



RAPIDS

Research Administration Professional Identity Values Scale

By Melinda Fischer, José Santos, and Simon Kerridge

Introduction

In a rapidly evolving world where research and innovation have become the driving forces behind global progress, the role of research administrators (RAs) is gaining significance. RAs play a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth functioning of research activities, and their professional contributions are invaluable. To further support and elevate the profession of research administration, the RAPIDS team has embarked on (what we hope will be) a transformative journey to create a Professional Identity Values Scale for Research Administrators. This article provides an overview of RAPIDS' mission and the potential impact of this endeavor on the research administration community, and the personal impact you can have by virtue of your participation in the survey.

The Significance of a Professional Identity Values Scale

Professionals such as teachers (Cheung 2008), counselors (Prosek & Hurt, 2014), and physicians (Barbour & Lammers, 2015) have long benefited from the implementation of Professional Identity Values Scales. These scales have proven instrumental in shaping the identity of these professions, setting standards, and guiding the professional development of individuals within them. For research administrators, a similar tool is long overdue. The RAPIDS team recognizes the importance of understanding the core values and professional identity of RAs, and our initiative aims to bridge this gap.

The RAPIDS Project

The Research Administration Professional Identity Development Scale (RAPIDS) project was announced in an *NCURA Magazine* article in August, promising to deliver a valuable tool that will contribute to the growth and refinement of the research administration profession. Since then, the RAPIDS team has been working diligently on developing a survey tool to

collect data and insights from the research administration community. This survey, which we now invite you to participate in, is a crucial step in gathering comprehensive information on the values and professional identity of RAs.

Benefits for Individuals

RAPIDS will offer individual research administrators the opportunity to assess their alignment with the values and skill sets shared by their peers. This self-assessment can potentially help RAs better understand their strengths, areas for growth, and how they fit within the larger landscape of research administration. We hope it will provide a clearer sense of professional identity, aiding in career development and personal growth.

Benefits for Organizations

By understanding the core values and identities of RAs, organizations can better tailor their professional development programs to enhance their ability to meet the needs of their members and employees. This could result in more effective training and support, ultimately leading to higher-quality research administration.

Attracting New Talent

One of the potential long-term benefits of RAPIDS could be its ability to attract more individuals to pursue careers in research administration. By highlighting the unique characteristics of the field, the scale will paint a clearer picture of what it means to be a research administrator, ultimately making the profession more appealing to newcomers. This, in turn, could help address the growing demand for skilled research administrators in academia, government, and the private sector.

Continued from page 3.

- **NCURA holds global standing:** it is internationally recognized as a leader, partner, and resource for professional development and collaboration. It works with sister societies to build and celebrate our global profession.
- **NCURA is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** this year, a land and labor acknowledgment statement was read at our national, and many of our regional, meetings. Further, AM65 focused on Inclusivity. Chaired by Kris Monahan, and co-chaired by Nancy Lewis and David Smelser. The theme reflected that 'US' is at the center of inclusion. That we are all in this work together to advance and support research.

I am thankful for the opportunity to have served as your NCURA President. In reflecting on the year, there are countless people to thank. My special thanks to Kim Moreland and Dave Richardson for their exceptional mentorship. Thank you to the University of Glasgow, particular thanks to Chris Pearce, Vice-Principal for Research & Knowledge Exchange and Uzma Khan, Vice-Principal for Economic Development & Innovation. I commenced my term as Vice President, and then President of NCURA, alongside moving country to take up a new position as Executive Director of Research Services at Glasgow. Both Chris and Uzma actively create a space for people to thrive, to step out of their comfort zone, to learn and to grow, with the knowledge that you are supported, which I am grateful for. My involvement with NCURA has crossed several institutions, from my early research administration days at the Australian National University, and later, at the University of Melbourne and now at the University of Glasgow. Each institution, and the people I have worked with, have encouraged my participation in NCURA—thank you.

Working with the Board of Directors, the Select and Standing Committees, Regional Officers, Presidential task force members, and the many exceptional volunteers that work across NCURA and our NCURA staff has been an honor. I extend particular thanks to outgoing Immediate Past President, Ara Tahmassian; outgoing Secretary, Robyn Remotigue; Treasurer, Timothy Schailey; Executive Director, Kathleen Larmett; Deputy Chief Executive, Tara Bishop; and Incoming President, Kris Monahan, for their guidance, support, and friendship. Kris, I wish you all the best as you take on the leadership baton. ■

“...we are all in this work together to advance and support research.”

Bryony Wakefield, PhD, is the NCURA 2023 President and serves as Executive Director of Research Services at the University of Glasgow. She can be reached at Bryony.Wakefield@glasgow.ac.uk.

Summary

The RAPIDS project aims to be a significant step forward in the development and professionalization of the research administration field. The creation of a Professional Identity Values Scale for Research Administrators will provide a comprehensive understanding of the values and professional identity of RAs. This, in turn, will benefit individuals by helping them align with their peers and grow professionally, while also supporting organizations and institutions in shaping more effective professional development programs. Moreover, the scale has the potential to attract new talent to the profession, ensuring its continued growth and success. To make this project a success, we urge all members of the research administration community to participate in the survey, as your insights are critical to shaping the future of the profession. Together, we can foster a stronger understanding of the global professional identity of research administrators and ensure the continued excellence of research administration worldwide. ■



You can read more about RAPIDS on the project website:
<https://bit.ly/ncurarapids>

References

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Melinda Fischer, CRA, CPRA, is a pre-award grants administrator and manager. College of Education Research Office, at Clemson University. She is PI of the NCURA funded RAPIDS project, Co-PI of the RAAAP-3 project, and advisor to RAAAPA. She is also an editor of the *Journal of Research Management and Administration*, and the *North American editor of the Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration around the World*. She can be reached at Melindf@Clemson.edu or on LinkedIn.



José Santos, PhD, PMP® is an Assistant Researcher and Research Manager at Centro de Investigação de Montanha (CIEMO), Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, Portugal. He is Co-I of the NCURA funded RAPIDS project. With over 17 years of experience in RMA, former Board Member of the Portuguese RMA network (PIC), his current research interests comprise R&D, innovation and project management, and professionals working at the interface of science. He can be reached at josesantos@ipb.pt.



Simon Kerridge, BSc, DProf, is the Founder of Kerridge Research Consulting. He is an advisor on the RAPIDS project, an EARMA board member, a past chair of ARMA, an editor of the *Journal of Research Management and Administration*, a co-editor of the *Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration around the World*, and leader of the various RAAAP projects. He can be reached at S.R.Kerridge@Kent.ac.uk, LinkedIn, and Twitter @SimonRKerridge.



Please take the survey now!

<http://bit.ly/RAPIDSsurvey>



Board Update

On November 11 and 12, the NCURA Board of Directors gathered in beautiful Savannah, Georgia to discuss a number of business items and review progress toward NCURA's strategic plan. Throughout the conversations, the Board focused on NCURA's guiding values of Integrity, Excellence, Service, Collegiality, Transparency, and Inclusiveness.

Several action items including numerous appointments to NCURA's standing and select committees were approved at this meeting. Some highlights of other discussion items include:

- The Board heard updates about a series of upcoming one day symposia planned for June 2024 on Artificial Intelligence, Research Security, and Pre-Post Award Leadership.
- The Board also heard updates on the growing number of Young Professionals in NCURA. In 2021 there were 199 identified Young Professionals. This number has grown to 949 Young Professionals in 2023.
- In mid-September, NCURA traveled to Helsinki, Finland to present a program on U.S. Grant Funding and Management, sponsored by the US Embassy in Finland and FARIA (Finnish-American Research & Innovation Accelerator).
- In October, NCURA signed an MOU with the French organization Udice to provide continuing education on US grants as well as performing introductions between US institutions and the 10 universities which make up Udice.
- NCURA received official notification from both the US Department of State and the European Commission that NCURA is now officially designated as the United States National Contact Point for Horizon Europe grants.
- The Board spent time discussing NCURA's role in the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) and the review of a statement for the INORMS website.
- The Board approved that NCURA may rotate its annual meeting location between Washington, DC, and other cities.
- Bryony Wakefield shared a Presidential Charge to a Task Force chaired by Anthony Ventimiglia to consider initiating a new award for research administrators new to the profession.
- The Board supported a pilot initiative to formalize a President's Council comprised of NCURA's past Presidents.

The Board concluded the meeting by discussing priorities and strategies for achieving NCURA's strategic plan core goals of:

- 1) Supporting A Growing Profession
- 2) Expanding the Research Administration workforce
- 3) Providing essential resources on the integration of technology into research administration
- 4) Building avenues for collaboration—between institutions globally

The Board will meet virtually in mid-December to finalize any 2023 action items and discussion.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kris Monahan



Kris Monahan, PhD, is the Vice President/President-Elect of NCURA and serves as Senior Director, Sponsored Projects and Research Compliance at Providence College. She can be reached at kmonaha6@providence.edu.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to any member of the Board of Directors or NCURA staff.

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