RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Sunday, November 8 - Workshops								
Workshop	Workshop	Workforce Wellness and Resilience / Basic	Same Mountain, Different Slopes: Navigating Communication with Intention	Exploring Preferences and Patterns Across People, Teams, and Systems Why do well intended communication efforts still miss the mark? Why do the same patterns keep repeating across people, teams, and systems? This highly interactive workshop invites participants to explore how communication challenges are shaped by what's visible on the surface, and what's happening underneath. Working across individual, team, and organizational lenses, participants examine what drives communication breakdowns, tension, and misalignment, and what helps create clarity, trust, and connection. Through facilitated discussion and practical exercises, the session surfaces how communication preferences collide, how patterns form over time, and how values driven alignment supports more effective, human centered communication. Participants will leave with practical insights, shared language, and adaptable frameworks they can apply to themselves, their teams, and their organizations. Designed for anyone who leads through influence, collaboration, or service to others.	Nicole Jenkins Associate Director, Organizational Effectiveness University of Colorado Boulder Alexa Van Dalsem Assistant Vice Chancellor, Office of Contracts and Grants University of Colorado Boulder	8-Nov	8:00 AM	Lawrence B
Workshop	Workshop	Post Award / Intermediate	Augmenting Research Administration with AI	Artificial intelligence is reshaping research administration, but the value of any AI tool is bounded by the quality of the data underneath it. It is also bounded by the nature of the work itself. Research administration runs on ethical judgment, regulatory interpretation, and human relationships, much of which cannot be automated. This workshop helps research administration professionals develop a practical understanding of where AI can support their work and where it cannot. The workshop will begin with an overview of modern AI systems, including how large language models generate output, the tasks they perform well, and the ways they fail. It will then examine which research administration activities benefit from AI assistance, which depend on institutional data infrastructure, and which should remain primarily human-driven. Participants will gain hands-on experience with open-source tools developed through the AI4RA project, including a prompt engineering trainer, a document extraction and review workflow, and a data lakehouse architecture used to prepare institutional data for AI applications. By the end of the workshop, participants will have a practical mental model for evaluating AI-generated output, understanding institutional data readiness, and identifying appropriate patterns for verification and oversight before relying on AI-assisted results.	Nathan Layman, Data Scientist, Office of Sponsored Programs, University of Idaho Bert Baumgaertner, Professor of Philosophy, University of Idaho	8-Nov	8:00 AM	Curtis
Workshop	Workshop	Overview	Certified Research Administrator (CRA) Body of Knowledge Review Session	This workshop is the CRA Body of Knowledge Review session presented by the Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC). The session will familiarize participants with the outline of information upon which the CRA exam is based.	RACC Noelle Strom, CRA®, CPRA® Associate Director of Research & Sponsored Programs Simmons University Jacqueline Rearick, CRA Executive Director, Offices of Sponsored Programs and Research Integrity University of Colorado Colorado Springs	8-Nov	8:00 AM	Lawrence A

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Workshop	Workshop	Post Award / Intermediate	Managing Costs with Confidence: Allowability, Allocability, and Audit Readiness	Managing sponsored project funds requires more than understanding the rules. It requires applying them consistently in complex, real-world situations. This interactive workshop focuses on one of the most critical areas of post-award administration: making sound, compliant financial decisions throughout the life of an award. Participants will work through real-world scenarios to assess allowability, allocability, and reasonableness of costs, while also exploring documentation expectations and audit considerations. The session will examine common gray areas, frequent audit findings, and institutional challenges in applying federal regulations and sponsor-specific requirements. Through guided exercises and group discussion, attendees will strengthen their ability to evaluate costs, support decisions with appropriate justification, and implement practices that promote consistency and audit readiness.	Brigette Pfister, Post Award Manager, Office of Sponsored Projects, Colorado State University Jeff Derr, ALM, CRA, Manager, Attain Partners	8-Nov	1:00 PM	Curtis
Workshop	Workshop	Pre-Award / Intermediate	Strategic Grantsmanship and Proposal Development Strategies for NSF, DOE, NIH Funding Opportunities	This workshop will provide participants with practical strategies for developing competitive proposals for different sponsors and sponsor agencies including National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Energy (DOE), and National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding opportunities. The session will cover award types, key elements of strategic grantsmanship in general and specifically for NSF, DOE, NIH, including identifying funding priorities, aligning research ideas with agency missions, crafting compelling narratives, developing realistic budgets, and budget justification, and responding effectively to solicitation requirements. Participants will also gain insight into common proposal strengths and weaknesses, review best practices for proposal organization and writing, and learn techniques for improving competitiveness in federal funding applications. In addition, the workshop will be particularly relevant for research administrators, offering guidance on how to effectively support faculty in assembling strong proposal packages, ensuring compliance with sponsor guidelines, and conducting thorough pre-submission reviews to enhance clarity, completeness, and competitiveness. The workshop is tailored to researchers and research administration professionals seeking to strengthen their proposal development skills and increase success in securing external funding. Prior familiarity with proposal development is helpful, and basic experience with NSF/DOE proposal preparation is recommended.	Mariam Ubilava, Proposal Manager and Researcher, University of Alaska Fairbanks Rachel A. Cook, Director, Sponsored Projects Office | UC San Diego	8-Nov	1:00 PM	Lawrence B
			New Member Welcome			8-Nov	5:30 PM	
			Opening Reception			8-Nov	6:00 PM	
Monday, November 9 - Sessions								
			Morning Fitness Walk/Run			9-Nov	6:00 AM	
			Breakfast			9-Nov	7:30 AM	Confluence
			Opening Welcome & Keynote			9-Nov	9:00 AM	Confluence
			Break			9-Nov	10:15 AM	Mezzanine Foyer
Dept & PUI	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Creating Order from Complexity: Establishing Practical SOPs, Grant Workflows, and Compliance Systems in a Growing Institution Subtitle: Lessons Learned from Building Research Administration Infrastructure at a growing Institution	Picture yourself walking into a start-up institution and being asked to build the Research Administration function from the ground up. Whether you've got decades of experience, or you're stepping into your first role, the challenge can be as exciting as it is intimidating. You might be asking yourself, "How do I start?" In this session we will discuss how to prioritize SOPs, workflows and compliance systems, lessons learned in rapid process building and opportunities to add value beyond compliance. Participants will learn practical knowledge on how to create sustainable research administration infrastructure to support institutional growth and success.	Leighsa Washington,Executive Director of Sponsored Projects and Research Administration, California University of Science and Medicine Louise Boarda, CUSM Senior Associate Dean of Operations and Chief of Staff Ezekiel Adu-Gyamfi, CUSM Director of Compliance & Risk	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Lawrence B
Sponsor Solutions	Sponsor Solutions	Informational	Demonstrating AI-Driven Award Data Extaction, REconciliation, and Setup		Chris Steele Director Huron	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Curtis
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Advanced	Holding the Reins: Effective Post-Award Management of Sponsored Research Contracts	Executing a sponsored research contract may get you out of the gate, but effective post-award management is what keeps the project on the right trail. This session will explore practical strategies for managing sponsored research contracts after execution, including understanding and communicating contractual obligations, monitoring compliance and performance, managing changes and amendments, coordinating with key stakeholders, and navigating issues through closeout—all while keeping a firm hold on the reins.	Jeff Derr, Manager, Attain Partners Nancy Lewis,Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Administration, University of California - Irvine	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Horace Tabor

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Compliance	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Navigating the New Trails of Controlled Information	The federal government has redrawn—and continues to refine—the terrain of non-classified controlled information in the research environment. This session will help participants map the evolving landscape of Federal Contract Information (FCI), Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI), and Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) requirements. Attendees will learn how to read the legend, recognize risks, and stay on trail. Pack your GORP and water bottles - this is a serious hike!	Alexa Van Dalsem, Assistant Vice Chancellor of the Office of Contracts and Grants, University of Colorado Boulder Jessica Helbling, Senior Research Administrator, Engineering Research Administration Services, University of Arizona	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Platte
Dept & PUI	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Reimagining the Grant Lifecycle: How AI Agents Are Shaping the Future of Research Administration at MGB	This presentation invites you to imagine a smarter, more intuitive grant lifecycle—one where AI agents quietly handle the complexity behind the scenes so researchers and administrators can focus on discovery, not paperwork. At Mass General Brigham, we are moving beyond simple automation to thoughtfully weave AI into the fabric of research administration, from proposal development through closeout. Along the way, we'll explore how intelligent agents help anticipate needs, reduce friction, and bring clarity to an otherwise intricate process, all while preserving strong governance and trust. The result is a glimpse into an AI-enabled research ecosystem designed to work with people, not around them, and to make the grant journey feel just a little more human.	Alanna Harris, Mass General Brigham (MGB), Manager Pre Award & AI Initiatives David Waldron, Director Research Support Services & Pre Award, Mass General Brigham	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Confluence C
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Saddle Up and Steward: Financial Fundamentals of Clinical Research	This session will cover budgeting best practices for clinical research, including sponsored research budgets and financial aspects of non-sponsored research. We will discuss the perspectives of an academic medical center and hospital working together to identify cost gaps, compliance issues, and complexities associated with both sponsored and non-sponsored research.	Jennifer Cory, Director of Strategy & Operations, Stanford Alyson Falwell, Clinical Reserach Operations Manager, Stanford Medicine Children's Health	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Lawrence A
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Steady Under Pressure: Sustaining Resilience for Research Administrators	Research administration is a high-stakes, deadline-driven environment—juggling proposals, award set-up, compliance checks, audits, and closeout while systems change and policies evolve. This session reframes "resilience" from simply "pushing through" to building sustainable practices at the personal, team, and organizational levels. We'll blend practical triage methods, boundary-setting scripts for tough conversations with PIs and leadership, and light-lift process tools (checklists, templates, cross-training, and automation) that reduce rework and burnout.	Brigette Pfister, Post-Award Manager, Colorado State University Trisha Southergill, Grant Manager, Colorado State University	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Confluence AB
Post Award	Discussion Group	Basic	Straight Talk on the Range	Have you ever found yourself in this situation? The Principal Investigator (PI) assumes the Research Administrator (RA) is monitoring the grant budget and proactively processing salary paperwork. Meanwhile, the RA is waiting for the PI to provide salary specifics, knowing that budgets can shift. Months pass, and when effort reporting is due, the PI is surprised to find no salary charged to the grant. Each believes the other was responsible. Join us for a deep-dive discussion into real-world scenarios like this one. We'll explore how to navigate unclear roles, prevent communication breakdowns, and share best practices to avoid hard conversations before they happen.	Tamara Ginter, CFRA, Director of Finance, Eastern Washington University Debbie Hoelscher, CRA (inactive), Lead Research Administrator, University of California, Davis	9-Nov	10:45 AM	Blake
			Region VI Business Meeting Lunch			9-Nov	12:00 PM	Platte
			Region VII Business Meering Lunch			9-Nov	12:00 PM	Confluence C
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Basic	Building Effective Partnerships with Tribal Funders	Learn about the importance of tribal sovereignty as related to grant administration, culturally respectful engagement, and strategies for developing collaborative, transparent, and mutually beneficial agreements. This session will also cover communication, and relationship-building to support successful project implementation and long-term partnerships with Tribal communities.	Christiana Gomez Frye, Grant Analyst, Cal Poly Humboldt Jen Maguire PhD, Professor and Department Chair, Department of Social Work, Cal Poly Humboldt	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Lawrence A
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Building stronger PI relationships	Pre-award administrators often serve as the first and most consistent point of contact for Principal Investigators throughout the proposal development process. While technical expertise and regulatory knowledge are essential, the ability to build strong working relationships with PIs can have an equally significant impact on proposal success. This session will focus on the people side of research administration and the role relationship-building plays in creating a positive and productive pre-award experience. Participants will explore practical approaches for establishing trust, improving communication, managing expectations, and navigating difficult conversations. The session will also examine how pre-award administrators can become trusted advisors who help investigators successfully develop and submit proposals. Attendees will leave with strategies they can implement immediately to strengthen PI engagement, improve collaboration, and foster more effective working relationships across their institutions.	Zaw Maung, Senior Contracts & Grants Officer, Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Katy Gathron, Senior Grants and Contracts Officer, Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Horace Tabor

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Sponsor Session	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Burnout. Vacancies. Deadlines. We've Got Your Back	Is your research office stretched to the breaking point? If you're responsible for balancing staffing shortages, burnout, hiring delays, or an ever-growing workload, you're not alone. Across the country, research administrators are being asked to do more with fewer resources while ensuring compliance, meeting sponsor deadlines, and supporting investigators. Stop by the MGB Research Support Services Solutions Discussion to discover how MGB RSS can help. Our experienced grant administration professionals provide immediate, flexible support across the entire grant lifecycle, from Pre-Award, Post-Award, Contracting, Clinical Trial billing and Reconciliation management to leadership coverage, operational assessments, and specialized consulting. Whether you need temporary staffing, long-term support, or help through a critical transition or Grant Management software implementation, our consultants integrate quickly and begin delivering results from day one. We'll show you how institutions of all sizes have used RSS to reduce administrative burden, prevent burnout, protect funding opportunities, and improve operational performance, all with solutions tailored to their needs and budgets. You don't have to choose between maintaining quality and controlling costs. Stop by the RSS Solutions Discussion and let's talk about how we can help turn your biggest staffing challenge into your next success story. You may just leave with the solution that makes you, and your research office, the heroes of your institution!	David Waldron Director, Research Support Services & Pre-Award Mass General Brigham Cait Lineck Manager, Research Support Services Mass General Brigham Francis Foley Research Suport Services, Senior Project Leader Mass General Brigham	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Curtis
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Charting the Trail Ahead: Building a proposal budget that's useful down the road	Proposal budgets aren't just a collection of numbers on a page. They are actually the financial roadmaps of sponsored projects, and when strategically built they become an indispensable tool for effective post-award management. However, if you build a roadmap without an understanding of the trail or your destination, it can result in a lot of frustration and potentially even financial shortfalls. This session will explore leveraging post-award expertise at the time of proposal with the goal of enabling you to foresee and hopefully mitigate bumps, potholes, and other obstacles along the trail.	Krista Roznovsky, Director, Engineering Research Administration, Stanford University Jessica Rowell, Senior Manager, Proposal Development, University of Colorado Boulder	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Confluence AB
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Knowing Your Award: Turning Terms & Conditions into Project Requirements	This session will help participants move beyond simply reading award terms and conditions to understanding how those requirements shape day-to-day project management. Using practical examples, we will explore how to identify key contractual obligations, translate them into project requirements, and partner effectively with research administrators, project teams, and stakeholders to support compliance, reduce risk, and improve project execution.	Nicole Carlton, Director, Program Management Office (PMO), University of Colorado Boulder Julia Putt, Program Manager, Program Management Office, University of Colorado Boulder	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Platte
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Saddle up for clarity – how to simplify communication, and why it's challenging and essential	In this highly engaging workshop, learn immediately actionable tools and build confidence to communicate clearly and concisely. Simplifying can improve written and spoken communication with any audience, anywhere. See why this movement is gaining momentum and build the skills now.	Lee Shainis, Simplify Language	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Lawrence B
Compliance	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Subaward Jeopardy: The Mane Event	Do you think you know a lot about subawards (or do you want to learn more about subawards)? Have you ever wanted to be on a game show? This is the session for you! Come test your knowledge of the subawards with this fun, interactive game show! Categories include FDP, flow-down framework, IDC calculations and many more. Come for the knowledge, stay for the prizes!	Carrie Chesbro, Assistant Director for Subawards & Subrecipient Monitoring, Stanford University Kari Vandergust, Contract & Grant Associate, Stanford University Megan Deitrich, Director for Client Advocacy & Education, Stanford University	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Confluence C
Dept & PUI	Discussion Session	Basic/Overview	Taming the Wild West of Subawards: Subrecipient Monitoring Throughout the Life of the Award	Saddle up as we discuss the challenges and opportunities of subaward monitoring and management throughout the life of the award. This session will provide a collaborative trail map to share experiences and answer questions about subawards.	Natasha Fung, Senior Research Business Manager, City of Hope Rosy Carias-Veloz, CRA, Research Grant Specialist III, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	9-Nov	1:15 PM	Blake
			Break			9-Nov	2:15 PM	Mezzanine Foyer
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Hold Your Horses: Considering Cost Principles When Beginning the Budget Journey	This session will focus on the cost principles and how to effectively think about allowability, allocability, reasonableness, and consistency when considering pre-award budget costs. You will be guided through the cost principles, appropriate best practices, how to avoid common pitfalls, and will be provided detailed information on specific budget cost categories, how the cost principles should be applied to each category, and budget items in need of additional justification. You will leave the session able to understand how to apply the cost principles and able to ask appropriate questions when developing a thorough and well-justified budget with your researchers.	Melissa Dunivant, Principal Proposal Analyst, University of Colorado Boulder Karen Roberts, Senior Proposal Analyst, University of Colorado Boulder	9-Nov	2:45 PM	Horace Tabor
Compliance	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	No longer the Wild West: Understanding Key Federal Compliance Requirements	This session will provide a basic understanding of federal requirements associated with Conflict of Interest (COI), Certificates of Confidentiality (CoC) and the Other Support document. We will review federal definitions and potential solutions for ensuring compliance.	Natalie Buys, Research & Finance Program Director, University of Colorado Anschutz Teresa Cochran, Sr Grants and Contracts Manager - Post-Award Finance, University of Colorado Anschutz	9-Nov	2:45 PM	Platte

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Compliance	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Roping In Trustworthy Results from AI Tools	Tired of AI tools that buck you off halfway through the task? This interactive session is your chance to learn how to break in AI as a dependable trail companion in your daily research administration work. We'll cover the skills that separate the greenhorns from the seasoned hands: crafting clear prompts, designing workflows you can ride again and again, and corralling big, messy tasks into pieces an AI can actually handle with a goal of producing trustworthy results.	Julie Wenzel, Colorado State University Sarah Martonick, Director, Sponsored Programs, Office of Research and Economic Development, University of Idaho	9-Nov	2:45 PM	Lawrence B
LeadMe	Concurrent Session	Overview	From Quarterly Catch-up to Monthly Confidence: Redesigning PI Reporting for Compliance, Clarity, and Impact - Tarita Varner, Mentee; The Challenge of Leading through Change: Combining the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership with Change Management - Catherine Douras, Mentee	Join us for an inspiring look at leadership in action! We'll kick things off with a brief introduction to the NCURA Region VI/VII LEAD Me Program, then hear from the 2026 mentees as they showcase their Personal Best Leadership Projects. These unique projects were developed independently by each mentee and demonstrate how they've put The Leadership Challenge's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership into practice in meaningful and impactful ways.	Tarita Varner, California State University Catherine Douras, Pre-Award Manager, Office of Sponsored Programs, Colorado State University Ashley Stahle, Associte Director, Sponsored Programs, Colorado State University Jennifer Cory, Director of Strategy and Operations, Stanford University	9-Nov	2:45 PM	Confluence C
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Straight Shootin': Simplify Language in Action	This session is a practical follow-up to Lee Shainis' Simplify Language session. We will address how to use clear, simple communication to alleviate administrative burden and be more inclusive for everyone, including non-native English speakers. Attendees will develop practical communication strategies built for the research world.	Allison Fischer, Manager - Proposal Development, Univerity of Colroado Boulder Juanita Rastello, Proposal Analyst, University of Colorado Boulder Erika Archer, Grant Offier, University of Colorado Boulder	9-Nov	2:45 PM	Lawrence A
Dept & PUI	Discussion Session	Intermediate	The Power of Data Driven Decision Making	Institutional leaders frequently emphasize "data-driven decision making," yet many Sponsored Programs Offices – particularly at Emerging Research (ERIs) and Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) – struggle to access, interpret, and leverage the operational data that truly informs research growth, staffing needs, process improvements, and strategic investment. Traditional metrics such as proposals submitted, number of awards received, dollars expended are important, but they often fail to capture the operational realities, administrative barriers and capacity-building needs that shape research success at smaller institutions. As recipients of an NSF GRANTED award, the Tri-Alliance for Post Award Innovation has undertaken a comprehensive effort to collect and analyze data that more accurately reflects the lived experiences and operational challenges of research administration at ERIs. Through surveys, institutional assessments, and NCURA peer review recommendations, the Tri-Alliance has identified actionable insights that are driving development of new tools, collaborative resources, and targeted strategies to strengthen research infrastructure and support sustainable growth. In the session, presenters will discuss practical approaches to gathering and utilizing qualitative and quantitative data to improve processes, advocate for resources, identify institutional gaps, and better support research growth. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, adaptable assessment approaches, and new ideas for leveraging data as a catalyst for institutional change.	Angie Rochat, Associate Vice Provost for Research, Loyola Marymount University Camille Coley, University of San Francisco	9-Nov	2:45 PM	Blake
Sponsor Session	Sponsor Session	Informational	Transforming Research Administration and Compliance with Deloitte	Research-intensive institutions are udner increasing pressure to manage complex research portfolios, strengthen compliance, improve administrative efficiency, and modernize technology environments. This session will explore Deloitte's integrated services across research admininstraton - from strategy and operating-model design to technology implementation and managed operations. Speakers will highlight how advise, implement, and operate frameworks can help institutions address immediate priorities while building scalable, compliant, and digitally enabled research capabilities.	Arpa Orojian, Specialist Leader, Deloitte Sophia Sodhi, Deloitte Consulting	9-Nov	2:45 PM	Curtis
			Break			9-Nov	3:45 PM	Mezzanine Foyer
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Community-Driven Research Administration	Attendees will learn about the community-driven research administration model at the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health (CAIANH). The session will apply two Native research methodologies – Indigenous Community Based Participatory Research (ICBPR) and Two-Eyed Seeing – to three use cases from CAIANH's post-award grant administration. The session will highlight primary examples of partnerships between CAIANH and American Indian and Alaska Native health organizations navigating challenges, celebrating successes, and ultimately successfully co-administering a variety of Federal and private grants.	Sarah Horwitz, Grant Lifecycle Manager, University of Colorado Anschutz Amanda Slezsak, Program Manager, Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health, Colorado School of Public Health | University of Colorado Anschutz	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Confluence AB

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Overview	Decoding DOE Office of Science Solicitations: A Practical Guide for Pre-Award Teams	DOE Office of Science solicitations (FOAs) can be dense, technical, and difficult to interpret, especially for pre-award professionals supporting complex, multi-institutional proposals. This session provides a practical, step-by-step approach to reading and decoding DOE FOAs, with a focus on identifying key requirements, compliance risks, and proposal strategy considerations early in the process. Using real-world examples, we will walk through how to break down a solicitation, map requirements to internal action items, and support PIs in developing compliant proposals. Topics will include interpreting eligibility and submission requirements, understanding budget and cost principles, identifying restrictions (e.g., foreign nationals, CUI, or IP provisions), and coordinating across subrecipients. Attendees will leave with actionable tools, checklists, and strategies to confidently navigate DOE Office of Science solicitations and streamline their pre-award workflows.	Juanita Rastello, Proposal Analyst, University of Colorado Boulder Erin Lemoine, Research Administrator, Colorado State University	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Platte
LeadMe	Concurrent Session	Overview	Exploring Responsible AI Adoption in Research Administration: Initial Framework and Repository - Abby Talkington Scouting the Trail: Using AI to Support Continuous Development in Research Administration - Amethyst Ware, Mentee	Join us for an inspiring look at leadership in action! We'll kick things off with a brief introduction to the NCURA Region VI/VII LEAD Me Program, then hear from the 2026 mentees as they showcase their Personal Best Leadership Projects. These unique projects were developed independently by each mentee and demonstrate how they've put The Leadership Challenge's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership into practice in meaningful and impactful ways.	Abigayil "Abby" Talkington, University of California, San Diego Amethyst Ware, University of California, Santa Cruz Ashley Stahle, Associate Director, Sponsored Programs, Colorado State University Jennifer Corey, Director of Strategy and Operations	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Confluence C
Sponsor Session	Sponsor Session	Informational	Framework Overload: Navigating CMMC, GLBA, and NIST in Higher Ed Research	Research administrators, compliance staff, and IT leaders on campus are increasingly asked to meet multiple security frameworks at once. CMMC, GLBA Safeguards, and NIST-based InfoSec assessments each have their own scope and language, and they don't always fit together. Research environments add open collaboration, decentralized labs, and grant-driven timelines that don't map neatly to enterprise controls. This session explains what each framework requires, where they overlap, and where they conflict. We'll walk through practical approaches to scoping research environments, preparing for InfoSec assessments, and managing compliance as requirements keep evolving. No deep technical background is needed. Attendees will leave with a clear vocabulary, a simple framework for prioritizing, and next steps to bring back to their institutions.	Jason Klinger, CISA, CMMC-RPA Senior Advisor CampusGuard Greg Lewis, CMMC-RPA-CISA Security Advisor CampusGuard	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Curtis
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Guarding the Treasury: Budgeting & Cost Principles for RAs	Research administrators are frequently tasked with developing compliant budgets, forecasting expenditures across complex multi-year sponsored awards, and ensuring costs align with federal, state, and institutional requirements. This session will provide a practical walk-through of budgeting and forecasting strategies that support effective fiscal stewardship and minimize compliance risk. Participants will learn how to build realistic budgets, monitor award spending, apply cost principles correctly, and forecast financial scenarios through real-world examples. Whether you are new to post-award administration or want a refresher grounded in Uniform Guidance and institutional best practices, this session will equip you with tools and confidence to manage sponsored funds from proposal development through award closeout. Learning Objective 1 - Use forecasting techniques to anticipate spending patterns and mitigate budget risks. / Learning Objective 2 - Identify common budget pitfalls and implement proactive monitoring strategies.	Debbie Hoelscher, CRA (inactive), Lead Research Administrator, University of California, Davis Tamara Ginter, Director of Finance & Administrative Services, Eastern Washington University	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Lawrence B
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Discussion Session	Intermediate	Hitch up yer wagon, it’s time to hit the trail	In this session we’ll discuss the challenges and common pitfalls of transitioning to a new university or institute and the variety of approaches that can lead to success when taking on a new position.	Matt Michener, Director Pre-award Operations, University of Tennessee, Knoxville Betsy Jinks, Washington State University	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Blake
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Basic	Single Audits and Subrecipient Monitoring: A Pardnership	Most of us are aware of single audit requirements, both for our own institutions, and for our collaborators. But what does that exactly mean for our subrecipient collaborators? In this session, we will talk about the history and components of a single audit. Then, we will take a deep dive into how to use single audits in your subrecipient monitoring program, and meet the requirements in Uniform Guidance for approaching findings for your subrecipients.	Carrie Chesbro, Assistant Director for Subawards and Subrecipient Monitoring Joshua Kerber, jkerber@uoregon.edu, University of Oregon	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Horace Tabor

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Success: What does EQ have to do with it, anyway?	It is Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, that is the #1 predictor of professional success and personal excellence. Many times we enter the workplace knowing how to read, write, and report on bodies of knowledge, but often the skills to manage our emotions in the heat of a challenging problem we face is lacking. We're born with an Intelligence Quotient (IQ), but the good news is, you can increase your EQ! We will dive into the four emotional intelligence skills: self-awareness, self- management, social awareness and relationship management. By assessing where you are, and where you'd like to be, you can approach your professional and personal lives with greater insight.	Barbara Inderwiesche, Director of Electronic Research Administration, University of California, Irvine Judy Gagnebin, California State University, Fresno	9-Nov	4:00 PM	Lawrence A
				Dinner Groups		9-Nov	6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, November 10 - Sessions								
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Fitness	Overview	Les Mills BODYBALANCE: Grounded for the Ride Ahead	LES MILLS BODYBALANCE™ is a yoga-based group fitness class that combines simple yoga movements with elements of Tai Chi and Pilates to improve flexibility, strength, balance, and overall wellbeing. Set to inspiring music, participants flow through a series of stretches, poses, breathing exercises, and mindful movement designed to reduce stress, increase mobility, and leave feeling centered, calm, and revitalized. Suitable for all fitness levels, BODYBALANCE helps build a strong, flexible body while promoting mental focus and relaxation.. About the Presenter: Barbara is a certified group fitness instructor and a Les Mills Certified Bodybalance instructor teaching the format four times each week. She is also certified in Les Mills Bodypump and Les Mills Bodypump HEAVY teaching multiple times per week at various locations in the DFW area. Outside of work, Barbara's passion is lifting weights and doing anything outdoors with her family. ***Please bring a towel to the session, as we will be spending time on the floor.***	Barbara Inderwiesche, Director, Electronic Research Administration , University of California-Irvine	10-Nov	7:00 AM	Augusta
			Breakfast			10-Nov	7:30 AM	Confluence
Agencies & Sponsors	Concurrent Session	Advanced	Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC)	Cybersecurity is a top priority for the Department of War (DoW or Department). The defense industrial base (DIB) faces increasingly frequent and complex cyber-attacks. To strengthen DIB cybersecurity and better protect DoW information, the Department developed the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Program. CMMC assesses defense contractor compliance with existing information safeguarding requirements for federal contract information (FCI) and controlled unclassified information (CUI). Universities are subject to CMMC program compliance. The presenters will discuss CMMC Model compliance at Level 1, 2, and 3 and potential ramifications for institutions not CMMC compliant.	Greg Lewis, Campus Guard Michael Rudzinski, Facility Security Officer, Kyl Institute for National Security	10-Nov	9:00 AM	Lawrence B
Agencies & Sponsors	Concurrent Session	Overview	NASA - OIG Updates	NASA OIG special agents Pamela J. Forgach and Sally Yang will provide an update on recent investigations conducted by the NASA OIG. Pamela Forgach has served as a Special Agent with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) since 2021. Working within the Office of Investigations, she addresses fraud, waste, and abuse that could impact NASA programs and mission success, including matters involving procurement fraud, product substitution, conflicts of interest, export control violations, and employee misconduct. Pamela began her federal career at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) OIG in 2008. During her tenure, she completed detail assignments with the U.S. Marshals Service Fugitive Felon Program and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, working within its White-Collar Division (Ohio) and Public Corruption Unit (New York). She was also assigned to the Major Frauds Unit at HUD OIG, where she collaborated with trial attorneys in the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Division. Her efforts contributed to recovering over $100 million in civil penalties and earned her multiple national awards. Special Agent Forgach is a graduate of the FBI National Academy (Session 290) and currently serves as the Agency Coordinator for Physical Fitness and Wellness, as well as a defensive tactics instructor. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Pamela earned her Master of Public Administration (MPA) from the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University and holds a graduate certificate in Criminal Justice from the University of Virginia's School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Outside of work, Pamela enjoys golf, pickleball, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and is currently training Bruno, the newest member of her family, to become a certified therapy dog. Sally Yang has served as a Special Agent with the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) since May 2023. She works within the Office of	Special Agent Pam Forgach Special Agent Sally Yang NASA	10-Nov	9:00 AM	Platte
Dept & PUI	Discussion Session	Basic/Overview	Passing the Baton From Pre to Post Award: The Full Cycle of Customer Service	How do central office institutions create an environment where excellent customer service can excel while aligning expectations and outcomes? What are best practices for building partnerships with PIs and departments from pre to post award? What are some tools to implement to ensure clear communication while working in a predominately PUI institution?	Yari Perez, Pre-Award Specialist, Santa Clara University Samantha Hull, Post-Award Specialist, Santa Clara University	10-Nov	9:00 AM	Blake

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Overview	Pre-award Jeopardy	Pre-award Jeopardy is just like it sounds! We will play the game show Jeopardy just as it appears on TV. Questions will range from easy (for 200 points) to difficult (for 1000). Categories will include all aspects of Pre-award research administration. Answers need to be in the format of, “What is…” just like the real TV Show. Come test your knowledge of Pre-award administration!	April Laliberte, CIRES Proposals Deputy Director, Cooperative Institute for Research In Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado Boulder Aly Krimmer, Senior Proposal Analyst, Cooperative Institute for Research In Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado Boulder	10-Nov	9:00 AM	Confluence
Compliance	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Wrangling Clinical Trial Billing Pitfalls	This session will explore common billing pitfalls and share practical strategies to improve collaboration, reduce risk, and strengthen billing compliance processes across research, finance, and compliance teams.	Jessica Kim, Associate Director for Clinical Trials & Industry Agreements, The Lundquist Institute Marysia Grabowska Galent, Craig Hospital	10-Nov	9:00 AM	Lawrence A
			Break			10-Nov	10:15 AM	Mezzanine Foyer
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Know When to Hold ’Em, When to Fold ’Em: Strategic Contracting Negotiations Across the Sponsor Frontier	In the diverse landscape of research administration, success requires the agility to pivot your negotiation strategy based on who is sitting across the table. Successful contract officers know when to hold ‘em, when to negotiate ‘em with flexible solutions, and when to fold ‘em and manage the risk internally. This interactive session will equip attendees with practical negotiation strategies tailored to different sponsor and agreement types, from grant agreements with private foundations to contracts with federal agencies. Rather than playing every hand the same way, we'll examine key contracting terms through the lens of sponsor and agreement type. For each critical topic, such as intellectual property, indemnification, export controls, publication rights, and more, we'll explore what cards you're likely to be dealt when working with non-profits, traditional federal contracts, and emerging sponsor agreement types. Drawing from real-world experience negotiating agreements across the sponsor spectrum, we'll share: -Common positions and red flags by sponsor type -Balancing conflicting hands and aligning sponsor expectations with institutional reality -Practical tips for efficient negotiations that protect institutional and researcher interests -Understanding risk assessment frameworks to guide your decision-making and improve your odds Attendees will leave with a winning hand: actionable tools, real life examples, and the confidence to tailor their negotiation approach based on who's at the table. Target Audience: Contract officers, grants administrators, and OSP	Eszter Rudy, Contract and Grant Officer, Stanford University Bridget West, Contract and Grant Officer, Stanford University	10-Nov	10:30 AM	Tabor
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Discussion Session	Intermediate	Don’t bring a knife to a gunfight: Corralling Communication with your stakeholders. Begin with the end in mind, it’s not manipulation. It’s guidance, direction, and structure.	Effective communication is essential to success in research administration. From investigators and sponsors to institutional leaders and colleagues, research administrators must tailor their communication approaches to diverse stakeholders while navigating competing priorities, complex information, and challenging conversations. This interactive discussion session will explore practical strategies for understanding your audience, communicating with purpose, and using negotiation and active listening techniques to achieve productive outcomes across the research enterprise.	Sarah Browngoetz, Senior Research and Sponsored Programs Officer, Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Simón Lowrie, Sr. Research and Sponsored Programs Officer, Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Allison Weber, Research Administrator, Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center	10-Nov	10:30 AM	Curtis
Sponsor Session	Sponsor Session	Informational	High Noon for AI Adoption: Draw Up Your Plan	This session will focus on the intersection between using an AI tool and what collaboration and preparation are needed to integrate a tool like this into daily work-life at the enterprise level. We hope the audience comes away with knowledge as to why Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and AI model selection are important, how an RA can evaluate outputs for consistency and accuracy, how Vandalizer makes evaluation ‘trackable’ and repeatable so that when models change or are updated RAs can more easily track changes to outputs, and finally we will discuss what is needed as a starter kit to securely and successfully deploy an on-prem AI solution like Vandalizer.	Sarah Martonick, Director, Sponsored Programs, Office of Research and Economic Development, University of Idaho	10-Nov	10:30 AM	Lawrence A
Dept & PUI	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Saddle Up Smart: Clinical Research Fundamentals for Departmental Administrators	This session will provide an overview of clinical research for the DRA: the stages of research, the roles of parties involved and best practices for effectively working together. We will review budget factors, compliance issues, and contracting components and how the DRA/their work connects to each functional area. Key regulations that guide researchers/institutions will also be discussed.	Jennifer Cory, Director of Strategy and Operations, Stanford University Alyson Falwell, Clinical Research Operations Manager, Stanford Medicine Children's Health	10-Nov	10:30 AM	Lawrence B

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Overview	Taming the Wild West: Wrangling Post Award Chaos Without a Map	You don't need a formal system to stay on track, simple organization and personal tracking can go a long way in avoiding errors and keeping things running smoothly. The right tools can take that effort to the next level by improving efficiency and saving time. In this session, we'll explore how this looks in both large universities and smaller organizations, keeping things straightforward and practical.	Denise Moody, Director of Research Operations, Systems, and Policies, The Lunquist Institute Katy Gathron, Senior Grants and Contracts Officer, Award Management, The Lundquist Institute	10-Nov	10:30 AM	Platte
Agencies & Sponsors	Discussion Session	Advanced	The Good, The Bad, and The Genesis: Surviving the DOE Frontier	This discussion group will review how different institutes managed the unprecedented DOE Genesis call for proposals and what was learned as we prepare for the 2027 call. Additionally, we will discuss resulting awards (OTAs) and how our institutes negotiated and worked with our partners. (Vince and I are open to adding others to this group or making this a panel discussion)	Matt Michener, Director, University of Tennessee Knoxville Vincent Borleske, Director, Engineering Research Administration Services, College of Engineering, University of Arizona	10-Nov	10:30 AM	Blake
Agencies & Sponsors	Concurrent Session	Overview	Uniform Guidance Reconstructed	Office of Management (OMB) published in the Federal Register a massive reconstruction plan for the Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR 200 (UG) (https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-05-29/pdf/2026-10817.pdf). This 412-page document includes revisions to all six Subparts and various Appendices of the UG. Seventy-four (74) sections out of 191 total sections in the UG (or 39 percent) are proposed to be revised, and 4 brand new sections are proposed to be added. The proposal has received almost 500,000 comments and congressional attention on its intent and impact to grants, particularly research grants. This session will highlight the major proposed revisions by Subparts, along with their potential impact on grant administration. It will inform you of the background, intent, and justifications for the major proposed revisions so you can assess their impact on your institution.	Gil Tran, Attain Partners Jennifer Jenkins, Utah State University	9-Nov	10:30 AM	Confluence
			Lunch & LeadMe Graduation			10-Nov	12:00 PM	Confluence
Agencies & Sponsors	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	CESU 101: The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit: Opportunities for Research and Education	The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network is a national consortium of 17 biogeographic units comprised of >500 federal agencies, academic institutions, tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental conservation organizations. At its core, the program is about collaborative problem solving responsive to long-standing and contemporary science and resource management priorities. CESUs bring together scientists, resource managers, students, educators, and other conservation professionals from across the biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering fields (from Anthropology to Zoology), who together possess the expertise and experience required for co-production of "usable knowledge" to inform decisions and actions. In this session we will cover the CESU mission, structure, and benefits. Additionally, we will provide tangible examples of how the science serves to inform on-the-ground management.	Lisa Gerloff, Executive Director, Rocky Mountain CESU, University of Montana David Pettebone, Social Scientist, Socioeconomic & Resources Recovery Division, National Park Service	10-Nov	1:30 PM	Lawrence B
Sponsor Session	Sponsor Session	Informational	Charting the Trail: From Proposed Uniform Guidance Revisions to Institutional Readiness	The trail ahead for the Uniform Guidance may be changing, but research administrators do not have to wait for the dust to settle before preparing for what comes next! This session will briefly examine proposed Uniform Guidance revisions, explore their potential impact on institutional policies, processes, and practices, and identify practical steps organizations can take now to chart a course toward institutional readiness.	Jeff Derr, Manager, Attain Partners Kathryn O'Hayre, CRA Training and Information Coordinator, Office of Sponsored Programs Colorado State University	10-Nov	1:30 PM	Lawrence A
Agencies & Sponsors	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	FY26 Federal Agency Funding Trends and Expectations for FY27	This session provides a comprehensive, data-driven analysis of federal research funding dynamics, examining major grant and contract expenditure trends across FY26 and strategic projections for FY27. Drawing on recent agency obligation data from federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH), the presentation will highlight critical disruptions in federal grantmaking, including NSF's 23% funding drop and 30% reduction in new awards, as well as NIH's evolving multi-year funding mechanics and Institute-level expenditure shifts. The session will also discuss an analysis of the broader macro-environment, including the impact of federal Continuing Resolutions, post-election fiscal policies, ongoing grant-related litigation challenging executive actions, and the President's FY27 budget request. Strategies for navigating this volatile funding landscape within university research enterprise management will be discussed. The session will cover approaches for institutional financial forecasting, managing unspent carryover and delayed award notices, adjusting submission strategies amidst lower success rates, leveraging industry and non-federal partnerships, and maintaining compliance amidst ongoing regulatory litigation. Emphasis will be placed on institutional resilience, proactive risk mitigation, and practical tools for supporting principal investigators and research administration teams through fiscal uncertainties.	Mark Van Dyke, Vice President for Research, Colorado School of Mines Jessica Helbing, Senior Research Administrator, College of Engineering, University of Arizona	10-Nov	1:30 PM	Platte

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Post Award	Discussion Group	Intermediate	Rounding Up the Numbers: Presenting PI Portfolio Data with Confidence	Post award focus on PI portfolio management, Award data and projection	Katie Wu, Senior Finance Manager , Stanford University Brent Taylor, Senior Research Finance Manager, Stanford University	10-Nov	1:30 PM	Confluence AB
Pre-Award	Discussion Group	Intermediate	Submitting PF5: What Worked, What Didn't, What We Deferred	This discussion group brings together research administrators to compare firsthand experiences submitting under NIH's new PF5 mechanism for international research collaborations. Opening with a firsthand account of a PF5 submission, the group will go around to share what the process actually looked like at other institutions: what worked, what proved more complicated than expected, and for those who held off, what led to deferring submission to a later cycle. Attendees will leave with a clearer sense of how others are approaching this still-new mechanism.	Kartik Yadav, MSCR, PGDPM, CRA Director of Research Development and Administration University of California, Irvine	10-Nov	1:30 PM	Curtis
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Discussion Session	Basic/Overview	Supporting the Career Pivot: Key Lessons from Year One	Keeping up with the demands of being a post-award research administrator often means reluctantly becoming comfortable with having a thousand things to do. Discovering compliance issues in grant budgets too late can make that burden even worse. This sessio	Elizabeth Donaldson, Non-Financial Analyst, University of San Francisco Samantha Hull, Post-Award Specialist, Santa Clara University	10-Nov	1:30 PM	Blake
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Basic	The Good, the Bad, and the Non-Negotiable: Navigating Red Flags in Sponsored Program Agreements	Sponsored programs contracting often feels like navigating the Wild West, where balancing institutional compliance with sponsor demands can lead to high-stakes showdowns. This session will simplify and de-escalate the dense, complex topic of contract negotiation and institutional risk management by utilizing an engaging Western theme. We will dissect critical risk zones, including "border disputes" (negotiating contentious intellectual property and publication terms) and "financial ambushes" (managing open-ended liabilities, out-of-state governing law, and rigid payment structures). Moving beyond basic risk identification, this presentation bridges the gap between central administration and campus partners by examining diverse sponsor motivations, from industry giants to federal flow-throughs. Attendees will leave not just knowing how to spot these contractual outlaws, but equipped with a practical toolkit of approaches and communication strategies to confidently navigate their next institutional negotiation.	Catherine Douras, PreAward Manager, Colorado State University Trisha Southergill, Grant Manager, Colorado State University	10-Nov	1:30 PM	Horace Tabor
			Break			10-Nov	2:30 PM	Mezzanine Foyer
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Beyond the Signature: Award Negotiation's Hidden Checklist for Project Success	Award negotiators spend significant time reviewing terms and conditions, but a successful award acceptance requires much more than legal and administrative review. This session explores the critical "beyond the terms" checklist that helps ensure awards are truly ready for execution and account setup. Topics will include compliance approvals and certifications, cost sharing, fabrication needs, subawards, export control considerations, account setup requirements, and other key institutional reviews that can impact project launch and long-term success. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and checklists to help identify potential issues before award acceptance and support a smoother transition from negotiation to award management.	Rebecca Libera, Colorado State Univesity Rick Wiechmann, Stanford University	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Horace Tabor
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Discussion Session	Basic/Overview	From Idea to Impact: Building a Cohort-Based Research Administration Training Program	Research administration is becoming increasingly complex, yet many institutions continue to rely heavily on decentralized or fully virtual on-boarding and professional development approaches. In response, the UC Davis School of Medicine Office of Research, Research Administration Unit developed an in-person cohort-based Research Administration Training Certificate Program designed to provide structured, interactive, and hands-on training for both new and experienced research administrators. This discussion session will explore the rationale, development process, and implementation of the program, including the decision to prioritize in-person cohort learning, collaborative discussion, case-based activities, and relationship-building across departments. Discussion leaders will detail the 2.5-year development process, curriculum design considerations, delivery methods, lessons learned, and early outcomes from the inaugural cohort. Participants will be encouraged to share their own institutional challenges and experiences related to on-boarding, staff development, retention, knowledge transfer, and building research administration communities. The session is intended to be highly interactive and will provide attendees with practical ideas and strategies for developing or enhancing training programs within their own institutions.	Christopher Wang, UC Davis Health Alyssa Bunn, Research Administrator/Trainer, UC Davis Health, School of Medicine	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Blake

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Dept & PUI	Open Forum	Basic/Overview	Granting the Future: Cultivating the Next Gen of Research Admins	This session will focus on how to best incorporate (undergraduate and graduate) student workers into the Research Administration world. Generation Z is a "digital-native generation, born between 1997 and 2012, [and] is driving significant changes in management styles, work environments, and organizational values" (Forbes, 2025). While our current student workers may not all come from Generation Z, this conversation will also touch on how to work across generational differences. Presenters have either worked with students or started as students, and will present insights on what practices, strategies, and actual assignments. They will discuss best ways to engage with student workers so that the students themselves walk away with professional development experiences as well as a love for Research Administration. Learning Objectives: Audience members will walk away with 1 - A specific knowledge of how to incorporate students of different generations in the workplace 2 - Implementable strategies of how to manage student workers 3 - Examples of actual assignments that will foster excitement for Research Administration and professional development.	Elliani Decker, Research Development Officer, Southern Utah University Vanessa Denny, University of Colorado Boulder, Compliance Officer Willem Hermann-Wedemeyer, University of Idaho, Internship Coordinator Malaika Juru, Southern Utah University, Student Sponsored Program Manager Marcos Valenzuela, Southern Utah University, Student Sponsored Program Manager	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Lawrane A
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Overview	Practical Guide to Large Language Models (LLMs) for Research Administration	From Funding Searches to Grant Closeouts, many aspects of research administration are very time-consuming. The presenters come from distinctly different institutions but will provide practical Large Language Models (LLM) solutions that have been implemented at each. The goal of this session is to show ways in which LLMs can be assistants for our RAs, cutting time and managing menial tasks while freeing them to work on those items that RA expertise is invaluable for. LLMs are here to stay, are you ready to work with your digital colleagues?	Robin S. Lewis, MPA, CRA, CPRA, CFRA, Director, SRSO, Santa Fe Institute Lisa A. Wilson, MBA, PMP, CRA, Assistant Vice President, Research Administration, Office of Strategic Optimization and Training (OSOT) and Senior Director, Strategic Operations & Training (SOT) Office of Research Administration (ORA), Emory University	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Platte
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Reigning in the FAR - Using SharePoint to Organize and Store Institutional Negotiation Positions	Ensuring consistent and up-to-date institutional negotiation responses to clauses in federal contracting requires negotiation positions to be stored in a way that is both accessible and flexible. Using a new tool CU Boulder has developed to house our positions on various clauses in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, this session will explore using SharePoint lists as a method of housing that data, beginning with an overview of the shift away from less functional software like Excel and continuing into how SharePoint enables management of new and changing data. Additionally, we will go over collaboration opportunities made available by housing those positions in a SharePoint site rather than a single file, including linkages between departments that give teams at different stages of award processing the ability to work off a common dataset and organize it according to their specific needs and focus areas.	Andie Smiley, Research Contracts Administrator, University of Colorado Boulder Melissa Clymer, Senior Contract Officer, University of Colorado Boulder	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Lawrence B
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Basic	Taming the Endless To-Do Lists: Strategies for Wrangling Compliance Issues in Grant Financial Accounts	Keeping up with the demands of being a post-award research administrator often means reluctantly becoming comfortable with having a thousand things to do. Discovering compliance issues in grant budgets too late can make that burden even worse. This session focuses on simplifying grant budget and account monitoring, and offers strategies that can be quickly implemented to identify high risk situations and catch compliance blips as they happen.	Courtney Wessling, Sponsored Program Manager, Southern Utah University Nathan Wiggins, Data Scientist, Southern Utah University Carrie Childs, Associate Director, SPARC, Southern Utah University Alex Hartvigsen, Director of Sponsored Programs Post-Award Service, Utah Valley University	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Confluence C
Dept & PUI	Concurrent Session	Advanced	When Pressure Sparks Innovation: Transforming Grant Management Through Creative Support Models.	The future of research depends on the strength of the teams who power it—and when those teams are stretched thin, deadlines slip, burnout rises, and opportunities are lost. But what if a staffing crisis could become the catalyst for something smarter, stronger, and totally transformative? In this dynamic session, discover how Mass General Brigham turned a serious grant management challenge into a bold new model of support—one that boosts capacity, accelerates workflows, and lifts entire research communities. This isn't just a story about filling gaps; it's about reimagining what's possible when innovation meets necessity. Whether you're a seasoned research administrator or a leader looking to refine and modernize your operations, this session offers practical strategies, sophisticated case insights, and a forward-looking perspective on how institutions can maintain excellence—even under significant operational strain. This session will challenge the status quo—and inspire you to think bigger about the future of grant management.	Francis Foley , Mass General Brigham (MGB), RSS Senior Project Leader Cait Lieneck, Mass General Brigham (MGB), RSS Manager	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Confluence AB

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Pre-Award	Discussion Session	Basic/Overview	Who Has Time for a Pit Stop?! Barriers to Evolving Workflow While Maintaining Momentum	This discussion group explores the "modernization paradox" facing university pre-award offices, including PUIs and other institutions that must adapt and evolve while navigating the persistent resource barriers inherent to their specific environments. The session focuses on the constant struggle of trying to keep up with a never-ending stack of daily to-dos while simultaneously trying to launch new systems to help the office grow. We will discuss the friction of "changing the tires while the car is moving," focusing on how teams can realistically navigate growth and modernize workflows when their primary resource, time, is already fully committed to survival. By addressing common hurdles from limited IT support and staffing shortages to a culture resistant to change, the group will share adaptable strategies for fostering stronger teamwork and seamless workload transfers without reaching a breaking point.	Judith Gagnebin, Grants and Research Administrator, California State University, Fresno Blake Greenwood, Research Administrator, University of California, Berkeley	10-Nov	2:45 PM	Curtis
			Break			10-Nov	3:45 PM	Mezzanine Foyer
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Discusion Session	Overview	Around the Campfire: Conversations on Change, Resilience, and Success in Research Administration	Pull up a seat around the campfire and join fellow research administrators for an open and candid conversation about navigating a rapidly evolving profession. From shifting sponsor requirements and increasing workloads to staffing challenges, new technologies, and changing institutional priorities, today's research administrators are continually adapting to new realities. Through facilitated discussion, participants will share experiences, lessons learned, and practical strategies for building resilience, supporting colleagues, and finding sustainable paths to success.	Rosemary Madnick, Vice President for Research Administration, The Lundquist Institute	10-Nov	4:00 PM	Curtis
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Advanced	From Compliance to Consequence: Strategic Decision-Making in High-Risk Federal Research Contracts	Federal research contracting has moved well beyond compliance. Today’s environment requires strategic decision-making under ambiguity, competing priorities, and institutional risk—where contract officers and project managers are not simply processing agreements and monitoring project implementation, but actively shaping outcomes. This session brings together a highly experienced contract officer and research project manager to explore how complex federal acquisition regulation (FAR) scenarios are navigated and operationalized in practice. Using an anonymized, real-world case, we will walk participants through a high-stakes situation involving nonstandard sponsor expectations, ambiguous deliverables, and institutional sensitivities, including industry, international, and politically complex collaborations. Participants will see how risk is identified not only in compliance requirements, but embedded within contract language, operational assumptions, and sponsor expectations. We will examine how downstream impacts are assessed prior to award acceptance—translating contract requirements into executable plans, governance structures, and deliverables—while evaluating implementation feasibility, faculty capacity, reputational exposure, and institutional alignment. A central focus is how contract terms are operationalized into execution reality. We will highlight how contract and project management roles function as an integrated discipline—translating ambiguity, aligning stakeholders, and guiding decisions under pressure to ensure negotiated terms can be successfully delivered in practice. The session also addresses managing sponsor demands outside policy frameworks, balancing a “yes” culture with institutional protection, and navigating internal tensions. We will close with near-failure conditions—where contract intent and execution diverge—and lessons for strengthening future practice.	Nicole Carlton, Director, Program Management Office, University of Colorado Boulder Melissa Clymer, Principal Research Contract Officer, University of Colorado Boulder	10-Nov	4:00 PM	Horace Tabor
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Managing the Proposal Surge: Practical Strategies and tools for High-Volume Submissions	This session focuses on practical strategies and tools for managing high-volume proposal submissions in fast-paced research environments. Participants will learn how to streamline proposal workflows, improve coordination across teams, collaborators, and other institutions, and maintain quality and compliance while handling multiple concurrent deadlines. The session will cover approaches for workload prioritization, internal tracking systems, document management, and effective communication between principal investigators, research administrators, support staff, and potential use of the AI in improving efficiency. Emphasis will be placed on scalable practices that reduce bottlenecks, enhance efficiency, and support timely submission without compromising proposal quality. The session is designed for research administrators, proposal managers and coordinators, and research development professionals responsible for coordinating or supporting multiple funding submissions simultaneously.	Mariam Ubilava, Proposal Manager, University of Alaska Fairbanks Oolka Dixit, Senior Contract and Grant Officer II, Sponsored Projects Office, University of California, San Diego	10-Nov	4:00 PM	Lawrence A

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Navigating Changes in Indirect and Direct Costing	The Federal grants and contracts environment is rapidly evolving, including the way the government views Indirect or F&A costs, and how they should be applied to grants. Since change is dynamic with this presidential administration, we will be sure to take the most current look at the newest pivots to Grants and Contracts Costing. In light of suggested reductions to indirect costs, we will explore opportunities for universities to pivot to direct charging for support costs, including sponsored projects administration, operations and maintenance, network costs, and much more. We will summarize at the evolution of the suggested changes and actual changes in the Federal regulations regarding indirect costs throughout the past year.	Jen Rowles, Senior Manager, Maximus Higher Education Gina Hooten, Manager, Cost Analysis & Equipment Management, Utah State University	10-Nov	4:00 PM	Confluence AB
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Taking the Reins: Driving Change Through Personal Agency	The wild west landscape of research moves fast, but the administrators who move it are often waiting for permission to lead. Regardless of our roles, each person possesses a unique set of skills and talents that often go untapped because they aren't listed in their job description. In this interactive session, we will focus on developing individual agency, moving beyond standard operating procedures to explore how your specific background and passions can be the catalyst for institutional change. This is a dedicated space to brainstorm how to saddle up using the tools you already have to fix the problems you see every day. Additionally, this session aims to increase retention and reduce burnout by helping staff find meaning and ownership in their daily work by leveraging their hidden strengths in practical ways.	Emma Pritchett, Research Administrator, Colorado State University Erin Lemoine, Grants Officer, Office of Sponsored Programs, Colorado State University Liza Hunn, Director of PreAward Support Research Business Operations | Engineering, Colorado State University	10-Nov	4:00 PM	Lawrence B
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	The Good, The Bad, and The Unallowable: The Wild West, A Satirical Guide to Cradle-to-Grave Research	The Good, The Bad, and The Unallowable: A Satirical Cradle-to-Grave Guide to Research Administration Gone Wild takes participants on a wildly fictional, painfully familiar ride through the sponsored project lifecycle. From the moment a PI declares, "We can get this submitted by 5:00," to the inevitable discovery of a mystery payroll charge during closeout, this session uses satire and research administration inside jokes to explore what can go wrong at every stage of a sponsored project. Participants will ride along as the presentation tackles proposal development, budget preparation, cost share, award negotiation, award setup, financial management, effort reporting, subrecipient monitoring, procurement, compliance, export controls, cost transfers, and closeout. Each scenario exaggerates familiar research administration behaviors to highlight the real risks hiding underneath the humor. While the examples are intentionally ridiculous, the lessons are not. Participants will leave with a better understanding of how communication gaps, inadequate documentation, unclear responsibilities, weak internal controls, and "we'll fix it later" thinking can turn manageable issues into significant compliance and financial problems. This session is designed as anti-training with a purpose.	Alexa Van Dalsem, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Office of Contracts & Grants, University of Colorado Boulder Garrett Steed, Director of Finance and Administration, Department of Physiology and Biophysics, School of Medicine, University of Colorado Anschutz	10-Nov	4:00 PM	Confluence C
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	The Good, the Bad, and the Ungoverned: Evaluating AI outputs at scale.	Research administration offices are using generative AI for tasks such as document review, data extraction, drafting, summarization, and policy interpretation. As these uses expand, institutions need practical ways to evaluate AI outputs across repeated tasks, multiple document types, different prompts, and changing AI tools. In this session, "at scale" means moving beyond one-off experimentation toward repeatable evaluation: testing many examples, preserving evidence, comparing results over time, and making evaluation findings usable for governance, training, and local decision-making. This session shares an emerging framework being developed through the AI4RA project. The framework organizes evaluation evidence around questions such as: What task was the AI asked to perform? What documents or cases were tested? What prompt and tool were used? Was the output compared to validated ground truth or to a preliminary reference? How consistent were repeated runs? What kinds of errors appeared? What evidence can be traced back to source documents, prompts, and evaluation records? Examples will include research administration use cases such as extracting structured information from award documents and analysis of RFAs from federal sponsors. Rather than presenting this framework as a finished or authoritative answer, the session invites community feedback on what research administrators need to evaluate AI responsibly in real institutional settings. The goal is to give participants a practical starting point for thinking about AI evaluation and governance in research administration, while identifying opportunities for cross-institutional collaboration on shared use cases, evaluation methods, and examples.	Barrie Robison, Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Data Sciences, University of Idaho Sarah Martonick, Director, Sponsored Programs, Office of Research and Economic Development, University of Idaho	10-Nov	4:00 PM	Platte
			Dinner and Conference Event			10-Nov	7:00 PM	Confluence

RM26 Program (update) - 11/06/2026

Track	Session Type	Level	Title	Description	Presenters	Date	Time	Location
Wednesday, November 11 - Sessions								
			Breakfast			11-Nov	8:00 AM	Confluence
Post Award	Discussion Group	Basic	Don't Wait for Sundown: Year-Round Financial Management for Award Closeout Success	Award closeout isn't just the last stop at the end of the trail—it's a financial management journey that requires year-round attention. Waiting until the award end date to address financial closeout activities can lead to compliance issues, unresolved balances, and unnecessary risk. This session explores how proactive financial management practices can help institutions stay ahead of closeout requirements year-round. The Grant Accountants at Denver Health will share practical strategies for monitoring financial activity, managing outstanding transactions, engaging departmental staff, and establishing standardized processes that support timely and successful award closeouts. Through real-world examples, attendees will learn how early financial oversight and strong collaboration between central offices and departments can reduce last-minute scrambles, improve compliance, minimize financial risk, and keep awards on track from kickoff to closeout.	Karon Schleigh, Sr. Grant Accountant, Denver Health & Hospital Authority Rowan Hollinshead, Grant Accounting Manager, Denver Health	11-Nov	9:00 AM	Curtis
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	From Opportunity to Submission: A Framework for Collaborative and Strategic Proposal Management	As funding opportunities become increasingly large and complex, research development teams need practical systems to coordinate proposal strategy, compliance, narrative development, and stakeholder engagement. This session presents a flexible proposal management framework developed through years of leading strategic, multi-partner proposal efforts across higher education and industry. Using a scalable Excel-based structure, the framework translates funding opportunity requirements into actionable workflows that support strategic messaging, facilitate collaborative proposal writing, improve coordination, reduce administrative burden, and strengthen proposal development as a strategic institutional function. Attendees will explore practical examples, lessons learned, and approaches adaptable to a wide range of institutional contexts.	Mike Mitchell, Senior Director, Research Development, University of Colorado Boulder Andrea Moore, Research Administrator Supervisor, Research Service Core, University of California, San Diego	11-Nov	9:00 AM	Platte
Dept & PUI	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	PROSPER Beyond the 8 Second Ride in a Dept/PUI: Saddling Staff for Success	The Dept/PUI ride is definitely exhilarating and comes with a lot of hopes and dreams of conquering the challenges before us. This session will challenge traditional staffing models where the 1-3/3-5 person office is traditionally the norm. Southern Utah University will present an update on new models developed through the NSF GRANTED program. We'll show how SUU has found replicable success in growing our PUI office to a well rounded 13 person team, while also addressing the challenges faced and plans for sustaining the programs beyond the 8 second ride.	Sylvia Bradshaw, Executive Director, Sponsored Programs, Agreements, Research, and Contracts (SPARC), Southern Utah University	11-Nov	9:00 AM	Lawrence B
Contracting	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Reading the Brand: Deciphering Sponsor Intentions - Grant or Fixed-Price Contract?	Accurate and early identification of a Sponsor’s intentions ensures a mutual meeting of the minds, fruitful negotiation and problem-free post award management and closeout. This session will explore why a grant can look like a fixed price agreement to a Post Award Officer and what to do when terms seem to contradict the Sponsor’s intentions. Additionally, we will consider the changes necessary to clarify terms and intentions within the award.	Melissa Clymer, Senior Research Contract Officer, University of Colorado Boulder Genevieve Hurst, Senior Grant Officer, University of Colorado Boulder	11-Nov	9:00 AM	Lawrence A
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Terms and Conditions May Apply: Using AI to Translate Award Agreements into PI-Ready Action	Award agreements are often dense, complex, and difficult to translate into clear guidance for Principal Investigators (PIs). This session explores a structured, human-centered approach to using artificial intelligence (AI) as a support tool for interpreting award terms, identifying reporting requirements, and creating PI-focused resources. Using a real-world implementation from a primarily undergraduate institution (PUI), the presenter will demonstrate how AI can augment the work of research administrators by reducing cognitive load, improving consistency, and supporting the development of standardized, meeting-ready tools. Participants will learn practical strategies for evaluating AI-generated outputs, designing repeatable workflows, and responsibly integrating AI into research administration processes. Whether you are AI-curious or actively exploring applications within your office, you'll leave with actionable ideas for transforming complex award information into clear, compliant, and PI-ready guidance.	Fable Mangold, Grants Analyst, California State University Channel Islands	11-Nov	9:00 AM	Confluence
Agencies & Sponsors	Discussion Session	Basic	Year 2 Federal Transition Roundup: Lassoing Mandates, Calming the Campus Corral, and Blazing the Trail Ahead	Giddy up, research administrators! Join us for an interactive session as we navigate Year 2 of the federal transition and wrangle the wild changes affecting institutions of higher education. We’ll start by reviewing our Year 1 track record before tackling the "bucking broncos" of Year 2, including how to rope in rapid-fire executive orders and keep your faculty and PIs calm when the ride gets bumpy. Together, we’ll share survival strategies for staying on the bull instead of getting thrown by shifting federal mandates. Saddle up for an informative, collaborative roundup where we'll map out the trail for the year ahead and ensure your institution is ready to ride the range with confidence.	Erika Archer, Grant Officer, University of Colorado Boulder Clay LeValley, Grant Officer, University of Colorado Boulder	11-Nov	9:00 AM	Blake

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			Break			11-Nov	10:15 AM	Mezzanine Foyer
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Basic	Avoiding the Closeout Stampede: A Phased Framework for Sponsored Projects	Closeout is where small oversights from earlier in the award lifecycle can become urgent, expensive problems—and where staff workload often spikes without warning. This session offers a structured, timeline-based approach to closeout that incorporates 2 CFR 200.344 and relevant 2024 Uniform Guidance revisions while focusing on practical implementation: spreading the work across the closeout timeline, clarifying responsibilities, and reducing last-minute pressure. We will walk through a phased framework covering the 90, 60, and 30 days before the project end date and the post-end-date window for resolving trailing transactions, completing financial reconciliation, and submitting final reports. The session will address common closeout stumbling blocks, including late cost transfers, effort certifications received after the books close, and other recurring issues attendees encounter. Attendees will leave with a closeout timeline template and checklist they can adapt to their own institutional context.	Michelle Lorenz, Post Award Specialist II, University of Wyoming Catherine Latzer, Finance Manager, University of Colorado Boulder	11-Nov	10:45 AM	Lawrence A
Post Award	Concurrent Session	Intermediate	Bridging the Gap: A Collaborative Approach to Current & Pending Other Support	Accurate and complete Current & Pending (Other) Support reporting requires coordinated effort across pre-award administrators, post-award administrators, and Principal Investigators—yet these stakeholders often operate with different processes, tools, and perspectives. This session explores how institutions can “bridge the gap” to create a shared, consistent approach to tracking and reporting Other Support data. We will discuss common challenges in aligning responsibilities and ensuring data accuracy, including communication gaps, version control issues, and evolving sponsor requirements. Using a real-world case study, presenters will demonstrate how cross-functional collaboration can improve transparency and reduce administrative burden while maintaining compliance. The session will also highlight the evolution of tracking methods—from legacy workflows using DocuSign to a more dynamic, Excel-based solution enhanced with AI—to centralize and standardize data collection. Attendees will learn how this approach enables streamlined data validation and the generation of XML outputs that can be directly uploaded into SciENcv, reducing manual entry and improving reporting consistency. Participants will leave with practical strategies to: •Foster collaboration and shared ownership of Other Support data across roles •Implement standardized tracking methods that improve accuracy and efficiency •Leverage technology, including Excel and AI tools, to streamline reporting and reduce duplication of effort This session is ideal for research administrators seeking scalable solutions to improve compliance, enhance collaboration, and modernize Current & Pending Support workflows.	Rochelle Hubbart, Research Administrator, University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus Andrew Krahulik, Research Administrator, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus Corey Brulla, Research Administrator, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus Emma Hulseberg-Dwyer, Research Administrator, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus	11-Nov	10:45 AM	Confluence
Dept & PUI	Discussion Session	Intermediate	How Are You Wrangling Grants? A Discussion of PUI Research Administration Systems	Research administrators at PUIs often manage complex proposal, award, compliance, and financial workflows with limited staffing, budgets, and resources. To meet these challenges, many offices develop creative approaches to award tracking and financial management leveraging low-cost or free tools, university-wide systems, or investing in electronic research administration software. Join colleagues for a practical conversation to learn about software options and innovations to managing grants and discuss what’s working and what’s challenging at your institution. Participants are invited to share software solutions and operational strategies being used at your institution or within your department. We’ll discuss electronic research administration platforms, homegrown solutions, integrations with institutional systems such as Workday, and innovative uses of free tools (such as Microsoft365). Discussion hosts can speak to their experiences with Workday, Basecamp, OneAegis, Excel, and Airtable – and look forward to hearing about your experience and software innovations. Attendees will leave with new ideas for tracking proposals, awards, compliance activities, and financial data while maximizing limited resources.	Jenna Isakson, Director, Office of Sponsored Projects, Seattle University Ann Cortez, Sr. Grants & Contracts Accountant, Post Award, Loyola Marymount University	11-Nov	10:45 AM	Blake

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Contracting	Discussion Session	Intermediate	It Changed Again! Managing the Review of Evolving Federal Award Terms	Federal agencies continue to introduce new award terms, certifications, and compliance requirements, creating challenges for institutions tasked with reviewing and implementing them. This facilitated discussion group will provide an opportunity for participants to share how their institutions monitor, review, interpret, and communicate changing federal award requirements. Topics may include who is involved in the review process, how responsibilities are divided among sponsored programs, compliance, legal, and other offices, approaches to risk assessment and escalation, and strategies for communicating changes to investigators and campus stakeholders. Participants are encouraged to share successes, challenges, and practical solutions as we explore how institutions are adapting to an increasingly dynamic federal funding environment.	Rebecca Libera, CRA Senior Research Administrator Colorado State Univesity	11-Nov	10:45 AM	Curtis
Pre-Award	Concurrent Session	Advanced	Saddle Up for Interdisciplinary Grants: How Engineering-Social Science Collaboration Shapes Research	Pre-award administrators are increasingly asked to support interdisciplinary grant proposals — but are Research Administrators equipped with the evidence and strategies to champion them effectively? This session offers a data-driven look at what cross-disciplinary collaboration between engineering and social science researchers actually produces, and what that means for how we develop, position, and advocate for interdisciplinary proposals. Drawing on bibliometric data from seven major U.S. research universities, this study examined whether engineering faculty who collaborate with social scientists produce measurably stronger research outcomes. The findings are compelling: collaborating engineers consistently outperform non-collaborating peers across grants, publications, citations, and honorific awards — generating between 42 and 69 percent of institutional research output while representing a smaller share of the faculty population. This pattern is consistent across institution types, from land-grant universities to elite private institutes. For pre-award professionals, the implications are practical and immediate. When RAs understand what makes interdisciplinary teams productive, we can better advise faculty during proposal development, make a stronger internal case for resource investment, and align our outreach strategies with the collaboration patterns that sponsors increasingly prioritize through convergence research initiatives. This session will translate the research findings into actionable strategies for pre-award practice — from how we structure early faculty conversations to how we frame broader impact narratives for interdisciplinary teams. Participants will leave with concrete, evidence-based tools and frameworks ready for immediate application and are encouraged to come prepared to share insights from their own institutional contexts.	Camille Coley, Assocaite Vice Provost, University of San Francisco Susan Day, Principal Proposal Development Manager, University of Colorado Boulder	11-Nov	10:45 AM	Lawrence B
Workforce Wellness and Resilience	Concurrent Session	Basic/Overview	Your Risk-Averse Mindset Needed: Responsibly Navigating the AI Adoption Rodeo	In a field governed by principles of responsibility and compliance, many research administrators remain uncertain about how secure artificial intelligence (AI) systems actually are - and whether using them puts their institution's data at risk. This session provides clarity and simplicity about the way that data moves through AI systems, and what institutions can do to use AI responsibly AND protect institutional data simultaneously. By breaking down each step of the process in straightforward, practical terms, each participant will be prepared to make decisions from an informed standpoint regarding when and how AI can be used safely in their own specific institutional contexts.	Nathan Wiggins, Data Scientist, Southern Utah University Jessica Robins, Director, Pre-Award Services, Arizona State University	11-Nov	10:45 AM	Platte