

# Chair-Elect Candidate

Vanessa O. Lopez, CRA  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Chair-Elect Candidate  
NCURA Region V

I am grateful and excited to be nominated for the position of Chair-Elect for Region V. I am eager to contribute to our region's continued success and growth.

I began my research administration career in 2008 at The University of Texas at Austin in the Office of Sponsored Projects, which ignited my dynamic and rewarding career path. I became a Certified Research Administrator (CRA) in May 2013. Over the years, I shifted from a pre-award to a post-award role, which significantly enhanced my comprehensive view and practical insight into all stages of research administration. Currently, I serve as Director of the Research Office in the Moody College of Communication, where I oversee the research enterprise for the college.

I have actively participated in professional development opportunities with NCURA, starting with a Traveling Workshop in December 2008 in Houston, TX, and progressing to co-leading both a discussion group and concurrent session at AM66 in Washington, D.C. in August 2024.

Volunteering with NCURA has been a defining aspect of my career. My journey began with assisting at the registration desk during my inaugural annual meeting in 2013 in Washington, D.C. Since then, I have had the privilege of co-leading a dynamic discussion group at the 2017 Region V meeting in Tulsa, OK, and co-presenting at the 2018 regional meeting in San Marcos, TX. In 2019, I played a key role on the Region V Program Committee, where I not only contributed to the education program but also served as entertainment co-chair, enriching our regional gatherings.

My tenure as Region V Treasurer-Elect and Treasurer, which began in January 2020, involved navigating a rigorous audit process to achieve a spotless report, founding a regional treasurer's group to foster best practices, and creating a comprehensive guidance document to refine our expenditure processes. Additionally, my involvement extended to the travel award and site selection committees, where I further supported our region's initiatives.

As the current Region V Education Committee Chair, I have enjoyed organizing the 2024 Lunch & Learn monthly sessions and collaborating with fellow volunteers to develop the educational program for the Region V 2024 fall meeting in Corpus Christi, TX. Advancing the field of research administration and supporting our community, while cultivating valuable connections with colleagues who share a passion for furthering our profession has been extremely rewarding.

NCURA has profoundly impacted my career, and I deeply value the relationships I've built and the personal and professional advancement I've achieved through this organization. Being nominated for the Region V Chair-Elect position is a tremendous honor. I look forward to working together with everyone to advance and support this exceptional region.

# Executive Committee At-Large Candidate

## **Nicole Babilya, CRA Manager of Post Award Administration, The University of Texas at Austin Region V At-Large Member Nominee**

I am excited to be nominated for the opportunity to serve NCURA Region V as an at-large member on the regional board.

I have been involved in pre- and post-award research administration, in both central and departmental/college offices, for over 15 years. I started my career at The University of Texas at Austin and have held positions at UTSW Medical Center, Southern Methodist University, and Sam Houston State University. I returned to The University of Texas at Austin last year as the Manager of Post Award Administration in the Cockrell School of Engineering. I am currently pursuing a master's degree at Southern Methodist University, after which I plan to enroll in the Texas Executive Education's Managerial Leadership Certificate program within the McCombs School of Business at The University of Texas at Austin.

I have been a member of NCURA since 2008 and obtained my Certified Research Administrator (CRA) certification in 2010. I co-led a discussion group at Region V's 2018 regional meeting and served on the sponsorship committee for the 2021 regional meeting. In February 2022, I was appointed regional Volunteer Coordinator and served the position through the December 2023. I enjoy pursuing professional development, continuing to expand my knowledge base and experience and meeting new colleagues.

I wanted to become more involved in NCURA for some time but wasn't sure where to start, so I very much appreciated the opportunity to join the sponsorship committee in 2021. While that position was short-term, it allowed me to meet the regional leadership and gain a first-hand look at all that goes into planning and running a regional meeting (it's a lot!). It also led me to be considered for – and have the confidence to accept – the volunteer coordinator position.

As regional volunteer coordinator, I was responsible for coordinating and recruiting volunteers for both the regional and annual meetings and ensuring a positive volunteer experience and interaction for our members. In this position, I sat as a (non-voting) member of the executive committee, worked closely with regional leadership, and helped facilitate successful meetings, all while having the pleasure of interacting with and supporting both seasoned and new volunteers. I also assisted regional leadership with developing and initiating the regional volunteer database, drafting the regional volunteer opportunities & descriptions document, and revamping the volunteer sign-up process.

I would very much like to continue my NCURA service as an elected at-large regional board member. I look forward to supporting the region on a more granular level and gaining experience with a wider range of regional operations. I am confident that my experience, along with my enthusiasm, will allow me to successfully serve our leadership and you, our membership, in this role.

# Executive Committee At-Large Candidate

H. Greg Chu, MS, CRA  
University of Houston  
At-Large Executive Board Member Candidate

I am excited to be nominated for the position of At-Large Executive Board Member.

I have spent my entire professional life at the University of Houston. I received my MS degree in Chemistry in 2002 from the University. My first job after graduate school was to manage an analytical chemistry instrument facility and a research laboratory. After eight years, I took over the graduate program manager position at the Department of Chemistry for 18 months. In 2012, I moved to my current position as a Research Liaison Officer at the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. I earned my CRA certification in May 2015.

My position as a facility/laboratory manager gave me two roles. As a facility manager, I was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the instrumentation facility. I helped set up the instruments and establish the facility's recharge center when I started. After that, I performed experiments and maintained the instruments. I was also in charge of the billing, budgeting, and generating scientific and financial reports.

As a research laboratory manager, I worked under a principal investigator to manage personnel, grants, and contract activities in his research group. I worked on and learned about research administration from an investigator's perspective during that time. Working in this position sparked my interest in the business side of scientific research.

In 2012, I had an opportunity to reset my career path to Research Administration. I became a Research Liaison Officer in the College. My work consists of Pre-Award Administration and Proposal Development at the college level. I prepare, review, edit, manage, and submit grant proposals and budgets to internal and external funding sources, including Federal, State, and private sponsors. Train and guide the new faculty and staff about the proposal preparation process. Identify funding opportunities and work with faculty to develop proposals, including career award, center award, and other multi-PI interdisciplinary award programs. Serve as liaison between the investigators, university offices, funding agencies, and other external organizations.

I joined NCURA in 2013 and attended my first Regional Meeting in Oklahoma City as the awardee of Quinten S. Mathews Regional Travel Award. Since then, I have attended at least one NCURA meeting every year (regional or national) and two traveling workshops so far. I have served as a concurrent session presenter, discussion group moderator, and volunteer in many different committees for regional and national meetings/activities. In 2022, I was appointed by the Region V Chair to serve as an At-Large Member of the Region V Executive Committee for a one-year term. I also Co-Chaired of the Regional Bylaws Review Committee, tasked with updating and modernizing our Regional Bylaws.

I have always enjoyed interacting with all my NCURA colleagues on every occasion. I value the opportunity to grow personally and professionally in this big family. I look forward to making contributions and serving the membership in the years to come.

# Executive Committee At-Large Candidate

James Montier, MBA, CRA

I am passionate about facilitating biomedical research, which drives the world's future health and advances technologies that benefit everyone.

My career in research administration began at Texas A&M University in 2002, working in their central research office and creating a database that tracked their extenentially funded research. Since then I have worked at a variety of universities and research institutes in central and departmental positions, including University of Missouri – St. Louis, Texas Biomedical Research Institute / Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston Methodist Research Institute, before arriving at MD Anderson Cancer Center in 2022. During that time, I have seen the field evolve from filling out forms with a type writer and mailing paper applications to the paperless processes we use today. Some day, I hope to see it become easier.

I have been a member of NCURA for several years, with a brief detour to that other organization, and look forward to an opportunity to increase my involvement with Region V. As budgets and travel restrictions have allowed, I have attended regional and annual meetings and recently participated as a mentor in the Region V Mustang Mentoring program. The educational opportunities provided by NCURA have proven invaluable in my career and I am a strong advocate for everyone in the field to join the organization. It is remarkable how lengthy some of my professional relationships have been through NCURA, and I have learned that our community grows very small quickly.

As an At-Large member of the Region V board, I hope to work more closely with the excellent leadership team and contribute more to the organization that has provided so much for me. Together I am hopeful we can develop educational programs and share knowledge that will advance our field and ease the administrative burdern to the life changing research that benefits us all.