

Meladi K. Lanier - Personal Statement

I had the privilege of serving on the Programming Committee for AM68 this year and during the keynote address the speaker had a slide that said, “The secret is this room – Nobody grows up wanting to be a research administrator.” That was the only slide that I took a picture of, because aside from the fact that I and everyone else thought it was hilarious, it was also very true. I had no idea what research administration was, what it entailed, or that it was even an option when I started out. I began college in Mechanical Engineering because I love science and math, but I didn’t love homework, so when I graduated from college it was in Business.

Imagine my surprise when I eventually found myself in a position that led me to NCURA and the business of research administration – the partnership between science and business. As many of my colleagues will say is their story too: I didn’t find research administration, it found me. I have often said that research administration is technical-adjacent. Working with engineering faculty requires a basic level of understanding of the work that they do. I need to regularly be able to make connections between their research and business processes to identify roadblocks for them before they happen - whether that’s co-writing a budget justification for a proposal that includes funding for a glovebox or figuring out the process to purchase a glovebox and have it successfully delivered to a lab without a loading dock.

NCURA has provided me a community that “gets it” in a way that a lot of other folks on campus just don’t. The Region VI/II LeadMe Program gave me the opportunity to see myself as a leader on my campus, but also within the NCURA community. I’ve since served on the 2025 Regional Meeting Planning Committee and the AM68 Planning Committee, as well as presented from the departmental perspective and facilitated discussion groups. The Member-At-Large position is the next right step to sharing my love and knowledge of the profession.

My genuine motto has been, “My favorite part of my job is that each day is a new adventure, and you never know what you’re going to get. My least favorite part of my job is that each day is a new adventure, and you never know what you’re going to get.” My experiences working with faculty, students, and staff, along with everything I have learned through NCURA, has facilitated tremendous growth – in both my work skills and my ability to confront challenges and imperfect systems to make things happen. I look forward to continuing to make connections between my fellow research administrators and moving the field forward, so that eventually it is an option. So someday, someone will want to grow up to be a research administrator.

Meladi K. Lanier

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Professional Summary

A life-long Vandal, primarily, but also a research administration and higher education professional with 18 years of progressive leadership experience at the University of Idaho, specializing in sponsored programs, financial management, organizational collaboration, and process improvement.

University of Idaho, Idaho Falls, Idaho, December 2023-Present

Business Manager II, Idaho Falls Center

Provide comprehensive research administration support throughout the sponsored project lifecycle. Oversee financial management and regulatory compliance for a diverse portfolio of sponsored programs, partnering with faculty to develop proposal budgets, manage awards, and resolve complex financial and compliance challenges. Advise principal investigators and university leadership on sponsor regulations, institutional policies, and financial stewardship while collaborating with academic departments, the Office of Sponsored Programs, the Office of Research and Economic Development, funding agencies, and industry partners to support successful research outcomes.

University of Idaho, Idaho Falls, Idaho, October 2016-December 2023

Financial Coordinator, Idaho Falls Center

Collaborated with faculty, the Office of Sponsored Programs, and external partners to support the full lifecycle of sponsored research projects, from proposal development and budget preparation through award management and closeout. Managed financial forecasting, regulatory compliance, research procurement, equipment stewardship, and project administration while serving as a trusted resource for faculty and staff. Contributed to institutional initiatives through service on hiring committees and as the Idaho Falls representative on the University Benefits Advisory Group.

University of Idaho, Idaho Falls, Idaho, June 2015-October 2016

Administrative Assistant I, Center for Advanced Energy Studies

Provided comprehensive administrative support for the Center for Advanced Energy Studies (CAES), collaborating with executive leadership, faculty, researchers, and external partners to support research, academic, and outreach initiatives. Coordinated faculty and staff searches, travel and financial processes, professional development programming, seminars, and research support activities while serving as a liaison among the University of Idaho, CAES partner institutions, and Idaho National Laboratory. Interpreted university policies, supported training and compliance efforts, and was selected to represent the Idaho Falls Center on the University Provost's Strategic Plan Development Committee, reflecting a growing role in institutional planning and collaboration.

University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, June 2014-May 2015

Interim Program Coordinator, ASUI & the Department of Student Involvement

Directed student leadership development and engagement initiatives supporting more than 215 student organizations through training, workshops, and campus programming. Supervised student staff, advised the ASUI Funding Board in the stewardship of a \$67,000 budget, and managed an additional \$32,000 leadership programming budget. Led implementation and promotion of the VandalSync student organization management system, developed strategic outreach and assessment initiatives, and collaborated across campus to deliver large-scale leadership events serving more than

1,000 students. Demonstrated organizational leadership through committee service, employee transitions, and chairing staff search committees.

University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, 2011-June 2014

Administrative Assistant II/Admin. Coordinator, ASUI & the Department of Student Involvement

Coordinated a wide range of administrative and operational functions supporting the Department of Student Involvement, including travel, payroll, hiring, contract processing, and financial transactions. Managed onboarding and administrative support for student employees, facilitated meetings and university access processes, and partnered with student organizations to administer reimbursements and funding. Supported multiple departments through effective organization of personnel, financial, and operational processes, and demonstrated leadership by chairing hiring committees for staff positions.

University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, 2008-2011

Administrative Assistant, Office of the Assistant Vice Provost for Student Affairs

Served as the primary point of contact for the Office of the Assistant Vice Provost for Student Affairs, providing customer service and guidance to students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors. Coordinated departmental operations by managing communications, facility scheduling, budget records, and information systems, while supporting student government activities and ensuring efficient administrative processes. Developed proficiency in the university's Banner finance and human resources systems and contributed to the effective daily operation of a high-volume student services office.

Education

Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Human Resources, emphasis in Human Resources

May 2009

University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho

Academic Certificate in Diversity and Stratification

May 2011

University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho

Professional Association & Leadership

National Council of University Research Administration (NCURA) Member – 2023 to Present

NCURA 68th Annual Meeting Programming Committee – Departmental Track Lead - 2026

NCURA Regional Meeting Programming Committee - 2025

NCURA Regional Meeting, October 2024 – LEADME Program Graduate

NCURA Financial Research Administration Conference (FRA) – 2023, 2019, 2017

NCURA Pre-Award Research Administration (PRA) Conference – 2018, 2017

Training & Certifications

Search Committee Training: Minimizing Unconscious Bias on Committees, March 2023

UI Search Committee Training, March 2023

Mental Health First Aid Certification, November 2020

Safe Zone, May 2020

Transgender 101, April 2020

QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Program, April 2020

Green Dot Facilitator Training and Certification, April 2013

Service/Volunteer Work

Pack 006 Grand Teton Council Cub Scout Treasurer – October 2024 to Present

UI Benefits Advisory Group - October 2016 to Present

Snake River Montessori School – September 2022 to Present

East Idaho College Fair - 2023, 2018, 2017, 2016

Idaho Falls Water Festival - 2023, 2022, 2019, 2016

Idaho Master Gardener - 2016

UI Idaho Falls Center Strategic Planning Committee - 2016

UI Strategic Planning Development Committee – 2015-2016

Spring Alternative Service Break - March 2014

- Led a group of 11 students for a weeklong service opportunity in Hammond, LA.

Make a Difference Day - 2014, 2013, 2012

Saturday of Service - 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012

Serving Your New Community (SYNC) - 2015