



Canadian Association of Research Administrators

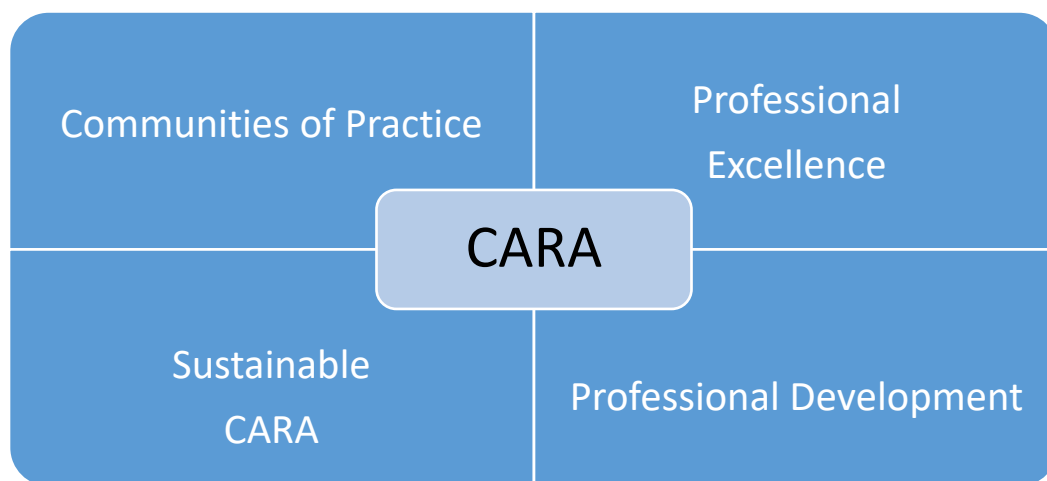
Implementation Plan 2020-2023

This implementation plan is to support CARA in delivering against its strategic priorities outlined in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

CARA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CARA's strategic priorities guide the board's decision-making and actions on behalf of CARA members from 2020 until 2023. The priorities shape the programmes CARA delivers, the services it provides and the management of its business and finances. These priorities allow the board to set appropriate operational targets, management of the executive office and ensure value for CARA members.

CARA's four strategic priorities for 2020 to 2023 are:



For each of the four strategic priorities, the board developed priority activity areas. It has also developed an implementation plan, which identifies tasks, timeline for delivery 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 including:
 - sharing learning and best practice with CARA members, including diverse communities within CARA;
 - increasing engagement with partners, funders, other organizations;



- exploring the redevelopment of the website to focus on ways to share information, encourage participation and facilitate two-way communication (e.g., open forums, robust resource library, blog board, CARA branding, easily recognized, easily accessible documents and services);
- engaging with, and expand information and offerings for, diverse communities within research administration: colleges, polytechnics, clinical, health, ethics, tech transfer/KM, etc.; and
- renewing SIG by ensuring easier access to information and ways to communicate; new opportunities and ways to interact; establishing SIG sections on the website that are interactive; ensuring opportunities for SIGs to connect at conferences and outside of conferences; and developing a 'hot topics' SIG that changes based on those topics.

There are a number of additional opportunities that the Board will also develop strategies for including:

- developing a register of individuals with specialized knowledge and experience who are willing to share info and serve as a resource;
- capitalizing on engagement opportunities between members by enabling opportunities for regional networking; and
- advocating to senior leaders (in institutions, with partners, with local, provincial and federal government bodies, and with funders) about the benefits of CARA.

We also note several challenges with regard to communities of practice. These include:

- identifying leaders and developing the next generation of research administrators;
- lack of staff time for the establishment of and enhancement of strategic partnerships; and
- CARA is led and run primarily by volunteers at all levels (Board, SIG leaders, webinar facilitators, etc.), with only the Exec Director and one part time staff member as paid employees) lac.

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
- Explore Indigenous principles, recognition, and reconciliation with regard to research administration practices in Canada

We also note the importance and value of organizations nationally and internationally whose activities connect with and cross over research administration. We therefore see the following additional opportunities to explore:

- encourage and support representation with affiliate organizations;
- develop connections with organizations whose mandates cross research administration; and
- review and either confirm or develop a definition of research administration for Canada that encompasses our members' realities.



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 strategic therefore include:

- Development of training, support and resources for leaders serving CARA;
- Develop and enhance diverse, rigorous training opportunities through different venues.

We know that professional development is critical for our members and therefore the following additional opportunities to explore:

- working with the data gathered through the RAAAP project, and focusing on the Canadian data within that set, map out a career paths for research administration and the skills needed;
- engage expertise within and outside of CARA for conference and webinars;
- explore the potential for some hands-on learning opportunities such as job swapping and exchange programs and promote those programs with affiliated organizations such as NCURA;
- support local networking events (half day seminars, cocktails with speaker);
- explore the potential for additional new accredited programs such as a graduate certificate in research leadership and a masters' degree in research management; and
- deliver sessions at conferences focused on professional development; for example, a session to help individuals develop presentation skills.

In order to develop and deliver professional development that is relevant and that can be offered through a variety of channels, we recognize that the following challenges need to be addressed:

- the website in its current form does not meet the current needs and future plans for professional development;
- current webinar offerings have become repetitive;
- more member and stakeholder engagement is needed for conference planning; and
- there is a lack of member awareness about opportunities.

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 organization, we note the following priority actions:

- Explore opportunities to increase funding for CARA;
- Invest in 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 continue to guide CARA's actions;
- Ensure staff are compensated fairly, and that professional development for staff is supported and encouraged.



DELIVERING CARA'S STRATEGY

To effectively deliver CARA's strategy the board will take the following approach:

Measure and monitor

To manage and improve CARA's performance, that performance must be measured and monitored. The Board will identify key performance indicators relevant to each of CARA's strategic priorities and will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses to determine CARA's performance and to inform improvements. Performance will be reported to the membership and CARA stakeholders through publication and dissemination of CARA's annual report.

While specific measures will need to be identified once various goals are confirmed, overall measures to consider include:

- increase in retention;
- increase in members;
- increase in numbers in programs;
- CARA contacted for expertise; and
- member satisfaction

Communicate and Report

Communication of CARA's strategic plan and priorities for 2020-2023 and regular engagement with its members, external stakeholders and partner organizations is critical to CARA's success. CARA will raise awareness by creating and implementing a robust and comprehensive communications strategy.

Resources

CARA will allocate appropriate resources to ensure delivery of its strategic plan. This includes financial investment as well as the management of staff and board time, staff and board training and development, and the application of appropriate organizational management and governance processes and procedures. The board will review board performance on an annual basis to ensure excellent governance.