CU Anschutz | CU Denver’s Office of Grants and Contracts surpass $1 billion in grant proposal submissions for the second year!

In March of 2016, we reported that CU Anschutz | CU Denver Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) grant proposals had passed the $1 billion dollar submissions mark following their transition into the InfoEd Global (InfoEd) suite of Electronic Research and Administration (eRA) tools. While this achievement was nothing short of phenomenal, the OGC team did not stop there, but continued to break submission records. Learn about the OGC’s amazing accomplishments in 2016.

OGC submits to several grant funding sponsors, including Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Justice (DOJ) and others. The National Institute of Health (NIH) is a primary funding sponsor for CU. February, June, and October are critical submission deadline cycles for various mechanisms such as large research and career development grants. These deadlines traditionally bring late nights and weeks of stress worrying about meeting submission deadlines.

In April 2016, UIS, OGC, InfoEd and the campus eRA teams partnered to upgrade the eRA system to version 13.808.01E. This upgrade brought a number of fixes and enhancements to the system, but also many changes to business processes both at OGC and for the vendor. Zachary Keys, UIS’s Director, eRA, states that with the efficiencies the upgrade introduced, grant administrators are now able to spend more time getting work done and less time working in the system. Grant Administrators were able to submit more proposals than ever before and even surpassed the $1-billion-dollar submission record one month earlier than they reached that mark in 2015 to $1.194 billion! In October, 2016, OGC submissions had increased by 28% over the previous year and 37% for the month of October itself. Even the numbers from the June to October deadline increased significantly, as shown in Table 1.

Mary Powell and Dung Pham, IT Senior Professionals in OGC, implemented several business process changes to align with the enhancements. They further aided in efficiencies across the campuses by providing training to their teams and department personnel helping to ensure timely submission of grant proposals. "The proposal submission process is streamlined since the eRA system was implemented," says Pham. "The Pre-award team has done well with streamlining their processes to align with the upgrades so there are rarely delays in reviewing a proposal and returning it to the department and Principal Investigator (PI). Grant administrators have also done a good job of getting their applications routed on time and incorporating OGC’s edits to get a strong application to the sponsor."

The vendor also continues to provide 24-hour system-to-system support, which wasn't even needed during this critical deadline given how well the system is now working. UIS and the eRA teams are constantly enhancing the tools and processes for greater efficiencies, including the development of additional ways to route proposals to save time for OGC for maximum efficiencies specific to the type of proposal.

These updates allowed researchers and administrators to work on the research and proposal refinement, rather than focusing on the proposal technology.

Great thanks go to Amy Gannon, Director of OGC, and Betsy Collins, Business Services Director, both working out of the Vice Chancellor for Research’s office. Most of all, thanks to our PI’s for continuing to submit research proposals. Keep those proposals coming!

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For the last 16 years Rytis' laboratory has worked on understanding the mechanisms of cell polarization. He has studied several different types of cell polarity with the major focus on understanding the machinery governing polarization of individual epithelial cells as well as coordinated polarization of multi-cellular tissues during epithelial tissue morphogenesis. In addition to studying polarized epithelial cells he also investigated few models of transient cell polarity, namely the machinery mediating the formation of the invadopodia during cancer cell migration as well as regulation of cytokinesis and abscission during cell division. All these projects are still ongoing in his laboratory and now focuses on understanding the roles of polarized membrane transport and cytoskeleton dynamics during epithelia polarization, invadopodia formation and cell division in vitro and in vivo.

In the last couple of years mitotic midbody has emerged as a novel signaling organelle that is asymmetrically inherited by one of the daughter cells during division. He also recently discovered that post-mitotic midbodies can also be released in to the extracellular milieu and later up-taken by neighboring cells. Significantly, inheritance or uptake of the midbody appears to directly regulate cell proliferation as well as differentiation. Furthermore, it has been suggested that midbodies may even be required for maintenance of cell "stemness". All these findings identified post-mitotic midbody as a novel and likely very important signaling "platform", yet the mechanisms regulating midbody inheritance, uptake, degradation and signaling remains essentially unknown. Consequently, his lab recently started a new research project to complete systematic analysis of all the cellular mechanism that regulate intracellular accumulation of post-mitotic midbodies as well as identification and characterization of midbody-dependent signaling pathways during cell proliferation and differentiation.

Rytis Prekeris is a Professor in the Department of Cell & Developmental Biology at the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus. Rytis received his BS in Physiology in the Department of Natural Sciences from Vilnius University in Lithuania. In 1997, he received his PhD in Cell Biology from East Carolina University School of Medicine. Following a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Howard Hughes Medical Institute at Stanford, he became an Assistant Professor here at the School of Medicine in 2001. He was appointed Professor in 2009.

Proposal Development Workshop
11:00am - 4:00pm, Wednesday, January 4th, 2017
Institute of Behavioral Science, Rm 155A
1440 15th Street
University of Colorado Boulder
(FREE but RSVP Required!!  email jessica.larue@colorado.edu)

The RMRDC invites interested researchers to attend our winter "Proposal Development Workshop." The goal of the workshop is to give researchers an overview of: (1) the restricted data resources available for RDC-based research, (2) programs and services available at the RMRDC, and (3) the steps involved in gaining approval for projects using restricted data.

Workshop participation is free and is open to all researchers at the University of Colorado Boulder, University of Colorado Denver including the Anschutz Medical Campus, University of Denver, Colorado State University, the University of Wyoming, and other RMRDC Consortium institutions. Faculty, researchers and doctoral students from all disciplines are welcome.

11:00am-11:30am Session I: Welcome, Overview of RMRDC Programs/Resources
Overview of the national RDC network and research opportunities in RDCs. Review of the resources, programs, and services available at the RMRDC.

11:45am-12:15pm Lunch (RSVP required for lunch!!, email jessica.larue@colorado.edu)

12:30pm-1:15pm Session II: Scouting RDC Projects and Data
Review examples of RDC projects and how to learn about them. Scouting restricted data sets available in RDCs. Overview of preparing proposals to use NCHS data sets.

1:30pm-3:00pm Session III: Writing Proposals for Projects Using Restricted Data
Review the Census perspective on the RMRCensus Bureau collaboration. Scouting and developing project ideas. Elements of successful RDC proposals and projects. Preparing/submitting Census RDC proposals. Planning project timelines.

3:15pm-4:00pm Session IV: Individualized Project Development and Consultations
Workshop presenters: Texas RDC administrator, Bethany Desalvo, RMRDC administrator, Katie Genadec, and executive director, Jani Little