Themes	Examples of Comments made by researcher	Institutional Initiatives & projects underway / contemplated & comments
Communication	- Post award administration is segmented e.g. OSR, RRF, and GPS. Not clear where to go and for which need. / For new Principal Investigator very confusing. - Financial Service Teams not as knowledgeable as they should be; support available from RRF etc…too far removed - MUHC RI communications don't work well - Need clear timelines for grant submission - Contracts and consulting ✓ Lack of education and knowledge on how these work ✓ Need guidelines, info sessions, templates, workshops ✓ How to talk to industry? ✓ What are the boundaries? ✓ What are risks and legal implications? - Delays experienced for new Faculty in getting on mailing list, hard time finding deadlines (only posted a couple of weeks in advance). Need deadlines posted at least 3 months in advance. Nobody here to help us navigate when we arrive at the University - Need to be informed about the process once the application goes to granting agency. What is the step by step process, before PI awarded or not? - Unclear on McGill and granting agency form (whose signature is required). Once form is provided to OSR, services are timely - Grant received; From this point, there is no information about where to go, and what has to be done, e.g. deadlines/timeline	✓ A new step-by-step document outlining the life cycle of a grant is in development and will be posted on OSR Website. ✓ Info-sessions and new faculty orientation will be provided to new researchers by OSR as well as training to FST in order to provide on-going support to researchers ✓ FST will continue to be trained in order to have an overall view of the research administration process. The first Phase of implementation was to allow them to assist in providing a quicker turnaround time for expense reports and aiding researchers on general enquiries relating to reports and financial questions. The next phase will allow them to be more directly involved in validating of eligible / ineligible transactions so as to assist researchers with questions. ✓ We will be moving to increased discussion and clarity on indirect costs and overhead on contracts, both on charge-outs and internal distribution. The contracts' group is presently creating new guidelines, procedures, etc… for purposes of training researchers and others. This training will also include the commercialization of IP (talk to industry, boundaries, and legal risks). OSR will organize joint sessions ✓ OSR agrees that more outreach should be done here. ✓ OSR is working on a New Faculty Orientation document. We will also host a New Faculty Orientation sessions in late summer/early fall and will include a section for "New Faculty" on the OSR webpage. ✓ OSR will update mailing list on a quarterly basis to ensure that new researchers are subscribed to the funding opportunities listserv as they arrive at McGill ✓ Researchers can find all deadlines on OSR web at the following link http://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/funding/deadlines/ ✓ Posting deadlines 3 months in advance is not always possible… Certain Agencies are announcing funding opportunities within less than a month before the deadline. However best efforts will ensure that deadlines are on list serve within a week of the announcement for Provincial programs. ✓ For CFI, the Institution receives the results. The PIs are immediately informed and instructions are sent to them on what next to do to open their fund and who to contact.

| Communication (cont'd) | An email sent with deadlines about available grant opportunities is good idea, but the deadline is "next week". Too short notice to capture opportunities; sometimes deadlines have passed Search engine terrible-documents not updated Provincial grant guides not available, therefore applications are not submitted. Policies to be pushed down; not easy to find List serve should be: ✓ More focused ✓ More targeted accessing by researcher (online, blog) ✓ Archived keyboard search ✓ Important elements retained ✓ Missing details (summary); one liner of research description (at top) ✓ Keywords Indirect Costs: lack of knowledge and understanding as to how they are used and how to access them for information support-things that are not eligible on grants (phone, internal connections, etc…) Grantsmanship sessions; Later in fall and need advance notification. No follow-up for information. | ✓ We are going to restructure the fund opening process in next few months in order to ensure a quicker turnaround time between time award notices is received by McGill and time funds are available to be spent. ✓ Provincial guidelines are not all listed on our McGill web but they are available on the agency website. Because there are so many deadlines and opportunities, we attempt to highlight the most important ones or the ones where McGill researchers demonstrate a true interest. Provincial team is currently developing guides for the major provincial grants competitions (FQRNT & FQRSC Nouveaux Chercheurs and Projets de recherche en equipe). Team is also developing English-language user manual for Provincial funding agency online system (Extranet) ✓ Section on OSR website with information on indirect costs has been updated recently and provides more detailed information on indirect costs (http://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/proposal/budget/#indirects). ✓ OSR provides Grantsmanship sessions in late spring & early fall. Follow up should be done by researchers contacting OSR for documents/copies of presentations. ✓ The VP RIR's current process review will address all these other specific issues and ensure that they have form part of the solutions identified. |

Local support	- Principal Investigator not understanding McGill's administration systems. Training Required; - No administrative type support to researchers / administering grants is time consuming; - Lack of knowledge on how to manage multiple funds with overlap-which grant to charge for shared expenses ; - Lack of education re: eligible/ineligible expenses and agency requirements; - Need more support at a local / departmental level to gear up for major projects, including accessing info, setting up projects, etc…; - Need direct support for administrative forms (HR, travel, purchase requisitions, P-Card, reconciliations); - Need better synchronization between Fund Administrators and Financial Service Teams for new funds (information sharing, budgets, restrictions, milestones).	✓ Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) staff work closely with Grants administration staff in various Faculties and provide support and mentoring to new staff members in Faculties on a needs-basis (Engineering and Education are two current examples). OSR will continue to provide this service at the request of Faculties. ✓ We strongly encourage the inclusion of additional project management staff to all funding applications where it is eligible. ✓ OSR has recently added a Senior Grants Officer (Major Projects) to the Grants and Foundations Team to provide support for major, interdisciplinary, inter-institutional projects ✓ Financial Services teams (FST) have been created in all Faculties except Medicine. Once Medicine completes its new "Administrative Excellence" project, the FST we will form part of that service "hub" and this will allow direct local support for researchers. ✓ Info-sessions to Researchers on Research Administration issues are being planned by OSR at the Faculty level. This will include training on both pre and post award issues. FST- teams will continue to be trained in order to provide on-going support/training to researchers. ✓ For complex grants like the CFI, eligibility of expenses is controlled before submission of the application. Any queries should be co-ordinated via the FST team members. ✓ Support currently exists for major projects via the OSR. Researchers should contact the Associate Deans Research, as they have a direct link into Vice-Principal & OSR Offices. ✓ We are currently investigating an update to both the OSR & Financial Services websites, which will is intended to provide easy identification and access to tools and resources, including: ✓ - List per types of grants Research and Restricted Funds
		   - Supervisors, managers, and administrators, per agencies
		   - Faculty (FST) contacts
		   - Other pertinent information

Regulations – Internal	- Obtaining signatures currently causes a long delay and "run around". Not efficient and up to date with possible online signatures - Administrator's perspective; Staying informed of changes e.g. Forms do not work well. - Too long in Faculty internal review-too short time after results to revise and resubmit by deadline (Suggest 3rd party reviewers dedicated to this peer review). - Mandatory peer review at Faculties may not be necessary/matter of choice. - Issues with Ethical (IRB) Review-human subjects include:
	  - Disagreement on social science research methods
	  - Not knowledgeable
	  - Movement from SSHRC to CIHR
	  - Bypass up McGill and going to hospitals because easier
	  - IRB "psychosocial" fast versus Faculty of Medicine slow
		✓ OSR accepts scanned copies of signature documents we do not request original signatures on OSR checklist. ✓ OSR accepts scanned signatures on agreements to speed approval process and follow up on original signatures when it is mandatory. ✓ It sometimes depends on the requirement of the grant agency although most now accept scanned signatures

Institutional Transfers	• Inter university transfers are too lengthy; delays experienced, especially with teaching hospitals. • Unknown steps to be taken to follow for this process;	✓ This process is not working to our satisfaction either, as some delays are caused by our partners not executing sub–award agreements in a timely fashion, in addition to not cashing cheques immediately. ✓ Part of the overall future restructuring will include a communication to the PI informing them of when the cheques have been mailed to the partners. We are investigating the possibility of creating a separate service point to meet this need. ✓ "In-coming" transfers to McGill result in delays due to outstanding compliance issues (e.g. ethics, COI, controlled goods, etc.) which must be completed by PI before releasing funds. We are examining the streamlining of this function with the one above. ✓ Other transfers on Collaborative Project are sometimes delayed due to negotiation (i.e. IP, publications, etc.), or signature of Partnership agreements. We will investigate how this can be improved with the process redesign. ✓ FST staff will be included in the communication loop in order to remind PIs of any outstanding items, which would result in delays.

Fund Opening	• CIHR; Notice of award was June, grant started October 1, but had no access to the fund until 2 weeks
	    - Applies during peak period and office peak
	    - Need to follow-up with many people
	    - Need to find solutions outside of McGill to "lend" us monies
	    - Renewals too
	• Disconnect - Urgency of getting grant up and running
	• Inconsistent delays on fund opening process
	• Delays in access to funds - Too many layers of approvals results in long delays (maybe due to one person on vacation). Loss of documents. Bureaucratic delays result in delaying payment to students.
	• Difficulty accessing startup funds
		✓ Delays are experienced on case-by-case basis: when NOA is received funds cannot be released before the official start date and/or before all compliancy requirement are met (e.g. human ethics, animal, biohazard, controlled goods, conflict of interest, etc.) as well might be conditional to "matching" funds from other sources which have to go through its own approval path.
		✓ OSR and Research and Restricted Funds we are currently finalizing solutions which will streamline the fund opening process and allow for quicker turnaround time.
		✓ In addition, we are also designing solutions for contracts and other specific grants which will allow for a reduced turnaround time between the execution of the "deal" and time when funds are available for spending.
		✓ The access to start-up funds is under the responsibility of the various Deans / Chairs. Communication should be directed to the FSTs so that appropriate resolution can be sought with the Faculty Financial Officers.
		✓ This process is part of our overall efforts to redesign our processes, which has been motivated by staff changes and other required changes in our internal structures.

Fund Closing	• Should be notified in advance (6 months plus one month warning) when closing a fund.	✓ RRF is in the process of reviewing the current service levels they provide from its remote location and assessing the need to better align itself with the local resources (FSTs) installed in all faculties / departments (except Medicine). We will improve the information sent to Researchers by better aligning ourselves with the customer service offered from the FST resources and equipping them with more reporting tools and training. This endeavor is currently underway.
Information Systems	• Budget/Financials are on Minerva. It is on personal profile, but <u>others</u> (admin. Coordinators) need access • Financial information is segmented. Principal Investigators do not want to know how to use Minerva/Banner • Reporting system does not provide detailed information in a simple, easy way to understand. • Minerva Systems: Reliant on an administrative coordinator. Information is not intuitive/easy to understand. • Need to see all charges by organized categories • Accounting website is badly organized, hard to navigate and to find contacts	✓ PI currently has ability to authorize access to "others" through FIS Application/Authorization Form – refer to the following link http://www.mcgill.ca/files/financialservices/fis_authorization_form.pdf ✓ Training session are being offered on how to use Banner / Minerva; however, FST can help in accessing a variety of currently available canned reports on Minerva. ✓ Further to the 1st focus group session, we're currently exploring new tools which could be presented to a test group for corroboration as to ease of use and overall value in reporting. ✓ Faculty by faculty training plan will be coordinated with FST in order to provide local hands on training to researchers who would be interested.

| Procurement: MMP / PCards / Accounts Payable | • MMP is too restrictive. Vendor selection (choices) is available, but inaccessible to many who do not know how to do this;
• Inflexible system despite help from MMP staff
• Restriction of suppliers
• Search engine is not useful; User unfriendly
• Paying for conferences with P-Cards worked well, request to change policy | ✓ MMP (i.e. electronic procurement) is best practice of any procurement regime.
✓ Finance help desk (x3463) and MMP Administrator in Procurement Services are available to provide one on one MMP training, where required.
✓ Procurement Services is working toward increasing the number of electronic catalog vendors on MMP while ensuring that for those cases where annual global purchases exceed $ 100,000, adequate public tendering is carried out and proper contractual relationships are established in compliance with the Act C-65.1 (the Act Respecting Contracting by Public Bodies). It is Procurement Services plans to expand the list of catalog vendors on MMP for those commodities that are commonly required by the McGill community at large. In addition to the Catalog vendors, any commodity that is not available through MMP online catalogs can be requested through submission of a free form requisition on MMP as long as the requested vendor has been validated by Procurement Services and entered into the Banner Vendor Table. For further info on McGill contracted and preferred suppliers please refer to Procurement Services' web site at: McGill.ca/Procurement.
✓ Any commodity purchase below $ 2,500 that is not available on MMP electronic catalogs can also be procured via Pcards.
✓ The 2nd phase of new travel module (Banner delivery of 2012) will be able to accommodate the use of Pcard for purchases of conferences.
✓ MMP is continuously being upgraded (more frequent than Banner) in order to provide more user enhancements and user friendly devices.
✓ As a result of a new feature in MMP, any purchase requisition (issued through electronic catalogs or free form orders) with a total value not exceeding $5,000 (including taxes) are transmitted automatically to the vendor once local and central approvals as well as budget availability checkings are performed on the requisition. This increased automation has enabled the McGill community to more efficiently acquire their low-dollar goods/services. |
| HR | • HR; does not ever reply to queries at hr.mcgill.ca
• "Not my job" attitude in HR. Not acceptable.
• HR; does not reply when email goes to an individual | ✓ We recognize the need for the Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance) to work in closer collaboration with the Provost on issues related to payroll and hiring processes.
✓ The Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance) in collaboration with the Provost and |

	• HR; 4747 –when call with question, often no response is provided. Need to reach a supervisor when urgent. • Payroll; Simple transfer services very long, due to missing resources (backup; people) • HR; Appointment process is disjointed with research • HR representatives do not communicate between each other	OSR will look to procedures and processes relating to salary payments to academics/ students/ others. This will include reviewing payments made from grants or contracts and incorporating any restrictions / special conditions which may exist.
Systems – Research	• Access to GIA not available • No tracking mechanisms between offices	✓ OSR is presently investigating the possibility for Faculties (and FST persons) to get access to a new grant management system which would have common information for all grant stakeholders. This however, may require additional resources which would delay implementation. ✓ The new Vice Principal Research and International Relations will be undergoing a process review to identify any potential areas of improvement throughout the whole research administration process. Continued collaboration between OSR and RRF are intended to further streamline processes and decrease delays in the fund approval process.
Monitoring	• Proving 100% this was a "research" expense; undermines the honor system • Random audit vs. total control over every expense • P-Card emails are aggressive. Told to do something fast. Re: reconciling and when audit	✓ We have shifted the responsibility for the review of Expense Report (except for Medicine) to the Faculty Financial Officers. In many cases, this has resulted in more effective reviews as the resources in local areas have been trained to ensure to meet all external and internal policy and regulations when verifying expenses. Continuous improvement is on-going as these changes were made while affecting a lot of change institution wide. The honour system is an integral part of our review process, as every signature on each document counts towards the validity of the expenses. ✓ We have already reviewed our internal processes to ensure all communications made with the McGill community are in a professional and courteous manner.

OTHER	• People don't answer phones ; get routed to voice mail. Want a person to answer, not an automated message • People do not understand how research works • Too much emphasis on money and not enough on research • Very authoritative attitude; no explanations provided when changes occur • No regular revisions done on policies and procedures • Policies are not clear ; not adapted well • NSERC guide too prescriptive. Needs to specify that this is flexible.	✓ OSR-people are answering phone. FST staff has direct contacts to those who can answer specific questions. As mentioned earlier, more training will be provided so that generic questions will be answered quicker. This is already working very well in certain Faculties. ✓ Info-sessions will be organized by OSR, as well as training to FST, in order to provide on-going support to researchers. ✓ OSR staff will revise the NSERC guide to make it less prescriptive.