

I've always viewed myself as stumbling along my work-related path, no real direction and no clear goals, but now that I'm about half way through my working years, and as I look back I can see I've been on the Research Administration (RA) path all along. I've heard more than once at NCURA conferences that we all have our own story about how we fell into RA, and now I finally recognize my own story – I was meant for this profession.

I was the Office Associate, Accountant and Business Manager for the Wyoming Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit (Coop Unit) at the University of Wyoming (UW) for a total of 14 years. I started at entry level and moved my way up as my knowledge and experience increased. With the Coop Unit I experienced the departmental side of RA, even though I had no idea what "RA" was at the time. I helped build budgets, managed complex sponsored research projects, and even went out into the field on a helicopter capture of mule deer and elk for migration research. I also became close and cared for the graduate students who graduated from our program - it still brings me joy to learn where they landed. Working at the Coop Unit allowed me to develop my attention to detail, my skill to compromise, time management and setting priorities, and helped me gain confidence in my decision making.

It wasn't until I joined the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) at UW as a Staff Assistant that I realized RA was an enterprise with endless opportunities and I began making career goals for the first time in my life. One of my goals was accomplished in 2020 when I passed the CRA exam. I'm currently in my second year in the Central Pre-Award Office at UW, as a Research Services Coordinator, and I believe my experience with the Coop Unit and the department-side of RA makes me a better central RA Coordinator. While working in ORED my commitment to service has increased, I have discovered my inquisitive side, and am developing my own research skills. I see my career goals as being met in two ways – education and experience and/or service. This profession has awakened my passion for learning - there so much to learn – so many agencies, so many sponsors, so many policies and procedures, so I have set additional education goals. I plan to take the CPRA exam in August, I am in discussions with my family on going back to school to earn my Masters in Research Administration and finally, to sit for the CFRA Exam.

Experience comes with time, but I continue to seek out new and different experiences. UW is implementing a new electronic RA system and I jumped at the opportunity to help train campus with using the new system. The experience of being the teacher will make me more knowledgeable about the system. Another experience goal I have (well sort of) is to submit more difficult proposals. There are always going to be proposal submissions that turn into disasters. Even though they are awful experiences filled with stress, anxiety, frustration and sometimes guilt (thank goodness I haven't had too many), these proposals have taught me the most. An additional experience goal I have is to serve the RA Community, helping to advance, improve and disseminate knowledge in all aspects of RA. I hadn't thought about this goal as much as others because I didn't think I was ready, but my supervisor feels I am through this nomination. Sometimes the best experiences aren't always planned for.

I believe my current education and experience would make me a valuable member-at-large for NCURA Region VII. Go Jackalopes!!

Amanda Larson

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Experience

Research Services Coordinator, Office of Research & Economic Development (ORED), February 2021 – Present

- Assist faculty members and other UW employees with proposal submission and to adhere to federal, state and university regulations.
- Contributes to a work environment that encourages knowledge of, respect for, and development of skills to engage with those of other cultures or backgrounds.
- Interpret information in requests for proposals and communicate critical information to principle investigators.
- Knowledge and use of electronic grant administration portals.
- Assist in disseminating information regarding changes to research policy and procedures.
- Manages multiple projects under tight deadlines
- Review budgets for adherence to solicitation guidelines.

Business Manager, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND), June 2020 – February 2021

- Manage contract and grant agreement processing for all WIND funding – proposal budget building, pre-award, greensheets, departmental award set-up, and compliance with award agreements and close-out procedures.
- Continually monitor award activity, review policies, procedures and reports, analyze current practices and make recommendations to improve efficiency and/or financial savings by effectively communicating with WIND Leadership
- Act as Liaison for the Department to other departments, programs, and various agencies on and off-campus. Effectively work with colleges, departments, programs, PIs and Business managers in a friendly, respectable and concise manner.
- Fiscal and budget responsibility for WIND funding, including state, federal, non-profit, gift, indirect cost, and cost-share agreements. Ability to interpret, communicate and execute University, State, Federal, and agency-specific regulations.

Director of Business Operations, Office of Research & Economic Development (ORED), October 2018 – May 2020

- Division Property Manager, Division Human Resources Manager, Division Planning & Budget Manager, Division Cost Center Approver.
- Make independent and authoritative decisions regarding business operations. Ability to compromise, problem solve and keep up with ever-changing priorities.
- Budgetary and administrative responsibility for the ORED Division.
- Assist in the development, implementation, and management of programs and initiatives: budget building, cost projections and long-term planning. Provide recommendations based on budget analysis and interpretation.
- Advise and work closely with the Vice President, Associate Vice President of Research and other directors across campus on a variety of issues.

Assistant to the Vice President, Office of Research & Economic Development, December 2017 – October 2018

- Review, research, analyze, develop, and integrate findings into policies and procedures for greater efficiency.
- Experience using Outlook email and calendar to keep the VP's calendar, schedule large meetings, and events.

Staff Assistant, Office of Research & Economic Development, June 2017 – December 2017

- Maintain detailed, accurate, up-to-date financial records through a minimum of monthly reconciliation and prepare financial reports and data upon request. Investigate discrepancies found when reconciling accounts. Summarize data for decision making and provide input and recommendations to all stakeholders.
- Assist with Research Misconduct investigations and maintain confidentiality.

Business Manager, WY Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, March 2014 – June 2017

- Fiscal and budget responsibility for over 50 research projects and over 100 grants and/or operating budgets including state, federal, non-profit, gift, indirect cost, and cost-share agreements. Ability to interpret, communicate and execute University, State, Federal, and agency-specific regulations.
- Prepare financial reports on Unit funding, research project funding, and federal funding upon request. Summarize a variety of data for decision making, provide input and recommendations.
- Assist in the development, implementation, and management of large complex projects: budget building/prep, cost projections and long term planning. Provide recommendations on future expenditures based on budget analysis and contract and/or budget parameters.
- USGS Research Work Order management: coordinate funding paperwork, distribute funding allocations, communicate program guidelines, policies and procedures to all stakeholders, track expenditures and program reporting requirements.
- Oversee and manage all personnel activities for Faculty, Academic Professionals, benefited, non-benefited/part-time, work studies and graduate assistant positions: position advertising, records management, hiring processes, evaluations, onboarding, position descriptions, effort reporting, time entry, and terminations. Direct Supervision of 1-2 staff members.
- Manage contract and grant agreement processing for all Unit funding – proposal budget building, greensheets, award set-up, and compliance with award agreements and close-out procedures.
- Continually monitor research activity, review policies and procedures and reports, analyze current practices and make recommendations to improve efficiency and/or financial savings by effectively communicating with Unit Leaders, PIs and graduate students.

Personal Skills

- *Great ability to problem-solve, compromise and think outside the box, but within policy and regulation.*
- *Recognize priorities and effectively manage time and energy.*
- *Extremely organized with impeccable record-keeping and electronic records management.*
- *Advise faculty, staff, students, and others on all aspects of operations.*
- *Independently seek training opportunities for professional development.*
- *Exceptional ability to adapt to change and effectively implement changes to policy and procedures.*
- *Excellent verbal and written communication with a wide variety of people regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, position or age.*
- *Knowledge and experience with Microsoft Office suite, Word, Excel, Outlook, OneDrive, Teams, Zoom.*
- *Experience with WyoCloud Financials, Human Capital Management, Project Portfolio Management, InfoEd*

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Job History

Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development, University of Wyoming

- *Research Services Coordinator, February 2021 – Present*

Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, University of Wyoming

- *Business Manager, June 2020 – February 2021*

Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development, University of Wyoming

- *Director of Business Operations, October 2018 – May 2020*
- *Assistant to the Vice President, December 2017 – October 2018*
- *Staff Assistant, June 2017 – December 2017*

Wyoming Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, University of Wyoming

- *Business Manager, March 2014 – June 2017*
- *Accountant, February 2009 – March 2014*
- *Office Associate, November 2003 - February 2009*

Zoology & Physiology Department, University of Wyoming

- *Office Assistant Sr., July 2002 - November 2003*

Education

- **Certified Research Administrator** – November, 2020
- **University of Wyoming**, Laramie, WY – B.A. Anthropology, 2000
- **Northwest Community College**, Powell, WY – Associate of Science, 1996

Memberships

- **National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA)**
 - *Former member of Professional Development Committee for Rocky Mountain Region*
 - *University of Wyoming Campus Liaison*
- **Society of Research Administrators International (SRAi)**

Work-related references

- **Ms. Diana G. Hulme** – Associate Vice President of Research, Office of the VP for Research & Economic Development, *University Wyoming*
 - dhulme@uwyo.edu, 307.766.5527, Colleague
- **Dr. Matthew Kauffman** - Unit Leader, *WY Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, University of Wyoming*
 - mkauffm1@uwyo.edu, 307.766.6404, Supervisor
- **Ms. Farrell Rapp** – Director Research Services, Office of the VP for Research & Economic Development, *University of Wyoming*
 - fgraf@uwyo.edu, 307.766.2047, Supervisor