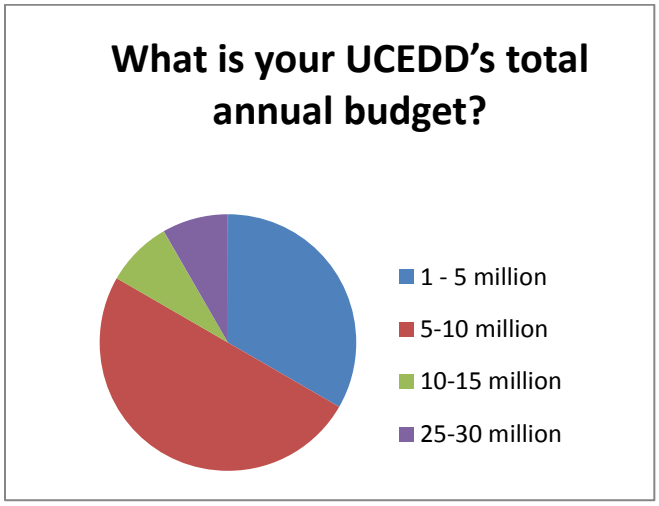
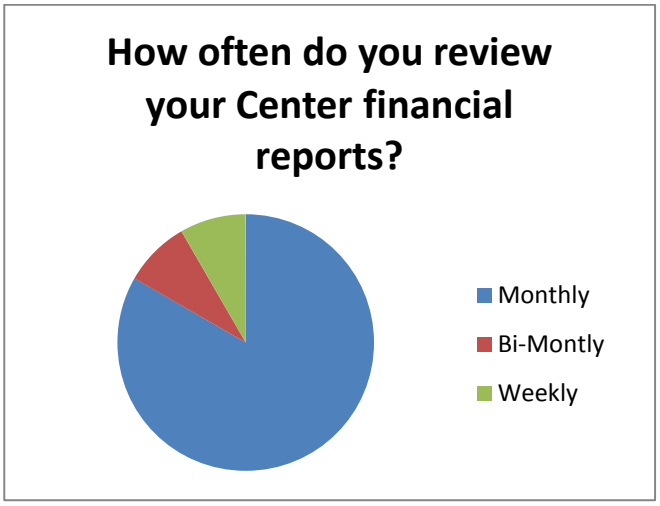
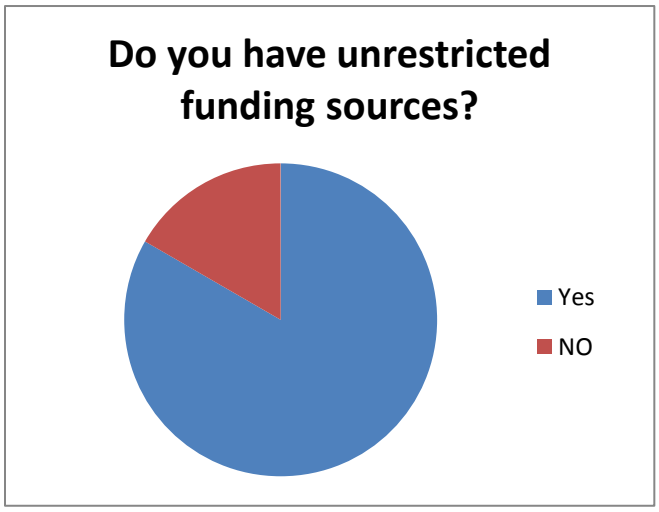
UCEDD Resource Center
A project of AUCD, in partnership with AIDD, to strengthen and support the network of UCEDDs

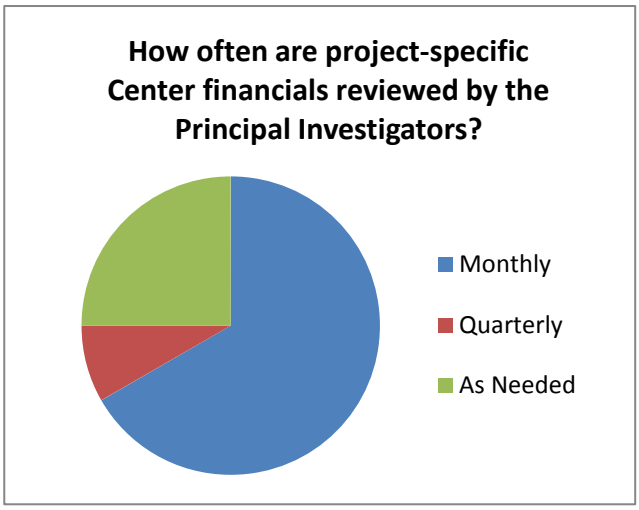
UCEDD Business Managers Meeting

Survey Results



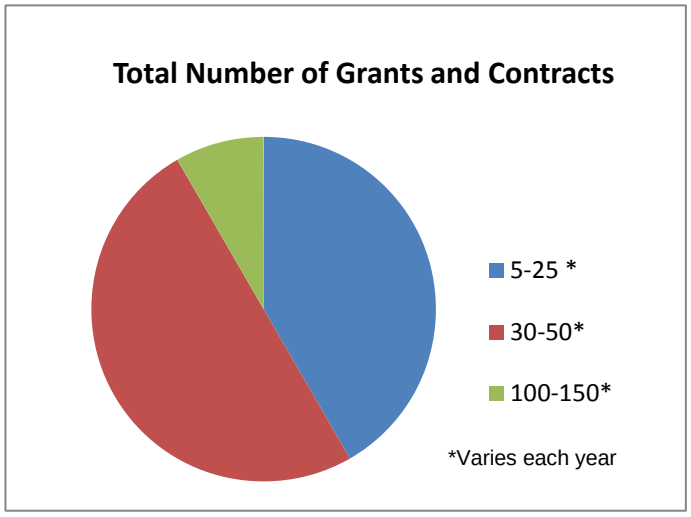


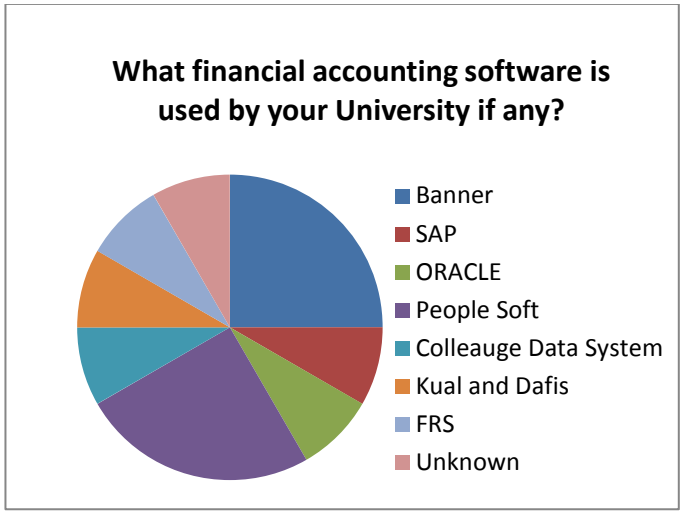


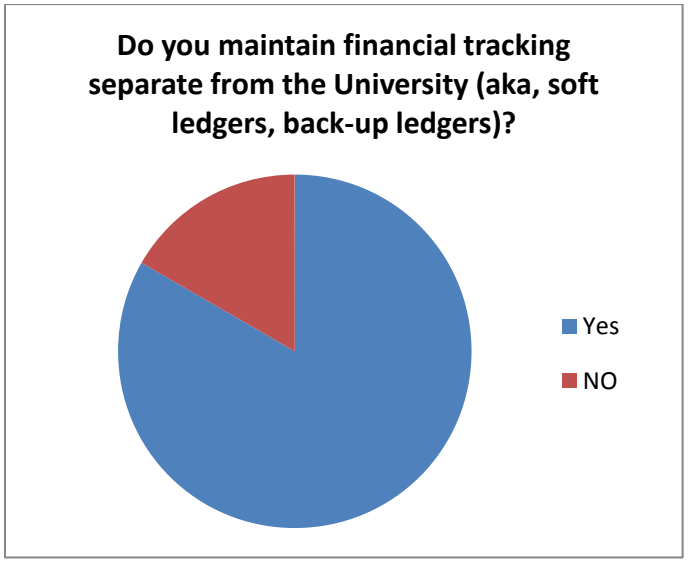


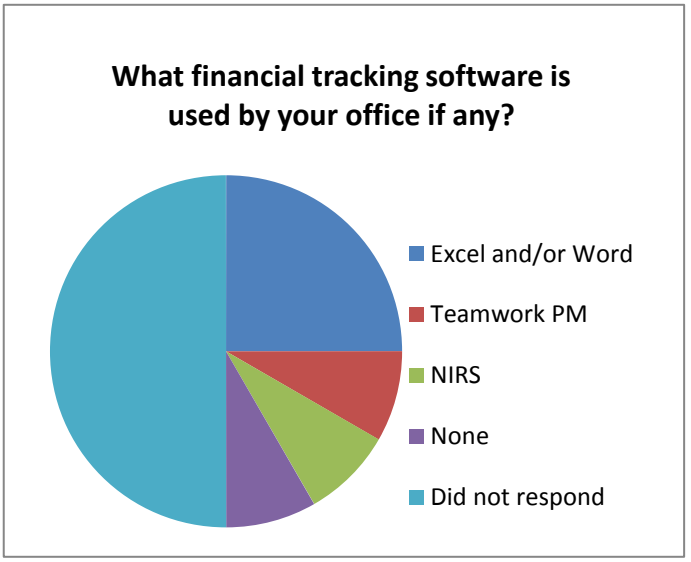
If yes, describe:

- University pays for part of the Directors salary
- Foundation
- University provides funding annually
- Returned indirect
- Unrestricted Gifts
- Unrestricted University Fund
- Small Endowment Fund and Faculty and Staff Revenue
- Unrestricted University Fund
- F&A Recovery


Total Number of Grants and Contracts
5-25 *
30-50*
100-150*
*Varies each year


What financial accounting software is used by your University if any?
Banner
SAP
ORACLE
People Soft
Colleauge Data System
Kual and Dafis
FRS
Unknown


Do you maintain financial tracking separate from the University (aka, soft ledgers, back-up ledgers)?
Yes
NO


What financial tracking software is used by your office if any?
Excel and/or Word
Teamwork PM
NIRS
None
Did not respond

Have you been successful in utilizing University financial tracking to provide you with up-to-date and accurate information? a. If so, what strategies & tools are successful?

- Yes, by using TOAD the SQL software to do reporting, we had to hire an outside consultant to help us develop the reports and SQL queries though.
- Provides up-to-date expenditure information.
- I have been able to download the actual detail in an excel format that is used to reconcile the encumbrances in the Excel spreadsheets.
- Yes, Cognos reports and Banner screens
- So far, yes. Reconciliation of University records and Center records on a regular basis.
- Most of the time. Good strategies have included maintaining good relationships with accounting staff at the Department and University-wide levels.
- Yes. Although it is not very user friendly, Banner does provide real-time accounting information. The Controllers Report Library is very useful.
- Same as above.
- The financial system is robust enough to provide accurate and current information. We struggle with rolling up information into categories (for example - research grants subtotals & outreach program totals).
- Peoplesoft is fairly accurate but has some flaws.

Do you have a process in place to track grant-funded projects that are initiated before the funding award letter is received and corresponding accounting codes set up in the University's system?

- No
- Yes – advanced accounts.
- Our University allows for a project to be established in People Soft to begin capturing project costs prior to Notice of Award, with the understanding the Centers unrestricted funds would be used to cover any expenditures if the award is not issued.
- Yes, can obtain tentative account numbers.
- Manual...keeps a hard/soft copy of all initiated grant-funded projects.
- The University does not allow us to initiate grant-funded projects before the award letter is received.
- No
- Yes
- Our Office for Research and Sponsored Programs does use Advance accounts on a limited basis. Usually these are funded at approx. 25% of the total expected budget for the project. This is very risky for the University and tends to be done fairly infrequently.
- The university accounting department manages all this for us, we have no issues tracking pre-awards.
- I have a shadow budget to track them. The expenses go to our 'suspense' account and are transferred to the project once it is set up. Or we have the sponsor sign a guaranteed funding letter that allows the project to be set up before the award is processed.

How many people are on the Finance & Admin team?			
Budget Size	**Number of Contracts**	**Staff**	**Staff Roles**
$6.5M	40	3	A financial manager, an Associate Director and a Program specialist. We have one program specialist position unfilled at this time.
$30M	120	21	6 Admin, 3 Finance/HR, 4 IT, 8 Patient Information
$8M	13	5	1 CFO and 4 accountants/budget analysts. CFO is funded by core grant and university funds. 4 accountants are spread across funding sources.
$7.5M	49	2	Operations Manager and Finance Specialist are covered under grant funds and one Grants Administrator paid by University.
$1.2M	10	3	1 administrator, 1 IT, 1 Sec. All are split across funding sources –The center does not receive any general fund dollars.
$9.7M	39	25	1 Director: provides overall administration and leadership for core functions and activities; 2 Associate Directors: one oversees the human resources of the center as well as coordinate staff and Advisory Council interaction and one oversees the development of programs and projects across initiative areas and provides guidance in grant development; 9 Project Managers/Principal Investigators: oversee projects and activities on areas of emphasis, etc.; 1 Administrative Manager: responsible for maintaining and managing fiscal and personnel records and assist the Director in administering support to the organization in developing grants and contracts; 10 Support Staff provide support in the area of tracking revenue sources and expenditures, maintaining fiscal/personnel records, maintaining communication with University Business Office and vendors, preparing requisitions/purchase orders, provides clerical and secretarial assistance and other related activities to support the center; and 3 Student Office Assistants: performs clerical and administrative duties that support the center.. Director is locally funded; all others are either covered by core grant and/or split across other Federal funding sources.
$5.9M	23	2	Two, plus University support personnel. Roles are 1) Business Manager (80% FTE), and 2) Data Coordinator (50% FTE). These two staff are funded by the core grant.
$1.5M	15	2	The Associate Director and an Administrative Assistant. Associate Director has responsibility for finance, HR, grant management. Associate Director and AA are funded by core grant with some match provided by the University.
$3.7M	9	4	Deputy Director, UCEDD Administrator, Financial Analyst, Management Assistant (who routes grants and contracts through University process).
$14.5M	60	8	There are 4 people solely dedicated to grant and contract administration and a portion of the Director of Finance & Admin's time is also spent on grant administration. In addition, there is an Operations Manager that covers HR and IT responsibilities not covered by campus wide HR and IT personnel. Also rolling up under the F&A function is an office receptionist and a special events coordinator. The latter position covers special events planning and training/conference planning for the ICI as a whole and for individual projects. The grant administrators are covered almost entirely on grants and contracts. Each person has a portfolio of projects that they administer and if there are funds to cover their effort on these projects, then they charge their effort accordingly. There are some portions of time that are covered by RTF funds. The Director and Events Coordinator are split funded by RTF funds and sponsored projects. The Operations Manager is entirely funded by RTF funds and some Core grant funds.
$8M	50	9	Director, Sr. Accountant, Research Administrator, Web Designer, Administrative support (4), procurement specialist. Split among core grant, sponsored programs and other revenue-generating programs.
$3.5M	32	3	Business manager, HR manager and a Business Support position.

What are the strengths of your business office?
Teamwork, cooperation and communication.
Knowledge shared for cross coverage. Balanced accounting with SAP.
Work together well to accomplish given tasks. Most have many years of experience with the University which is helpful for document processing.
Financial acumen and planning expertise.
Positive working relationships with others, maintaining excellent communication and working closely with UOG Business Office and others to ensure transaction records are updated and accurate; thus reducing or minimizing errors.
Lot of built-in safeguards against errors.
Tracking of grant/project budgets.
Managing expenses within budget constraints and ensuring accuracy of expenditures on each grant/contract, including initiating corrections when needed.
The business office is a centralized place for PI's and other project staff to get information. We are well informed as to federal and state grant requirements and are learning more about IP and international grants and contracts. We are extremely professional and add structure to a culture that prefers "flexibility" and "creative problem solving" often in direct conflict to funder requirements. We clarify confusing University policies and procedures and serve as the middle people in working through the larger university bureaucracy.
We have strong accounting skills and understand the relationship between transactions and financial statements. We also have very good understanding of policies and best practices to ensure compliance with sponsor requirements.
Professional, quick turnaround, attention to detail.

What are your challenges?
Not having enough support from the University, too much bureaucracy to get things done and trying to fit into a system that doesn't allow deviation when a lot of our circumstances are unique and don't fit into the UAA 'box".
Working through bugs in with constantly changing upgrades. Training new staff - lots of systems from patient billing, compliance training, to submitting a vacation request.
While there is a good understanding of University rule/procedures, there is limited understanding of accounting concepts, etc. Other than the CFO (who is a CPA), no accounts in the office have accounting degrees or CPA.
Working with the University (HR, Payroll, Finance), recently some changes in Employment process and forms. The system does not allow for quick response when projects are funded that require the Center to hire new employees.
Minimal safety net since we are totally soft money funded - need to continuously monitor payroll charges and plan for changes in effort.
Tracking of documents can be challenging. Documents appear to be held for more than two days in one of the approving units within the University.
Figuring out the University's labyrinthine business accounting processes.
Sharing of administrative costs between grants and contracts.
Having sufficient time to engage PI's in staying informed of financial performance.
1) Very limited resources as we are over 90% soft funded. 2) We are challenged with having to balance the need to bring in as much funding as possible with the need to implement and adhere to internal controls that are in place within our organization and within the larger University. 3) PI's, faculty and other staff that fail to follow processes or who are often confused about these processes. PI's who end- run the F&A staff until they get an answer they can work with. 4) Recently, we are challenged with trying to merge a new faculty culture with an existing staff research and training culture that was originally a stand-alone institute. 5) The diversification of our funding portfolio to include more entrepreneurial projects is requiring that we have access to more legal expertise than is currently at our disposal and there are huge risks that entering these new types of agreements bring to our institute and the university as a whole. 6) Too many more to fit in this space....
We struggle with coordinating financial results with non-financial activities to tell a "big-picture story". We don't have a good process for compiling all the data (publications, awards, presentations, activities) in the various formats required by our group. Different compilations of data are required for NIRS, department reporting and Medical Center reporting.
Getting people to follow procedures (usually faculty).