**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP (CRS)**

Date: March 13th, 2019

Senators Present: Gillian Beamer (phone), Roger Tobin, Mitch McVey, Rob Jacob, Jette Knudsen, Brent Cochran, and Nirupa Matthan

Regrets: Misha Eliasziw

Ad hoc members: Debra Berlanstein, Albert Robbat

**Minutes**

**Guest Speakers**: James Walsh (University Controller) and Dick Doolin (Senior Director, TSS)

James Walsh discussed the shift in responsibilities between OFA (in OVPR) and SPA (in Finance) related to post award support. He provided a rationale for the change, steps that are being taken to ensure a smooth transition and to enhance support to faculty at the various schools.

Key points are summarized below:

1. Reason for the decision to shift post award from OFA to SPA was primarily due to issues related to delayed billing/collections that impacted cash flow and potentially increased the university’s liability (risk).
2. Part of this was due to the office being understaffed, so there has been a push to rebuild SPA along with several measures to retain staff and to prevent the high turnover rate (office environment, compensation, etc.). There are still 3 vacancies that need to be filled.
3. SPA has hired Huron Consultancy to help with bill collection, portfolio support and management, and close out support.
4. Changes that are in the pipeline include
	1. Elimination of QERs, and shifting effort report to certification by project/grant; and certification from quarterly to annually.
	2. Eliminating PAFs so that labor can be redistributed retroactively.
	3. Providing tools to RAs, so that they can make decisions unilaterally, which should reduce paperwork.
	4. Assigning a specific person to each school and have them sit with local RAs at least 1-2 days/week.
	5. Accelerating award setup and amendments, eliminating cost transfers and creating web based workflows.
	6. Coordinating joint trainings between pre-and post-award.

Suggestions offered by committee members induced the following:

* Making sure that customer service is the priority
* Giving locals RAs more support so that they do not have to spent most of their time following up with SPA
* Developing processes to make reporting and tracking less cumbersome
* Continuously monitoring progress and obtaining feedback