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The First 365 Days as a Chief Research Officer

Six To-Dos for a Successful First Year (and Beyond)

University Research Forum

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Who Should Read

New Chief Research Officers

Chief Research Officer Hiring Committees

Aspiring or Interim Chief Research Officers

The First 365 Days as a Chief Research Officer

Six To-Dos for a Successful First Year (and Beyond)

Four Ways to Use This Publication

- Navigate the connections between research and other university priorities and partnerships.
- Distill research goals, both individually and at the institutional level.
- Identify and leverage CRPO resources to implement initiatives across campus.
- Develop a stakeholder plan and support system for the first year in seat.

University Research Forum

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About EAB

EAB is a best practices firm that uses a combination of research, technology, and data-enabled services to improve the performance of more than 1,300 educational organizations. EAB forges and finds the best new ideas and proven practices from its network of thousands of leaders, then customizes and hardwires them into every level of member organizations, creating enduring value. For more information, visit eab.com.

About the University Research Forum

With declining federal and internal subsidies, it has become more challenging to grow the research enterprise. The University Research Forum provides best practices and implementation support to help chief research officers prioritize strategic growth areas, communicate needs and values to campus stakeholders, and better align long-term planning with research funding realities.

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Supporting Members in Best Practice Implementation

Resources Available Within Your Membership

This publication is one of the many resources to assist chief research officers (CROs) navigate their role and responsibilities. Recognizing that ideas seldom speak for themselves, our ambition is to work actively with members of the University Research Forum to decide which practices are most relevant for your organization, to accelerate consensus among key constituencies, and to reduce implementation time.

We offer a variety of services to assist you with your mission. For additional information about any of the services detailed below, please contact your organization's relationship manager or visit our website at eab.com. To order additional copies of this publication, please search for it by title on eab.com.

Implementation Road Maps and Tools

Throughout the publication, this symbol will alert you to any corresponding tools and templates available in the Toolkit online at eab.com.

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Our website includes recordings of webconferences that walk you through best practices. Forum experts are also available to conduct private webconferences with your team.

Unlimited Expert Troubleshooting

Members may contact the consultants who worked on any report to discuss the research, troubleshoot obstacles to implementation, or run deep on unique issues. Our staff conducts hundreds of telephone consultations every year.

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Our experts regularly visit campuses to lead half-day to daylong sessions focused on highlighting key insights for senior leaders or helping internal project teams select the most relevant practices and determine next steps.

To access the full range of services available to you, please visit our website at eab.com/urf.

Executive Summary

"The CRO role is increasingly equal parts 'farmer' and 'hunter:' the farmer must cultivate their existing research expertise while the hunter must expand into new territories of research activity."
–Seasoned CRO, R1 Public University

The chief research officer (CRO) position requires equal parts long-term strategic vision and meticulous attention to detail. Like other university executives, the CRO role is rife with challenges that demand dedicated focus and investment of resources. Each university is unique, and many of the decisions CROs will make depend on their campus's objectives and needs.

New CROs will quickly encounter numerous trade-off decisions—administrative minutia versus strategic goals, short-term wins versus sustainable growth, doubling down on federal funding versus expanding non-federal funding opportunities. The most common initial reaction is to attempt to take on everything, but this can lead to quick burnout among CROs in their first year. However, avoiding significant mental strain is easier said than done. Most new CROs encounter brand-new challenges along with a ballooning portfolio of responsibilities and a decelerating federal funding pool.

To help prioritize and successfully tackle this complex role from day one, the University Research Forum crafted this to-do list, accompanied by specific guidance and resources, to assist new CROs' first year in seat:

The Six To-Dos for a Successful First Year (and Beyond)

1. **Create an Executive Onboarding Plan**
   In the absence of a formal onboarding process, new CROs should craft their own blueprint of responsibilities and expectations in their new role.

2. **Assemble a Mentorship Circle**
   With an onboarding plan in place, new CROs should select a group of external research executives to advise on challenges in the research space and help navigate university politics.

3. **Index Internal Constituencies' Wants, Needs, and Expectations**
   The listening tour is a common, but often poorly executed, method for gathering internal stakeholder feedback. CROs should leverage meetings strategically to glean the most useful information from these sessions.

   Resource #1: Listening Tour Planning Guide

4. **Map External Stakeholders' Goals to Research Strengths and Services**
   The connection between research and university external stakeholders is complicated and entails the steepest learning curve for new CROs. CROs should identify early overlaps in interest to further cultivate research partnerships.

   Resource #2: CRO Networking Guide

5. **Transition from Learning to Doing**
   Once new CROs understand the needs of stakeholders and their ability to influence outcomes, they can begin implementing initiatives that advance research goals.

   Resource #3: Advisory and Implementation Panel

6. **Build a Performance Feedback Loop**
   In the absence of a formal evaluation process, CROs should create their own mechanism to receive feedback from other executives and research stakeholders.

#1: Create an Executive Onboarding Plan

Better Understand the Role and Fill in Knowledge Gaps

The role of the chief research officer (CRO) has matured significantly in the last few decades. Increasingly, the CRO retains a seat on the president's cabinet, often reports to the president or provost directly, and oversees an expanding portfolio that extends beyond research administration.

While the importance of the CRO has increased, the onboarding experience for new CROs remains underdeveloped and inadequate at most institutions. Even though CROs have a higher turnover rate than other executive roles, they often lack a formalized process for role orientation, institutional onboarding, and cultural initiation. As a result, many CROs struggle to execute on key goals.

What Is Expected of a CRO

First and foremost, new CROs need to understand what is expected of them when (and often before) they arrive on campus. Although this mandate appears straightforward, even experienced research leaders and administrators report finding themselves surprised by the breadth of responsibilities and strategic importance of the role to institutional leadership.

The Implicit Meaning of Sample CRO Job Duties

"Promote/Foster a Culture of Research"
This requirement is very common but lacks clarity in how to execute. When "promoting" is the priority, CROs will be asked to grow research in predominantly teaching disciplines.

"Collaborate with Other Executives to Grow Research"
This requirement mandates that CROs understand how research relates to other university functions (e.g., Advancement, IT, Facilities) and what goals these divisions share.

"Attract and Manage Significant Grants"
The CRO role certainly includes managing research funding, but it also includes attracting additional dollars. This requires CROs to engage potential funders (e.g., agency directors, industry leaders, donors) to secure diverse funding for the institution's research.

"Continue Excellence in X, Y, and Z Disciplines"
Although this requirement may seem fairly straightforward, it is not always clear how "excellence" is measured. CROs will need to monitor programmatic rankings, funding opportunities, and faculty engagement to ensure these disciplines remain competitive.

But beyond the job description, new CROs will also find their expectations detailed in the institution's strategic plan. Although these plans often articulate lofty goals, the research section(s) contain essential directional cues for new CROs. Separating realistic targets from aspirational achievements can be difficult, so many new CROs elect to author research-specific strategic plans that serve both as their personal to-do list as well as a playbook for the Research office.

Translating University Strategic Goals into Specific Research Goals

University Goal:
Discover New Solutions

Research Goal:
Highlight Specific Research Discoveries

Most research universities are actively "seeking new solutions" to long-standing societal problems. However, most researchers and CROs fail to connect discoveries to those real-world problems. But communicating research outcomes is crucial to lobbying for future funding.

University Goal:
Integrate Learning with Doing

Research Goal:
Engage Students in Research

This goal is typically tied to undergraduate education, but CROs can ensure students have access to research opportunities through summer programs, lab assistantships, or internships. These interactions can also spur greater faculty interest in research.

University Goal:
Grow Research Expenditures

Research Goal:
Grow Research Expenditures

Although straightforward, most strategic plans include a numeric research expenditure goal, such as "double in five years." These goals look good on paper but lack context of the current funding climate; as such, CROs need to balance realistic progress with aspirational goals in presentations to boards.

Identifying Knowledge Gaps

Once CROs identify (and clarify) the research goals of the institution, they should then determine how to execute on these goals. Depending on background, new CROs enter the role with varying familiarity of the resources, levers, and authority available to make progress on those goals. CROs who held the same role at previous institutions will have a deeper reserve of tools but may lack the institution-specific knowledge to achieve certain goals. Alternatively, an internal candidate understands the university's processes and peculiarities but may lack the national context and connections necessary to pursue big funding projects.

To better understand their strategic position, new CROs should use the following framework to determine their understanding of six critical competency areas that are outlined on the following page.

Competency Area Review Framework

- **Strategic View and Position:** What is the current performance status of each competency area? Is this an area of desired improvement or contentment? Have there been recent high-profile and/or high-impact successes or failures in this area? What are the current attitudes on campus about these areas?
- **Process:** How does the institution manage this function: Centrally or in units? Is there clear ownership of this area? Has the institution engaged external experts to improve the area? Which stakeholders would need to be involved in a committee or initiative regarding this area?
- **Common Challenges:** For each area, what are the barriers any institution is likely to encounter? To what extent does this institution's version of this problem seem better or worse than others? How aware are institutional leaders of these problems? What resources (e.g., internal reports, professional write-ups) exist to help institutions address these challenges?
- **Personal Knowledge:** What is the CRO's level of familiarity with this area? How much experience do he or she have with managing these functions? How networked are is he or she with experts to help address these challenges?

CRO Competency Area Checklist

Research Funding

Agency Priorities

- ❑ HHS/NIH
- ❑ NSF
- ❑ DoD
- ❑ DoAg
- ❑ Other 1:
- ❑ Other 2:
- ❑ Other 3:

Industry and Philanthropic Partners

- ❑ Partner 1:
- ❑ Partner 2:
- ❑ Partner 3:
- ❑ Partner 4:
- ❑ Partner 5:

Research Administration

Research Office Responsibilities

- ❑ Funding identification
- ❑ Proposal preparation
- ❑ Pre-award functions
- ❑ Post-award functions

Electronic Research Administration Tools

- ❑ Funding databases
- ❑ Faculty profiles
- ❑ Publication databases
- ❑ ERA/routing tools
- ❑ Financial systems

Compliance

Regulations and Processes

- ❑ IRB
- ❑ IACUC
- ❑ COI
- ❑ Export Control
- ❑ Research/lab safety
- ❑ Data security
- ❑ RCR
- ❑ Environmental health and radiation safety

Tech Transfer

Commercialization Metrics

- ❑ Disclosures
- ❑ Patent filings/active
- ❑ License filings/active
- ❑ Royalties and revenue
- ❑ Startups

Innovation Resources

- ❑ Incubators
- ❑ Accelerators
- ❑ Venture funds
- ❑ Shared spaces

Facilities

Core Facilities Metrics

- ❑ Centrally managed cores
- ❑ Unit-managed cores
- ❑ Pending core proposals
- ❑ Cores under review

Startup Packages

- ❑ Amount from research
- ❑ Amount from college/department
- ❑ Space prioritization

University Processes

Budgeting

- ❑ Percentage of budget allocated from central funds
- ❑ Percentage of budget captured by units

F&A Statistics

- ❑ Negotiated rate
- ❑ Effective rate
- ❑ Distribution

Key Steps to Creating an Executive Onboarding Plan

1. Distill specific CRO goals from the CRO job postings and the university's strategic plan
2. Integrate university-wide strategic plan goals with CRO research-specific goals
3. Audit which areas of the research enterprise are well understood and which will require guidance from others

#2: Assemble a Mentorship Circle

Whom to Include, Where to Find Them, and How to Use Them

Even though research overlaps with numerous aspects of university life, the CRO position can feel isolated. Part administrator in chief and part faculty advocate (and for some, part investigator as well), the CRO role requires a mix of strategic thinking, administrative oversight, partnership development, and problem solving. The typical new CRO enters the role with varying degrees of experience in these areas but rarely is afforded time to get up to speed on deficit areas before being thrust into the position.

Figuring out Whom to Include in a Brain Trust

To better meet the diverse requirements of the role, seasoned CROs recommend developing a personal mentorship circle of external research executives to provide strategic guidance and decision-making support. These individuals should represent the diverse cross sections of the role and include veterans who have overcome obstacles. In particular, new CROs should seek to include two to four leaders who can collectively fill the four roles below to advise on any situation.

Four Personalities to Include in a Mentorship Circle

Trusted Advisor

- A CRO from an institution with which the new CRO is familiar
- Serves as the confidant who can provide guidance on political or sensitive challenges

Aspirant Peer

- A CRO at an institution that is at a higher HERD/ Carnegie rank than current
- Serves as a guide on general challenges and growth strategy, but likely not specific goals

Seasoned Veteran

- A CRO who has served in the role for five or more years
- Provides insight into funding trends, growth challenges, and campus political barriers

Knowledge Gap Filler

- A CRO with experience in an area with which new CROs are less familiar
- Helps address challenges in an area in need of significant growth/adjustment

Where to Find Them

For new CROs, individuals to fill each of these roles may immediately spring to mind, while others may prove more elusive. Fortunately, the CRO space is well networked and CROs are often eager to support one another. Some common professional meetings and circles that can help you to identify these mentors include the following:

- **The University Research Forum membership:** With over 80 institutions in our membership, we can offer suggested peers and conduct the initial outreach.
- **Strategic-Level Groups:** Both the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) offer Research Executive meetings throughout the year that allow new CROs to meet potential mentorship circle members.
- **Specialized Groups:** Some CROs attend function-specific association meetings, such as the National Organization of Research Development Professionals (NORDP) or the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM). CROs who participate in these meetings may offer particular expertise in research development and tech transfer, respectively.

How to Use Them

The primary purpose of the mentorship circle should be to help new CROs better understand roles and responsibilities, how to accomplish goals, and how to overcome obstacles along the way. Each individual brings unique competencies and experiences, so the guide below offers ideas for specific areas each may be best suited to address.

Some Key Questions for Mentorship Circle Participants

Trusted Advisor

- Sensitive questions, such as specific growth initiatives or faculty problems
- Political problems, such as working with other cabinet members

Aspirant Peer

- General growth questions, such as sources or policies
- Communication challenges, such as to internal stakeholders or elected officials

Seasoned Veteran

- Pervasive operational challenges, such as staff organization or research and teaching balances
- Career pathing questions, such as professional development opportunities

Knowledge Gap Filler

- Content-specific challenges, such as compliance or tech transfer
- Resource recommendations, such as professional associations or consultants

Key Steps to Assembling a Mentorship Circle

1. Determine which experiences and opinions are needed to complement personal experience, ensuring representation of a trusted advisor, an aspirant peer, a seasoned veteran, and a knowledge gap filler
2. Consider the best networks, conferences, or associations from which to identify potential mentors
3. Leverage their experience and insight, both individually and as a group in specific ways according to need

#3: Index Internal Constituencies' Wants, Needs, and Expectations

Developing an Accurate Assessment of Three Critical Groups

When trying to understand internal constituencies, there are several layers to analyze. The first is personal gain: how the Research office can serve the individual interests of other campus stakeholders. The second is the broader mission of the university. The last layer, culture, is the most ambiguous and challenging.

Culture is the "…norms, values, and ideologies that are created, shaped, and sustained within an organization"[1] and requires CROs new to an institution to quickly identify those elements as they relate to research. Culture differs across the organizational structure. While universities possess their own cultures, so do cohorts of faculty and individual offices, including research. The following practices can help new CROs support internal constituencies at each level.

The President's Cabinet

Nearly every office on campus overlaps in some way with the activities and operations of the Research office. Some of the areas of overlaps are obvious. For example, the provost and CRO share similar strategic goals and are both actively involved in faculty matters. This relationship involves strategy and operational thought partnership equally. Other cabinet members, however, require different levels of engagement within strategy and operations.

New CROs who understand these specific connections with other cabinet members can better leverage these relationships to address priorities.

Spectrum of Relationships to CRO Among Cabinet Members

Strategic Overlap

These cabinet members' goals intersect with research strategy:

- Academic Affairs
- Business/Finance
- Enrollment

Funding/Partnership Overlap

These cabinet members' goals intersect with research funding:

- Academic Affairs
- Advancement
- Economic Development
- Athletics

Administrative Overlap

These cabinet members' goals intersect with research administration:

- Business/ Finance
- IT
- Communications
- Facilities

1) Tierney, William, "Trust and Organizational Culture in Higher Education," 2008.

Research Office and Team

New CROs find varying degrees of competency in the Research office. In some cases, they find an office very effective in meeting goals, and thus the CRO hopes to continue that excellence. In other cases, the office is in need of major reform, reorganization, and/or reengagement. Making an accurate initial assessment is essential for new CROs, as the office and its staff are the vehicles for serving faculty and achieving institutional research goals.

There are several critical sources to consult in making an assessment. First, immediate deputies and directors can help the CRO understand the office's current status and desired direction. CROs should also ascertain the faculty's opinion of Research office performance. Finally, the Research office itself may provide critical information. Turnover in research administration roles is higher than many other administrative areas on campus, and staff members report "lack of support" and "difficult customer engagements" as their primary reasons for departure. Even when a new CRO has been tasked with righting the Research office ship, the insights of current staff members can ensure they address the *right* problems.

The Academic Apparatus

Most new CROs have a proficient understanding of the academic apparatus that underlies a university, although the level of familiarity can vary widely by institution. The vast majority of CROs have a PhD in a specific field, have served as researchers at a university, and have a mix of public and private sector research experience.

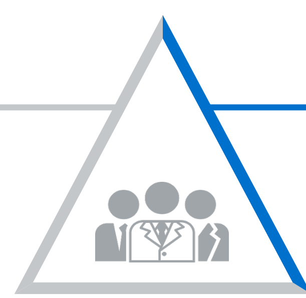
Despite these extensive backgrounds, many new CROs are surprised by how differently faculty and colleges interact with the Research office. Chief among these differences is how some faculty are true "customers" and others are simply "stakeholders." For example, a dean certainly has a stake in the operations and success of the Research office but may not be an active researcher and therefore is not a direct consumer of the office's services. Understanding this distinction is critical to providing tailored and flexible service, as customers require a different frequency and responsiveness than stakeholders.

Distinguishing Academic Customers Versus Stakeholders

Stakeholder Expectations

Stakeholders are faculty that have a vested interest in the direction and strategy of the Research office. They need:

- Consultation prior to important decisions
- Engagement in ongoing strategic initiatives
- Returns on investments made in the Research office



Customer Expectations

Customers are faculty that access and receive services from the Research office. They need:

- Effective and efficient service
- Channels to share feedback
- Improvements to areas of concern
- Some reporting on feedback

Resource #1: Listening Tour Planning Guide

Resource #1: Listening Tour Planning Guide

To view the full Listening Tour Planning Guide resource, please visit our website: eab.com/urf/

How to Get the Most Out of Listening Tours

Campus listening tours are common practice for new presidents, provosts, and CROs. They allow university executives to quickly gather perspectives of different constituents directly and share back with them the vision and goals in person. Unfortunately, this practice has become so routine that many executives conduct these meetings without proper preparation and strategy, making them ineffective.

The most effective CROs identify key stakeholders, prioritize meetings carefully throughout the first year, and prepare for each meeting by reviewing relevant background information on that stakeholder and their potential role in achieving university research goals. To maximize the efficiency and value of these meetings, CROs should also think strategically about which stakeholders to meet with individually versus in small groups or town hall settings.

Guidelines for Three Different Meeting Forums on the Listening Tour

One-on-Ones

- President's cabinet members
- Deans
- AVPRs, directors, and research administration staff
- Large center and institute directors
- Trustees
- Large external donors and funders

Small Group Roundtables

- AVPs of other university functions
- Associate Deans for Research
- Smaller/less research intensive centers and institutes
- Cohorts of high-research activity faculty
- Previously standing task forces, committees, and advisory groups
- Recently hired tenure-track investigators

Town Halls

- All faculty
- Graduate students and post-docs
- Undergraduate researchers
- Research-interested alumni
- Community members

Key Steps to Indexing Internal Constituencies' Wants, Needs, and Expectations

1. Categorize each cabinet member according to strategic, funding partnership, and administrative overlaps with research
2. Identify influential stakeholders among the faculty, and capture their feedback before engaging faculty customers
3. Employ the Listening Tour Planning Guide to make the most of the various meetings and town hall sessions across the first few months

#4: Map External Stakeholders' Goals to Research Strengths and Services

The External Matrix: Partners and Their Interests

Understanding How Research Connects to Partnerships

New and/or inexperienced CROs report that understanding the nature of research partnerships with external constituencies presents the steepest learning curve in their first year. Most report some previous interactions with external research partners in their former roles (either as investigators, center directors, deans, or associate vice presidents for research) but still feel the breadth of partnerships is largely unknown. External research partners can be delineated into three basic types:

- Federal and State Funding Agencies
- Corporate and Philanthropic Funders
- International Funders (e.g., foreign governments, foreign companies, foreign universities)

This stratification is a good starting point but is limited only to funders of university research. As the outputs and importance of basic research evolve, so do the types of partners interested in collaboration. A more strategic approach to partnerships requires CROs to consider a wider subset of partners and develop a deeper understanding of what they hope to achieve by partnering with the university, especially in areas where research can be the connection.

Identifying Three Common Stakeholders' Personal Priorities

CEO of a Local Company

Priorities
- Hire top talent from the university
- Sponsor research that yields commercializable products
- Demonstrate economic impact to state lawmakers

State or Federal Legislator

Priorities
- Grow jobs and economic success
- Ensure local companies are supported by universities
- Increase state's competitiveness

Big Donor and Notable Alum

Priorities
- Understand impact of contributions
- Boost university's prestige and rankings
- Identify next big donation opportunity

Being a Good Steward of Partnerships

To cultivate partnerships, CROs must understand the university's broader value proposition and earn the trust of other executives to represent that proposition in good faith. Most collaborators have more to gain from a relationship with the university than just research. Corporate partners, for example, are often more interested in hiring top talent than in collaborative or contract research. Therefore, CROs should understand the company's hiring needs and connect them with the university's professional education and training departments. Elevating partnerships beyond single one-off engagements cultivates broader and longer-term collaborations, which produce more funding for research while also positively impacting student internship opportunities, philanthropic endeavors, and joint advocacy initiatives.

Resource #2: CRO Networking Guide

Resource #2: CRO Networking Guide

To view the full CRO Networking Guide resource, please visit our website: eab.com/urf/

The Conversation Guide—What Research Can Offer

With the understanding that research connects to all facets of university business and that each external stakeholder has some interest in the institution's research, it is imperative that new CROs understand the precise connections between their office and the university's external partners.

For starters, CROs can "connect the dots" between the institution's external partners and the assets of the Research office to organize how they might approach a conversation with these stakeholders.

What CROs Can Offer External Stakeholders

CEO of a Local Company

Priorities
- Hire top talent from the university
- Sponsor research that yields commercializable products
- Demonstrate economic impact to state lawmakers

CRO Offerings
- Connection to graduate students in certain labs
- Access to existing IP and contracts for new work
- Joint projects and reporting of impact across the state

State or Federal Legislator

Priorities
- Grow jobs and economic success
- Ensure local companies are supported by universities
- Increase state's competitiveness

CRO Offerings
- Expansion of IP and startup opportunities
- Access to technologies and facilities to support companies
- Stories of high-profile researchers and their work

Big Donor and Notable Alum

Priorities
- Confirm impact of contributions
- Boost university's prestige and rankings
- Identify next big donation opportunity

CRO Offerings
- Reports on impact of gifts to researchers
- Stories of high-profile researchers and their work
- Strategic plans for future of research excellence

Key Steps to Mapping External Stakeholders' Goals to Research Strengths and Services

1. Review the institution's external partnerships and understand collaboration history
2. Determine which research disciplines and services could provide the greatest interest and value to each partner, and publicize those areas of expertise
3. Coordinate with other cabinet members to construct a university-wide partnership plan that includes research and other areas of interest

#5: Transition from Learning to Doing

Distilling a Task List from the Strategic Plan and the Listening Tour

Top-Down: Strategic Plan

As mentioned in the first section, operationalizing a university-wide strategic plan poses challenges for CROs since the goals are often highly ambitious and ill-defined. The first step is to pare down the university-wide goals into specific research-related goals (page 8). In order to determine the precise action steps for these goals, CROs should establish specific measurements that will be used to gauge progress.

Connecting University-to-Research Strategic Plan Goals and Metrics

University Goal: Discover New Solutions to Global Problems

Research Goal: Highlight Research Successes

Metrics:

- Number of popular media features of research stories
- Impact metrics from studies locally and globally
- Number and breadth of international partnerships
- Public perception polling of the university's impact

University Goal: Integrate Learning with Doing

Research Goal: Engage Students with Research

Metrics:

- Number of undergraduates involved in research
- Number of co-op/internship sponsoring companies who also engage in research
- Dollars in dissertation grants, undergraduate sponsored research awards

University Goal: Grow Research Expenditures

Research Goal: Grow Research Expenditures

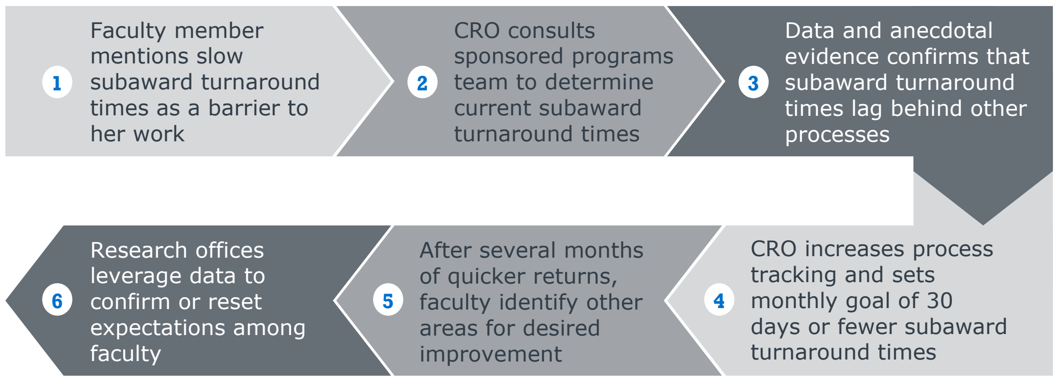
Metrics:

- Non-institutional expenditures year over year
- Federal and state funding versus nongovernment funding
- Growth in industry and foundational funding
- Number of research-active faculty
- Proposal success rates and average award size

Bottom-Up: Takeaways from the Listening Tour

The Listening Tour, as outlined in the third to-do, generates tremendous amounts of content with varying levels of utility. To make the most of a listening tour, CROs must distill and analyze the feedback through the lenses of Research office performance data and institutional priorities. They should create a reporting mechanism to highlight progress against areas of concern for faculty, and promote improvements in future faculty meetings. The process below outlines an example of how a problem brought up during the Listening Tour can be addressed.

How an Off-Hand Complaint Transitions into a CRO Accomplishment



Spans of Control

How to Know What CROs Control and How to Use It

Despite increasing strategic importance and an expanding portfolio, CROs retain less control and authority to influence the outcomes they are responsible for compared to their executive-level peers. Unfortunately, this results in a perception that the CRO has *no power*, as opposed to the reality of having *some power*, which limits his or her ability to enact and execute on crucial projects and initiatives. The trick is for CROs to distinguish the spans of control they do have, and within those spans identify the available levers for changing or influencing behavior toward desired outcomes. The table on the next page highlights the different areas of resources (as types of "capital") and how much control the typical CRO has over each area.

Internal Capital Audit Based on Spans of Control

Category	Type	Level of Control
Human Capital	Research office staff	Complete control
	Non-Research office research administrative staff	Little control
	Faculty leadership	Little control
	PIs	No control
	Graduate students/post-docs	Little control
Physical Capital	Individual/disciplinary equipment and spaces	No control
	Shared equipment/core facilities	Partial control
	University shared spaces	Little control
	Research park	Complete control
Financial Capital	University central budget	No control
	Research office budget	Significant control
	F&A returns	Little control
	Royalties and commercialization revenue	Partial control
Political and Personal Capital	Academic connections	Partial control
	Industry and foundational connections	Significant control
	Legislative and agency connections	Partial control
	Community connections	Significant control

Key: Complete control; Significant control; Partial control; Little control; No control

Resource #3: Advisory and Implementation Panel

Resource #3: Advisory and Implementation Panel

To view the full Advisory and Implementation Panel resource, please visit our website: eab.com/urf/

Building an Advisory and Implementation Panel

It is fairly common for both new and experienced CROs to create an internal advisory panel to serve as a sounding board for ideas and initiatives. Unlike the mentorship circle of external research experts, this advisory panel is composed of internal research stakeholders, such as PIs, center directors, and core facilities directors. Traditionally, this panel serves primarily as an advisory board, offering feedback and reacting to CRO ideas.

For new CROs, there is no shortage of feedback to gather. However, when it comes time to uproot old processes to respond to feedback and improve functions, allies can be in short supply. Therefore, effective new CROs also leverage their internal advisory panels as implementation boards. Assembling a team of members who can provide sound advice but who also hold positions of esteem and authority sufficient to support implementation can make the panel most helpful.

Essential Core Competencies in an Implementation Panel

Focused on Achieving Goals

Participants should be willing to promote policies and initiatives to their respective cohorts to advance research goals

Inclusive and Expansive

The panel should include faculty from a range of disciplines and levels of research activity to ensure campus-wide support for research initiatives

Driven by Mutual Incentives

Panel members should recognize the personal and institutional benefits to them in research initiatives and policies and leverage those benefits when encouraging colleagues

Approved by Superiors

CROs should request permission from panel members' direct superiors before asking them to serve to decrease friction between panel and academic leaders

Key Steps to Transitioning from Learning to Doing

1. Distill personal "tasks" directly from the CRO job posting and the university-wide strategic plan
2. Conduct an asset inventory to discern what resources and levers the Research office can use to shape and influence faculty and staff behavior
3. Assemble an Advisory and Implementation Panel that serves as an internal sounding board as well as the initiators of new practices and procedures

#6: Build a Performance Feedback Loop

Goal Mapping

Personal Goals and Measurements

A common lament among new CROs (and many new university executives) is a lack of formalized performance feedback. Although the concept of formal performance evaluations is atypical at the higher ranks of an institution, most university executives have fairly direct expectations: VPs for Enrollment are measured by enrollment targets while VPs for Advancement are measured by fundraising targets. The CRO role, for better or worse, is not as straightforward. CROs are measured in part by research expenditure goals as well as by a series of less quantifiable targets.

CRO Ability to Influence the Outcomes

Even when (or if) expectations are articulated clearly to CROs, their ability to influence the outcomes varies widely, especially when it comes to federal funding. A good exercise for new CROs to undertake is to align the Research office goals with the influence levers they possess and then determine how far their reach must extend to influence the goals furthest from their direct control. For example, a CRO has less ability to control expenditures and success rates but more control in highlighting economic impact and growing commercialization.

CRO Proximity of Influence to Goals

CRO as an Executive

As an executive of the university, CROs are partly assessed on their ability to support the goals of other executives, as they relate to research. With the mapping exercise in section three complete, CROs can solicit progress feedback from other cabinet members to gauge how well the Research office is supporting other functions on campus.

CRO as a Manager

Another significant portion of the CRO's role is internal management of the Research office. In this upward review of immediate associate vice presidents and directors, CROs should seek a balance of quantitative customer feedback (covered below) and qualitative input regarding their support of the Research office and university goals.

CRO as a Customer Service Representative

Lastly, CROs maintain a "chief customer service officer" role that requires feedback from faculty who use Research office services. Too often, Research offices under-request (i.e., annual or every-other-year feedback surveys) or over-request (i.e., following every interaction) feedback, frustrating faculty and forgoing valuable quantitative insight. In high-functioning Research offices, this feedback is collected at proper intervals with ongoing metric tracking and spaced-out satisfaction and process surveys.

Customer Feedback Mechanisms and Timing

Process Surveys

- Captures qualitative feedback from individual PIs
- Specific to Research office functions and processes
- Timing: After proposal submission or award closeout

Leadership Panels

- Captures bottom-up qualitative feedback from research leaders
- Includes associate deans for research, Research office leadership, and center/institute directors
- Good for strategic-level feedback and communicating policies and initiatives
- Timing: Monthly for college-level leaders, twice a year for senior leadership

Metric Trackers

- Captures quantitative feedback on research function performance
- Includes volumetrics and cycle time metrics
- Good for reporting back to individual faculty and Research leadership
- Timing: Ongoing in Research office

Satisfaction Surveys

- Captures qualitative feedback from all stakeholders
- Requests feedback on strategic research direction, effectiveness of Research office, and desired support
- Timing: Annually or every other year

Key Steps to Building a Performance Feedback Loop

1. Understand how much influence the CRO has to accomplish goals, and temper stakeholders' expectations accordingly
2. Ensure collection of feedback at each level of the CRO role: as a fellow cabinet member, as a direct supervisor, and as a customer service manager
3. Institute feedback mechanisms for faculty that provide qualitative and quantitative metrics on services and staff

Coda: Year Two and Beyond

Planning for the Future

Reflecting on the Year That Was

Dedicating time to review the successes and challenges of the first year in seat is important. Specifically, what did the Research office accomplish, and what research goals were reached? These successes should be shared with internal leaders and external stakeholders. Equally important, what hurdles did the Research office encounter during the year, and where did CROs make limited progress toward the research goals? These challenges should also be shared, along with action steps for how to overcome them in the coming year.

Building the Bench

Hopefully the first year provides enough time for new CROs to retain or fill vacant AVPR and director-level positions. With the team in place, CROs can begin to delegate higher-level tasks to deputies, which allows deputies to own strategic initiatives and interact with other university executives. Doing so hones their management and leadership skills, which are essential for reducing the CRO's workload over the long run. As an executive, a strong cohort of AVPRs is essential for achieving goals. As a leader, a strong bench of deputies also helps build the available pool of future CROs.

Where to Next?

As the CRO role continues to grow in strategic importance and responsibilities, experienced CROs will find themselves competitive candidates for other university executive roles. For some, the CRO role is a "term" job—a majority of CROs return to the faculty after serving a few years. But for those aspiring to other university offices, the future is bright:

- **President:** 2017 saw a handful of CROs ascend to the top role of several different institutions. Often, these CROs came from large research universities and became presidents at midsize growing research universities—especially true if that institution is their alma mater.
- **Provost:** Less common than moving into a president post, some CROs transition to the provost role after a few years in the Research office. This is most commonly an internal move at the same institution, either as an interim or permanent candidate.

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Professional Associations for CROs

- Association of American Universities (AAU): https://www.aau.edu
- Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU): http://www.aplu.org –Council on Research (CoR): http://www.aplu.org/members/councils/research
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS): https://www.aaas.org
- Council On Governmental Relations (COGR): http://www.cogr.edu
- Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP): http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fdp/index.htm

Professional Associations for Research Functional Areas

- National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA): http://www.ncura.edu
- Society of Research Administrators International (SRA): https://srainternational.org
- National Organization of Research Development Professionals (NORDP): http://www.nordp.org
- Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM): https://www.autm.net
- Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers (NACRO): http://nacrocon.org
- University Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP): https://www.uidp.org

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