## Goals Achieved for FY 2011

**In partnership with the faculty and administration, develop and implement reasonable and enforceable deadlines for proposal submissions to the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) such that the risk of rejection by sponsors’ systems is minimized and a high level of proposal quality is maintained, yet faculty member time to develop a strong technical proposal is maximized.**

**Goal accomplishment:** After an extended discussion period and three months’ advance notice, changes to OSP’s proposal submission guidelines became effective February 1, 2011. The new guidelines provide a standard handling process for at-risk proposals, defined as those submitted after the internal deadline of 9:00 a.m. the day before the sponsor’s deadline. By establishing a separate queue and processing staff for at-risk proposals, the new guideline ensures that the emergency handling required for such proposals does not preclude a timely and thorough review for those proposals submitted in advance of the deadline. Data indicates that the majority of the faculty embraced the new guideline in the spirit of service it was intended, as the share of total proposal submissions arriving on the sponsor’s deadline fell from an average of 35 percent over the 12 months leading up to the new policy, to less than 18 percent in the month following its implementation.

**Reduce the time it takes OSP to negotiate contracts and set up awards. This includes creating streamlined procedures, standard agreements, and building relationships with sponsors and collaborators.**

**Goal accomplishment:** In November 2010, in conjunction with Research Information Technology (IT) Systems staff, OSP implemented a new system which facilitates email/Web-based distribution of project authorization notices (PANs). The system, available 24 hours a day, shortens preparation time and eliminates transit time for the PAN by sending it in an email notice as a navigable Web page providing detailed information about the project, such as cost sharing, subcontracts, electronic documents, and related funds, along with a printable summary of the PAN. In addition, the system provides easy navigation to related funds and access to key electronic documents.

**Collaborate with Virginia Tech Application Information Systems, the College of Engineering, and others to develop and support methods and tools to present research-related information to the faculty and staff in formats that are easy to access and easy to understand.**

**Goal accomplishment:** OSP supported and embraced the efforts and accomplishments of the College of Engineering as it rolled out its PI Portal tools to many of the university institutes and departments that host a high volume of research. The system includes an electronically routed proposal approval form, which simplifies and speeds the process of tracking a proposal through its various required approvals.

**Collaborate with Research Education and Development to develop additional outreach opportunities that help OSP staff visit, see, and hear about the research that they help support in order to strengthen our customer service focus.**

**Goal accomplishment:** OSP management and staff visited a number of programs, laboratories, and research sites during the fiscal year, including the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute, the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute in Roanoke, and Virginia Tech in the National Capital Region.
Additional Accomplishments

- Ten OSP administrators achieved the status of Certified Research Administrator.
- Twenty-four OSP employees received official recognition awards from the Office of the Vice President for Research recognizing outstanding contributions to the organization. This includes four at the Gold level and seven at the Silver level.
- OSP eliminated one middle management position and reorganized in a fashion that creates entry-level management positions known as Team Leaders. This new opportunity clarifies the career path for research administrators and provides them with opportunities to test and further develop their supervision skills with a smaller number of direct reports before moving on to more-demanding middle management positions. It is expected that these positions will enhance the flow of information between management and front-line staff.
- The individuals comprising the Proposal Assistance Group were moved into positions where they were better able to meet the faculty’s needs.
- An internal audit of the post-award section was completed with no high-risk issues identified and only a single recommendation for further improvement. The improvement opportunity relates to close-out of projects, and it is incorporated in OSP’s 2012 objectives.
- Enhanced procedures for accounts receivable and the granting of credit, which were developed during fiscal year 2010, paid off in the results of OSP’s collection efforts in fiscal year 2011.

Value and Number of Proposals Submitted by Year

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR FY 2012

Streamline Grants.gov proposal preparation, reduce the risk of submission errors, and improve the quality and accuracy of sponsored funding proposals by implementing an easy-to-use Web application that simplifies the creation, review, approval, and electronic submission of grant proposals to meet sponsor administrative requirements.

Improve quality and timeliness of contract and award negotiation and set-up practices.

Collaborate with Virginia Tech Application Information Systems, Research IT staff, and others to develop a database for award and contract tracking to provide OSP with workload management tools and present status information to the faculty and staff in formats that are easy to access and easy to understand.

Collaborate with the Controller’s Office to update and improve procedures for managing sponsor funded/loaned equipment and update and expand the staff training matrix to incorporate the new methods.

Implement best practices for award closeout such that 95 percent of ended-project files are closed within six months of the project end date.

Enhance OSP outreach to faculty members and departments.

Continually update the OSP website with examples and checklists for easier reference, plan visits for OSP staff to see and hear about the research that they facilitate, and continue to educate the campus about the at-risk proposal process in order to strengthen OSP’s working relationship with the faculty.