



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **PLANNING GRANTS FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE IN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Purpose:**

The National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) is requesting proposals from regionally accredited institutions of higher education to plan and develop a master's degree program in university research administration. Implementation Grants will be solicited as a second phase of this process.

#### **Awards:**

NCURA will offer four (4) Planning Grants of \$10,000. Awards will be for seven (7) months beginning February 1, 2009.

#### **Background:**

NCURA is a non-profit professional development organization dedicated to the continuing education of university research administrators. Founded in 1959, NCURA is a 501(c)(3) higher education organization of individuals involved in the administration of sponsored research at colleges, universities and teaching hospitals throughout the US and abroad. The organization has over 6,500 members from over 900 institutions and continues to grow its membership by an estimated 500 individuals each year. In addition, NCURA is expanding its international collaborations with the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators.

NCURA has a strategic goal of advancing the professionalism of the field of research administration by providing a pathway for its members and others in the research community to obtain a Master's Degree in Research Management. In seeking the creation of a master's degree in research administration, NCURA considered the following:

#### **Demand:**

In September 2008, a survey of NCURA membership indicated a strong demand for a master's degree program. Of the 855 respondents, 60% (over 500) expressed an interest in an online graduate degree in research administration. In addition to data from the NCURA survey, anecdotal information from federal government employees also indicates a strong interest in a graduate program in research administration.

#### **Need:**

Although no formal survey has been conducted of potential employers (universities, government agencies, hospitals, and other non-profits), there is direct and indirect evidence suggesting significant employer need for formally trained research administrators. A recent article on the importance of the CRA (certified research administrator) credential indicated that employers sought employees with formal training in research administration. A 2005 dissertation, Roberts, T. J. (2005). *Perceptions of Research Administrators on the Value of Certification* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Florida, 2005). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 68/08, 2799, found the same result and noted the growing need for formal training. These formal studies along with the rapid expansion of the profession of research administration provide strong evidence of employer need for formally trained individuals.

#### **Topical Areas of Study:**

NCURA believes the following areas of study are important elements for the development of a graduate degree program:

- Major Issues in Pre-Award Administration
- Major Issues in Post-Award Administration
- Legal and Ethical Compliance

- Budgeting and Project Management
- Grants Fiscal Management
- Legal and Regulatory Environment
- Contracts and Subcontracts
- Auditing
- Facilities and Administration Costs
- Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer
- Organizational Models

**Distance Learning Formats:**

NCURA believes that the majority of student demand for a master’s program comes from working adults. Therefore, it requires that universities utilize distance learning formats for the delivery of the program, not only to accommodate the needs of working professionals but also to address the demands of learners from across the nation.

Role of NCURA:

NCURA can offer grant recipients support in terms of information about the profession of research administration, literature on the body of knowledge, support in the promotion of the degree program, and access to senior members of the profession who have demonstrated instructional skills and who can serve as adjunct faculty, as internship supervisors, and final project/thesis committee members.

Application Procedures:

Narratives for Planning Grants should not exceed 15 double spaced pages (12 point type). Proposals should address the following elements:

1. Learning Goals: The narrative should clearly articulate the objectives of the proposed master’s degree and the expected learning goals for students.
2. Planning Process: The narrative should explain how the project will address the elements required in the Final Report (see below). For example: Who will be involved in formulating the learning goals, the plan of study, the admission and retention standards, the exit requirements, and the format? What will be the process used for distance learning? How will you determine enrollment capacity?
3. Approval Process: The proposal should outline the process and timeline for creating and approving new master’s degree programs.
4. Budget: The proposal should include a detailed budget and justification.

Application Deadline and Submission:

The deadline for submission of proposals is 5:00 p.m. in the submitter’s time zone, on December 1, 2008.

Proposals must be submitted by e-mail in PDF format (version 7 or higher) to:

[proposals@ncura.edu](mailto:proposals@ncura.edu)

Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- The quality and rigor of the proposed Plan of Study,
- The extent and use of distance learning formats,
- The accessibility of the program to part-time and geographically bound students,
- The thoroughness of the planning for a degree program, and
- The extent to which the proposal meets NCURA’s goals for a master’s program in research administration.

Reporting:

Award recipients will submit a final report by September 15, 2009. The Final Report should contain the following items:

- 1 Learning Goals: The narrative should clearly articulate the objectives of the proposed master’s degree and the expected learning goals for students
2. Plan of Study: The proposal should propose how many hours and how many courses students are required to complete to earn the master’s degree. The Plan of Study should also explain what, if any, courses are

required as well as how many elective courses are permitted. It should also discuss the sequence of courses and the exit requirements (internships, thesis, non-thesis, exam, etc.)

3. Admission and Retention Standards: The narrative should explain the proposed admission standards, retention requirements, and graduation requirements of the program.
4. Courses: The proposal should outline the courses students are expected to complete.
5. Enrollment: Discuss the proposed enrollment projections and enrollment capacity for the program.
6. Faculty: The narrative needs to address the qualifications of the faculty responsible for delivering the program.
7. Format: The proposal should outline how it will employ distance learning formats for the delivery of the program.
8. Resources/Business Plan: The proposal should discuss the amount of resources needed to sustain the program and how it proposes to meet those needs.
9. Program Assessment: The narrative should include a discussion of how it will assess whether students are meeting the learning goals and if the program is achieving its objectives.
10. Approval Process: The proposal should outline the process and timeline for creating and approving new master's degree programs.

**Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to:**

[proposals@ncura.edu](mailto:proposals@ncura.edu)