

September 16, 2019

To: University of Louisville Research Community

From: Robert S. Keynton, PhD, Interim Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation and
Kevyn E. Merten, PhD, Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation

RE: Internal realignment of three “pre-award” research administration units under the Office of the
Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation (EVPRI)

Dear UofL Research Colleagues,

Over the last year and a half, the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation has pursued major opportunities to streamline and strengthen the University’s research infrastructure and to provide enhanced support services to the research community in order to allow you, our faculty and staff, to pursue and secure externally sponsored funding (grants and contracts). Our goal is to facilitate your research programs and to help the University achieve preeminence as a nationally recognized metropolitan research university. To achieve these goals, the Office of the EVPRI must provide you with a research administration infrastructure that is efficient, easy to navigate, and strategically positioned to provide first-class research support services. Today, we write to inform you of some upcoming changes to our research administrative structure that we believe will provide your research programs with enhanced support and position UofL’s research enterprise for future growth.

Since 2013, “pre-award” research administration services at UofL have been delivered by three separate offices/units under the Office of the EVPRI, with each unit supporting a distinct type of externally sponsored research - the Office of Industry Engagement (OIE) has supported non-clinical research sponsored by industry sponsors, the Clinical Contracts Division (CCD) has supported clinical research activities funded by non-federal sponsors, and Sponsored Programs Grants Administration (SPGA) has supported clinical research funded by federal sponsors and non-clinical research funded by non-industry sponsors. While this organizational structure allows for the delivery of focused subject matter expertise for each type of sponsored program, it also leads to a number of inherent challenges for the UofL research community and for the Office of the EVPRI. Some of these challenges include:

- The existence of multiple points of entry for “pre-award” support services creates confusion for researchers, research teams, and external sponsors;
- The inconsistent implementation of research administration policies, processes and systems across three separate units causes frustration for the research community and duplication of effort for researchers as well as departmental and central research administrators;
- A dilution of limited University/EVPRI resources into subspecialties leads to delays in securing and establishing sponsored projects and prevents a unified approach to educating, training, and communicating with the research community;
- The distributed responsibility for compliance initiatives across multiple units increases risk to the University and causes undue administrative burden on researchers and research administrators.

With these and other challenges in mind, on October 15, 2019, the Office of the EVPRI will realign the three “pre-award” units – OIE, CCD, and SPGA – into a single unit, which will serve as a central hub for the administration of all externally sponsored activities, irrespective of sponsor or project type. This newly created unit will partner with Sponsored Programs Financial Administration (SPFA) and will, collectively, be the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration (OSPA). The new OSPA will provide support services across the full administrative and financial lifecycle of externally sponsored projects and programs at UofL. The new OSPA [organizational chart](#), [staff directory](#), and [more information about OSPA](#) can be found on our web site.

Accordingly, the rollout of the new OSPA will include several changes to historical administrative processes and to the delivery of support services. In addition, we will be introducing new initiatives to enhance education, training, and communication with the UofL research community and to improve sponsored programs compliance oversight. A summary of these changes and new initiatives is available in the [FAQ](#) document. We are aware that changes to longstanding structures and processes can lead to questions and confusion; please feel free to contact the [OSPA leadership team](#) if you need guidance and/or direction.

We view this realignment as an initial step toward renewing our research infrastructure and positioning our support services for an expansion of research at UofL. As the new OSPA takes shape, there will be many opportunities for you to provide input, feedback, and ideas for how we can help you and your research programs succeed, including the new OSPA Open Office Hours series. OSPA welcomes the opportunity to meet with you and your research support staff to discuss its new structure, updated processes, new initiatives, and future opportunities for enhancing support to the UofL research community.

Thank you for your outstanding efforts to maintain the status of the University of Louisville as a Carnegie R1 Doctoral University: Very High Research Activity. Without your tireless efforts to secure external funding, we would not be where we are today.

Sincerely,



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