



Welcome to a New Lead Federal Representative

By Jamie Sprague and Stephanie Scott

On behalf of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP), we warmly welcome Michelle Bulls as our new lead federal representative!



Michelle is the Director of the Office of Policy for Extramural Research Administration (OPERA) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a post that she has held since 2012. As director, she oversees grants management policy and compliance for the 24 institutes and centers at the NIH. She has led change

at the NIH, including implementing standard terms and conditions in response to the Uniform Guidance and implementing policy and procedures surrounding Final Research Performance Progress Reports. Her current efforts focus on collaboration with the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other federal agencies to develop harmonized federal common disclosure forms and requirements, as well as the NIH's response to National Security Presidential Memorandum 33 (NSPM-33) and the CHIPS and Science Act.

Michelle has been actively involved in the FDP for many years and is a regular attendee at the FDP's virtual and in-person meetings. In addition to her regular participation in meeting panels, Michelle is a member of the FDP Executive Committee and is actively co-leading the NIH Data Management and Sharing Pilot (<https://thefdp.org/demonstrations-resources/nih-data-management-sharing-pilot>).

As the lead federal representative, Michelle will expand her experience to take on a more prominent leadership role, including holding regular meetings with the FDP executive director and the FDP co-chairs as well as the FDP Federal Agency Representatives, working with the FDP Federal Engagement Working Group to increase the engagement of federal grant-making agencies as members of the FDP, and developing priorities and strategic plans for future efforts aimed at further strengthening the partnership between federal agency representatives, research faculty, and research administrators.

As Michelle embarks on her new role with the FDP, we asked her to share some of her thoughts about her participation in the FDP.

Tell us about your history working with the FDP. How did you first get involved and how has your participation grown over the years?

MB: I have been a member of the FDP since 2001. I became the federal executive to the FDP for NIH in 2011. I have participated and led several pilots and a few were highly successful!

What experiences through your involvement do you feel encapsulate the essence of the FDP's mission and goals of reducing burden while maintaining high standards of stewardship and accountability of our U.S. funded research enterprise?

MB: I have experienced so many wonderful opportunities to partner with the FDP members to manage and even eradicate administrative burdens to the research community as well as NIH staff as a result of implementing administrative regulations and NIH policies. Working together with the FDP institutions to identify ways to collectively and strategically implement policies in a manner that supports compliance within our recipient community as well as manage our processes for doing so.

What are some of your immediate and longer-term goals in taking on this new role?

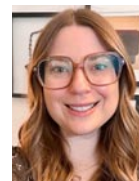
MB: My immediate and long-term goals are to strengthen partnerships between the FDP institution members and the federal partners, increase federal membership awareness, determine shared interests, and identify pilots that both FDP members and federal partners can tackle together.

What do federal agencies need from the research administrator community to better align our shared interests and make impactful partnerships through the FDP and other outlets?

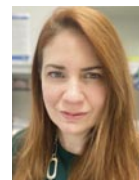
MB: Federal agencies would benefit from consistent discussions with the research administration community to identify shared interests as well as challenges that we experience that result in burden on all sides. ■

Reference

National Institutes of Health (2022, December 1). *Office of Policy for Extramural Research Administration (OPERA)*. https://grants.nih.gov/aboutoer/oer_offices/opera.htm.



Jamie Sprague is a Team Lead/Senior Grant and Contract Officer in the Office of Sponsored Programs at Cornell University. Jamie's responsibilities at Cornell include pre-award and post-award non-financial activities, non-financial agreements with federal and university partners, and leadership and training for the federal teams and campus research administrators. She can be reached at jas2233@cornell.edu.



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