

## NCURA Region VII Member-At-Large Personal Statement

Julie Cunningham

I am truly excited about the opportunity to serve in a Member-at-Large role because I am passionate about NCURA and all of the resources that are available to its members. This is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer my time by welcoming new members, encouraging member involvement, building excitement at regional meetings and leading the Region VII Travel Award and Volunteer of the Year programs.

I am a thoughtful, dedicated leader with over 26 years of experience in the field of research administration; six years in healthcare and 20 years in a university setting. I have led the post-award activities at the University of Denver for 20 years, the pre-award team for 15 years and most recently, the Research Development team. I am amazed at how much I continue to benefit from being a member of NCURA and I am especially grateful for the networking, collaboration and friendships I have made with NCURA colleagues across the country. I look forward to working with the leadership team and all of the wonderful members in this leadership role.

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## **BUSINESS SUMMARY**

Extensive record of success in the areas of research administration, financial analysis, accounting, leadership, education, strategic planning, human resources, and project management within the corporate, public, and private financial, healthcare, and academic sectors. Special expertise in improving processes to enhance quality and data accuracy. Excel at identifying areas for enhancing efficiency and leading reengineering initiatives. Adept at evaluating and interpreting agreements, policies, and procedures. Excellent analytical skills and detail oriented.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, Denver, Colorado

January 2009 – Present

### **Senior Director, Sponsored Programs Administration (2009-present)**

Manage approximately \$46M of external funding in grants and contracts and oversee all pre and post award functions through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Provide support to principal investigators in preparing proposals, negotiating terms and conditions of research awards, preparing agreements, administering grants and contracts, expenditure approval, compliance and regulatory issues, accounting and billing for all research awards and coordinate training programs. Responsible for the Banner grants module, managing the eRA initiatives within the department and electronic interfaces with sponsoring agencies, assuring data integrity. Develop procedures to assure accuracy of accounting transactions, act as primary office contact for audit requests, provide analyses of financial information on grants for university administration and Board of Trustees and maintain complete, overall knowledge of Banner grants module and the InfoEd electronic research administration system. Maintain a strong knowledge of Federal Uniform Guidance and the regulatory environment for Sponsored Programs. Represent the University of Denver by participating in COGR, NCURA, SRA and IMURA meetings and forums. Supervise a team of one Director of Research Grant Development, one Manager of Research Financial Services, three Senior Grant and Contract Administrators, three Grant and Contract Administrators, one Financial Analyst and one Graduate Student Intern.

- Improved efficiency by reorganizing the department and training staff on pre and post award functions.
- Developed comprehensive accounting procedures for grants and contracts administration.
- Played a key role in vital system implementations and upgrades, including Banner and Info Ed.
- Serve on several strategic planning committees for university-wide initiatives.

### **Grants Accounting Manager (2003-2009)**

Reconciled financial balances between the Banner grants module and the GL. Researched posting and system errors and reconciled clearing accounts. Approved correcting journal entries and all monthly federal drawdowns. Developed procedures to approve expenditures and assured the accuracy of journal entries and monthly close procedures. Utilized data from the Banner financial system for the preparation of standard and custom reports and invoices. Provided monthly reports on accounts receivable and aging of A/R, bad debt, overruns and holding funds and managed the collection duties for the office. Approved all P-Cards for grants and reviewed all expenditures for allowability at each monthly billing cycle. Calculated tuition waivers for grant funds and posted expenses on a quarterly basis. Ran daily processes to post cash, indirect costs and billing. Supervised a staff of one Senior Grant Fund Analyst, three Grant Accounting Specialists and one Graduate Student Intern position.

- Implemented processes and procedures to effectively use the Banner grants and billing modules.
- Developed an A/R report to effectively reconcile the Banner grants module to the GL.
- Decreased A/R by \$2M through improved reconciliation process and collection monitoring tools.

ROSE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, Denver, Colorado

August 2001 – October 2003

### **Controller/Human Resource Manager**

Provided internal financial reporting monthly with budget variance analysis. Provided external quarterly financial reporting for supporting organizations, donor-advised funds and other funds held on behalf of others. Prepared annual budgets, reconciled investment activity and reconciled grant making and donor databases. Prepared for the annual audit including

financial statements and managed project accounting and government grants for a biomedical corporation. Managed the human resources function for a staff of 25 employees including payroll, benefits and new employee orientation and training. Coordinated commercial insurance renewals and claims and troubleshoot computer problems. Supervised a staff of three.

- Negotiated new healthcare plan and commercial insurance renewal.
- Updated human resources policies and trained accounting staff on new payroll system.

DENVER HEALTH AND HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, Denver, Colorado

May 1997 - July 2001

#### **Financial Analyst**

Directed specific grants financial activity including tracking budget issues, cost analysis, monitoring funded projects, coordination with related financial activities and development of reporting structures. Resolved financial and administrative issues with sponsors and administrators and resolved post-award contract issues. Analyzed a broad range of financial and post-award accounting data and information and made judgments about how best to present data. Administered budgets, and revenues and expenses for special project funds and clinical trials. Reviewed and authorized accounts payable and purchasing requests and resolved grant payroll issues. Prepared all accounting and budget entries for State of Colorado, federal and private grants and contracts.

- Developed comprehensive monthly financial statements for the new Denver Health and Hospital Foundation and prepared tax returns.
- Implemented procedures for grant and contract financial compliance, proposal submissions and budgeting.

NATIONAL JEWISH CENTER FOR RESPIRATORY MEDICINE, Denver, Colorado

April 1995– May 1997

#### **Program Specialist**

Administered sponsored grants/contracts in accordance with agency regulations including the review of grant and contract applications, maintenance of budgetary controls, pre-audit and approval of expenditure documents, and project budget reviews. Established restricted fund cost centers and prepared reports of expenditures for grants and contracts including analysis of allowable costs and adjusting journal entries. Displaced restricted funds at year-end and reconciled funds to the general ledger. Resolved post-award financial and accounting issues with sponsors and program administrators.

- Created thorough reporting procedures for the Medicare Time and Effort tracking system.
- Developed comprehensive billing procedures for departments and clinics.

RESOLUTION TRUST CORPORATION (RTC), Denver, Colorado

May 1990 - March 1995

#### **Lead Financial Reporting Analyst (1993-1995)**

Analyzed and researched asset data submitted by financial institutions. Identified and interpreted trends and major variations among institutions with previous accounting periods. Developed financial statements and oversaw compliance with reporting deadlines. Utilized extensive computer skills in producing financial reports and supervised a staff of three reporting analysts.

- Selected as Lead Analyst to delegate and manage workflow within the department to meet deadlines for special projects.
- Initiated, designed and co-implemented numerous financial database systems and reporting procedures.
- Created and maintained comprehensive desk procedures for all reports produced.
- Developed paradox-based systems for tracking contractor performance.
- Developed senior management reports for Advisory Board quarterly meetings.

**Asset Technician/Assistant Oversight Manager (1991-1993)** Audited asset management reports and reviewed, analyzed and reconciled monthly and quarterly departmental financial reports. Responded to inquiries from congressional representatives and managed the reporting requirements and contract policies of major asset management firms.

- Implemented a comprehensive filing system for all asset management files facilitating ready access for six departments.
- Developed a departmental manual for auditing contractor financial reports and trained staff members.

**Claims/Settlement Assistant (1990-1991)**

Processed deposit insurance claims and made insurance determinations regarding customer accounts. Served as a claim agent in eight savings and loan closings and prepared responses to congressional inquiries from depositors of failed savings and loan institutions.

- Assisted in the distribution of \$1 billion in dividends and settling over 7500 deposit insurance claims.
- Managed a staff of 10 government contractors and coordinated new employee orientation.

**COMPUTER AND SOFTWARE SKILLS**

Windows, Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Internet Explorer, Outlook, Banner, Kronos, Info Ed

**ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

Read, write, and speak Spanish with some fluency. Completed 21 credit hours of Spanish.

**EDUCATION**

BS, Business Education, University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Nebraska  
MBA in Finance and Accounting 3.84 GPA, Regis University - Denver, Colorado

**AFFILIATIONS**

Member of National Association of University Research Administrators  
Member of the Society of Research Administrators  
Member of Council on Governmental Relations

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS**

**REGION VII**

**NOMINATION FORM ELECTION 2024**

**Nominator:**

Name: Noelle Strom

Institution: University of Denver

Position: Director of External Funding, College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

Phone: 303-871-4039 Email: Julie.cunningham@du.edu

**Candidate Information:**

Select One:  Chair-Elect (2025)

Treasurer-Elect (2025)

Member-at-Large – 2 year term (2025-2026)

Regionally Elected Member of the National Board of Directors (2025-2026)

Name: Julie Cunningham

Institution: University of Denver

Position: Senior Director, Sponsored Programs Administration

Phone: 303-871-4039 Email: Julie.cunningham@du.edu

**Nominator's Statement of Candidate's Qualifications:**

I am writing to enthusiastically nominate Julie Cunningham for the position of Member-At-Large. With a strong commitment to NCURA's mission and a deep understanding of our region's needs, Julie is exceptionally well-suited to contribute as a Member-At-Large.

Julie has extensive experience in research administration and leadership. With over eighteen years of experience in research administration, she has proven to be an exemplary leader in our field. She has led the Sponsored Programs Administration team at the University of Denver (DU) for more than a decade, overseeing the pre- and post-award functions during a 10-year period when the institution's research volume doubled and DU became an R1.

Julie is a thoughtful, supportive, and strategic leader. I am confident that Julie's passion for research administration and community building will greatly benefit our region in the role of Member-At-Large. Thank you for considering her nomination.