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RA Spotlight: Kathy Pitts
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As is often the case with members of the MIT community, Kathy Pitts’ MIT story is truly a family affair. Not only is she a Financial Coordinator in the Koch Institute, Kathy is a second-generation employee at MIT! Kathy’s parents met (and married) at MIT, and in another striking parallel - Kathy met her husband at MIT too. Her father, Henry Bondar, was an Administrative Officer in MIT’s Nuclear Reactor for 21 years and a revered colleague in the MIT Community. Kathy’s first childhood memories of MIT were of coming to campus with her dad on the occasional “snow day” from school. When starting her career as a young adult, her father encouraged her to seek employment at MIT, bringing home the old Tech Talk paper and pointing to current MIT openings. However, Kathy had other plans, wanting instead to work in the restaurant business. Kathy was hired by TGI Friday’s in Boston where she trained staff, designed and implemented accounting practices, processed payroll, managed the staffing schedule, and had the opportunity to travel the world opening several restaurants for the chain. While she loved the people and found working in restaurants exciting, the hours were long. There are no nights or weekends off in the restaurant business! She began looking for a position that would allow her to spend more time with family and took a position working for the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department as a liaison between inmates and families, preparing and analyzing financial statements, and billing medical expenses. Though Kathy enjoyed the work, she unfortunately faced a layoff, so she found another job - assisting her mother with MIT paperwork in the Benefits Office. She heard there would soon be an opening in Benefits and that she should apply. Kathy also heard about an opening at the Cancer Center. She interviewed for the both positions and ultimately accepted the job at the Cancer Center in 2002, working with then-AO Colleen Leslie.
At that time, the Cancer Center was a small lab located at 40 Ames Street. Kathy has been with the Center as it has grown over the last 17 years into what is now the Koch Institute. Kathy works primarily on the Post Award side of research administration, managing 4 professors, including the Director, Tyler Jacks. With the growth of the Institute and the complexity of the grants, it can be a challenge to coordinate the deadlines and reports, ensuring everyone is completing what they need to. But Kathy says that new tools such as the finance tracker Koch uses really help by providing timely prompts of upcoming deadlines. The most rewarding aspects of her position are working with and training people – she loves training new staff and faculty on MIT and its systems.

With her long-term experience at MIT, what advice would Kathy offer to other research administrators? “Try to do something you really enjoy; focus on your dreams and what you really want to do. The Institute has many wonderful opportunities – take a class, don’t be afraid to check other areas at MIT for those opportunities.”

Kathy is expecting her 1st child in December. We are certain that her dad – if he were alive today, would be the first to suggest that this grandchild is a third generation MIT employee in the making!

Is there a research administrator you’d like to shine the spotlight on? Send suggestions to ra-help@mit.edu with “spotlight suggestion” in the subject. Thanks!

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**Hub News flash**: National Research Administrators Day is September 27th

Celebrate with us at our first Topics in Research Administration of the 2018-2019 season: Careers and Career Paths – luncheon included!

Join us for lunch and listen to the panelists’ unique perspectives of career adventures in research administration at MIT. Our esteemed panelists combined years of MIT experience exceed 102 years. That’s right – over 100 years of insights into supporting MIT research endeavors.

The panelists are:

- **Acia J Adams-Heath**, Senior Staff Accountant, Sponsored Accounting, Office of the Vice President for Finance
- **Sarah B. Brady**, Assistant Dean for Finance, School of Science
- **Jack Defandorf**, Administrative Officer, Kavli Institute for Astrophysics & Space Research
- **Katherine Ware**, Senior Fiscal Officer, Plasma Science and Fusion Center

Come and enjoy the camaraderie and networking opportunity with fellow administrators.

**Topics in Research Administration: Careers and Career Paths**

**Thursday, September 27**

12-2pm, the buffet luncheon will be available at 11:45am

Walker Memorial (Bldg. 50)

**Register for this event by end of day Friday September 21st to ensure we have an accurate count for the luncheon.**
VPF Corner

VPF updated Buy-to-Pay (B2P) system release from application provider Coupa on Saturday, September 15.

New features and enhancements in Release 21 include:

- Approvers can now edit change orders.
- Purchase orders (POs) can have a “soft close” and can now be reopened.
- Expired cost objects can no longer be used for requisitioning.
- Views for working with multiple cost objects and pending invoice amounts are improved.
- Enhanced View and Search includes the ability to use AND with OR.
- Reports can be scheduled for a specific time.

View the Release 21 tutorial.

Transition to New Process for Procuring Goods and Services

Earlier this month, VPF helped guide the MIT community through a transition to a new policy and process for procuring goods and services greater than $10,000 in order to comply with new federal compliance standards known as Uniform Guidance. In concert with this change, which went into effect on July 1, VPF posted a new online Selection of Source form for the MIT purchasing community to use when documenting the sourcing process.

VPF Strategic Sourcing and Procurement Operations teams extend their appreciation to the community for its assistance with this transition and for sharing feedback on the process along the way.

A summary of the new requirements with an easy-to-follow online tutorial on the new Selection of Source Form, and an FAQ for Uniform Guidance Procurement Standards are available on the VPF website.

If you have any questions about the new purchasing policy or process, please contact the B2P Contact Center at B2P@mit.edu or 617-253-7000.

Meet the new preferred Travel Management company: Key Travel

Key Travel, MIT’s newest Preferred Travel Agency, will host a series of Information Sessions on campus this September. A full-service travel management company dedicated to supporting the not-for-profit academic community, Key Travel can coordinate individual faculty and staff travel and plan international itineraries for groups of 10 or more. Key Travel also offers:

- Access to unique “non-profit” international airfares that provide low-cost tickets with flexible terms
- A knowledgeable team of academic travel consultants who provide expert support
- The benefit of strong relationships with airlines, lodging providers, and local partners
- In-house support, available 24/7
- Value-add partnerships including insurance, risk management, and visa services

VPF Strategic Sourcing and Key Travel are hosting information sessions on campus in September.

https://vpf.mit.edu/key-travel-to-host-information-sessions-on-campus

Did you know that VPF posts recent news and announcements on their website?

Check them out at http://vpf.mit.edu/news
Meetings – On and Off Campus

On Campus Meetings

MIT Administrative and Fiscal Officers (AO/FO) meetings

- Fall term meeting: Thursday, November 1, 2018
- Spring term meeting: Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Meetings held in the Wong Auditorium at the Tang Center, Building E51 from 9:30-11:00 am.
Agendas shared in advance of each meeting.

NCURA Networking Event – October 25th

NCURA Region 1, in partnership with MIT’s Office of the Vice President for Research, proudly present a Night of Networking on October 25th at the Koch Institute (Building 76-156) from 5-7 PM. This networking event is free to members and non-members of NCURA. Plans are still in motion to include lite fare, a cash bar to enhance your night of conversation with local research administrators. Interested in attending? Please fill out the Wufoo link https://ncuraregioni.wufoo.com/forms/m1p7vmfc0h00eu8/
We would love to meet you in person. Questions? Please contact David Barnett, Fiscal Officer in RLE, by email at barnettd@mit.edu or by phone at X4-7263.

Off Campus Meetings

NCURA fall Region 1 workshops.

Membership is not required in order to attend, but there is a discount for NCURA members. Wait, you say you’ve never heard of NCURA? Well then, a little background for you:

NCURA is the National Council of University Research Administrators. Their Mission Statement is, “NCURA advances the profession of research administration through education and professional development programs, the sharing of knowledge and experiences, and the fostering a diverse, collegial, and respected global community.”

They offer invaluable information and training for research administrators, such as the following:

http://ncuraregioni.org/workshops.html

- Advanced Topics in Research: Beyond the Basics Tuesday, October 16
  Faculty: Jeff Seo, Roseann Luongo
The purpose of this workshop is to provide participants with in-depth guidance on financial audit and compliance risk areas, research compliance, and other institutional high-risk areas relating to research administration. Specific topics include high-risk financial compliance topics, subrecipient monitoring, conflict of interest, international collaboration/export controls, and IRB/IACUC/IBC.

Who Should Attend: This workshop is designed for more experienced research administrators at an intermediate or advanced level.

Clinical Trials Workshop Thursday, November 1

Faculty: Lisa Benson, Theresa Stone

Clinical trials are conducted in a variety of institutional settings, and if your organization is engaged in clinical research it is likely that you face complex problems, issues and challenges on a regular basis. This workshop examines key administrative, contractual, financial, and regulatory issues that arise in the planning, funding and conduct of clinical trials.

Who Should Attend: This workshop is directed to anyone interested in learning more about the regulations, policies, and best practices that govern clinical trials.

Registration is limited to ensure an interactive learning experience for all attendees. Please register early!

Contact curriculum@ncuraregioni.org with any questions

Society of Research Administrators International Annual meeting

Join fellow research management professionals for the 2018 SRAI Annual Meeting in Orlando Florida.

The five-day event, October 27-31, 2018, will bring together research administrators from across the globe to learn, share and transform ideas into solutions with more than 150 innovative learning sessions.

The Annual Meeting features a full slate of industry, government and subject matter expert speakers, as well as the prestigious Senior Executive Institute, focused specifically on the needs of high-level decision makers.

Join the conversation with your peers, recognized industry experts and leaders, inspired by the most innovative ideas for five days of valuable, relevant, invigorating professional development, education and networking.

Learn more at: http://www.sraannualmeeting.org/2018/

Tips from the RA Support team:

If you are new to research proposal preparation, or returning to it and need to refresh your skills, you are likely looking for a KC Proposal class. During the summer break, the RA Support & Education team took the opportunity to update our KC proposal class offerings. We combined the two courses that separated the System-to-System (S2S) and Non-S2S into one class - now called KC Proposal Basics. In addition, instead of spreading over 2 half-days, the class is now a one-day session. We designed new resources & handouts, and revised the lessons to fit in a 6-hour class with AM & PM breaks, and 40 minutes for lunch on your own. Another change – at least one of the RA Support team will co-teach every class. If you took the prior versions of the KC Proposal Development trainings, you do not need to take this class as a supplement to your training – this one-day course meets the same requirements. We hope it will be easier for participants to fit this one-day class into their schedules.
Educational Offerings for Research Administrators
(registry via atlas.mit.edu –MIT Certificate required)

Topics in Research Administration

Research Administration and Career Paths at MIT  27 Sept
Panel: A. Adams-Heath, S. Brady, J. Defandorf, K. Ware
Hold the date  27 Nov

RAP Sessions (Research Administration Practices)

MIT User Accounts and Kerberos ID’s  18 Sept
NSF FastLane Demo & Proposal Tips  9 Oct
Post Award and KC Navigation  30 Oct
Reading a Solicitation  12 Dec

ToolTime

Tableau PI Financial Reporting:  3 Oct
Presenters: Liz Reitz, Dan Delgado, & Olu Brown

Kuali Coeus Proposal Training

KC Proposal Basics (Updated class!)  17 Oct
KC: Budget Development Rates & Personnel  13 Nov
KC Proposal Basics  18 Dec

Financial Management & Post Award Administration

Concur Travel Drop-In (multiple dates)  26 Sept
Buy-to-Pay (B2P) Drop In (multiple dates)  3 Oct
Intro to Travel and Expense Reporting  17 Oct
Accounting Fundamentals  18 Oct

Questions, email address is: RA-Help@mit.edu
RA Support website is: research.mit.edu/mit-research-administration-hub