

Office of Research Names Director for Sponsored Research Programs for Proposals and Subawards

Feb. 18, 2022 – After a national search, Celeste Rivera-Nuñez has been named the new Director for Sponsored Research Programs for Proposals and Subawards in UCF’s Office of Research.

The New York native begins her new duties today (Friday, Feb.18). The move is a promotion for Rivera-Nuñez, who has been the associate director since 2017. She has more than 20 years of research administration experience including 16 years at UCF. She was selected from a field of 37 candidates.

“I look forward to continuing the efforts for consistent and clear processes and procedures, working with the broader research community and continuing to promote and assist in the development of training and education, building relationships and creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive working environment,” Rivera-Nuñez says.

Rivera-Nuñez will replace long-time director Jennifer Shambrook who is planning to retire later this year. Shambrook is moving to a special projects’ role until then in part because of the coming changes to Huron triggered by the adoption of Workday software planned for the summer. Many guidance documents that research administrators rely on around campus need updating and trouble shooting and Shambrook’s more than 30 years’ experience including more than a dozen at UCF will help with the transition.

Since arriving at UCF in 2006 Rivera-Nuñez has not only learned research operations, but she has also contributed to various UCF committees and national initiatives. They include serving as a mentor for the UCF Leadership Empowerment (LEP) Program and mentoring three cohorts in the NCURA Region III Research Administration Mentor Program (RAMP) Program. Rivera-Nuñez also co-founded the Florida Research Administration Conference (FRAC) Annual Meeting and its ongoing weekly seminar series.

Before joining UCF in 2006 she worked as an assistant director of administration and sponsored research operations at Queens College of CUNY and as secretary of the organization’s Institution Review Board. She says she was drawn to UCF because of the opportunity to be part of a growing research institution.

“I am passionate about the research administration field and have been fortunate to have had great mentors and leaders who have supported me and have encouraged me along the way,” she says. “I enjoy working with the research faculty and research admin community and want to continue to help facilitate and support their work. I enjoy working with this amazing group of individuals on the proposals and subawards team.”

When she’s not working, Rivera-Nuñez can be found cooking or looking for new restaurants to try. She enjoys reading books on leadership and self-improvement and spending time with family. The Disney parks are also one of her favorite places to decompress.