2019, the NCURA Global Fellowship Program will be celebrating its 10th anniversary. Within the next decade, the program will become one of the largest global initiatives supporting collaboration within the research administration community. The fellowships are joint initiatives between NCURA and its sister organizations to train research administrators, reduce barriers to global research administration and create joint administrative frameworks to facilitate global research collaboration. There is an ever-increasing amount of global research collaboration, and these fellowships aim to cultivate a pool of individuals with the ability to interpret a multitude of various sponsor requirements and provide their institutions with administrative compliance expertise on an international scale — from application submission through financial reporting and closeout.

The program, which was conceived in 2007 and launched in 2009, came about while Kathleen Larmett, NCURA executive director, and Denise Wallen, current vice president of NCURA, attended the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) conference in Warsaw, Poland. “We discussed how great the opportunity for U.S. research administrators to connect with their European counterparts was and how beneficial it would be to have a formal reciprocal program in place between NCURA and EARMA,” said Larmett.

Larmett and Wallen, along with a specialized taskforce, designed a pilot program which was then shared with EARMA. After receiving interest from the NCURA Board of Directors and EARMA and approval of more than 75% NCURA members, a beta call was launched in 2008. In 2009, the first EARMA members came to the United States, and in 2011, NCURA’s board approved travel funds for NCURA Fellows. In 2013, NCURA began fellowship exchanges with the Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), and in 2015, a formal alliance between the NCURA and the Australasia Research Management Society (ARMS) was formed. The fellowship program continues to grow in 2018, with the newest partnership program with NCURA’s German sister organization Netzwerk für Forschungs- und Transfermanagement! e.V. (FORTRAMA).

The program has grown tremendously over the last several years. “We only had a few host institutions in the beginning, but our host institutions list has grown substantially over the last five years. This is mainly due to the assistance from NCURA staff who have been able to dedicate their time to the program as well as assistance from the Select Committee on Global Affairs (SCGA)” said Larmett. She continued, “the program has done exactly what it intended to do by connecting research administrators globally, not only increasing their network but also giving them the opportunity to go elsewhere and learn about university research management practices, policies and regulations in another country.” Denise Wallen added, “the NCURA Global Fellowship Program has blossomed and matured since its inception ten years ago. We are fortunate to now have a cohort of fellows that bring their rich experiences back to their institutions, the profession and NCURA.”

The fellowship program provides an opportunity for research administrators to travel to another country’s research organization and to immerse themselves in a program of mutual learning and knowledge exchange. “It is an extraordinary opportunity for NCURA members to spend two
weeks experiencing how another institution in a different culture supports its research enterprise” said Gai Doran, chair of the SOGA. Doran continued, “As chair of the SOGA, I highly encourage NCURA members to apply. Successful applicants show clear commitment to NCURA and the profession – through their presentations at NCURA conferences, publications in NCURA Magazine, and a history of volunteering for the organization. In their statements of interest, they describe how their fellowship experiences will benefit not only themselves and their institutions, but the organization as a whole. If preparing for a future application, I’d recommend reaching out to your regions for opportunities to volunteer and attending one of the Global Fellowship information sessions at either FRA/PRA or the Annual Meeting.”

Additionally, the fellowships offer host institutions greater exposure in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. “University of California San Francisco has been honored to serve as a host institution for NCURA Global fellows for the last few years from Australia, Finland and Spain. Hosting has also given our Office of Sponsored Research greater exposure and interest in international research administration. Two of our staff have also been selected as Global Fellows (Australia and Switzerland), and we hope to continue to play a key role in fostering these professional development opportunities in the future!” stated Eunice Chang of the UCSC.

“There are many benefits in hosting a fellow: making new connections, broadening our international collaborations, sharing research administration practices and approaches, and sharing what we have in common and what makes each organization unique. It challenges us to aspire to new and exciting skills and projects in our workplaces. The NCURA Fellowship program is an important enabler for the growth of research administration as a global profession,” commented Bryony Wakefield of the University of Melbourne. Wakefield continued, “There is nothing quite as inspiring as spending an extended period learning from colleagues at institutions outside our own. It can teach us to think differently, explore alternative approaches to common issues and inspire us to implement new ideas.”

Over the past decade, NCURA has sent more than 50 Fellows to 17 different countries, including China, South Africa, Poland, Switzerland, Italy, and Australia. NCURA will support up to $2,000 in travel costs, and Fellows are expected to pass on their experiences and knowledge of how research administration management operates at their institution, to identify best practices and the local knowledge of their host institutions, and to respect all appropriate organizational rules and cultural practices. This year, NCURA would like to extend an invitation to past and current Fellows to a special celebration at the NCURA Annual Meeting taking place in Washington, D.C. in August. We invite you to come celebrate this milestone of the program while exchanging and learning of new opportunities in the field of international collaboration as well as opportunities to support research together.

For more information on the Fellowship Program please visit www.ncura.edu/Global/NCURA FellowshipProgram.aspx

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