

Research Operations Innovation Program

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1. Background

City of Hope (COH) Research Operations (RO) team is committed to providing COH basic, translational, and clinical programs excellent operational and regulatory support. The RO staff assist investigators, remove administrative barriers and help rapidly and safely move science forward. There are 5 large teams supporting RO these include, Research Applications and Data Management, Clinical Research Services, Research Administration, Research Protections, and Clinical Research Operations. All 5 teams, under a single leader, work together furthering COH scientific discovery, support and provide infrastructure for the research portfolios and programs. There remain opportunities for more collaborative, efficient, standardized processes, and potential for staff development and engagement.

2. Goals

The selected proposals supported the following initiatives:

- Enhance community research;
- Enterprise-wide implementation of Precision Medicine;
- Promote efficient use of resources and financial accountability;
- Continue to advance CAR T and/or IEC programs;
- Increase employee engagement scores;

3. Solutions and Methods

In 2019, COH RO created a Research Innovations Program to boost collaboration and generate innovative ideas between the 5 RO teams resulting in enhanced operational excellence, efficiency and engagement. Projects must be led by RO staff with planned completion by the end of 2020 Fiscal Year (FY20). Each project needed a sponsor from the team as the project contact and serve as the project leader. Senior leaders could participate as project team members, but could not sponsor any proposal. Leadership issues the request for proposals (RFP) for collaborative programs, workflows or potential new systems addressing operational matters on September 15, 2019. Proposals were reviewed by a leadership committee, with the intent to select 5 for funding in FY 20. In total, 12 proposals were submitted spanning basic science, clinical trials and employee development.

4. Outcomes

The committee selected 6 well-conceived and developed proposals, one more than anticipated. All the selected projects offered to close a gap and foster a highly engaged work environment, they included:

- Research Operations Collaborator Content Management System for Subsites & Sponsors;
- Research Operations Orientation Program;
- Research Operations Campus Recruiting Project;

Category: Clinical Trial Operations – Work in Progress

- Developing a Research Operations Conference Travel Policy;
- Use of Mobile Performance Board Template to Identify Challenges & Drive Change;
- Expanded Lunch & Learn Program.

Subsequently, the 6 program sponsors provided the RO staff a project overview, implementation plan, and addressed questions. During FY20, project sponsors will provide the RO team project updates and progress with plans for sustainability beyond FY20.

5. Lessons Learned

Although the projects only recently launched, there is a clear display of connectedness and the planned outcomes well-received by RO staff. Beyond the collaborative nature, the RO project provided leadership a window to better understand staff needs and challenges on a departmental level. The RO Leadership team received valuable feedback regarding issues surrounding employee engagement, barriers and administrative burden specific to the RO team. This allows not only these projects to move forward but for leadership and teams to consider the challenges of the employees when considering solutions and new initiatives.