



Canadian Association of Research Administrators

Strategic Plan 2020-2023

BACKGROUND

“Research is essential to the health, prosperity, and security of Canadians and to our efforts to foster a creative, inclusive, and vibrant society. Our universities, colleges, and research institutions are responsible for providing the right environment and tools not only to perform this research at the highest levels of excellence, but also to inspire, teach, and shape each new generation of students through research-led education” (Naylor, Birgeneau, Crago, Lazaridis, Malacrida, & McDonald, 2017, p. 26).

Research administration is an integral part of research and recent research demonstrates the recognition of research administration as a profession (see Kerridge & Scott, 2018, p.2). Through the Research Administration as A Profession (RAAAP) international project, of which CARA is a member, the following definition of a research administrator has emerged:

A **research administrator** (research manager in some countries) is defined as someone whose role (or a significant part of it) is devoted to support some part of the research lifecycle, including, but not limited to: identifying funding sources and customers, preparing proposals, costing, pricing and submitting funding proposals, drafting, negotiating and accepting contracts, dealing with project finance, employing staff on research contracts, reporting to funders, advising on research impact, knowledge exchange, technology transfer, supporting short courses, postgraduate research student administration, research strategy and policy, research assessment, ethics and governance, information systems, audit, statutory returns, and research office management” (RAAAP Website)

The Canadian Association of Research Administrators (CARA) is the national voice for research administrators in Canada. With over 1,000 members, our professional organization's strength is in its diversity and comprehensive approach to research administration. CARA provides a critical interface between stakeholders in the management of the research enterprise. CARA members come from universities, colleges, polytechnics, government, research hospitals, and the private sector to name just a few.

The purposes CARA are to:

1. foster research administration and management expertise in Canada by facilitating a strong and vibrant community;
2. provide and facilitate robust career and professional development programs and services for members; and
3. enable synthesis and dissemination of information/knowledge on research administration and management with a view to developing individual and organizational excellence.



OUR MISSION

To be the authoritative body of knowledge and expertise on research administration and management in Canada.

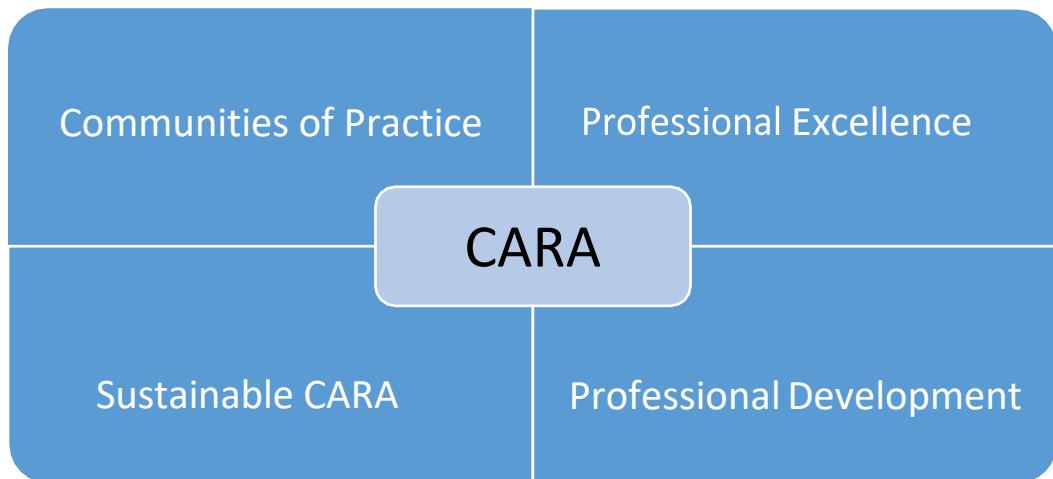
OUR VALUES

- **Inclusivity**, which means developing and maintaining a supportive, active, accessible, and diverse research administrator/management community that is welcoming and that celebrates and encourages a variety of thoughts and ideas. It also means a commitment to ensuring transparency in our actions, and a questioning of processes through the lens of equity, diversity and inclusivity. We know and understand that our CARA community is stronger, more productive, and more effective because of diversity.
- **Integrity**, which includes respect, trust, authenticity and honesty.
- **Authentic collaboration**, with the entire research community (colleagues, faculty, funders, partners) and beyond. This includes a commitment to sharing information, insights, best practices, and worst practices.
- **Relevance**, by supporting innovation, forward thinking, learning, improvement, creativity, and inquiry.
- **Sustainability**, in terms of resources including both people's time and funding.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CARA's strategic priorities guide the board's decision-making and actions on behalf of CARA members. The priorities shape the programmes CARA delivers, the services CARA provides and the management of its business and finances. These priorities allow the board to set appropriate operational targets, manage the executive office and ensure value for CARA members.

Our four strategic priorities, developed in 2016 and reaffirmed for 2020 - 2023 are:





For each of the four strategic priorities, the board has identified opportunities and challenges, and developed priority activity areas. An implementation plan was also developed which identifies tasks, timelines for delivery, measures, and anticipated outcomes. CARA's implementation plan will be reviewed and adjusted as required on an annual basis.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

CARA's strength as an organization is based on its members, volunteers, partners and stakeholders. Building strong relationships within research administration and with partners is part of who CARA is. Communities of practice focus on collective learning - on sharing ideas and information towards a common goal. CARA as a single entity is a community of practice and there are numerous communities of practice within that larger entity. Including the special interest groups (SIGs) and regions. In order to enable these communities to grow and thrive, we will undertake the following priority actions:

- Develop diverse engagement opportunities across all activities

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Professional excellence focuses on ensuring that research administration is recognized for the value it brings to the research enterprise and that CARA is respected nationally and internationally. We recognize that CARA is relevant to organizations that are connected to research administration and the research enterprise. We also recognize that there is a wealth of knowledge within CARA and expertise to provide information and recommendations on specific topics.

As such, we commit to the following priority actions:

- Develop, cultivate, explore and establish national and international partnerships to support and sustain research administration excellence
- Enhance CARA awards programme
- Further establish CARA's authority as a thought leader on research administration nationally and internationally
- Explore Indigenous principles, recognition, and reconciliation with regard to research administration practices in Canada

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since its inception CARA has focused on professional development needs of its members. We recognize the need to continue this area of focus, and to look at the evolution of professional development and how to best meet the current and future needs of our members. As a profession, it is incumbent upon us to ensure a comprehensive, high quality, suite of opportunities for professional development of our members. We also note the importance of training the next generation of research administrators.

Priority actions over the term of this strategy therefore include:

- Development of training, support and resources for leaders serving CARA
- Develop and enhance diverse, rigorous training opportunities



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SUSTAINABLE CARA

A sustainable CARA is one where we are effective and diligent with our resources and value is delivered to our members in an effective and appropriate manner. We acknowledge and understand that resources include the time of members who are volunteers, time and demands on staff, and funds available. In ensuring a robust and sustainable organisation, we note the following priority actions:

- Explore opportunities to increase funding for CARA
- Provide support for the Research Administration Certificate
- Maintain a clear financial strategy to manage risk and grow the services to our members
- Annually review and improve CARA's governance processes to ensure governance excellence;
- Ensure members needs continue to guide CARA's actions
- Ensure staff are compensated fairly, and that professional development for staff is supported and encouraged

Works Cited

Naylor, C.D., Birgeneau, R.J., Crago, M., Lazaridis, M., Malacrida, C., & McDonald, A.B. (2017). Investing in Canada's Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research. Canada's Fundamental Science Review. Government of Canada. [http://www.sciencereview.ca/eic/site/059.nsf/vwapij/ScienceReview_April2017-rv.pdf/\\$file/ScienceReview_April2017-rv.pdf](http://www.sciencereview.ca/eic/site/059.nsf/vwapij/ScienceReview_April2017-rv.pdf/$file/ScienceReview_April2017-rv.pdf)

Kerridge, S., & Scott, S.F. (2018). Research administration around the world. *Research Management Review*, 23(1): 1-34. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1187515.pdf>

RAAAP Worldwide: Research administration as a profession worldwide:
<https://raapworldwide.wordpress.com/>