

## Celebrating a Profession: The Global Perspective

### **Dr. David Langley**

Director, Research and Enterprise Development  
University of Bristol  
Senate House, Tyndall Avenue  
Bristol, BS8 1TH, UK  
+44 117 928-8457  
david.langley@bristol.ac.uk

### **Dr. Mildred Huff Ofofu**

Assistant Vice President  
Sponsored Programs and Research  
Morgan State University  
1700 East Cold Spring Lane  
Baltimore, MD 21251  
443-885-4505  
mofosu@moac.morgan.edu

### **Authors' Note**

This article celebrates one of the most challenging factors in contemporary research administration – the stretch of internationalization. We have attempted to provide a sense of the global change that has taken place in the profession and to detail its ever unfolding nature. By necessity, the paper reflects our own experiences, and so we readily acknowledge that this means we have focused on certain examples at the exclusion of others. The views expressed here are those of the authors.

### **Abstract**

Universities operate increasingly in a global environment, and the scope and scale of sponsored research programmes have changed dramatically over the last 40 years. It is now commonplace for research programmes to involve international collaboration among researchers from multiple countries and even continents. There can be little doubt that research and its administration is an international activity that poses opportunities and challenges to those involved in its administration, support and delivery. As sponsors and regulatory frameworks have become more complex, the need for the management of research administration to move away from the principal investigator (or her/his administrator) to resource-entities with relevant skill sets has become essential. Dedicated research support offices and professional officers are now common in the larger, research active institutions, and these have had to adapt and invariably grow as a consequence of the changes in complexity, size and scope of research programmes. Increased requirements in research administration over the last 40 years have had a global impact and there is hardly a corner of the world where we would not find colleagues striving to administer and lead research to the best of their capabilities. There can be little doubt that we truly are a global profession that offers a number of exciting opportunities to work together and move us forward even further.

**Key Words:** Global research, international sponsored programme offices, international research collaboration, developing countries

# Reflections

---

Research administrators must ensure they are best placed to help secure and manage funding, add value to the academic mission, and continue to develop strategic alliances while ensuring risks to an institution are minimized. Demands on staff involved in research management continue to grow, and it is not unusual to find dedicated sponsored research support offices in universities and elsewhere with specialist areas such as: research strategy and themes; horizon scanning; benchmarking and metrics; pre-award skills and costing methodologies; internal peer review; contract negotiation; post-award management and adherence to sponsor terms and conditions; audit; networking with sponsors and being aware of their requirements; organizational portfolio management and reporting; trend analysis; project management of large contracts and bids; clinical research, ethics and governance/integrity; international research programmes; knowledge transfer and intellectual property; spin outs and commercialisation; consultancy; business systems and accounting; management information and reporting; and monitor compliance and risk areas.

International research collaboration is a rapidly growing component of research activity for virtually all countries, and provides researchers with opportunities to move further and faster by working with other leaders in their field. A recent report (Adams, Gurney, and Marshall, 2007) identified international collaborations as contributing to outputs with some of the highest impact activity. The authors studied the output of nine countries (Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, China, India, UK and the USA) across a broad range of disciplines, and found the volume of international collaboration had increased significantly in the last 10 years, with Germany, UK and USA dominating as the largest and highest quality research economies.

One of the largest challenges for the less research-intensive universities (who may have an income of only a few thousand dollars of awards in place at any one time) is that they are often overwhelmed by the complexity and governance

required to carry out that research. Regardless of the size of the sponsored research office or the total amount of grant and contract awards, all institutions must know, understand, abide by, and implement standard rules, guidelines and procedures. For example, bioethics and governance of human subjects should apply to all, regardless of the country. The recent document, *International Compilation of Human Subject Research Protections*, published by Health and Human Services, summarises human subjects legislation for 79 countries. The current edition contains entries for eight new countries: Armenia, Croatia, Cyprus, Iran, Malawi, Moldova, Nigeria, and Tajikistan. If partnerships and collaborations are to be effective and successful, research administrators must become familiar with programme and statutory requirements and terminology that differ from their own, and they must ensure compliance. The trend towards electronic application systems also means that a collaborator, regardless of location or country, must be able to register and use systems such as those employed by NIH.

The internationalisation of research also affects those countries whose research base and infrastructure may be less developed than our own. Conversations increasingly refer to the likely growth of research and development opportunities in China and India. However, many countries outside North America and Europe are involved in research, and a series of country reports in the journal *Research Africa* highlights recent developments in Africa. Many of those institutions have extremely well developed sponsored research offices such as those found in South Africa and are involved in many international studies, particularly clinical trials. Perhaps surprisingly, the research agenda extends to countries with recent troubled histories or less developed economies. In Rwanda, for example, higher education has expanded rapidly in the post-genocide years; since 1997, three new institutions have been created, the number of government-sponsored students has risen 250%, and the budget for science and technology has

grown 340% to almost \$27m (Research Africa, 2007). Over the last nine years, the country has produced 139 research articles, almost all of which involved international collaboration. These endeavours must, of course, be supported by research managers and administrators, and a number of organisations, including the Society of Research Administrators International, have been involved in helping some of these countries develop and evolve their capabilities and skill sets.

One tangible way in which colleagues can support each other and share best practice is through professional associations. A conference held in Lagos, Nigeria in 2006 attracted some 50 delegates from Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone who agreed to form a West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA). This recognised the need for a sustainable self-help organisation that disseminates good practice across the region in a way similar to SRA. The aim is to publish best practice guides and training workshops. This venture further indicates that there is truly a global family of research managers and administrators.

Where do research managers in developing countries come from? Some answers came from a recent survey conducted by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) at conferences held in South Africa and Nigeria. A vast majority of respondents (69%) cited universities as their most recent place of work, and 75% held doctorates. The ACU is a good example of an organisation promoting the globalisation of research and its management. The association produces a journal entitled *Research Global*, with articles dedicated to this topic. Information concerning the ACU can be found at: [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk).

The global nature of research administration will be celebrated next year at the second Congress of the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) in Liverpool, UK. The INORMS gathering will provide an opportunity for research administrators from all

over the world to explore the similarities in roles and activities, and identify the essential aspects of research management that cross national boundaries. The Congress will highlight a wide range of sessions, including: research funding and funding opportunities; policy and strategy; research integrity, ethics and governance; research integrity, ethics and governance; systems and operations; management and organization of research support; developing and supporting researchers; developing professional research managers and administrators; dissemination and translation of research; and assessing research. More information concerning INORMS 2008 can be found at: [www.inorms2008.org](http://www.inorms2008.org).

The membership of INORMS, shown in Table 1, illustrates the global scope of research administration. Although it is widely encompassing, there is enormous scope for expansion and inclusion. This can often best be achieved through training and professional activities.

Meaningful partnerships and collaborations will assist sponsored research offices in expanding training in countries, regions and communities. Some training can be accomplished through educated and professional citizens. The outreach can be done through religious or community-based organisations. Education and training in health and medicine will improve child and elder health, improve the life expectancy and quality of life of women, and reduce certain sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoea and AIDS. Education and training are also needed in fiscal accountability, especially in unstable or warring countries or those without the usual infrastructure and controls we would expect.

Due to a lack of understanding of some cultural and environmental conditions, many projects are not successful. A few examples may be helpful. Transport links may be vastly different from our own; roads and railways simply may not exist. In such cases, some of the largest costs in a research programme may involve fuel for generators

# Reflections

Table 1  
*Membership of INORMS*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Australian Research Management Society (ARMS)</li><li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)</li><li>• European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA)</li><li>• Association of Research Managers and Administrators UK (ARMA)</li><li>• Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA)</li><li>• Society of Research Administrators International (SRA)</li><li>• Canadian Association of University Research Administrators (CAURA)</li><li>• Swiss Association of Research Managers and Administrators (SARMA)</li><li>• West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA)</li></ul>
---

or heavy duty vehicles. Moreover, it may not always be possible to obtain a receipt for fuel purchases; often institutions must operate through cash rather than budgets. One also has to be familiar with the holiday schedules in other countries, where the breaks are much longer compared to the few days allowed in the U.S.

There is an urgent need to share best practices on community development; integrating education and research; improving science and technology; capacity building in electronic research administration; establishing/increasing or improving research administration in pre-award, post-award, and compliance; establishing strategic partnerships; and finding the most effective ways to meet economic and social needs in communities and regions.

Once capacity is improved, more research can be done on health issues such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, contaminated water, and other serious realities that affect everyday life in those countries.

The growth of international research has been mirrored in the development of offices of sponsored research at virtually all research active institutions across the globe, including

those in developing countries. This poses an opportunity for institutions to undertake larger, bolder programmes of work and tackle major research questions. It also poses a seriously stretching challenge to us, as research administrators, to share best practices among the global community and become conversant with international requirements and law. We must work to ensure that international collaborations are as efficient and seamless as those between local organizations and celebrate the common links rather than stumble over the differences. Even more deeply than simply “practices,” the international perspective has changed our profession and our self-identity beyond all recognition over the last 40 years, and it is likely the same will be true for the next 40. Our present task is to discover more deeply how we have been changed and the horizons toward which we are aiming. It would seem obvious, then, how imperative it is for us to work more closely with one another around the globe so that the leadership we exercise as research administrators always enriches both our society and the research that serves as so much hope for a searching world.

## References

- Adams, J., Gurney, K., & Marshall, S. (2007). *Patterns of international collaboration for the UK and leading partners*. A report commissioned by the UK Office of Science and Innovation.
- Ajai-Ajagbe, P. (2007, April). Research managers – Who are they? *Research Africa*. The R&D profile – Rwanda. (2007, March). *Research Africa*.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections. (2007). *International compilation of human subject research protection*.

**Eric Guttag, JD** is a partner in the Cincinnati, Ohio office of the intellectual property law firm of Jagtiani + Guttag. He has over 30 years of corporate and private intellectual property law experience on various aspects of patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret and unfair competition matters. He is extensively well published, and is a member of the American Intellectual Property Law Association as well as various bar associations.

**James Hanlon** is Manager of Human Resources and Administration at TRIUMF, Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics, located in Vancouver, British Columbia. He has been an active member of SRA since 1992, has served on the Board, has chaired and co-chaired a number of SRA committees and is a member of the SRA Distinguished Faculty.

**Dr. Jose Jackson-Malete** is Deputy Director of Research in the Office of Research and Development at the University of Botswana. Previously, she was Director of Research at the National Food Technology Research Centre in Botswana and Lecturer of Food Science at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. She has conducted research in her native academic areas, as well as in the responsible conduct of research and evaluating research environments.

**Christine B. Knisely** is Executive Director of the Office of Research and Grants at Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine. She has worked at the College for over ten years in the areas of grants and research administration and curriculum. Prior to Ohio University, Ms. Knisely was the Assistant Director of the Ohio Humanities Council, a state-based agency of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

**Dr. Greg Koski** is Associate Professor of Anesthesia at the Harvard Medical School and Senior Scientist at the Institute for Health Policy at the Massachusetts General Hospital. He is also President-Elect of the Academy of Pharmaceutical Physicians and Investigators and Associate Editor of the Journal for Empirical

Research on Human Research Ethics. He was formerly Director of the Office for Human Research Protections at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Dr. Elliott Kulakowski** is President of the Research Administration and Management Strategy Group. He has served as a Past-President of the Society of Research Administrators International. He has been an executive in research management in federal, university, and academic medical center environments. A proponent of the SRA educational mission overseas, he is co-editor of the recent work, Research Administration and Management (Jones/Bartlett).

**Marcia Landen** is Executive Director of the Pre-Award Office at Indiana University, with responsibility for proposal submissions, award negotiations and acceptance, and staff management. With a particular interest in professional development and leadership in research administration, she regularly presents conference sessions on these topics. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in communications as well as a certificate in nonprofit management from the School of Continuing Studies at Indiana University.

**Dr. David Langley** is Director of Research and Enterprise Development at the University of Bristol, UK. A neuropharmacologist, he was a post-doctoral Fulbright Scholar at the NIH. He has an extensive record as a research executive serving most recently at Imperial College London and the UK Medical Research Council. He is a Director and Trustee of The British School of Osteopathy. He is a Director of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators, UK.

**Dr. Elaine Larson** is Associate Dean for Research and Professor of Pharmaceutical and Therapeutic Research, Columbia University School of Nursing; and Professor of Epidemiology, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Dr. Larson has been

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.