SIMONE WHITEHEAD, CRA®, CPRA®

Research Administration Leader | Pre-Award Strategy | Professional Development

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Research administration leader with 16+ years of progressive experience across departmental and central research operations, including extensive pre-award leadership, proposal development, compliance, budgeting, staff development, and process improvement. Known for translating complex sponsor and institutional requirements into practical systems, clear guidance, and reliable submission strategies. Brings a collaborative, service-centered approach to faculty engagement, team development, knowledge continuity, and professional education.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Pre-Award Strategy & Operations	Complex Proposal Development	Sponsor & Institutional Compliance
Budget Development & Review	Process Improvement & SOPs	Faculty & Stakeholder Engagement

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Director, Sponsored Programs - Pre-Award
Apr 2021 - Present

University of Miami, Department of Public Health Sciences | *Miami, FL*

- Lead day-to-day pre-award operations for a high-volume academic department and guide faculty through federal, nonfederal, and multi-institutional proposal submissions.
- Review funding opportunities, develop submission strategies and internal timelines, prepare and validate budgets and justifications, and approve departmental proposals for central-office review.
- Design and implement SOPs, checklists, workflows, dashboards, templates, and communication tools that improve consistency, visibility, compliance, and submission readiness.
- Advise principal investigators and project teams on sponsor requirements, institutional policy, effort, subrecipient documentation, compliance, and proposal risk.
- Mentor and train staff, promote cross-training and knowledge continuity, and foster collaborative relationships among faculty, departmental leadership, central offices, and external partners.
- Prepare proposal activity reports and operational analyses to support workload planning, performance monitoring, and leadership decision-making.

Senior Research Analyst, Department of Surgery
Jan 2018 - Apr 2021

University of Miami | *Miami, FL*

- Managed a portfolio of pre-award activities, including proposal planning, budget review, sponsor compliance, institutional routing, and submission coordination.
- Advised investigators on administrative requirements and coordinated key proposal elements for accuracy, completeness, and timely institutional approval.

Senior Research Analyst, Hussman Institute for Human Genomics
Jun 2015 - Dec 2017

University of Miami | *Miami, FL*

- Managed pre-award applications and post-award accounts, conducted regular grant-status meetings with investigators, monitored project budgets, and coordinated compliance documentation and subaward payments.

Senior Research Analyst / Research Analyst, Research Enterprise Support
Jun 2012 - Jun 2015

University of Miami | *Miami, FL*

- Supported complex pre- and post-award matters in a central research office, responded to escalated faculty inquiries, reviewed financial compliance, and trained and mentored new analysts.

Sponsored Programs Assistant, Department of Neurology
May 2010 - May 2012

University of Miami | *Miami, FL*

- Supported grant budgets, application document collection, central-office coordination, electronic records, and monthly proposal-status reporting.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA): Region III Membership Volunteer; 2026 Annual Meeting Welcome Table Volunteer; Discussion Group Facilitator.

Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC): CPRA® JTA Task Force member.

Society of Research Administrators International (SRAI): IRAM Certificate Reviewer; Proposal Peer Reviewer; Podcast Committee member.

Professional Memberships: NCURA, SRAI, National Grants Management Association (NGMA).

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- "Scaling Pre-Award Success: From Dashboards to Delicate PI Relationships," Discussion Group Facilitator, NCURA Annual Meeting, 2026.
- "Beyond the Checklist: Building Knowledge Continuity in Research Administration Through Cross-Training and Shared Resources," Poster Presenter, SRAI Annual Meeting, 2026.
- Creator of the Intentional Systems Framework™, a practice-based model centered on systems, communication, partnerships, and stewardship in research administration.
- Develops professional resources, including pre-award guides, workflow tools, dashboards, checklists, communication templates, and staff cross-training materials.

SELECTED LEADERSHIP & OPERATIONAL IMPACT

- Built and refined departmental pre-award infrastructure, including proposal trackers, standardized communications, desk guides, submission checklists, and complex-proposal coordination tools.
- Lead faculty-centered proposal planning while balancing sponsor compliance, institutional deadlines, operational risk, and collaborative service.
- Support high-complexity federal and nonfederal submissions involving multiple components, institutions, subrecipients, consultants, and sponsor systems.
- Advance team resilience through mentoring, cross-training, process documentation, and shared resources that reduce dependence on individual knowledge.

SYSTEMS & TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY

Sponsor and research systems: Grants.gov, NIH ASSIST, eRA Commons, SciENcv, eBRAP, ProposalCentral, and sponsor-specific portals. **Institutional and productivity tools:** Huron/IBIS, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft 365, Teams, SharePoint, Google Workspace, and Box.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, University of Miami — Expected Summer 2027

Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, Nova Southeastern University — **1997**

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Certified Research Administrator (CRA®) - Research Administrators Certification Council, 2024 | **Certified Pre-Award Research Administrator (CPRA®)** - Research Administrators Certification Council, 2023

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Earlier career experience in financial reporting, accounting, auditing, variance analysis, strategic planning, and operational reporting with Royal Caribbean, Port of Miami-Seaport, Starboard Cruise Services, and Deloitte & Touche Corporate Services. This foundation supports strong financial stewardship, analytical judgment, and risk awareness in sponsored programs administration.