Message from G. Michael Purdy

I recently returned from a day in our nation’s capital, meeting with agency folks and other colleagues. All my friends and contacts in Washington, D.C. are unanimous in their agreement that they cannot remember a year in which the Federal budget process was as broken as it is this year. And this goes far beyond the imposition of the across-the-board arbitrary funding reductions for the agencies, which for some bizarre reason have become known by the odd term ‘sequestration.’ At the time of writing these words (late May), no agency of importance to us (e.g. NSF, NASA, NIH, DOE, NOAA, etc.) has an OMB-approved spending plan for its FY 2013 budget. (We are just 3-4 months away from the end of FY 2013). So in truth, none of our agencies know with certainty what their budgets will be for FY 2013!

I have not met anyone who believes that we will have agreement on a budget for FY 2014 in a timely way, so that means, come September, we will be living within the conservative constraints of yet another Continuing Resolution. The battle to agree upon a FY 2014 budget is made all the more difficult by the fact that the target numbers for the total of non-defense discretionary spending that the appropriations committees in the House and Senate are working with have never in history been so different (~$200B). So, this is all very troubling.

However, all this madness seems to be occurring within an overall environment of great support for science and engineering research. (I am very aware that there are a vocal few who question whether NSF’s peer review process best serves the nation’s economic interests, and whether the support of research on climate change is worthwhile, but I honestly do not believe that these folks have traction – I have sufficient faith in the system to think that, in the end, the more rational majority will win out). I cannot remember a modern President who has been as outspoken in his support for science and engineering as has President Obama. And I cannot remember a time when the case for fundamental science and engineering research as the engine that drives economic prosperity and assures national security has been made as strongly as it has today.

Doubtless the next couple of years are going to be tough. Our already highly competitive worlds are going to become just a little more competitive. We must recognize this, face up to this reality and develop innovative ways to increase the competitiveness of our plans and proposals. We must think strategically about how to maintain our core strengths through the next few years of tight budgets. When growth returns, which it most certainly will, we must be poised to continue to play the world leadership role that is so desperately needed amid the international political and economic turmoil of the 21st century.

http://evpr.columbia.edu/
News From Washington: What's Going on with FY 2013?

It has become very common for those of us on the receiving end of Federal funding to expect delays in notices, expenditures and obligations. However, this year the situation seems even more drawn out. The President signed into law the FY 2013 Appropriations Bill for the remainder of this fiscal year, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6), on March 26. However, Federal departments and agencies still do not have clear word on expenditures for the remainder of FY 2013 because the Appropriations Bill requires that all agencies submit “a spending plan to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act (or May 10, 2013).” We are advised that those spending plans have been written by the Departments and are pending Congressional review. Federal agencies’ ability to issue award notices remains delayed across the board.

For example, NIH has a $29.15 billion budget for FY 2013, which is a decrease of approximately 5% from appropriations in FY 2012. On May 13, NIH issued “NIH Fiscal Policy for Grant Awards – FY 2013, Notice Number: NOT-OD-13-064” to provide guidance about the NIH Fiscal Operations for the remainder of FY 2013. But NIH cannot yet detail exact funding cuts by Institutes/Centers or dates. NIH instead notes that “Non-competing continuation awards that have already been made in FY 2013 were generally funded at levels below that indicated on the most recent Notice of Award (generally up to 90% of the previously committed level)... Such reductions may be partially restored, but are unlikely to be restored to the previous commitment level. Therefore, non-competing continuation grants (research and non-research) including those that remain to be issued in FY 2013 likely will be made at levels below those indicated in the Notice of Award. The NIH will make an effort to keep the average size of competing awards constant at FY 2012 levels, but is likely to make fewer competing awards in FY 2013.”

Due to the uncertainty that governs this process in the eighth month of the current fiscal year, we can appreciate concerns and frustrations with program managers who may not be providing information. Nonetheless, we encourage you to continue to submit proposals for this and the next fiscal year. So much is uncertain and cuts are likely, but the President’s budget request for FY 2014 requests $143 billion for Federal research and development (R&D), including the conduct of R&D and investments in R&D facilities and equipment. This works out to a 1% funding increase over FY 2012 levels for all R&D. The budget provides $68 billion for basic and applied research, an increase of 8% over FY 2012 levels. The FY 2014 budget proposes a reduction in defense R&D to $73.2 billion, $4.0 billion or 5.2% less than the FY 2012 enacted level, and $69.6 billion for non-defense R&D, an increase of 9.2% or $5.9 billion over the FY 2012 enacted level.

Monitoring the Use of Live Vertebrate Animals: New Post-Approval Monitoring Program

The Columbia University Office of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) has introduced a Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) program. PAM is a method of monitoring the use of live vertebrate animals in research, teaching and testing after IACUC approval has been granted. This program will allow the IACUC to ensure and document program integrity, compliance with regulations and guidelines, and adherence to approved protocols. It will serve as an opportunity for continued interaction and education for the research staff, and help ensure animal welfare.

Federal regulations pertaining to the care and use of laboratory animals do not explicitly require PAM, but it is implied in statements requiring continuing reviews of activities. The 8th edition of “The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals” includes a discussion of PAM.

The IACUC PAM program includes four components: 1) formal PAM; 2) informal PAM; 3) IACUC semiannual inspection follow-up; and 4) tracking.

This initiative is headed by one of our IACUC Training and Compliance Coordinators, Dr. Rebecca Saez.
IRB Guidance Documents
To facilitate the submission of protocols that address all necessary regulatory requirements, the IRB has released several guidance documents in the past 10 months. Researchers who are preparing protocols that relate to one of the areas covered by these documents should be sure to review the requirements.

Additional Requirements for Protocols Funded by Specific Federal Agencies or Subject to Specific Federal Policies (8/9/12)
Research Involving Pregnant Women (8/9/12)
Withdrawal of Subjects from FDA-Regulated Studies (9/10/12)
Review of Clinical Coordinating Center Submissions (4/8/13)

Policy and Guidance Refresher
A new feature, “Policy and Guidance Refresher”, was added on the main page of both IRB websites: Columbia University - Morningside (CU-MS) IRB and Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) IRB. The focus of this feature will be revised monthly to remind visitors to the webpage of important information and direct them to the location on each website where the information is permanently posted. Recently featured were the documents “Additional Requirements for Protocols Funded by Specific Federal Agencies or Subject to Specific Federal Policies” and “Research Involving Pregnant Women”.

Research Personnel Listserv
The Columbia University IRB Office is interested in facilitating contact and collaboration among researchers at Columbia for the purpose of enhancing human subject protection. Accordingly, the Office has initiated a new listserv for Columbia personnel who conduct or oversee research with human subjects.

Examples of how the new listserv may be used include:
1) facilitating recruitment of research personnel within the University to participate in research related to human subject protection issues such as informed consent or recruitment of specific populations;
2) identifying individuals with specific expertise to serve as consultants for IRB reviews; and
3) soliciting volunteers for committees or focus groups that can inform the development of policies and procedures related to the protection of human subjects in research.

To subscribe to this new “Research Personnel” list, please send an email to LISTSERV@ALIPES.CUMC.COLUMBIA.EDU. Include in both the Subject Line and Email text: “Subscribe Researchpersonnel”.

To utilize this listserv for recruitment purposes, please send an email request with the subject line “IRB listserv message request” to irboffice@columbia.edu and include:
- Rascal IRB#, if applicable;
- A summary of the initiative, including why use of this list is requested;
- Proposed email text and subject line for the message, in a document attached to the email.

For questions regarding this new list, contact the IRB Office:
CUMC IRB: (212) 305-5883, irboffice@columbia.edu

RASCAL Update
Rascal recently increased our support for a variety of non-western, European languages. We now support all characters in UTF-8, including Spanish and Greek. Additionally, we also now support a variety of Microsoft-specific characters, though viewing that information will depend on your browser/device supporting those characters.
RISE 2012—2013

The Research Initiatives in Science and Engineering (RISE) Program provides early-stage seed funding for particularly imaginative research that suffers from the Catch-22 of having no data to secure funding, but no funding to produce data. Moving into now its eighth year of funding, the expectation is that RISE will enable the researchers to test these unusually creative ideas so that they would then compete successfully for support from traditional funding sources.

AWARDS in FY13

Of the 12 proposals invited to the second stage of the RISE competition, the following awards were made:

"Regulation of Ribosome Recycling"
Jonathan Dworkin (Microbiology, Immunology) and Ruben Gonzalez (Chemistry)

"Development of a Superconducting Detector Array for Studying the Beginning of the Universe"
Bradley Johnson (Physics)

"'Cells to Society' Approach to Reduce Racial Achievement Gaps: Neuro-physiologic pathways involved in stereotype threat and social psychological interventions"
Valerie Purdie-Vaughns (Psychology), Daichi Simbo (Medicine), Matthew Burg (Medicine) and Julie Spicer (Psychiatry)

"Laser Cooling of an Organic Molecule"
Tanya Zelevinsky (Physics) and Daniel Wolf Savin (Astrophysics Laboratory)

“Systemic Failures across Domains: Towards a Unified Model-based Framework”
Venkat Venkatasubramanian (Chemical Engineering), Peter Bearman (Sociology), Garud Iyengar (Industrial Engineering and Operations Research) and Stephen Morse (Clinical Epidemiology)

PROCESS

The application process for RISE has two stages: Round 1 includes a one-page abstract, and those invited to Round 2 are asked to submit a four-page proposal and budget. In order to help PIs decide whether their proposal is appropriate for RISE, the Office of Research Initiatives introduced a new supporting document to the first round of the 2012 – 2013 RISE competition. In addition to the one-pager, applicants were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their proposed project. The process is further outlined at: http://researchinitiatives.columbia.edu/resources/research-initiatives-science-and-engineering-rise

Awarded are required to submit Progress Reports in order to secure the second year of funding. We also ask that they give us final reports and updates a few years out so we may evaluate the “return of investment” of the RISE program. Whereas any program that sponsors very early stage, very high risk research will have some research that will not succeed, the RISE program has also led to a very rewarding series of studies funded, papers produced and subsequent awards made (http://evpr.columbia.edu/content/rise-impact).

A Suggested Read from the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

“From PhD to Professoriate: The Role of the Institution in Fostering the Advancement of Postdoc Women” is a new resource book developed by the National Postdoctoral Association as part of the NPA ADVANCE project. Supported by a three year grant from the National Science Foundation ADVANCE program, the NPA ADVANCE project’s goal is to foster the transition of women postdoctoral scientists and scholars into faculty positions. This new resource book provides an overview of our current understanding of the various factors that impede postdoc women from continuing in academia and recommends practices that have shown promise in helping postdoc women overcome career advancement obstacles in academia. You may download the book at http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/index.php/programs-resources-25/npa-advance
The Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain and Behavior Institute Second Workshop

Seventy-five faculty and staff of the University convened on May 13, 2013 for a Workshop focused on Mind and Behavior research in the context of the Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute. The Workshop followed a recommendation from the first Research Workshop on January 25, 2013, to reach out to the Morningside research community with a focus on social sciences and related disciplines. The Workshop was sponsored by the Zuckerman Institute Faculty Advisory Committee and was held at the Italian Academy on the Morningside Heights Campus. Geraldine Downey, Professor of Psychology, led the Workshop, which was introduced by President Lee C. Bollinger and Thomas Jessell, Director of the Zuckerman Institute and co-chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee. The goals of the Workshop were to explore research questions within the four intellectual topics listed below, and to identify specific actions the Institute can take in its planning stages to promote the integrated exploration of these questions, with strong engagement from social scientists and the Morningside community. Discussion of the research topics was organized around the following four panels:

Ethics, Morals and Law: Paul Appelbaum, Robert Burt, Daniel Richman, Elizabeth Scott
How can neuroscience partner with other disciplines to advance understanding of ethics, morals and law?

Challenging Environments and Changing Brains: Frances Champagne, Valerie Purdie-Vaughns, Virginia Rauh
What can neuroscience and other disciplines focused on the mind and brain potentially tell us about the neurological impacts of exposure to violence, famine, or discrimination versus exposure to environments that are supportive and enriching?

Economics and Value: Eric Johnson, Michael Shadlen, Daphna Shohamy, Michael Woodford
How can neuroscience and other disciplines focused on the mind and brain help advance the understanding of how we behave and make decisions in the context of economics and value?

Emotion and the Arts: Kevin Ochsner, Christopher Peacocke, Daniel Salzman
What can neuroscience, in partnership with other disciplines, potentially tell us about human emotions with regard to music, art and aesthetics more generally?

JRSC and RDRC Go Live on RASCAL

We are pleased to announce that the Rascal module for the Joint Radiation Safety Committee (JRSC) and Radioactive Drug Research Committee (RDRC) Applications and Committee reviews has gone live. All JRSC Human Use Subcommittee and RDRC Applications should now be completed in and submitted through Rascal. An Application should be attached as Hazardous Materials Appendix H to the IRB Protocol that relates to the study. The Application Guidelines have been modified and can be found at http://www.ehs.columbia.edu/RadiationFormsMC.html.

We believe that the new Rascal Applications and Review process will result in further improving and streamlining the radiation safety processes at the University. If you have any questions concerning the new module, please contact the Radiation Safety Office at 305-4095.
New Office of Research Administration

It is with great pleasure that we announce the formation, as of May 1, 2013, of a new, combined University-wide Office of Research Administration (ORA) to oversee the operations of both Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) and the Clinical Trials Office (CTO), and the appointment of Rudina Odeh-Ramadan to the position of Associate Vice President for Research Administration.

SPA and the CTO will remain constituted as they currently are within ORA, and, under Rudi’s leadership, will be managed by Sue Ross, who will continue in her current role as Interim Executive Director of SPA, and Helen Kim, as the Executive Director of the CTO. This new structure will allow more efficient operations and provide improved levels of service to the research community University-wide.

Rudi Odeh-Ramadan has run the CTO as its Executive Director since November 2008 and has been instrumental in transforming that office into an efficient, client service oriented operation. In the coming weeks, she will be meeting with Deans, Chairs and principal investigators on all of the University’s research campuses to learn how operations and services can be improved. Helen Kim has worked with Rudi since September 2009 as the Director of Regulatory Affairs and Clinical Development in the CTO. Sue Ross came to the University in October 2011 as the Post Award Director in SPA and became the Interim Executive Director of SPA in November 2012.

We look forward to working with this very talented team of administrators to find ways to continually improve the delivery of research administration services to the University community.

Plagiarism in Grant Proposals: Funders Using Software to Identify Misconduct.

As reported recently in the Science Magazine website ScienceInsider, “[t]he National Science Foundation (NSF) is investigating nearly 100 cases of suspected plagiarism drawn from a single year’s worth of proposals funded by the agency,” the result of the agency using plagiarism-detection software to review all awards made in FY 2011. Many researchers are not aware that plagiarism in grant proposals is a form of research misconduct that can have serious consequences. Such plagiarism encompasses not only copying from journal articles or other publications without attribution, but also copying from other grant proposals, even those that were never funded.

It is important for grant writers to realize that NSF and other sponsors are using plagiarism-detection software to identify cases of potential research misconduct. Such a finding may result in suspension and ultimately termination of a funded project. “If your proposal contains plagiarized text and is recommended for federal financing, the stakes are high,” reported another recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education. “In one incident reported by the NSF, a program officer said plagiarized text in a grant proposal had influenced his decision to support the work, ‘which meant the plagiarism amounted to fraud’ and thus was a crime.”

The Chronicle article explores the issue and offers suggestions for avoiding plagiarism in proposal writing, including:

“Don’t forget to use quotation marks when you copy text verbatim from a source.
Paraphrasing means restating a concept in your own words. Just changing a few words does not qualify. Also, be sure to cite the original source of the idea….
Carelessness and time constraints do not excuse plagiarism.”

The Office of Research Compliance and Training offers resources on research misconduct and publishing that include discussions on avoiding plagiarism. Check the RCT website: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/compliance/docs/research_misconduct/

ScientInsider article: http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/03/nsf-audit-of-successful-proposal.html
New Faces

MAXWELL AMURAO
Environmental Health and Safety is pleased to announce the appointment of Maxwell Amurao, Ph.D., M.B.A., DABR to the position of Radiation Safety Officer for Clinical Programs. Dr. Amurao will direct and supervise clinical radiation safety programs at New York Presbyterian/Columbia Hospitals, including Milstein Hospital, the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of New York and the Allen Hospital. He will also oversee quality assurance programs for the School of Dental Medicine and affiliated off site faculty practices.

Prior to his arrival at Columbia University, Dr. Amurao was the Director of Radiation Safety for Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC. He served as the Radiation Safety Officer and implemented a comprehensive medical physics program for diagnostic imaging services. He was also an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Radiology where he taught medical imaging physics. Previously, he served as Senior Medical Physicist in the Clinical Imaging Physics Group at Duke University in Durham, NC.

Dr. Amurao is graduate of De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, with a Masters in Physics and the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio with a doctorate in Medical Physics. He also holds a Masters of Business Administration from the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin. He is certified by the American Board of Radiology in Diagnostic Medical Physics and Nuclear Medical Physics. Dr. Amurao is also certified by the Board of Laser Safety in Medical Lasers.

LOGAN GRAY
The Office of the Executive Vice President for Research welcomes Logan Gray as Assistant to the Executive Vice President. He will be responsible for the management of administrative operations for the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research in collaboration with the Office’s eight reporting units.

Prior to joining Columbia, Logan was an Associate Manager and Assistant to the Chief Scientific Officer at biotech firm, Chromocell Corporation. In this role, he was heavily involved in the structuring and oversight of key business development and research programs. He led the establishment of the Quality Assurance Department within the company, served as a project manager in business procurement and development and was involved in establishing a research presence at The Rockefeller University to develop an AIDS cell therapy application of the company’s core technology. He is currently on the organizing committee of the New York Arts and Sciences Salon, an organization that hosts social events for artists and scientists within the NYC area. He is also President of the NJA Housing Management Corporation and serves on the Advisory Board of Phi Delta Theta at Rutgers.

Logan is a graduate of Rutgers University and holds a Bachelor’s degree in Physics and is pursuing a M.S. at Columbia.

HEGULKA SCHEIMAN
Hegulka Scheiman, IRB Specialist, recently joined the IRB staff on the CUMC campus. Having been involved in IRB-related work for more than seven years, Hegulka was most recently affiliated with the IRB at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, where she served as Assistant Director on the Newark Campus. Hegulka’s responsibilities with the Columbia IRB will include quality assurance and improvement initiatives, and coverage of officer positions during periods when an officer is absent.
New Faces

MICHELLE AVALLONE
The Office of Research Compliance and Training welcomes Michelle Avallone, the University’s new Research Export Control Officer. Ms. Avallone’s work focuses on matters relating to export controls and international research. Before joining Columbia, Ms. Avallone was an attorney in private practice in Southern California focusing on government contracts and export controls. She is a graduate of Columbia Law School and received an M.A. in Anthropology from Columbia University.

AMY PAIGE
Amy Paige recently joined the IRB staff on the CUMC campus as an IRB Specialist who will work with CUMC IRB #4, which is responsible for the review of cancer-related research. With her experience as a research coordinator at the Montefiore Cancer Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Amy is well suited for this position. Her responsibilities will include the review of submissions to IRB #4 and writing minutes of Board meetings.

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