

Personal Statement – Vincent Borleske

Two years ago, I was contacted by a colleague and asked to submit my own nomination for the position of Regionally-Elected Member of the National Board of Directors for Region VII. This request originated from a person that I had worked for in the past when I started my career in university research administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dianne Barrett was someone that I trusted. I listened to her advice and submitted the necessary paperwork to appear on the Region VII ballot. A few months later, I was elected to serve. This was during the pandemic and my term as an NCURA national board member began as another isolated virtual experience that we were all learning about and adjusting to.

Today, I submit my nomination to continue to serve as the Regionally-Elected Member of the National Board of Directors for Region VII for the 2023/2024 calendar years. Although my initial experience with the national board was virtual, having the opportunity to represent Region VII has allowed me to build connections to colleagues in the state of Arizona, in Region VII, and across the country. This network has enabled me to successfully work and manage through the last few years.

There are many important issues that will confront research administrators and NCURA in the next few years. Continued discussions on the benefits and challenges of remote work, defining regional membership, and responding to efforts to promote equity and diversity at the regional and national level will continue to be important. Maintaining membership numbers, diversifying revenue sources, and continuing to support professional development in a virtual world will also continue to be a challenge as many institutions expect employees to return to “normal” working conditions but expect managers to lead teams on severely reduced budgets.

Well into my two-year term on the NCURA national board, I finally feel like I am grasping the severity of the challenges that we have all worked through in the last 24 months. I am also excited about the potential solutions and opportunities that NCURA can bring to the profession of research administration. For example, creating opportunities for engagement of individuals through committee membership, hosting professional development activities, and providing networking opportunities for our members through virtual platforms are all assets and opportunities that I support and would encourage NCURA to continue at the national and regional level. Matching opportunities to NCURA members in Region VII is an activity I would continue to support and something I have prioritized as a board member. For example, I encouraged a University of Arizona NCURA member to apply to the first cohort of the EMERGE Program and her application was selected. Supporting efforts to expand access and opportunity for Region VII members at both a regional and national level would continue to be a priority in my second term. A priority I learned from a former mentor, Diane Barrett.

As many of you know, I am not originally from Region VII. I moved to Tucson, Arizona and began working at the University of Arizona, College of Engineering in April 2018. In addition to the challenging work in the college, I have been encouraged by my supervisors to seek leadership opportunities in my field including supporting my nomination to serve as the regional representative to the NCURA national board for an additional two-year term. I was not sure how the move to Arizona would work out, but I have grown personally and professionally from the experience of serving on the NCURA board. I would be honored to serve in this capacity for Region VII for an additional two-year term.

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Education: Northern Michigan University, Masters of Public Administration, 1994
University of Wisconsin-Parkside, BA, Political Sciences, 1991

Work Experience:

**April 2018 – Current College of Engineering (ENGR), University of Arizona,
Title: Director, Engineering Research Administration Services (ERAS)**

I began working at the University of Arizona in April 2018. I have spent considerable time working with the ERAS staff to improve internal systems for preparing proposals and tracking work outcomes. We have improved internal tracking systems including creation of an electronic filing system and have eliminated duplicative or unnecessary administrative duties in the proposal development process. During FY21, the ERAS team submitted 391 proposals totaling \$225 million in funding requests with the College of Engineering as the lead unit. The ERAS team has also coordinated pre-award services during this time for CAPLA and the College of Law. During my tenure as Director, ENGR research expenditures have grown each fiscal year.

The staff of ERAS is also committed to improving post award administration of grants and will be working to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the post award management of sponsored projects. Lastly, I have been very involved in developing a more robust compliance management system within the College of Engineering. This includes monitoring conflict of interest reporting and the development and implementation of management plans, working with export control to implement appropriate review of engineering programs, and consulting with other campus offices on issues related to risk management, financial compliance, and procurement activities.

I have also been very involved in University of Arizona initiatives to improve administrative processes and to develop the infrastructure to conduct classified research. I have been involved on committees that have reviewed contract signing authority and processing of agreements. I am also involved in working on improving processes for the internal routing for proposals. I have participated on hiring committees in the export control office, conflict of interest office, and the ENGR search for an Associate Dean for Research. Given the types of research that faculty are interested in on the University of Arizona campus, I have also been involved in developing procedures for the potential of the University to host research under more restrictive terms and conditions. This includes proposal processing, hosting and maintaining information and communications, and promoting collaboration between faculty and the newly organized University of Arizona Applied Research Corporation.

University of Arizona Committees and Workgroups

University of Arizona Research Administrators Collaborative (RAC) August 2021–Present

Partnering with CALS and SPS pre-award, I organized the RAC to provide a forum for campus research administrators to convene monthly to discuss current campus issues. We have met monthly since August 2021 and provide opportunities for collaboration, networking, administrative support through system upgrades, and sharing of best practices. In addition to one-hour dedicated to the campus colleague discussions, SPS is provided one hour to bring updates or relevant issues to this group for consultation and insight.

UAR User Group June 2020-Present

Actively participated in the Quali upgrade that was implemented on the University of Arizona campus in January 2022. As a member of the campus user group, I attended weekly meetings to discuss platform changes, functionality issues, and to conduct user testing and training.

Contract Management Pilot and UITS-CIS Workgroup January 2020-Present

As strategic initiative 5.2A4 under the University of Arizona strategic plan, Pillar 5, the contract management pilot workgroup and the CIS Workgroup have developed ways to increase efficiency, transparency and access to pertinent

data through a shared contract management and storage system. This workgroup continues with planned implementation of Phase II in conjunction with Financial Modernization.

**July 2009 – March 2018 College of Agricultural & Life Sciences (CALs), Research Division
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Title: Distinguished Administrative Program Specialist**

During my tenure in CALS at UW-Madison, I supervised and provided administrative support for the college's preaward research infrastructure. I monitored and distributed tasks to four employees, including other academic staff, who were responsible for all preaward functions for the college. The preaward team managed a number of complex tasks related to proposal preparation and submission, proposal follow-up, negotiating terms and conditions of award documents and completing award set-ups in the University accounting system. I supervised the staff and worked to insure that the division was meeting all proposal deadlines. I also trained and supported staff in reviewing and negotiating industry contracts, material transfer, confidentiality, data transfer, fee-for-service and other collaborative agreements.

While working at the CALS Research Division, I developed a broad knowledge base regarding federal agency proposal submission requirements including grant proposal guidelines for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA). I developed familiarity with federal electronic submission systems including grants.gov, eRA Commons Assist (NIH), Fastlane (NSF), and NSPIRES (NASA). I also gained significant experience working directly with state agencies including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Finally, CALS served as a strategic partner with commodity board partners across the state and region including partners in the corn, soybean, and milk industries. These nonfederal partners included international collaborators providing important and vital annual research support to the college.

CALS had an annual \$75 million award portfolio. The staff submitted more than 700 proposals a year totaling \$272 million in requested funding for FY2017. This included almost \$2.4 million of industry research contracts. The CALS Research Division also processed approximately 350 non-funded agreements including material transfer, confidentiality, data transfer, and fee-for-service agreements each fiscal year.

**March 2006 – July 2009 Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP), University of Wisconsin-Madison
Title: University Grants and Contract Specialist – Senior**

As a Senior University Grants and Contract Specialist, I worked with both pre and post award functions at RSP. I worked closely with academic departments, division offices, and principal investigators to insure timely and accurate submission of proposals and review of documents needed to finalize proposal awards. I was also involved in negotiation of both federal and nonfederal contracts and completed award set ups including the confirmation of conflict of interest, IRB protocols, cost share, and effort reporting. From April 2008 through July 2009, I served as the lead in proposal submission including overseeing the submission of over 600 proposals between March-July 2009 in response to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA).

UW Madison Committees and Workgroups

WISPER Development Team (2007/08) – Worked with Research & Sponsored Programs (RSP) team to assist in developing WISPER functionality, an electronic system for routing and approval of applications and other agreements. This team was also responsible for developing both lecture and hands-on curriculum for campus training.

Cayuse Training Team (2008) – Member of the campus team that implemented Cayuse, the system-to-system solution for grants.gov submissions. This team developed expertise using the Cayuse submission system and created curriculum materials for campus training.

RSP Effort Advisory Group (2015-2018) - RSP committee charged with reviewing campus effort policy and implementation of effort reporting procedures on the UW campus.

RSP Commitment Tracking Workgroup (2016-2018) – Specialized workgroup that reviewed how faculty could better track commitments to research projects using online tracking tools.

Office of Industrial Partnerships Workgroup (2013-2018) – Provided guidance and input on issues related to industry contracting including reviewing university template language for agreements and mechanism to improve negotiation with sponsors.

November 2000 – March 2006 State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration

Title: Grants Specialist, Wisconsin National & Community Service Board (WNCSB)

As a Grants Specialist with WNCSB, I served as a program officer working directly with federally funded AmeriCorps*State programs. The board was made up of 22 citizen members appointed by the governor to select and manage a portfolio of national service programs. AmeriCorps programs, like Peace Corps, provide year-long service opportunities to individuals between the ages of 17-80 to support innovative programs that meet compelling local needs. Annually, the WNCSB provided about \$4 million dollars in grants that supported between 600-800 individuals serving in the program.

Publications

“Evaluation of Pandemic Remote Work within Research Administration and University Policies,” NCURA Magazine, VOLUME 53, No.6, December 2021. Authors: Vincent Borleske, Sandra Logue, and Alesia El Ali.

Leadership Activities

National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA)

Regionally-Elected Member of the National Board of Directors, Region VII, Two-year term ending December 2022

Conference Committees/Presentations

National Council of University & Research Administrators (NCURA)

August 2022

NCURA Annual Meeting – Washington, DC

“The Main Event: Research Administration vs. Research Development. The Unanimous Decision is That We Need to Work Together.”

This discussion group will cover topics related to how institutions handle work distribution between research administration and research development. Discussion will include how institutions define each service and how research administration and research development duties are organized.

Society of Research Administrators International

April 2022

Western-Midwest Section Meeting – Phoenix, AZ

“Supporting Large, Complex, Strategic Proposals.”

This 3.5 hour presentation covered material relevant to leading an effort to provide research administration support to a inter-, multi-, or cross disciplinary proposal involving significant collaboration with other departments, colleges, universities, and other external partners.

National Council of University & Research Administrators (NCURA)

September 2021

NCURA Annual Meeting – Washington, DC

“Beyond the Zoom: Strategies for Improving and Maintaining Communication with Faculty and Each Other.”

This one-hour discussion group provide participants with the opportunity to discuss the challenges of remote work and promoting and maintaining open communication channels with staff, their teams, and faculty.

Tri-University Research Administration Conference

March 2021

State of Arizona Public Institution Virtual Conference

“Proposal Budgets 101”

This budgeting sessions covered basic concepts for beginners on standard proposal budget categories. It covered basic budget concepts and where to find and locate information to complete a compliant budget for a proposal submission.

National Council of University & Research Administrators (NCURA)

March 2020

Pre-Award Research Administrators Conference – San Juan, PR

“Packaging Your Proposals – Negotiating Annual Proposal Submission & Award Processes Through Master Agreements.”

This one-hour training session focused on the benefits and challenges of working with sponsors who contribute annual research dollars through the implementation and use of master agreements.

National Council of University & Research Administrators (NCURA)

Region IV Spring Meeting – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

April 2013

“Award Fest: Negotiating an Award with USDA NIFA.”

This session was presented a case study of the negotiation process with USDA NIFA as it relates to a 5-year, \$10 million dollar award to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This outlined specific examples of proposal follow up and provided a timeline for award negotiations.

National Council of University & Research Administrators (NCURA)

March 2013

Pre-Award Research Administrators Conference – New Orleans, LA

“10 Simple Tips for Developing a USDA Proposal Budget and Writing a USDA Budget Narrative.”

This session covered USDA requirements for proposal budget and budget narrative development including tips and techniques to reduce the award negotiation process.

National Council of University & Research Administrators (NCURA)

Pre-Award Research Administrators Conference – Hilton Head, SC

August 2008

“Grants.gov Packages vs. System-to-System: Enhancing the Change in Electronic Systems.”

Presented on the topic of electronic application submission to federal agencies and differences between using grants.gov application packages versus System-to System submission programs. Led the concurrent session and a follow up discussion group.