the researchers used focused on private buy-out company CEO’s. Therefore, it is not known if this same information would apply to publicly owned companies, whose CEO’s may need more soft skills to manage relations with diverse stakeholders and have many groups they must be accountable to. However, the authors compared their results to Collins (2001) *Good to Great* and believe their findings are consistent with what Collins defines as Level 5 leadership: “CEO’s have unwavering resolve, are fanatically driven, exhibit workmanlike diligence, and build strong teams.” On the other hand, their results do not appear consistent with Collins’

Level 5 CEO’s exhibiting compelling modesty and giving credit to others/taking blame on themselves.”

I first read an article about this study in a *Wall Street Journal* article by George Anders published on November 19, 2007. The title really piqued my interest “Tough CEOs Often Most Successful; a Study Finds.” The information was so contrary to what I had been reading (in all the latest leadership books) and reporting to you in my regular column. I felt compelled to find the study and learn more. I also felt compelled to share this information with you and keep you abreast of new findings. It will be interesting to see if, once again, the pendulum swings.

I emailed one of the study authors, Dr. Kaplan, and asked him if he thought his study findings would be applicable to those of us who work in academic medicine and whether “hard” abilities and execution skills were predictors of success in our working environment as well. He said yes. So, while it is important to have the “soft/team related skills” don’t forget to also focus on what this study defines as “hard/individual skills,” they may be what gives you the edge and defines you as a Level 5 performer!

*University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and NBER,

**University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

President's message

Continued from page 1

has been both personally and professionally rewarding. Last spring, when this administration began, we were in Boston for a great conference. **John DiGangi** (UMass) and his associates **Tina Nesbeda** and **Pat Barkey** were wonderful hosts. The fall brought the memorable trip to scenic Park City, Utah for our fall conference. **Dan Hogge** was our man on the ground in Utah and he did a great job of hosting. This conference was a successful experiment in holding the conference over a day and half period.

Sandwiched between last spring's conference and the upcoming spring conference were Education Committee meetings to plan the fall conference in Utah and upcoming spring conference in Orlando. The Education Committee does a tremendous amount of work to coordinate and execute the conferences. The Education Committee this past year was led by **Steve Blanchard**, President-elect and Chair of the Education Committee, with **Narri Shahrokh** (UC Davis), Member-at-Large for Education, and committee members **Marika Brigham** (U Florida), **Rich Erwin** (U Missouri), **Dan Hogge**, **Jim Landry**, **Janice McAdam** (U Kansas), **Elaine McIntosh** (U Nebraska), **Margaret Moran Dobson** (U Toledo), **Tina Nesbeda**, **Jan Price** (U Michigan), **Marti Sale** (U Kentucky), and **Pat Romano**.

In addition to the educational conference activity, the Board of Directors has taken on several other projects. **Margaret Moran Dobson**, in her role as Member-at-Large for Strategic Collaborations and Governance, has done a superb job of updating the AAP strategic plan to cover the next three years. This month you will be receiving a copy of the revised strategic plan and the bylaws revisions required to support the updated strategic plan. **Tina Nesbeda** as Member-at-Large for Membership recently reported that there are currently 124 active AAP members, 7 honorary members, with 19 new members joining in 2007. Four additional new members have joined AAP since the beginning of 2008. Tina is following in the footsteps of **Steve Blanchard** as a great membership recruiter! In the fall, **Jan Price** published the 20th anniversary edition of *The GrAAPvine*. This was a special edition chronicling the history of the AAP newsletter and acknowledging individuals who have been instrumental in delivering this important communication medium to our membership. We tip our hat to Jan who has been devoted to keeping *The GrAAPvine* presses rolling for many years. Additionally, there has been a Website Task Force working to upgrade the AAP website making it more comprehensive, interactive, and secure for our membership. This task force has some impressive goals and we look forward to detailing these at the annual business

meeting. The Website Task Force members are **Rich Erwin**, **Jim Landry**, **Margaret Moran Dobson**, and **Elaine McIntosh**.

In addition to these projects, a few Board members have been working to determine AAP's appropriate business category under internal revenue rules. Beginning in 2008 there will be stricter federal requirements for the completion of internal revenue documents for non-profit organizations such as AAP. We want to be on the proactive side of dealing with these new requirements.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for your support during the past year. Your contributions to AAP provide the vitality of the organization. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as your president. It has been a year of professional growth, wonderful memories, and getting to know special friends and colleagues. I encourage each of you to become involved as an officer, committee member, attendee at a conference, or contributor to the listserv or *GrAAPvine*. I guarantee you will be richly rewarded. And please don't be shy. Your volunteerism will be welcomed and greeted with enthusiasm.

Consider joining us in Orlando. Bring your family for a great warm weather get-away after this record setting cold winter for many areas of the country. Join us for education, networking, food, fun, personal growth, and an opportunity to be more involved in your career.

Looking forward to seeing you in Orlando!

The executive suite

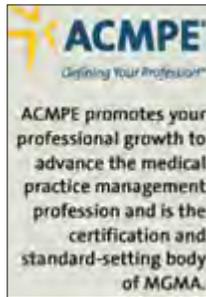
The annual column

by David Peterson, FACMPE

It is that time of year for the annual column that tallies American College of Medical Practice Executives (ACMPE) membership, shamelessly promotes the ACMPE and allows me to thank again *The GrAAPvine's* editor, **Jan Price** (U Michigan) and the AAP leadership for allowing the ACMPE regular print space to tout the benefits of continuing education, networking, certification and the fellowship process offered through the College. This column has been allowed to grow over the years from the College Corner to the Executive Suite and an indulgent editorship has allowed the column content to drift a bit, but hopefully never too far from the main goal of addressing the value of improving one's skill set, knowledge and professionalism while testing the same against a published Body of Knowledge.

Approximately 15% of the AAP membership are also members of the ACMPE and have embraced the challenge of formalized continuing education and certification. Membership grew by 3 this past year (Allen, Harding and Jordan - see sidebar) which offset 3 other lapsing memberships. The current AAP members who are members of record in the ACMPE are listed on page 7.

For those readers new to the AAP and *The GrAAPvine*, the College logo and statement



succinctly describe the purpose of the ACMPE.

Toward that end, the ACMPE offers a variety of resources to aid the medical practice executive. ACMPE members receive, for example, the *Executive View*, a semi-annual print publication. The most recent issue highlighted areas such as “the art of leadership in a medical practice” and “strategic planning in a medical practice,” to name two.

Certainly the ACMPE's *Body of Knowledge* defines the skill sets for the successful practice executive. The ACMPE's website, www.acmpe.com, is a useful tool offering a wealth of information. One can find, for example, gateways to online forums, continuing education events and articles. One of the pieces currently highlighted, “Write power: Using a journal for professional development,” was penned by AAP member and former ACMPE Chairman, **Ron Menaker, FACMPE** (Mayo Clinic). Another article titled, “Think you know how to manage your practice's finances?



Are you certain?” identifies ways to assess one's financial practice acumen.

For the final shameless plug (and the disclaimer as an author of one of the volumes), the ACMPE joined together with the Medical Group Management Association to publish *The MGMA Body of Knowledge Review Series*. This nine volume paperback set focuses on the core management knowledge and skills identified in the *Body of Knowledge*. Each booklet provides a review of a specific management domain by highlighting key concepts, terminology, regulations and crucial resources while addressing tasks related to medical practice. Buy the whole set and a “knowledge assessment” CD comes with it at no charge. The set can be ordered through www.mgma.com. As with most activities, the participant (or member in this instance) gets back what s/he puts in. In the case of the ACMPE, a small investment can result in big returns.

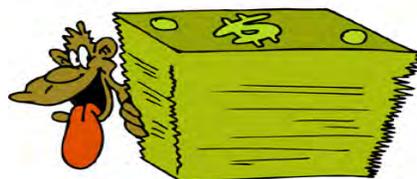
For more information on joining the ACMPE or the board certification and fellowship process, contact the ACMPE directly at 877.275.6462 ext. 889 or contact David Peterson, FACMPE at 414.456.8990, email at peterson@mcw.edu or at the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine,

AAP members in the American College of Medical Practice Executives

Name	Organization	ACMPE Status
David Allen, RN MSHA	University of Alabama – Birmingham	Nominee
Beverly Bowen	HSCIC – Lubbock School of Medicine	Nominee
Lindsey Dozanti	Case Western Reserve University	Nominee
Richard Erwin, CMPE	University of Missouri	Certified
Mario Harding	Denver Health Medical Center	Nominee
Judith Hyer, RN BSN	Texas A & M University	Certified
Alex Jordan	University of Washington	Nominee
James Landry, CMPE	Tulane University	Certified
Ronald Menaker, FACMPE	Mayo Clinic	Fellow
Florie Munroe, CMPE	Health Quest	Certified
Larry Peters	New York University	Nominee
David Peterson, FACMPE	Medical College of Wisconsin	Fellow
Andrea Rahlf	University of Illinois – Chicago	Certified
Patricia Sanders Romano	Albert Einstein College of Medicine	Nominee
Randolph Siwabessy	University of California – San Francisco	Nominee
Jeffrey Tapper	Northwestern University	Nominee
Marietta Taylor, FACMPE	Bassett Healthcare	Fellow
Carol Thomas	University of Louisville	Nominee
Joseph Thomas	University of Michigan	Certified
Jennifer Tungent Henry	University of Louisville	Nominee

Don't monkey around Pay your dues

You should have received your dues notice in your email recently. Contact Janice McAdam at JMCADAM@kumc.edu if you haven't.



It will also be possible to pay your 2008 membership dues with your AAP Spring conference registration.

CMS preparing Web-based Medicare provider enrollment

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) anticipates unveiling its new Web-based Medicare provider enrollment system in March 2008. To access this new system, providers and appropriate staff will be required to obtain an account through the CMS security system known as Individuals Authorized Access to CMS Computer Services - Provider Community (IACS-

PC). To prepare for the rollout of the new provider enrollment system, CMS is encouraging all providers and appropriate staff to register for IACS-PC accounts now.

IACS-PC passwords expire if they are not used within 60 days. Therefore, CMS advises that IACS-PC account holders access their accounts periodically to prevent this from occurring.

To register for an IACS-PC account, go to <https://applications.cms.hhs.gov/warning.html>.

For additional information about IACS-PC, check the webpages listed below. These pages contain FAQs, including questions to help providers decide whether to register as individuals or as a provider organization.

IACS-PC information websites

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLN MattersArticles/downloads/SE0747.pdf>

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLN MattersArticles/downloads/SE0753.pdf>

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLN MattersArticles/downloads/SE0754.pdf>

2008 CPT codes and clarification for psychologist billing

Effective January 2008, CPT code changes may help psychologists bill properly for services. One change clarifies language describing when to use the codes for psychological and neuropsychological testing. 96101 and 96118 can be billed for time the psychologist spends integrating other sources of clinical data into a report, including previously interpreted results and information from tests administered either by a

technician or computer. The new language does not change the way the codes are intended to be used and does not represent a change in Medicare billing policy, such as the use of the -59 modifier for technician and computer-based testing codes when billed with a professional code for the same patient on the same day. The time the psychologist spends interpreting and reporting on individual tests administered by a technician or computer is still paid under those

appropriate codes (96102/96119 and/or 96103/96120).

A second change created new CPT codes for team conferences of at least 30 minutes with non-physicians from at least three disciplines to assess a patient's plan and progress. These team conference codes, 99366 (patient present) and 99368 (patient not present), are similar to codes which have been available to physician providers in the past.

UPDATE: Joint Commission inpatient psychiatry core measures

The Joint Commission and the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS), the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) and the NASMHPD Research Institute, Inc. (NRI) are continuing to work together to identify and implement a test set of core performance measures for Hospital-Based Inpatient Psychiatric Services (HBIPS).

Work on specifications for the following test measures has been completed:

- Assessment of violence

risk, substance use disorder, trauma and patient strengths completed

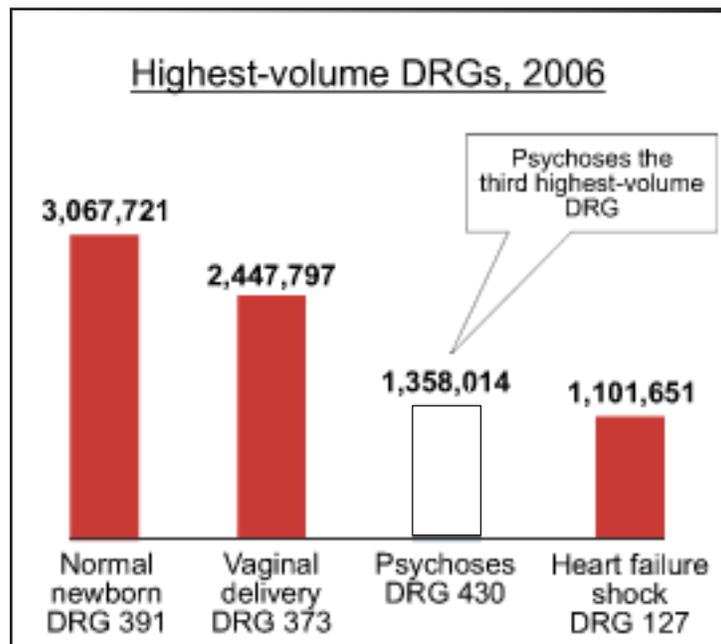
- Hours of restraint use
- Hours of seclusion use
- Patients discharged on multiple antipsychotic medications
- Discharge assessment and aftercare recommendations are sent to next level of care providers upon discharge.

Data collection for the test set began with January 2007 discharges and continued throughout 2007. The final measure set will be submitted to the National Quality Forum (NQF) for con-

sideration and endorsement. It is anticipated that the finalized set of measures will become available to psychiatric hospitals in the fall of 2008 to meet Joint Commission performance measurement requirements.

Updates may be posted from time to time, including specific timelines as they become available. If you have any questions about this project, you should contact Celeste Milton, Associate Project Director, at 630-792-5925 or via email at cmilton@jointcommission.org.

PSYCHIATRY BY THE NUMBERS



Source: American Hospital Association website

University development, expenditures and compliance

by Robert Killoren

Dr. Killoren serves as Associate Vice President For Research, The Ohio State University and is the 2007 recipient of NCURA's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Research Education. This article is based on his address to the 49th annual meeting of the National Council of University Research Administrators.

In 1953, the total of university research expenditures for the whole country was \$255 million. Today 66 universities spend more than \$255 million each, on research every year. Ten years ago universities did \$24 billion of research, today we do twice that much – \$48 billion. Federally-supported research likewise doubled in ten years from \$14 billion to \$30 billion. As Ohio State's President, Gordon Gee, recently said to our university's research administrators, "That is one powerful engine. And you are the people who make that engine run."

But the job of making that engine run is getting harder and harder every year. At Ohio State our federal research doubled in five years, not ten; but our pre- and post-award operations supporting federal research have not grown at all. How many of you have the human and fiscal resources to effectively support your faculty's research? Not many. We cannot keep up with the ever growing red tape associated with the explosion of regulatory requirements governing human subjects, animal experimentation, biosafety, export control, conflict of interest, visas, publication restrictions,

scientific misconduct, foreign nationals, select agents, responsible conduct of research, and, just recently added, the Chemicals of Interest List for Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards. But I am not feeling sorry for us. This is the way it ever was for research administrators, and we will respond the way we always have – we will work harder and find better ways to do things. What I am concerned about is the long-term effect this administrative growth is having on America's research.

Focus: The Federal Demonstration Partnership and the National Academies

Earlier this year, the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) released the findings of a study on administrative burdens on faculty researchers. The FDP study was led by Dr. Robert Becker of Northwestern University and surveyed over 6,000 faculty researchers. Here is the key finding: "Of the time that faculty committed to federal research, 42 percent was devoted to pre and post-award administrative activities – not to active research." The landmark National Academies report, "Rising above the Gathering Storm," has demonstrated the

critical importance that basic research, performed primarily in America's universities, has in maintaining America's global competitiveness and its economic security. It is clear that America needs to invest more in scientific research, but how much ground are we losing each year simply because our faculty are spending nearly half their research time on administrative duties and not on active research? How much more competitive could we make America by simply fixing this anomaly?

Why do faculty spend so much time on administration? One reason that seems pretty self evident to me is the 26% cap on administrative costs that Congress put on universities over 15 years ago. Universities have to subsidize everything they spend for research administration over the cap. On average, the institutions that participated in a recent Council on Governmental Relations (COGR) Facilities & Administrative Costs (F&A) study already have had to come up with an additional \$3,700,000 for every \$100 million of MTDC they spend in order to cover administrative costs over the cap. If we apply that formula, very

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conservatively, to the modified total direct costs of federally funded research in the top 25 institutions in the country, that yields a subsidy to the federal government of well over \$200 million.

And recently Congress passed a defense bill that includes a cap on F&A for all basic research funding sponsored by the Department of Defense (DOD) – research that is performed predominantly by universities. Even DOD itself appealed to Congress to defeat that provision, calling it unjustified and questioning such pinpoint selection of only DOD basic research from the universe of Government R&D funding.” The kind of basic research that DOD supports is precisely the kind of research that the “Rising Storm” report feels is so important. Now some universities will have to subsidize defense research projects too. Most of the over-the-cap cost is being spent to cover compliance requirements that have been added since 1991, not to relieve the administrative load on faculty. This is unfortunate, but understandable. Schools are loath to invest even more to cover costs out of their own pockets, especially when every other kind of grantee in the country gets fully reimbursed for their overhead. So they ask themselves, why subsidize grants administration any more than we absolutely have to?

Since 2000, universities have been struggling to come up with enough money to support the absolutely essentials

aspects of running an institution of higher education. The fact that faculty have to spend half their research time doing administration does not hurt the typical university bottom line, so it does not get fixed. But this is dangerously short-sighted as well. What will increase your faculty’s ability to compete more successfully for more grant money? Giving them more administrative help will free them up to do more research, which will give them stronger proposals, which will help them win more grants. That does affect the bottom line.

Supporting faculty at the lab level - Not

Giving faculty additional administrative help without the institution having to subsidize that cost seems like such an obvious solution to the current dilemma. In fact, in the FDP researcher survey, 95% of the faculty said “they could devote additional time to active research if they had more assistance with research-related administrative tasks.” So why not just give more administrative help to faculty and let them charge it to their grants?

Unfortunately, back in 1991, not only did the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) put a cap on F&A, it took a further step to cut back on administrative costs being charged to grants by tightening language restricting the use of direct costs to support administrative assistants for researchers. With the cap coming on, the government did not want institutions

shifting administrative costs from the indirect to the direct cost category. So in effect, the combination of capping the F&A and not allowing administrative salaries as a direct cost has really resulted in transferring clerical and administrative work to researchers themselves.

Faculty saw this negative outcome immediately and reacted strongly. After the new regulations came out, the story goes that President Clinton met with a number of the country’s leading scientists at a function in the Rose Garden and was besieged by angry researchers who complained vociferously that they were losing their secretaries. Shortly after that encounter, OMB came out with an exception that allowed administrative and clerical salaries to be charged to major projects. That seemed to take care of the problems these top scientists had. Over time, however, auditors have been chipping away at what constitutes a major project and how institutions verify that they are not double charging the government for administrative expenses to the point where it can be risky to put administrative or clerical salaries even on major projects.

Two organizations have been working together to try to find a solution that would get direct administrative support for faculty, as suggested by the FDP survey, and not violate the cost principles. The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) reported at the September

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2007 meeting that progress was being made “in the development of a proposal for a pilot project aimed at providing PIs with support for certain administrative tasks related to their research.” The proposal would explore whether or not adding some “highly trained and skilled” administrative assistants to projects would lower the administrative effort of faculty without increasing the costs of the research overall, and determine if this change actually resulted in an increase in overall research productivity. This project offers some promise, but OMB still has to weigh in. The Council on Governmental Relations (COGR) has been working in parallel to the FDP with federal officials to find viable alternatives that could provide researchers with the administrative help they need most. It may be possible, the FDP suggests, appointing a “research administrative/technical specialist” to a project and charging them, at least partially, as a direct cost, without creating a problem with Cost Accounting Standards governing consistency in the treatment of costs.

COGR also feels that improvements could be made to the “Direct Charge Equivalent (DCE)” methodology that

is used by some institutions to make adjustments to the “Departmental Administration” component of the F&A rate when administrative and clerical salaries are allowed to be charged as a direct cost to grants. For instance, certain aspects of the methodology create financial disadvantages for universities even when they have determined that they have a major project and direct charging is allowed. Likewise, institutions run into DCE problems when they are charging salaries to non-federal sponsored projects for administrative help. You would think that institutions should be at least able to charge administrative support to non-federal grants as a direct cost when these funding entities allow it. So it seems that no matter what direction universities turn there are barriers to providing administrative help to faculty.

Conclusion

This recent history is not something to be proud of. There are strong reasons to believe that fiscal concerns over who pays for administrative help on federally sponsored projects is actually hampering our nation’s research productivity and thus adversely affecting our competitiveness in the global economy. But what are the chances that any of these

problems will be addressed any time soon? Just about zero! So what is the most likely outcome? Once again, it will be up to research administrators across the country to take up what slack we can, help relieve our faculty of administrative burdens as best we can, and do as much as possible with the resources we have.

It has actually been this way throughout my 30-year career. One might ask then, why did I choose to address an issue I know has so little chance of getting fixed? Because this tiny, little issue could actually have dire consequences for the future of our country.

It reminds me of saying attributed to Ben Franklin:

For want of a nail, a shoe was lost
For want of a shoe, a horse was lost
For want of a horse, a rider was lost
For want of a rider, a message was lost
For want of a message, a battle was lost
For want of a battle, a war was lost
And all for the want of a nail...

You have to wonder about a system in which it seems more important to save a little money by having faculty personally deal with all the paperwork and administrative, everything from continually fiddling with time and effort reports to ordering supplies, instead of devoting their time and minds to solving the critical challenges of our age.



Coming attractions

Administrators in Academic Psychiatry Spring Conference

March 29, 2008
Orlando, FL
www.adminpsych.org

Academic Practice Assembly Educational Conference

March 30-April 1, 2008
Orlando, FL
www.mgma.com

Administrators in Academic Psychiatry Fall Conference

October 16-17, 2008
Sacramento, CA
www.adminpsych.org

Medical Group Management Association

October 19-22, 2008
San Diego, CA
www.mgma.com

The GrAAPvine provides information about educational opportunities of interest to its members. It does not necessarily endorse these programs (except, of course, our own!)

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The back page

A wild-eyed man dressed in a Napoleon costume and hiding his right hand inside his coat entered the psychiatrist's office and nervously exclaimed, "Doctor, I need your help right away."

"I can see that," retorted the doctor. "Lie down on that couch and tell me your problem."

"I don't have any problem," the man snapped. "In fact, as Emperor of France I have everything I could possibly want: money, women, power -- everything! But I'm afraid my wife, Josephine, is in deep mental trouble."

"I see," said the psychiatrist, humoring his distraught patient. "And what seems to be her main problem?"

"For some strange reason," answered the unhappy man, "she thinks she's Mrs. Schwartz."



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