Marquette ADVANCE AMP Series Interim Report

AMP Series #1: Addressing the **post-award process** for Marquette faculty

February 2022

ADVANCEing Marquette Priorities (AMP) is a new Marquette ADVANCE initiative developed in January of 2022. AMP is designed to develop and implement solutions to faculty-identified priority challenges via workshops or other interactive mechanisms that bring together faculty and staff. The first AMP-topic is post-award support for grant-funded investigators. This interim report will summarize the initial post-award workshop results. If you have any questions, or would like to lead an AMP topic in the future, please contact Dr. Jeanne Hossenlopp or Sara Spragg.

AMP was created in response to a discussion that Dr. Anita Manogaran, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, had with the ADVANCE PI, Jeanne Hossenlopp, about her challenges with post-award support and desire to help facilitate faculty-focused and workable solutions. Anita agreed to co-lead the inaugural AMP initiative with Jeanne. To prepare for the February 25, 2022 workshop, a list of potential post-award issues was generated by Anita and Jeanne who obtained additional input from the Associate Deans for Research group. Faculty from the ADVANCE departments were asked to identify their top three priorities from the initial list. Results from this survey are found below (note that some topics overlap).

The February 25th event brought together faculty from seven departments and staff from Arts and Sciences, Health Sciences, ORSP, ORI, and ITS to begin to work on the top three topics:
(a) shortening the timeframe for setting up new award accounts;
(b) providing user-friendly monthly account reporting; and
(c) creating a centralized repository for finding forms and other grant information.

Anita and Jeanne started the workshop with a presentation that highlighted the following:
1.) Why a change to the post-award process is necessary; 2.) Top three priorities faculty chose in the pre-event survey; and 3.) A call-to-action. Participants then moved between stations set up to obtain input on these three topics. After rotating through issues of interest, the group reconvened and discussed suggestions that were written down and prioritized next steps. Key points recorded during the small group discussions are summarized below.
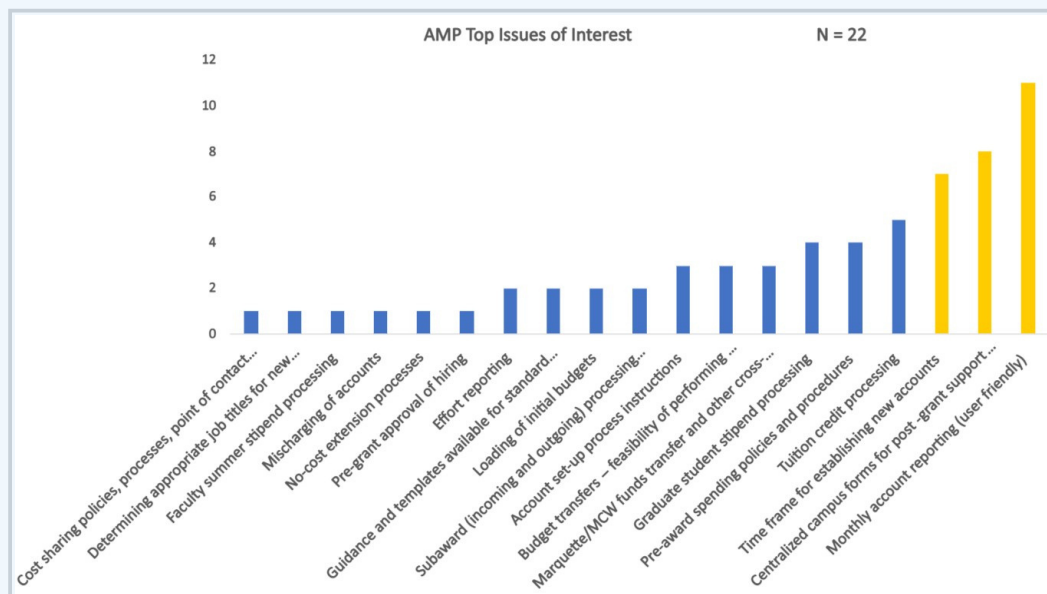
User-friendly monthly accounts summary:
- Include who got paid through the grant
- Include how much unspent/uncommitted funds is available
- Include access to labor reports
- Educate - FAQ/tutorials on how to navigate the summary, videos should be included in common reports
- Transparency regarding sub-awards PI should distribute BI guidance for grants
- One place to report all expenditures with links to details

Centralized forms for post-grant support:

- Forms should be housed in ORI website Re-budget requests Consistent document formats (effort reporting, inventory, etc.)
- Automated web forms that generate necessary reports
- Common area to point to the necessary stakeholders
- Flow-chart of the interrelationships
- Training on forms during new faculty onboarding

Timeframe and account set-up:

- Hiring and ordering before start date
- Set up accounts ASAP so faculty have 10-12 months to generate results for annual reports
- Train on account set-up during new faculty during onboarding
- Sensitivity to reality that new funds may be needed to keep existing personnel paid in a timely fashion
- Ability to time new account set-up relative to program start date
- Mechanism to allow spending once award is confirmed, prior to arrival of funds

Parking Lot (topics that emerged for future discussion):

- Pay invoices and change charge account within one month
- Grants across fiscal years
- Training (consistent) for those who support grants

"We are shared stewards of the work we do."
-Jeanne Hossenlopp

Next Steps

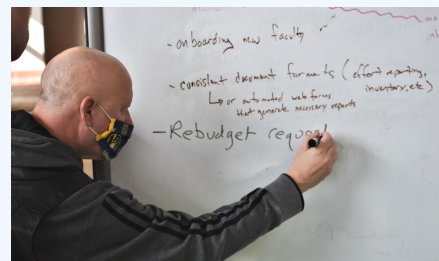**Based on the discussion at the February 25th workshop, the following next steps are planned**

Mark Simonson (ORI) and Blake Ward (ITS) with work with ADVANCE coordinator Sara Spragg to schedule a follow-up event where current processes for accessing account information will be demonstrated. This will help develop better reports and training materials. Faculty indicated a desire to have easier access to the following high-level account information:
1. *Summary of available funds*   2. *Summary of charges during the past month*   3. *Listing of who is being paid with grant funds*

Process flow diagrams will be created for a centralized post-award information site, to be housed on the Office of Research and Innovation website with links to other sites where the information resides. Rather than simply a collection of forms, the group emphasized the need for more user-friendly explanations of process and who faculty need to work with for various grant administration activities. A small group will be convened to work on pilot materials and some background work has begun. Mark Simonson has (since the workshop) begun to create a beta version of this site. Kathy Durben has (post-workshop) developed a draft Marquette modification of the roles and responsibilities matrix from FAU that Anita showed at the workshop as a potential model, noting that there is a much more detailed version that a group of staff from across the university developed in 2019. An update will be provided at the next event.

Account set-up and the ability to get grants started in a more timely manner is impacted by a range of challenges. A new position in ORSP will be focused on post-award service, with an anticipated July 1, 2022 start date. The input from the AMP workshop emphasized that the ability to start the hiring process prior to the grant start date is especially important (and in some cases, the lead time for ordering can delay work on a project). This topic will require additional work (and resources) and will continue to be prioritized in on-going AMP discussions.

Thank you to those who attended the first AMP Series workshop. Your dedication to improving faculty-related issues is appreciated!

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AMP
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