**What’s New in Research Administration**

**Subrecipients versus Vendors: Apples and Oranges?**

*By Pegah Parsi*

Subrecipients and vendors look a lot alike, but the differences can affect your budget. When another organization is to be paid from your sponsored project, where do you start? Do you submit a requisition for a subaward through OSR or one for a vendor agreement through Procurement?

First things first. Long before your proposal is due, read **OMB Circular A-133** and **RPH 3.7** to familiarize yourself with the definitions of a subrecipient and vendor. You will see that the difference is clear... well, it depends. You can use some general characteristics to guide you in making the determination. The most important consideration is the role the entity will play in your project.

In general, a **subrecipient** performs a portion of Stanford’s scope of work, contributes to the intellectual aspects of the project, is responsible for programmatic decision-making, and is subject to the requirements of Stanford’s sponsor. Also, consider whether the nature of the organization’s work may result in intellectual property or co-authorship of a paper; if so, the entity is most likely a subrecipient.

A **vendor** provides its service or product as part of its normal business in a competitive market environment. Vendor services are provided based on specifications and the needs of Stanford’s PI, but a vendor has no responsibility for the intellectual aspects of the project, contributes little or no discretionary judgment, and is not likely to develop any IP. Thus, a vendor is not subject to the compliance requirements of Stanford’s sponsor.

Once you’ve considered these points and gathered relevant information, contact your contract officer. He or she can help you determine whether the entity is a subrecipient or vendor before proposal submission and avoid future delays and frustrations!

**Changes to NSF Project Reporting are On The Horizon**

*By Mich Pane*

Attention NSF Award Recipients! As part of a government-wide initiative to implement a new, standardized reporting format, the NSF will transfer its current project reporting service from FastLane to Research.Gov on March 18, 2013. The Annual and Final Project Reports that are required for each NSF grant will now be called the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR). PIs will be able to log into Research.Gov using their FastLane login and password. Research.Gov is considered the modernization of FastLane and is expected to provide the next generation of grants management capabilities for the research community.

How will this transition affect Stanford PIs? As part of the transition to Research.Gov, there will be a FastLane freeze. NSF Project Reports must not be submitted via FastLane starting February 1, 2013. Any report due between February 1 and April 30 will receive an extended due date to accommodate the transition to Research.Gov but must be submitted using the new system after March 18th.

The NSF has created numerous help guides and training documents to support this transition. [CLICK HERE](#) for information about this upcoming change.

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**SeRA’s Corner**

The person with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds.

*—Mark Twain*

I always wanted to be somebody, but now I realize I should have been more specific.

*—Lily Tomlin*

When I met Mr. Right, I had no idea his first name was Always.

*—Rita Rudner*

Always remember you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.

*—Margaret Mead*

Cleanliness becomes more important when Godliness is unlikely.

*—P.J. O’Rourke*
Both of these efforts required a lot of work and from time to time tested our customers’ patience (thank you for that!). Although we have completed our re-organization and are about halfway through the SeRA deployment, we continuously assess our strengths and weaknesses, and there is still room for improvement. We strive to apply what we’ve learned to do things better.

Most importantly, listening to you, the Research community, helps us identify our top areas of focus. While we meet regularly with our campus customers, we want to push the status quo, and that requires your ongoing feedback. With our move to Porter, what can we do to stay connected with you and ensure that sense of personal contact is not lost? More Brown Bags and/or OSR on the Move? More in-the-trenches workshops and classes? I want to hear your ideas, even the seemingly crazy ideas that challenge conventional thinking (in fact, I like those best). Let’s tawk!

As we enter 2013, the question I hear most is “what are your top priorities?” Great question. In OSR, we are constantly thinking about how to improve and fine-tuning our vision of what OSR will look like five years from now. As you know, we have spent the last few years re-organizing OSR and deploying SeRA. Both of these efforts required a lot of work and have a latte on us!