

CLOSING REMARKS



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Research Administration is now Strategic Infrastructure!

- Research administration is no longer back-office support.
- Part of how universities protect research, accelerate discovery, build talent, and remain globally competitive.

The Problem

Training across institutions is:



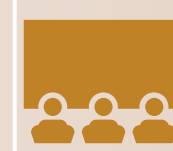
Fragmented



Duplicated effort



Uneven



Variable quality



Costly



Delayed onboarding/reactive learning



Built in isolation



RA only focused in a "Us" vs. "Them" format

STAIR PILLARS

1. Open-Access Training Foundation

2. Applied Concierge Support

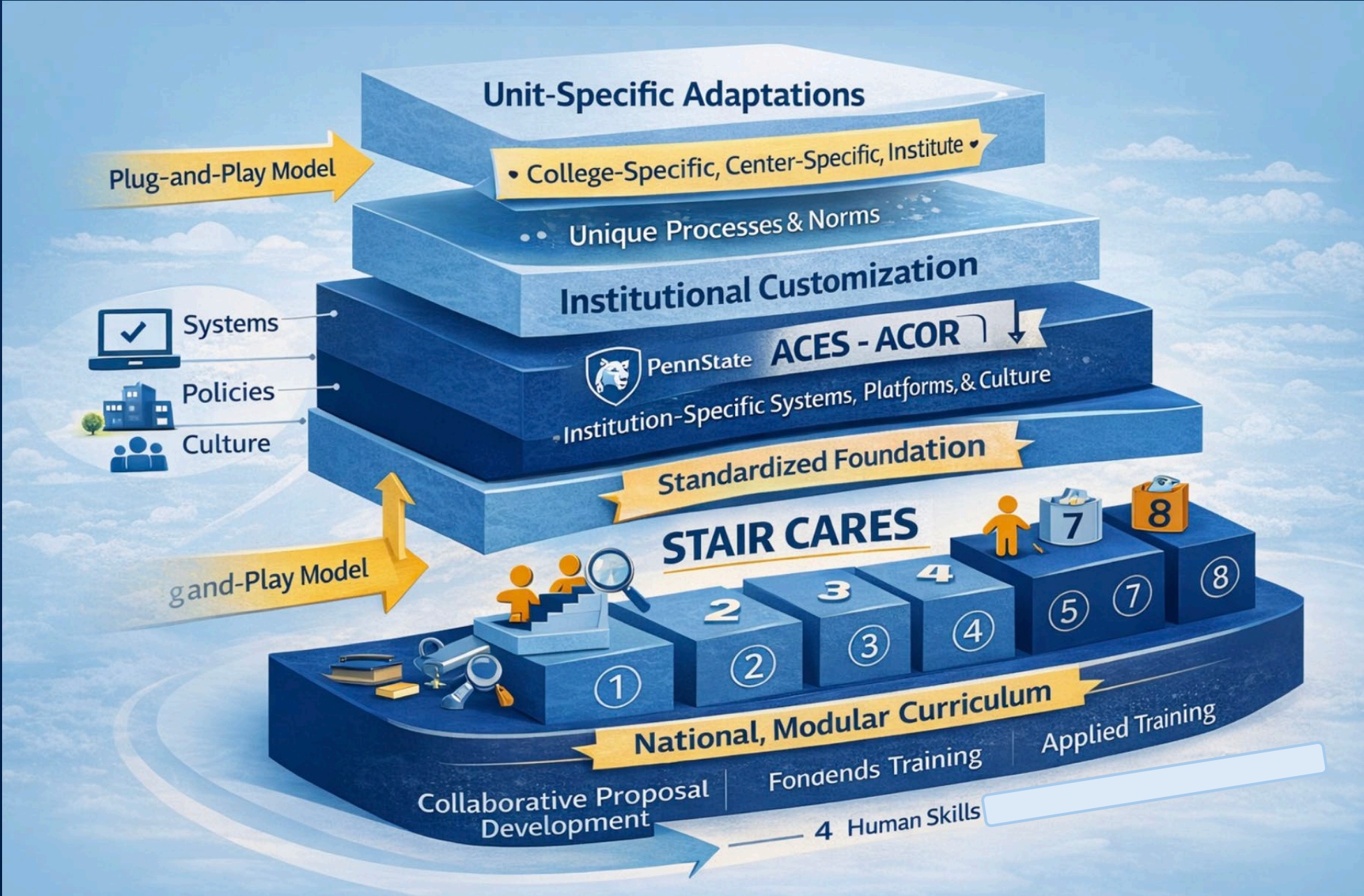


The Foundation

**Standardized where
standardization helps;
localized where local
context matters.**

STAIR CARES establishes a national, standardized, Open Access foundation for research administration with insight from both faculty and RAs.

- Not just a curriculum but a portable and equitable infrastructure for workforce development.
- STAIR CARES does not replace institutional learning- it enables it.
- Institutions can build targeted, short duration, institution-specific training layers on top of STAIR CARES focusing on own:
 - Systems
 - Policies
 - Procedures
 - Needs



Mentorship



What do we hope to get from you?

- 1. Help shape a model for shared resources and expertise that can serve the field nationally.**
- 2. Leave with good ideas, a few new colleagues and, ideally...**
- 3.... a reason to answer our follow-up email and invitation to join the STAIR LinkedIn group.**
- 4. Interest in joining a working group to explore a new study that can build upon the recent executive report prepared for AAU and COGR**

More specifically:

- Assess whether STAIR CARES could serve as foundational training in your institutional context.
- Share the consulting opportunity with teams who would benefit.
- Help us imagine what regional collaboration could look like in practice
- Stay in conversation after the Summit and join our working groups.



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with you!



1. Research Admin Conference Travel Award

- Support for ERIs and Penn State to co-present at professional conferences.

2. Leadership Travel Award

- Funding for leaders across universities to connect, share expertise, and build long-term partnerships.

3. Virtual Training For Students

- Introduces career potentials and builds relevant skills in research administration.



Stewardship + Strategy

- 1. Shared learning**
- 2. Shared talent development**
- 3. Shared commitment to reducing burden**

The background of the slide is a collage of data visualization elements in shades of orange and white. It includes several bar charts, line graphs, and circular progress indicators. One prominent circular gauge shows '82%' and another shows '64%'. A large magnifying glass is positioned over a candlestick chart in the lower-left quadrant. The overall aesthetic is professional and analytical.

Mapping Institutional Research Investment in U.S. Higher Education

We invite you to be part of the study!

Background: Institutional Investment in University Research

- **Rapid growth in research spending (NCSES, 2026)**
 - U.S. higher education R&D expenditures nearly doubled (2014–2024)
 - Institutional funding grew fastest (+91.8%), now ~26% of total
 - Internal funds increasingly subsidize research beyond external grants (AttainPartners, 2026; Davis, Tran & Leonard, 2026; Winginton, 2026)
- **Highly concentrated and competitive landscape**
 - Top 30 institutions account for 42% of total R&D spending (NCSES, 2026)
 - Intensifying “arms race” for research prestige and rankings

Problems: Institutional Investment in University Research

- **Hidden and underexamined investments**
 - Institutional contributions remain poorly defined and opaque
 - Limited visibility into how funds are allocated and tracked
- **Rising financial pressure**
 - External funding does not fully cover research costs
 - Institutional investment linked to tuition, fees, and reallocation of resources (Stocum, 2013).
- **Critical knowledge gap**
 - Little evidence on effectiveness, ROI, and decision-making processes
 - Lack of frameworks for strategic investment and accountability

Join Our Study!

Research Questions:

- Institutional Investment in Research
- Spending and allocation practice
- Measuring returns on research investment
- Strategic perspectives

Thank You to Our STAIR Summit Organizing Committee Members!

Steering Committee

- Camelia Kantor
- Jialing Wang
- Zoubeida Ounaies
- Diane Rudy
- Emily Martell
- Jennifer Hoffman
- Debra Sokalczuk
- Jennifer Stewart

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***Thank you all
and safe travels!***



**PennState
Research**

