Office of Research Administration (ORA)

Overview, Priorities, Annual Satisfaction Survey

Dr. Robert Nobles, Vice President for Research Administration

Special Thanks to Research Data Analytics and Emory’s Research Administrators
Research Administration’s Priority Areas

Recruiting and Developing a Strong and Supported Workforce
- Workload and Staffing Analysis (matching staffing to growth)
- Fostering a Positive and Supportive Environment
- Produce One-ORA Outcomes

Pursuing and Reaching Operational Efficiency
- Enhance Operational Efficiency of RAS
- Build strong collaborative partnership with Schools/Departments through shared accountability
- External Program Reviews
- Quality improvement projects led by the ORA Dragon Team
- Enhance Post Award Administration, Including Close Outs

Building a Robust and Resilient Infrastructure
- Research IT Working Group – Comprehensive Assessment of our IT Systems
- Expand our Grants and Contracts Support
- Establish the Strategic Operations & Training Unit
### Research Administration: The Past Decade

#### Emory Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service to Faculty</th>
<th>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</th>
<th>Fragmentation</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Staff knowledge, competencies, and focus</th>
<th>Staff back-up resources</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Highly Variable</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Operate in Silos</td>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
<td>Knowledgeable, competent staff</td>
<td>Non-existent</td>
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#### Vision and Solutions

| High level of support to all faculty | Clearly defined and well-documented; Staff (central & local) held accountable (utilizing data and metrics) | A locally-based team providing high quality research administration services. | Consistent, standardized, and streamlined processes. Minimize redundancy and rework. | Knowledgeable, competent staff focused on research administration teamed with local dept. staff for faculty support | Ability to balance workload and provide back-up for staff (especially during FMLA, vacations, etc.) |

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### Emory Challenges

- **Service to Faculty**: Highly Variable
- **Roles & Responsibilities**: Unclear
- **Fragmentation**: Operate in Silos (Lab, Dept/Division, School/Unit, Central)
- **Processes**: Inconsistency
- **Staff knowledge, competencies, and focus** (some only do it occasionally):
  - Inconsistency
- **Staff back-up resources** *(in some departments)*: Non-existent
The Structure of ORA

Organizational Chart

Legend
- Sponsored Programs and Fiscal Support
- Regulatory Affairs
- Operational Support
- AVP – Associate/Assistant Vice President
- AD – Associate/Assistant Director
- AED – Associate Executive Director
- D – Director
- ED – Executive Director
The Organization of Research Administration at Emory
**Vision:**

A Unified Research Culture where shared Engagement & Accountability Drives Positive Change

**Improved Transparency and Aligned Priority setting:**
- Triannual Business Reviews
- Joint Unit level Feedback, Escalation Management & Problem Solving
- Alignment on ORA Process Improvement Initiatives

**Joint Strategic and Operational Governance with Schools/Departments**

**Aligned Goals, Metrics and ongoing management of key HR actions & budgets**

Creating Unification is critical to a healthy Research Infrastructure and optimum Faculty Support & Engagement
“Two Parent Household”

BI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATION

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

ABILITY TO EXECUTE ON OUR GOALS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

- All team members are validated as an active participant
- Accountability and ownership at macro and micro levels of the processes
- Actionable outcomes from partnership and communication
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Human Resources</th>
<th>Information Technology</th>
<th>Quality Improvement</th>
<th>Infrastructure Assessment</th>
<th>Training</th>
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</table>
| • Led by Del King and Maria Mendez  
• Collaborating with CBOs, HR Representatives, & RAS leadership  
• Focused on streamlining recruitment, hiring, onboarding, tracking, and transparency  
• Critical to success is improved retention and staff engagement | • Led Wil Brown, Melanie Lawrence, and Marc Overcash  
• Collaborating with ORA, ORA-IT, CBOs, Data Analytics, Enterprise Financial Systems,  
• Focused on performing an assessment of utility, usability, integration, gaps, and potential solutions | • Led by Inger Garnett  
• Collaborating with ORA, CBOs, and research teams  
• Focused on existing work streams (Award Closeout, Subrecipient Monitoring), continuity of service, increasing efficiency, listening to all stakeholders, and mobilizing action steps/processes | • Led by VPRA/Deans/CBOs  
• Focused on thinking about alternative support mechanisms for RAS Directors, continuity when vacancies occur, expanded leadership opportunities and maximizing faculty support  
• Jointly determining staffing levels | • Led by Lisa Wilson and Tonya Jenkins  
• Collaborating with ORA Senior Leadership, RAS Leadership, and RAS team member  
• Focused on conducting an inventory of existing trainings, training needs, training delivery, and next steps |
RAS Overview
Research Administration Services (RAS) units provide faculty assistance with pre and post award activities; while coordinating with other research units. Their support with the compliance and administrative requirements of the grant life cycle allows researchers to concentrate on the science/study; while being excellent stewards of their sponsored funds and outcomes.

RAS is the Tip of the Iceberg

1. RAS
2. OSP
3. RGC
4. OTT
5. OCR

Research Administrative Services
- The Face of Research Administration
- Facilitate Pre & Post Award

Office of Sponsored Programs
- Pre-Award Grants, Contracts & Subawards

Research Grants & Contracts
- Post-Award Financial Services and Compliance

Office of Technology Transfer
- MTA, DUA, Commercialization

Office for Clinical Research
- Clinical Research Administration
Research Administration Services (RAS): MATRIX Organizational Structure with Schools and Units

Central ORA Staff
Dual reporting to school and Associate VP, RAS

School/Unit
Dean or Delegate

Vice President for Research Administration

Assoc. VP, Research Administration Services

Department Chair or delegate *

Director, RAS - ABOSS
Director, RAS - Basic Sciences
Director, RAS - Cancer & Imaging
Director, RAS - Colleges and Professional Schools
Director, RAS - Hospital and Specialty Services
Director, RAS – Medicine
Director, RAS – Pediatrics*
Director, RAS - Public Health and Nursing
Director, RAS - EPC

KEY COMPONENTS
- School/Unit & ORA have SHARED accountability for RAS and dual reporting of the AVP RAS role
- RAS Directors have SHARED accountability to the department/school/unit and to ORA
- Each School/Unit maintains the budgets & HR records, and will SHARE accountability with ORA for determination of staffing levels, hiring, performance evals, merit increases, performance improvement plans and terminations for RAS Staff
- ORA maintains and transparently reports on performance standards and holds accountability for efficiency and effectiveness across ORA Units;
- ORA & School/Unit have shared responsibility for training and onboarding staff, creating operational efficiency, RAS staff satisfaction and faculty satisfaction with RAS.

* Also to include faculty leadership as assigned by Chair/Dean
Customized Shared Governance Implementations by RAS Unit due to:

- Multiple Departments within each unit, therefore different leadership engagement strategies are necessary (ie: DOM=1 dept, ABOSS/HSS=17 depts, Basic Science=7, CAPS = 11 schools)
- RAS Unit structures vary by school/unit (ie: EPC v. RSPH v. SOM)
- Unique challenge (ie: Pediatrics relationship with Children’s, C&I relationship with Winship; ECAS relationship with non-HSC schools)
- Varying clinical trials infrastructures
Survey went out to external stakeholders via multiple listservs (more than 6,000 unique persons).

The response rate was around 9%.

Survey was strictly anonymous

We did **NOT** include ORA staff responses in any summary data or analysis.

We again received more responses than last year*:

- Total responses are up 13% (from 458 to 519).
- Faculty responses are up 16% (from 305 to 353).
- Staff responses are up 8% (from 153 to 166).
Most responses came from faculty (68% or 353 out of 519 responses this year).

FY 2022 Number of Faculty Responses By School

- School of Medicine: 238
- Emory College of Arts & Sciences: 46
- School of Public Health: 17
- School of Nursing: 17
- School of Law: 9
- Emory Primate Center: 8
- Oxford College: 5
- Other: 5
- Goizueta Business School: 3
- Graduate School of Arts & Science: 2
- Candler School of Theology: 2

Source: Qualtrics
RAS Units: SOM Respondents Counts

FY22 Annual Survey Results
SOM RAS Units
Number of Responses

Source: Qualtrics
Overall, have you been satisfied with your interactions with Office of Research Administration over this past fiscal year?

Overall, 54% were satisfied.

Faculty satisfaction dropped from 61% to 45%.

Staff satisfaction dropped from 85% to 73%.
There are clear correlations between volume, departures, and average satisfaction scores for RAS Units:

- The higher the workload (proposals, awards, vacancies) the more departures ($r=.780^*$).
- The higher the workload for a unit, the lower the average satisfaction scores ($r$ between $-.698^*$ and $-.730^*$)
- The more departures the more survey responses ($r$ between $0.823^{**}$ and $0.832^{**}$)
- The more survey responses the lower the average satisfaction ($r$ between $-.866^{**}$ and $-.956^{**}$)
Faculty Satisfaction Trends Driven by Turnover and Awards

- Record award dollars since FY2020
- Very strong positive correlation between award dollars and staff turnover
- Very strong negative correlation between staff turnover and overall faculty satisfaction
- 50% of staff changed since FY2020
- 25% staff vacancy across all of ORA in FY2022 alone

Award Dollars ( Millions) vs. Faculty Satisfaction Rate vs. RAS Turnover Ratio
FY2020 - FY2022

- Award Dollars
- Faculty Satisfaction Rate
- RAS Turnover Ratio

Source: Qualtrics, EBI, Central HR Turnover Dashboard
FY22 Research Administration Positions Filled and Departures Overview

- 144 positions filled in Research Administration
  - 77 new hires (new to Research Administration and Emory)
  - 44 promotions open recruitment (internal Research Administration candidates)
  - 12 transfer-ins (from other Emory departments to Research Administration)
  - 11 rehires (prior Emory or Research Administration employment)

- 51 internal Research Administration promotions (promotions – job reclassifications)

- 85 total departures
  - 68 exits (left Research Administration and Emory completely)
  - 12 transfer-outs (from Research Administration to other Emory departments)
  - 5 retirees

Counts are record/action counts, not necessarily unique employee headcounts
For example, employee might have been promoted more than once or employee might have joined and departed within FY22
FY2022 Number of Positions Filled by Department/Unit

Source: HRWeb
FY2022 Number of Promotions by Department/Unit

Source: HRWeb
FY22 ORA HR Action Report
Positions Filled, Departures, and Promotions
By Area and Department
(144 Positions filled, 85 Departures, and 51 Promotions)
FYTD23 Research Administration Positions Filled and Departures Overview

- 103 positions filled in Research Administration
  - 57 new hires (new to Research Administration and Emory)
  - 24 promotions open recruitment (internal Research Administration candidates)
  - 8 transfer-ins (from other Emory departments to Research Administration)
  - 13 rehires (prior Emory or Research Administration employment)
  - 1 lateral transfer (from one research administration department to another)

- 6 internal Research Administration promotions (promotions – job reclassifications)

- 33 total departures
  - 28 exits (left Research Administration and Emory completely)
  - 4 transfer-out (from Research Administration to other Emory departments)
  - 1 retiree

Counts are record/action counts, not necessarily unique employee headcounts
For example, employee might have been promoted more than once or employee might have joined and departed within FYTD23

Source: HRWeb
FYTD23 Q1 and Q2 ORA HR Action Report
By Positions Filled and Departure Types
(103 Positions filled and 33 Departures)

- New Hire - New to OR: 57
- Promoted - Open Recr.: 24
- Transfer-in - From oth.: 8
- Rehire - Prior emplo.: 13
- Retired: 1
- Transfer-out - From O.: 4
- Exit: 28
- Lateral Transfer: 1
FYTD23 Research Administration
Positions Filled and Departures Overview

FYTD23 Q1 & Q2 ORA HR Action Report
Positions Filled, Departures, and Promotions
By Area and Department
(103 Positions filled, 33 Departures, and 6 Promotions)

Source: HRWeb
Faculty Satisfaction Trends Driven by Turnover and Awards

Quantitative Analysis

- Very strong positive correlation between award dollars or volume and staff turnover
- Very strong negative correlation between staff turnover and overall faculty satisfaction
- RAS Staff turnover FYTD23 is substantially down compared to FYTD22 (-40%)
- We expect faculty satisfaction to increase for FY2023

Award Dollars (Millions) vs. Faculty Satisfaction vs. RAS Turnover Ratio FY2020 - FY2023* (projected)

Source: Qualtrics, EBI, Central HR Turnover Dashboard
In 2022:
84% of Faculty responses were positive or neutral
96% of Staff responses were positive or neutral
Average satisfaction is consistently higher for competency and customer service than for timeliness. This is the case for both faculty and staff respondents. Staff tends to be more satisfied than faculty.
# Average Satisfaction: Timeliness by Department/Unit

**Quantitative Analysis**

**Average Timeliness Satisfaction 2022**

Faculty & Staff  
(1=Very Dissatisfied - 5=Very Satisfied)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Unit</th>
<th>Average Satisfaction 2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EHSO</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGSO</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCR A</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAS Colleges and Professional Schools</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAS Cancer &amp; Imaging</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAS Hospital &amp; Specialty Services</td>
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</tr>
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<td>IACUC</td>
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<td>RAS Basic Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSP</td>
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<td>RAS ABOSS</td>
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</tr>
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**Response w 2022**  
- EHSO: 76  
- TGSO: 27  
- RCR A: 78  
- RAS Colleges and Professional Schools: 23  
- RAS Cancer & Imaging: 21  
- RAS Hospital & Specialty Services: 11  
- IACUC: 45  
- RAS Basic Sciences: 17  
- IRB: 135  
- RAS EPC: 15  
- Research Dev: 22  
- OTT: 97  
- RAS Public Health and Nursing: 25  
- OSP: 164  
- OCR: 78  
- RAS ABOSS: 42  
- RGC: 115  
- RAS Peds: 47  
- RAS Med: 56

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**Top 3 improvers on average timeliness satisfaction:**  
- RAS – Cancer & Imaging, up 19%  
- OTT, up 7%  
- RAS Colleges and Professional Schools, up 6%
Average Satisfaction: Competency by Department/Unit

Average Competency Satisfaction 2022
Faculty and Staff
(1=Very Dissatisfied - 5=Very Satisfied)

Top 3 improvers on average competence satisfaction:
- RAS – Medicine, up 12%
- RAS – Cancer & Imaging, up 8%
- RAS – Colleges and Professional Schools, up 6%

Source: Qualtrics
### Average Customer Service Satisfaction 2022
**Faculty & Staff**
(1=Very Dissatisfied - 5=Very Satisfied)

#### Top Improver: RAS – Cancer & Imaging, up 16%

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<tr>
<td>RAS Pediatrics</td>
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Source: Qualtrics
There is a clear overall impact of work volume and average satisfaction scores:

- RAS units with average timeliness satisfactions of 3.2 or higher had an average volume of 769 proposals/awards

- RAS units with average timeliness satisfactions of 2.7 or lower had an average volume of 1,219 proposals/awards

- The same is the case for competence and customer satisfaction levels for scores above and below 3.0.

The RAS Unit is the level of analysis, n=9.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
"Responsiveness is the main issue. Even a message such as "I will do this in the next 48 hours" rather than complete silence as we are approaching deadlines that threaten our funding would be helpful."

"There's no clear instruction as to what everyone does. Most of the time, I'm lost. I need a concierge to walk me through everything I need."

"More communication and transparency in the pre award and post award processing"

"Really need to prioritize fixing post-award management and getting faculty support for grants once funded. Pre-award grant submissions is going ok despite being noticeably understaffed. Pay these people more perhaps and maybe they will stay longer."

"Running lean is not running efficient. I understand we are in a budget crisis, but funding staff is an investment in our future eminence, and I encourage you to consider how we can prioritize more staff positions to help us run efficiently."

"A new functional system is needed. Emory has nearly $1 billion in research funding each year but hasn’t invested in the necessary infrastructure to support the research enterprise."
Questions and Discussion
THANK YOU

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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