



FEDERAL DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP

FDP Update:

Welcome to a New Executive Director

By Melissa Korf

On behalf of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP), we would like to take this opportunity to offer a warm welcome to our new Executive Director, Maria Koszalka. Maria's appointment began April 3, 2023, and in this new position, she will lead the FDP, an organization of ten federal agencies and more than two hundred institutional recipients of federal research funds. Maria will advance FDP's core mission in pursuit of its goal of reducing the administrative burdens associated with federal research awards while maintaining the highest standards of stewardship and accountability. She will continue FDP's long-standing close relationship with the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) and the Policy and Global Affairs Division (PGA) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies).

Maria comes to the FDP following a long career as a published researcher and research administrator for several key federal research agencies including the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (U.S. Department of Agriculture), the National Institutes of Health, and the Health Resources and Services Administration. She has also worked in the private sector for the Office of Technology Development at the Northrop Grumman Corporation and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Prior to assuming her position at the FDP, Maria spent more than six years in the Division of Institution and Award Support (DIAS) at the National Science Foundation. In that position, among her responsibilities was the implementation of Research.gov, the online electronic grants management system that has replaced FastLane. For the past few years, Maria has served as the institutional representative to the FDP of the National Science Foundation. In that capacity, Maria has worked with several key committees, including the Membership Committee, the Federal Engagement Working Group, the Faculty Committee, and the FDP Executive Committee. Maria is the recipient



Maria Koszalka

of the NCURA 2021 Joseph E. Carrabino Award for her significant contributions to research administration. Maria received both her B.S. and M.S. degrees in biological sciences at Wayne State University. She also holds an M.B.A. degree from Johns Hopkins University.

Maria was selected for the Executive Director position following a national search. As Maria embarks on this exciting new role, we asked her to share her thoughts with us on how her career path led her to work with the FDP and take on this new role and her vision for the FDP of the future.

You have had a wealth of experiences over your impressive career, including collaborating with the FDP as a federal agency partner. What inspired you to become even more involved with the FDP through this new leadership role?

I originally began my career as a bench scientist but found that I really enjoyed and excelled at the administrative component of science. I have spent time at the bench, on the award recipient side, and on the award provider side. Over the last five years, I have really increased my engagement with the FDP in my role with NSF and could not pass up this opportunity to contribute even more to the pursuit of the FDP mission. I am really looking forward to taking on a leadership position with this passionate group dedicated to working together to support the research enterprise and reduce administrative burden.

As part of its strategic planning for Phase VII (2021-2026), FDP established five key goals and objectives: (1) Demonstrate positive impact on administrative efficiency and effectiveness; (2) Institutionalize evaluation to determine the relevance and impact of the FDP; (3) Strengthen resources and infrastructure to sustain FDP growth; (4) Actively engage community partners-administrators,

faculty, and federal representatives; (5) Tell a powerful FDP story to internal and external audiences. How is the FDP working towards these goals and evolving to meet the needs of its members in the changing regulatory landscape?

As we find ourselves nearing the halfway point in Phase VII, FDP has made great progress in its pursuit of these strategic goals. We have engaged a marketing firm to help us design a holistic communication strategy that will both help us tell a powerful FDP story as well as more effectively engage with our community partners. A critical component of this engagement and overall communication strategy is an overhaul of the FDP website, which we hope to be able to launch in Fall 2023. We recently issued a Request for Proposals to select an entity to perform a mid-phase evaluation of FDP's effectiveness and are looking forward to making a final selection and kicking off the evaluation. Through our Infrastructure Committee and other efforts, FDP has made great strides in implementing more rigorous processes and reinforcing our resources to meet current needs and position ourselves well for future growth. I am really excited for what more we will accomplish in the second half of the phase!

What are you most excited to work on in this new role?

I am really excited to take on this one-of-a-kind opportunity to collaborate with a wide variety of stakeholders from federal funding agencies, research administration leadership, as well as researchers in pursuit of our shared goal of reducing administrative burden without compromising compliance or stewardship of federal funding. We could not do the important work of strengthening the nation's research enterprise without the incredible contributions of our partners - the institutional and federal agency members and our amazing community of research professionals.

FDP recently had its first in-person meeting since January 2020. How did it go? How will FDP approach its meetings in the "new normal"?

FDP held its first in-person meeting since the start of the pandemic in May 2023. We held a standing room only pre-meeting orientation for new Phase VII FDP members and attendees to provide them with the best meeting experience possible with our unique meeting structure! Our programmatic content kicked off with an opening plenary from Michael Lauer, M.D., Deputy Director for Extramural Research at NIH, on the stresses the research workforce has experienced in the past and how it relates to current challenges. We were excited to leverage the opportunity presented by the in-person meeting to focus on the federal collaboration that is at the core of what FDP is all about and host a session with our federal partners to discuss specific strategies to support and develop the critical partnership between research institutions and federal partners. This meeting of federal representatives also supported collaboration across government agencies and important discussions focused on developing communication channels and sharing updates on successful pilots/demonstrations already underway. Two afternoon sessions further highlighted our federal partnership. The NSPM-33, CHIPS and Research Security session included a panel discussion exploring the latest implementation efforts from our federal partners, as well as updates from members of the FDP Foreign Influence Working Group (FIWG). The session on the FDP NIH Data Management & Sharing (DMS) Pilot

shared updates on FDP and NIH's progress working very closely together to test the usability and effectiveness of two DMS Plan templates and planning for a second phase which will focus on budgeting and costing issues. Finally, our meeting agenda included many opportunities for faculty engagement, and included a fireside chat with Michael Nestor, Ph.D., the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable's (GUIRR's) newly appointed Board Director, and me. The success of this meeting would not have been possible without the amazing contributions from our Membership and Program Planning Committees, who dedicated their time to ensure we had a great agenda and seamless transition back to the in-person meeting structure.

It was a truly energizing experience. The program was top notch, and we all left the meeting with our minds full of ideas for potential burden reducing efforts, which is always the sign of a successful meeting. There might have even been a lot of hugs between colleagues excited to see each other in person for the first time in several years!

FDP is currently in the process of considering several options for adapting its meeting schedule to the post-pandemic "new normal" as well as meet the needs of the growth in membership during Phase VII. We surveyed the full membership in July 2022 to gather their thoughts on planning for future meetings and are working on plans to implement resulting recommendations. I am excited to see everyone at our next virtual meeting in September 2023 and when we're able to schedule our next in-person meeting!

The members of the FDP congratulate Maria on her appointment as Executive Director and look forward to a long and successful collaboration! ■

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