

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii



June 17, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Lynn Kinney, Chairman,
and Members of the Board of Directors

FROM: Michael P. Hamnett
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Proposed Research and Training Facilitators Pilot Program

RCUH is proposing the establishment of a research and training facilitators program in conjunction with the University of Hawaii on a pilot basis. We believe such a program will significantly enhance the research administration management infrastructure at the University of Hawaii. This new support system is not intended to replace existing research administration management units at the University of Hawaii (e.g., Office of Research Services, etc.). Rather, it is intended to supplement UH services by assisting researchers in managing extramural contracts and grants through the UH and RCUH systems. This is in line with the "soup to nuts" research support concept outlined in the RCUH Strategic Plan

This new research and training support initiative will be implemented in conjunction with InfoEd, the electronic research administration software being purchased by UH and RCUH (the RCUH Board, at its December 2004 meeting, approved funding of \$285,000 towards the UH's purchase of this software). InfoEd will clearly make research and training proposal development more efficient and effective and will also improve project management when it is fully implemented. However, it is unlikely that InfoEd will significantly reduce the faculty time and effort required to manage proposal development and contracts and grants at the University of Hawaii.

It is recommended that the proposed research and training facilitators program be implemented in conjunction with the purchase and implementation of a new business process and knowledge management software program. Business process and knowledge management software provides a systematic way to document how individual tasks or transactions are initiated and processed and allows organizations to develop best practices. It can:

- Reduce operational costs
- Improve employee productivity
- Make internal processes more efficient
- Maximize resource effectiveness

It also facilitates the training of new staff and improves consistency of business practices and the applications of policies and procedures across research and academic units.

The implementation of business process software clearly involves a major investment in documenting and reviewing business practices. However, it allows organizations to reduce the cost of staff training and provides systematic ways to improve business practices.

Specific Research and Training Management Support Needs

The specific research administration support needs to be met by this new cadre of research and training facilitators will include the following:

- Facilitate the development of pre-proposals and proposals to support research and training for faculty; e.g., identify proposal requirements, assist in developing budgets, ensure that institutional certifications and assurances can be met, facilitate departmental/college/ORS approvals for proposal submission, etc.
- Track proposals (after submissions and prior to award or rejection by sponsoring agency).
- Facilitate the execution of contract or grant documents (the award documents) at the University of Hawaii by working closely with the UH Office of Research Services.
- Where necessary, assist with the establishment of project accounts (including advance accounts) and insure that budgets are revised as needed.
- Facilitate:
 - √ hiring of project staff through UH and RCUH,
 - √ executing of sub-agreements and sub-contracts for sub-recipients and contractors,
 - √ procuring of project equipment,
 - √ completing final reports to sponsors.
- Assist with the implementation of InfoEd software
- Continually assess research and training support needs among researchers.
- Monitor research and training opportunities in areas of interest to researchers.

Initial Effort

It is proposed that the research and training facilitators program be implemented as a joint venture between RCUH and the UH College of Business Administration (CBA). A Program Coordinator will be recruited by RCUH and placed in the CBA. He or she will report to a management committee initially consisting of the Dean of the College of Business, the RCUH Executive Director and the RCUH Director of Human Resources. He or she will draw on CBA faculty expertise to assist with the design and implementation of the training program.

Recruitment of facilitators will be initiated at three levels: advanced CBA undergraduates, CBA graduate students, and at the professional level. Prospective facilitators can enter the facilitators training and career development process at any level. Facilitator training will be done using the business process and knowledge management software and group interaction. Therefore, trainees with more experience can help facilitate learning among those with less experience.

Trainees at the advanced undergraduate level will be encouraged to apply for graduate assistant positions in the program. And, master's degree students who complete their degrees will be encouraged to apply for professional positions in the program.

Initially, a class of six research and training support facilitators will be recruited. They will be trained and supervised by the Program Coordinator and will be deployed to schools and colleges at UH but will work together to develop and refine business practices they will employ as research and training support facilitators.

This program is being proposed as a pilot program for three years out of funds to be budgeted for RCUH's Strategic Plan implementation. Estimated program costs for the first year will total about \$290,000. If the

first year evaluation indicates that the first year demonstrated success and we are ready to expand the program, we are estimating approximately \$370,000 for Year 2. If the Year 2 evaluation shows growing success and we are ready to expand the program, we are estimating a Year 3 cost of about \$490,000. A proposed budget is attached.

Whether RCUH or UH continues to fund the program after Year 3 will be up for discussion. It is suggested that UH take over sponsorship of the program after Year 3.

At the conclusion of Year 1 or Year 2, if it is determined that the program is not meeting its intended objectives, the program will be discontinued.

The Program will be evaluated by RCUH and the UH CBA in collaboration with UH Principal Investigators and UH administrators participating in the program on an annual basis. And, as noted above, continuation and expansion of the program will be based on the results of that evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION: *That the Board approve the establishment of a Research and Training Facilitators Program on a pilot project basis, not to exceed three years at a funding level as noted in the attached budget, with the proviso that if the program does not meet its intended objectives after Year 1 or Year 2, that the program be discontinued.*

SUMMARY
Proposed Research and Training Facilitators Program

Purpose: Support UH Principal Investigators (PIs/researchers) in securing and managing research and training grants — research administration management from soup to nuts.

Staffing: 1 full-time Program Coordinator and 3 levels:

	Advanced Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students	Professionals
Year 1	4	2	
Year 2	8	4	
Year 3	8	4	2

Training Method: Use of Business Process and Knowledge Management Software & InfoEd Software

Primary Duties: The specific contracts and grants support needs to be met by this new cadre of research and training facilitators will include the following:

- Facilitate the development of pre-proposals and proposals to support research and training for PIs.
- Track proposals (after submissions and prior to award or rejection by sponsoring agency).
- Facilitate the execution of contract or grant documents (the award documents) at the University of Hawaii by working closely with the UH Office of Research Services.
- Where necessary, assist with the establishment of project accounts (including advance accounts) and insure that budgets are revised as needed.
- Facilitate:
 - √ hiring of project staff through UH and RCUH,
 - √ executing of sub-agreements and sub-contracts for sub-recipients and contractors,
 - √ procuring of project equipment,
 - √ completing final reports to sponsors.
- Assist with the implementation of InfoEd software.
- Continually assess research and training support needs among researchers.
- Monitor research and training opportunities in areas of interest to researchers.

Funding: Initial three years by RCUH:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$290,000	\$370,000	\$490,000

Housed: UH College of Business Administration

Evaluation: Annually by RCUH and UH CBA in collaboration with UH Principal Investigators and UH administrators.

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii



May 10, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Byron Bender, Chairman,
and Members of the Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Research and Training Facilitators Pilot Program – First-Year Review

Attached is a report on the first year activities of the Research and Training Facilitators Pilot Program. The Board approved the subject program last year to assist the University in enhancing the research administration management infrastructure at the University of Hawaii. This new support system is not intended to replace existing research administration management units at the University of Hawaii (e.g., Office of Research Services, etc.). Rather, it is intended to supplement UH services by assisting researchers in managing extramural contracts and grants through the UH and RCUH systems. The plan is that RCUH would offer the program on a pilot basis for three years.

Dr. Dharm Bhawuk, Professor of Management and Industrial Relations at the UHM College of Business Administration, has been serving as the program coordinator and has been providing the necessary guidance to the student facilitators. He will be available at our Finance and Personnel Committee meeting on May 24, 2006 to elaborate on his report and answer any questions.

Through the budget, we are recommending continuing the program for a second year.

Michael P. Hamnett
Executive Director

Attachment

CONTINUING WITH THE TRAINING OF THE FACILITATORS

- ❖ We continue to train the Facilitators using the twin processes of on-the-job training (10 hour a week at SSRI, SOEST and JABSOM) and in-class instructions with the Project Director.
- ❖ The Facilitators continue to learn and map the processes of the tasks needed to relieve PIs of administrative duties so that the PIs can focus on research.
- ❖ Facilitators continue to use the software Proforma to map processes and are getting more conversant with the software.
- ❖ The weekly class, which meets on Wednesdays from 3:15 to 5:15 pm, provides a learning community where they share their process maps with each other as well as their learning experiences and issues they face.
- ❖ In the weekly class we continue to focus on developing a positive attitude toward supporting PIs, and discuss articles and books that provide tools to cultivate positive attitude in the workplace.
- ❖ We lost two Facilitators (Fayth had to move back to California because her father-in-law died, and Erin is doing another internship in her specialization) in January, and are in the process of recruiting four new ones. Based on our experience last semester, we only want to take local students who want to work for the RCUH or the University system after completion of their training..
- ❖ Currently, we have Facilitators working 10 hours a week at SSRI (Namrata and Justin), SOEST (Lavina), and ORS (Mehana).
- ❖ Namrata, Justin, and Lavina are also putting in additional 10 hours at ORS, where Mehana is assigned to Pre-Award (with Georgette, Paul, & Linda), Justin to Post Award (with Galen), Lavina to Compliance (with Dennis), and Namrata to Contracts (with Mary Ann).
- ❖ Ms. Jennifer Pavlec oriented the interns to ORS and handed out the manuals for InfoEd. We plan to rotate the facilitators through various units of ORS to make sure that they understand all its functions. The objective is for the interns to become proficient in InfoEd to be able to help Jennifer train people when InfoEd becomes operational at UH later this semester.
- ❖ Again, we had a slow start in setting up the interns at ORS. It is expected that whenever we assign the Facilitators to a new unit, it will take 3 to 4 weeks to create an accepting environment for them to start working.

WHAT THE FACILITATORS HAVE LEARNED

- ❖ They have developed a working knowledge of the RCUH-UH system and how it functions.
- ❖ They have become self-directed, and seldom wait for a staff member to give an assignment. People they work for say positive things about their work and attitude.
- ❖ They have acquired proficiency in using the software Proforma.
- ❖ They are now comfortable with the processes involved in the following activities:
 - ❖ purchase orders
 - ❖ payments
 - ❖ travel advances
 - ❖ mileage reimbursements
 - ❖ petty cash payments
 - ❖ travel completions
 - ❖ non-employee reimbursements.

THE FLOW CHARTS COMPILED BY THE FACILITATORS

The Facilitators continue to polish the process maps for the following tasks: Payment, Exempt purchases, Non-competitive purchases, Competitive purchases, PO procedure for FOs, PO payment, Travel request form, Calculating per diem and tax, Travel advance, Travel attachments, Travel rules, Travel completion, Purchase requisition, Change PO, Mileage reimbursement, Advance account, Sources of funds, and PR money quotes.

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii



May 9, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mrs. Joelle Kane, Chairman,
and Members of the Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Research and Training Facilitators Pilot Program – Second-Year Review

Attached is a report on the second year activities of the Research and Training Facilitators Pilot Program. The Board approved the subject program in 2005 to assist the University in enhancing the research administration management infrastructure at the University of Hawaii (an initiative of the RCUH Strategic Plan). This support system is not intended to replace existing research administration management units at the University of Hawaii (e.g., Office of Research Services, etc.). Rather, it is intended to supplement UH services by assisting researchers in managing extramural contracts and grants through the UH and RCUH systems. The proposal was that RCUH would offer the program on a pilot basis for three years.

As the attached indicates, we are making some substantive changes to the program, as some of our objectives proved to be unfeasible.

Through the budget, we are recommending continuing the program for a third year at a projected cost of \$355,000. The future of the program after Year 3 has not been decided. When we proposed the establishment of the program, our intent was for the University to fund the program after Year 3. This matter requires discussion with the University.

Michael P. Hamnett
Executive Director

Attachment

Second-Year Review of Research and Training Facilitators Program

We have conducted an evaluation of the Research and Training Facilitators Program that included a survey of PIs and Facilitators. The evaluation revealed the need to make several adjustments in the Program:

1. More upfront training is required before facilitators are placed and PIs need to know what business processes they have learned. This will be more efficient and more effective than relying on OJT and business process mapping.
2. PIs need to be given a better understanding of the goals and objectives of the program and the capabilities of the facilitators with whom they are working. PIs should also be given copies of the program description and job descriptions of the facilitators.
3. Managing this program requires more time than we anticipated—more interaction between the facilitator program manager and the PIs is needed to make sure the facilitators are being used effectively and that the part-time schedules are allowing the facilitators to meet the needs of the PIs.
4. The program should be aimed at undergraduates and not MBA students. RCUH and UH salaries for research facilitators cannot compete with the business community for MBAs. While RCUH and UH salaries may need to be increased to be competitive in the current labor market, paying MBA graduates market rates will create real inequities for existing RCUH employees.
5. Recruitment of advanced undergraduates should go beyond the College of Business—there are talented people in science programs who would like to remain involved in science without becoming a research scientist.
6. The objectives of the Program should include placing graduates in project and program support staff positions through either UH or RCUH. This kind of program “leakage” will enhance contracts and grants management capacity across the board.
7. A broader-based UH/RCUH training program is needed for facilitators, new project and program staff, existing project and program staff, FOs, and PIs. Content and methods of delivery need to be tailored to meet the knowledge needs and schedules of each audience.

During Year 1 and 2 of the program, we had 9 facilitators assigned to SOEST¹, JABSOM², SSRI³, and ORS⁴.

¹ School of Ocean & Earth Sciences & Technology, specifically, Fiscal Office, CCMED Project, and Geology & Geophysics department.

² John A. Burns School of Medicine, specifically, Tropical Medicine & Medical Microbiology department and Clinical Research Center.

³ Social Science Research Institute (part of the College of Social Sciences).

⁴ Office of Research Services (both the systemwide office and their satellite office at JABSOM).

Proposal for Year Three

The Research and Training Facilitators Program will be combined with a comprehensive contracts and grants management training program being developed by UH and RCUH.

- Contracts and Grants Management Training

UH and RCUH has commissioned a contracts and grants management training needs assessment. An integrated contracts and grants management training program will be designed to meet the needs of new research and training facilitators, new project and program staff, Fiscal Officers and PIs. The program will focus on federal and state contracts and grants rules and regulations, UH and RCUH policies and procedures, and use of on-line financial and human resources systems. This program will build on existing training efforts including the three day FO training provided by UH Financial Management Office, the six module contracts and grants management training program developed by the Office of Research Services, the human resources and financial management systems training provided by RCUH, and the InfoEd (electronic research administration system) training currently being launched by the Office of the UH Vice President for Research.

The training programs will be staffed by UH and RCUH staff assisted by a training consultant in the development of training modules and materials. The initial focus will be on a four week introductory training program for facilitators that will be open to participation by existing project support staff at the University of Hawaii and an introduction to contracts and grants management at the University of Hawaii for PIs.

- Full-time Facilitators

The program will hire four full-time research and training facilitators. Recruitment will be open to the research and training facilitators that have been with the program during its first two years. These will form the core of an RCUH unit that will support the PIs with program and project management, assist with new program and project startups, and provide on the job training for new facilitators and for support staff. This on the job training will be in addition to training provided through the joint UH/RCUH contract and grants training program described above. Starting salaries will be from \$27,000 to \$32,000 depending on the level of proficiency with contracts and grants business processes.

- New Facilitators

The program will recruit 8 student facilitators in FY 08. They will undergo an intensive four-week training program focusing on the most frequently used project management business processes. They will then be placed in UH units and mentored by the full-time facilitators. Over the course of their first year, they will receive additional training in the use of InfoEd and on the use of less frequently used business processes.

Initial salaries for student facilitators will be \$12 per hour but may be adjusted as they gain knowledge of business processes and gain experience.

Graduates of this program will be a source of new project and program management staff and full-time research and training facilitators.

**Year 3 Budget
Research and Training Facilitators Program**

		Annual	Total
SALARIES:			
Program Coordinator (20% FTE)		\$28,360	\$28,360
Full-time Facilitators	4.00	\$30,000	\$120,000
Student Facilitators	8.00	\$12,000	\$96,000
FRINGE:			
Program Coordinator			\$3,120
Full-time Facilitators (25% of salary)			\$30,000
Student Facilitators (15% of salary)			\$14,400
TRAINING COSTS:			
Training Consultant	20,000		
Initial Training (July/Aug 2007)	20,000		
Continuing Education	15,000		
Training Materials	6,000		\$61,000
SUPPLIES:			\$2,000
TOTAL COSTS			\$354,880

Research and Training Facilitators Program

The Research and Training Facilitators Program was initiated three years ago to lay a foundation for the matrix contracts and grants management staffing envisioned in the RCUH strategic plan. In year one, we recruited and trained graduate and under graduate students to provide direct support to principal investigators. More centralized training and better placements were instituted in year two following an interim evaluation. By the end of year two it was clear that part-time facilitators could not provide the kinds of support that PIs wanted. We further modified the program and hired three full-time facilitators to provide support to PIs themselves and to supervise student facilitators.

Nelson Sakamoto recently conducted the evaluation of the Research and Training Facilitators Program promised to the Board when the program was first initiated in 2005. Nelson concluded that the program has fallen short of expectations for several reasons: (1) our inability to recruit quality student facilitators, (2) the lack of meaningful work assignments and work volume for full-time facilitators, and (3) the limited ability of facilitators to support multiple projects.

Our inability to attract quality students may have been a function of the salary and benefits offered. However, at the time we were recruiting, there did not appear to be that many students in the market for this type of position.

The lack of meaningful work assignments for our full-time facilitators was a problem in all three units in which facilitators were placed. This problem persisted despite staff efforts to encourage units to make better use of the facilitators. PIs and support staff clearly needed additional staff to initiate travel requests, reimbursements, purchase orders and other simple transactions but clerical staff or student help could initiate such transactions. Our facilitators could have trained clerical staff or student help to handle routine transactions but there simply were not people to be trained. PIs and staff were reluctant to assign more complex research management tasks such as proposal development and submission, complex procurement actions, and recruiting and hiring staff because of the inexperience of our facilitators.

Unfortunately, traditional ways of managing projects mitigated against sharing facilitators across projects. At SSRI, where this was done out of the central office, there was insufficient volume to keep one full time facilitator meaningfully engaged.

Nelson Sakamoto's evaluation concluded that there is a very strong need for people to initiate transactions, but highly trained facilitators is not cost effective way to provide that support. And, putting more resources into training university support staff would be a much better investment of RCUH resources. The Research and Training Facilitators program was approved by the Board as a pilot

program in 2005, with the intent that the University take over the funding of the program after Year 3 should the program be continued.

Training to Build Research Management Capacity

RCUH had already recognized the need for training prior to the Research and Training Facilitators Program evaluation. This is becoming more apparent as faculty and support staff at the University retire.

Last year, RCUH joined with the UH Office of Research Services and the UH Financial Management Office to conduct a training needs assessment and gap analysis. These were completed early in the year through interviews and focus group meetings with PIs, FOs, and support staff at the University. The assessment concluded that there is a tremendous need for training; the initial thrust of the new training effort should be a foundation course for new principal investigators. And, this should be followed by enhancement of the six-module contracts and grants management course developed by the Office of Research Services for fiscal officers and other support staff.

The classroom and on-line versions of the first module of the two-part foundation course for PIs has been reviewed by PIs, FOs, and support staff and was very well received. The on-line version will be available later this month and some initial work on the second module has already been completed.

Given that the Research and Training Facilitators Program will be discontinued and the response to the first module of the new training program has been well received, we propose to instead provide financial support to the University for a one- to two-year period to establish a Research Support Training Program. After this time, the University should be able to support the program on its own. We strongly believe that RCUH support for training and the automation of routine transactions will be critical the continued success of the research enterprise at the University of Hawaii.