Understanding the Source and Impact of Burden

Theory to Practice and Back Again

January 24, 2024

Participation by:
- Faculty-Administrator Collaboration Team (FACT) – Session Host
- The Research Systems Technologies Committee (RSTC)
- Open Government: Research Administration Data Subcommittee (OG-RAD)
FACT: Agenda

- Introduction...Where does burden come from? Who bears it? A “theory” of burden. (Mark-Moderator)
- Findings through research on burden (Steve and David)
- Use Case of increased burden from a new requirement: SciENcv mandatory use by NSF October 2023 (Carmen and Kelly)
- Improving successful adoption of changes to processes and tools (Lori)
- Moving forward – desirability of and strategy for achieving integrated design, development, and deployment of processes for government funded research (Discussion)
The Faculty-Administrator Collaborative Team (FACT) brings together paired institutional representatives for focused dialogue and joint efforts to enhance faculty-administrator collaborations that support successful research operations and reduce administrative burden.

The Open Government Research Administration Data (OG:RAD) effort is FDP’s data centric, evidence-based subcommittee. Dedicated to surfacing pain points, assessing them for burden, compiling evidence, and working with our Federal partners to provide feedback to help ensure efficiency and effectiveness in their modernization efforts.

The Research Systems Technologies Committee (RSTC) serves to advocate for, optimize, and integrate technology solutions across the full life cycle of the research enterprise, in the service of the FDP’s mission to streamline the administration of federally sponsored research and foster collaboration.
Basic Principles of \( B \)

\( B \) is generated by change
\( B \) can be reduced by additional \( B \)
Someone must bear \( B \)
A Model of a B System

G can add B reducing B for A + F
A can add B reducing B for G and F
F bears what is left
FACT: Findings from feedback

I. Institutional contribution to the administrative burden associated with research
   - Institutional administrative processes can generate burden in addition to federal requirements
   - Process complexities can stem from misalignment of faculty and administrators’ roles and goals
   - These burdensome processes differ from institution to institution

II. Institutional variables impacting burden
   - Mutual Trust: Lack of trust = increased overall burden
     • Transparency and Effective Communication
     • Familiarity
     • Competency, Fairness, Accountability
     • Involvement / Engagement
     • Value and Support
   - System variables and resources: defined by stress-points
     • Flexibility/ Adaptability
     • Communication / Relationships
     • Infrastructure / Resources

FDP Volunteer Historical Perspective:
- David Driesbach, PMP (ORCID), AVP Research, Florida International University (FIU), FDP Technical Rep
- Concurrent university-wide efforts (Faculty Success Initiative) at FIU to help faculty optimize their digital presence with high-quality information across various internal and external digital touchpoints (i.e. ORCID, ScienCV, etc) and use cases (i.e. compliance, annual reporting, research development).

Spring 2023: OG:RAD effort established to assess faculty burden and experience in maintaining PI profile information in the context of federal applications within systems like ScienCV.

Fall 2023: OG:RAD in search of a faculty lead. Collaborative discussions with Carmen Scholz.
OG:RAD: Findings from feedback

I. Many Shared Goals/Principles
   I. Harmonize and optimize CV information across federal agencies in alignment with ScienCV vision.
   II. Meet regulatory and agency specific requirements while striving to reduce burden.
   III. Development of infrastructures for leveraging high-quality research information at both federal agencies and universities to facilitate multiple processes (i.e., research development and compliance).
   IV. Ensuring all stakeholders perspectives are identified and integrated during the implementation processes.

II. Need for the collection of evidence/data during implementation process to inform system-based discussions.
   I. Quantifying experience of researchers in the management/usage of their profile information in systems like ScienCV.
   II. Understanding the variability of structure of researcher profile information captured across the federal agencies.
   III. Understanding the variability of related university research information infrastructures to develop shared best practices and roadmaps across the community.

III. Many areas of future collaboration possible and needed across FDP groups and perspectives to “Connect the Dots”
The New Requirement

- Friday, October 20, 2023 (5:00 PM submitter’s local time) was the last day to upload the NSF fillable PDF format for the biographical sketch and current and pending (other) support.
- Beginning October 23, 2023, use of SciENcv to prepare those documents and upload in Research.gov or Grants.gov became mandatory.
Use Case: SciENcv 10/23 NSF requirement

- Compliance changes and effects at an institutional level
- Changes, and different level of support, leads to frustration
  - HIGH level of frustration of investigator when SciENcv was mandated by NSF for those faculty at institutions with little/no admin support
  - Transition from using SciENcv for NIH was not as easy for NSF
    - Lesson Learned: Better path was to add all info to ORCID and then link to SciENcv
  - SciENcv described as “house in the middle of a minefield”
  - Needs same level of instructional info for each path that one can travel through SciENcv

**EXAMPLE:** Multiple log in options was part of the frustration...different paths=different experiences

**EXAMPLE:** Once you are in SciENcv, data source choice is misaligned with how you logged in

NOTE: If you want to use data from ORCID, get ORCID from the “External source” drop-down menu.

**EXAMPLE:** Other Frustrations

- Signing in with one’s university logon MAY OR MAY NOT compromise the use of ORCID (e.g., if your university assumes that all users have PubMed, the university may default to that, effectively preventing the use of ORCID)
- Unless one changes browsers, the cache will keep repeating the error in subsequent logins
Implementation –

- Full understanding of impact on workflow was not developed or communicated
- Institutions were not prepared; lack of administrative support at institutions led to new tasks left for PI to figure out
- Couldn’t link publications properly
- Help email at NCBI was not attended to in a timely manner;
- Help line during such a large change/implementation at launch should be more advertised/communicated
- Human centered design/use methods should be implemented when designing and fielding new processes
How can we improve process change adoption?

- **Background:** SciENcv implemented 10 years ago; a lot of formal testing; RSTC was engaged in testing
- **When agencies require changes and faculty member have insufficient support implementing, there is frustration/negative impact from the increase faculty burden**
- **Who bears the burden of changes?** If everybody “punts,” it falls on faculty.
- **Should the Institution/Federal agency requiring the new change support a collaborative effort to reduce the burden of adopting that change?**
The case study presented is an example of a much bigger issue that applies to much more than just SciENcv.

Who can make a difference? Who can do what at FDP?

Identify different FDP groups and the intersection between/among working on similar issues.

Collaboration across committees -- RSTC, FACT, OG-RAD, etc. How can we get these groups on the front side of policy making?

When a new requirement is introduced, what should accompany it? What is the impact on the different workflows and institutions (and their different levels of support)?

Desirability of and strategy for achieving integrated design, development, and deployment of processes for government funded research.

What is our action? What have we learned and how can we improve future formulation and rollout of new research processes?
THANK YOU!

For more information about FACT, see our webpage:
http://thefdp.org/default/committees/faculty-committee/faculty-administrator-collaboration-team-fact/

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