

Around the World

By Dave Richardson

International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) 2010 Biennial Conference Managing Research for Impact: New Approaches to Research and Innovation Management Cape Town, South Africa

I remember my very first NCURA conference where upon observing the vast number and diversity of the participants it immediately struck me that the job I held was part of a larger profession and that research administrators throughout the United States toiled daily with similar challenges. I experienced a similar revelation but with a global perspective with my recent participation in the 2010 International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) Biennial Conference held in Cape Town, South Africa. This biennial meeting, hosted by the South African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), exceeded all expectations attracting over 400 participants from more than 40 different countries. SARIMA and the Capetonians, as residents of the Western Cape Province are called, proved to be excellent hosts and continuously displayed their warmth and hospitality. South Africa is set to host the 2010 World Cup this June and from my experience with INORMS 2010, they are more than ready to welcome the world.

The official NCURA delegation also included Dr. John Carfora, past chair of the NCURA International Commission. John and I traveled to INORMS 2010 with the goal of expanding NCURA's collaborations among the various international research management associations and to put forth the possibility of having the 2014 INORMS Conference held in North America. I'm proud to admit that we were successful on both fronts. As representatives of the oldest organization of research management professionals in the world, we were often called upon to share how we institutionally approach training, outreach, and management of our membership. We readily shared on numerous formal and informal occasions the many lessons learned from our long-term participation in NCURA and how a professional research management association can advance its field and yet at the same time serve its members. It was great

having the opportunity to communicate our perspectives on the common thread of research administration regardless of language or location in the world. We are also thrilled to announce that North America will be granted the opportunity to host the 2014 "World Cup of Research Administration" tentatively targeted for Washington D.C. Stayed tuned over the course of the next year as details of the 2014 INORMS Conference emerges.



At last year's annual NCURA meeting we focused on the theme of "One World Connected through Research". While this still rings true I would like to modify the theme somewhat to read "One World Connected through the Eyjafjallajokull Volcano". As the 2010 INORMS Conference came to a successful conclusion we received warnings that a volcano in Iceland was erupting and spewing enormous clouds of ash that was threatening flights into and out of the Northern European airspace. Given that a great many of us flew either directly from or connected through Northern European airports, the Eyjafjallajokull ash cloud drew our attention. Mother Nature did win out and the ash cloud managed to make a mess of travel plans around the globe. The NCURA

delegation found itself "stuck" in Cape Town without word or news of when air traffic would resume. While we dwelled on our fate, we considered ourselves fortunate for during the course of our "extended" conference we were treated very well by all whom we encountered and had the opportunity to solidify our organizational relationships with our European and African counterparts. There is nothing like a crisis to bond people and organizations together. I'm pleased to say that the field of research administration prepared us well for surviving this unexpected extension of our time in South Africa. We expanded our professional network by befriending the flight crews who were staying at our hotel for they were the only reliable source of information on the airspace above Europe. When the airlines themselves ultimately failed to assist us, we called upon our professional negotiation skills in finding an alternative route out of Africa. In the end, we survived the largest global flight stoppage in history by managing to flank the ash clouds by traveling back home via a South American route. We are extremely grateful to many and owe thanks to a number of people who assisted us in safely returning home during this crisis. Specifically, we wish to thank Kathleen Larmett for she was there with us in spirit the whole time via email and voice communication and was a constant reminder of why NCURA is such a great organization.

Even with the additional challenges of our return trip home, I would not change anything about the experience. The 2010 INORMS Conference was a great success and it was an immense honor to represent NCURA to the world. While we look forward to the 2012 INORMS Conference in Copenhagen, we will be preparing ourselves to host the world in 2014! ■



Dave Richardson joined the field of research administration in 1992 starting as a grants officer with the University of Georgia. While at the University of Georgia, Dave's work focused initially on pre-award activities in the Office of Sponsored Programs and concluded with service as a departmental business manager handling pre and post award responsibilities on a large international cooperative agreement. In 1998, Dave joined the administrative faculty of Virginia Tech assisting the Vice President for Research with research management operations of the university. In 2001, he was appointed the Director of the Virginia Tech Office of Sponsored Programs and was responsible for both pre- and post-award functions. He concluded his service to Virginia Tech as the Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration in 2006. In 2007, Dave joined Pennsylvania State University. He currently serves as the Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs.