

Jenna Isakson
Seattle University
Nominee Statement – Secretary-Elect/Secretary

I am excited to submit my interest for the role of Secretary-Elect for NCURA Region VI as an opportunity for me to leverage my organizational, administration, and communication skills in support of an organization that has been instrumental in my development as a research administrator. I joined NCURA in 2010 after taking my first role in a departmental post-award support role at Seattle University, and have benefited from multiple NCURA workshops and regional meetings. The community and resources cultivated by NCURA, and specifically, through the regional meetings have contributed to my interest, persistence, and growth in this career path. As I've grown in experience and confidence as a research administrator, I've sought out ways to give back such as volunteering at regional meetings and sharing my experience in professional development opportunities such as the Lunch and Learn series and 2023 Regional Meeting. I'd be delighted to deepen my engagement and serve as the Region VI Secretary-Elect.

In my 13+ years in research administration, I've been fortunate to gain experience as a departmental post-award administrator, as a central office Sponsored Research Officer supporting the full grants lifecycle, and currently as the Director at a predominately undergraduate institution, overseeing research development, research administration, compliance and policies, and office operations at Seattle University. As a supervisor, I value collaboration, communication, and transparency and would bring those attributes to this role.

I am deeply committed to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion and have been grateful to benefit from NCURA's DEI webinar series, as well as my institution's efforts to advance DEI through a bi-annual Racial Equity Summit, Supervisor DEI Training series, and other programming and resources that have taught me to listen deeply and to recognize and challenge internal biases and inequitable systems. As a member of the region VI board, I would commit to encouraging participation from all individuals, striving for our region to reflect the diverse backgrounds of all of our members. As secretary, I would ensure that our meetings, communications, and decision-making processes reflect NCURA's DEI commitment and advocate for policies and practices that promote equity and justice.

I believe that my organizational, deep listening, and communication skills, and collaborative approach make me a great candidate for Secretary-Elect. If selected, I will devote the necessary time and attention to this role - taking detailed and concise meeting minutes, efficient and clear communications, and conducting thorough outreach and engagement for future elections. Thank you for your consideration.

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Master of Public Administration, emphasis in non-profit sector (summa cum laude)

UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND

Bachelor of Science in Organizational Communication; minor in Sociology

Employment:

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Director, Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP)

3/2019 - present

- **Leadership & Management:** Oversee all sponsored projects operations from pre-award through closeout, ensuring compliance. Supervise and evaluate a team of five, organize staff meetings, and promote professional development.
- **Staffing:** Hired and onboarded four staff members with structured plans.
- **Strategic Planning:** Provide strategic direction for sponsored projects, collaborating with campus leadership to achieve university funding goals; Co-chair of Goal 2.2 of university strategic plan.
- **Institutional Initiatives:** led the creation of and chair the Faculty Fellowships and Awards Committee; facilitate limited submissions and internal fellowship program; support institutional grant awards.
- **Faculty Engagement:** Established and lead an OSP faculty advisory council to improve scholarship initiatives, resulting in a key strategic white paper.
- **Research Development:** Integrated research development into office services, including budget allocation, subscription services, and educational workshops; identify and disseminate institutional grant opportunities.
- **Proposal Support:** Steward institutional proposals, develop comprehensive proposal checklists and guides; develop complex budgets.
- **Training & Policy Development:** Host a quarterly peer learning group for grant managers, continuously update policies, and led the transition to compensation certification.
- **Compliance & Technology:** Oversee programs to maintain compliance with all federal, sponsor, and internal policies; developed a partnership for animal care compliance; collaborated with IRB on implementing a customized electronic research administration software.
- **Documentation & Communication:** Maintain a comprehensive procedure manual and an updated website, oversee newsletters and reports.
- **Collaboration:** Work with campus offices to support grantsmanship and scholarship.
- **Operations & Reporting:** Track key metrics, manage department operations and budget, and distribute regular reports to administration.

WOODLAND PARK ZOO

Donor Stewardship Coordinator

4/2018 - 3/2019

- **Internal Grants Coordination:** Facilitate collaboration between development, finance, and programs. Review and recommend improvements for post-award grant management to ensure compliance with federal and private funders such as IMLS and USAID. Establish and communicate new procedures internally.
- **Donor Stewardship:** Write acknowledgment letters and stewardship reports. Provide exceptional customer service, oversee donor recognition and benefit fulfillment. Develop a donor stewardship plan with retention goals, and implement new tactics for enhancing the donor experience. Develop and document related processes and procedures.

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Sponsored Research Officer, Office of Sponsored Projects

4/2016 - 3/2018

- **Proposal and Award Management:** Supported faculty in grant prospecting, proposal preparation, and post-award management; Developed grant budgets and ensured compliance with university, sponsor, and federal guidelines; Reviewed and drafted contracts, provided training to faculty and staff; Liaised with sponsors for award modifications and issued subawards.
- **Internal Communications:** Collaborated with Corporate and Foundation Relations, the Controller's Office, and department budget managers; Created and facilitated grant handbooks and trainings, updated the department website, and led the department's strategic planning process.

Grant Accounting & Research Coordinator

9/2011 – 4/2016

- **Post-Award Management:** Oversee all post-award aspects of Science & Engineering grant portfolio; Produce financial and qualitative grant data reports; Facilitate all grant procurement, budgets and reconciliation; Develop and maintain internal Science & Engineering grant policies and procedures; Coordinate grant-funded conferences.
- **Manage undergraduate research program:** Coordinate the annual research stipend and travel award application, review and selection process; hire and communicate with student employees; manage the research open house and end of summer poster session.

Volunteer:

KILOWATTS FOR HUMANITY

Co-Founder & Board Member (Treasurer)

12/2013 - 12/2022

- Led incorporation and application for 501c3 status; Establish financial and operational policies and procedures; Create case for support and promotional materials; Participate in fundraising efforts; communicate mission through web communications and presentations; manage all finances.
- Served as business team lead on solar installation projects (Muhuru Bay, Kenya; Munyama Zambia)

Additional:

- **Certification:** Certified Research Administrator (CRA), June 2023.
- **Professional Development:** Active member of NCURA, NORDP, SRAI, and CLASP. Presented at NCURA Regional Lunch and Learn (August 2023), NCURA Regional Meeting 2023, and CLASP virtual meeting 2023 and CLASP Coffee Talk discussion 2024
- **Community Involvement:** NCURA Region VI meeting volunteer; Endowed Mission Fund Review Committee; Women in Mission Advisory Team member; Supervisors Community of Practice working group member; SU Staff Council (2020-2022) and Professional Development Subcommittee Co-Chair
- **Awards:** 2015 College of Science & Engineering Distinguished Staff Award recipient.
- **Skills:** Graduate coursework in Sustainable Business and Criminal Justice. Proficient in Microsoft Office, DocuSign, OneAegis, Google Docs & Sheets, Adobe