

International Insight:

A Brief Interview with Annika Glauner

By John M. Carfora



Since many of our readers might not be familiar with EU GrantsAccess, ETH Zurich, and the University of Zurich, can you tell us more about your work with them?

EU GrantsAccess is the mutual office for International Programs of ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich. It supports and promotes international academic cooperation between scientists and scholars. It informs and supports researchers on European research programs. The office is an active participant in shaping the internationalization strategy of both universities and their associated research centers. As a member of the Swiss Information Network for EU Research Programs, EU GrantsAccess closely collaborates with its partners at national and international levels. ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich are presently involved in over 600 EU projects within the FP7 (the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for research), including over 160 Marie-Curie-Fellowships and 80 ERC projects (European Research Council). All these projects were negotiated and partly administered by our office.

In addition to the above, EU GrantsAccess is a EURAXESS Service center (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/>). As such it provides information and assistance to mobile researchers and helps researchers and their family plan and organizes their move to a foreign country, and providing assistance in all matters related to mobility. As an information and advice center for young and established international researchers and academics, for more than 10-years EU GrantsAccess has been: (1) working with researchers wishing to come to Switzerland from anywhere in the world; (2) working with Swiss researchers going or planning to go abroad; and working with Swiss researchers and academics returning to Switzerland.

As previously noted, EU GrantsAccess is a mutual office of ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich. Both institutions play a key role in Switzerland's research landscape. ETH Zurich – more formally known as The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich – is an institution of the Swiss Confederation dedicated to higher education, learning and research. As a typical technical university, ETH Zurich has a clear focus on engineering, architecture and natural sciences, but also includes the humanities and social sciences, as well as management and economics in distinct departments.

Annika Glauner and I first met at the 54th annual meeting in November, and since that time has joined Jim Casey and me as a co-chair of the international track for NCURA's 55th annual meeting in August 2013.

Since 2007, Annika has been a Senior Research and Program Manager at EU GrantsAccess, a joint office for international programs between ETH Zurich – the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich – and the University of Zurich, Switzerland's largest university. She is an active member of the Community of European Research Project Managers of the League of European Research Universities (LERU), a member of the Professional Development Group of the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA), and since 2011 Secretary of NCURA's International Region. In addition, she is a mentor within the KoWi Brussels EU Mentoring Program (please see the following link for information about KoWi:

http://www.kowi.de/en/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-273/1036_read-1269/

ETH Zurich regularly appears at the top of international rankings as one of the best universities in the world. Indeed, 21 Nobel Laureates have studied, taught or conducted research at ETH Zurich, underlining the excellent reputation of the institute. Transferring its knowledge to the private sector and society at large is one of ETH Zurich's primary concerns. ETH Zurich also helps find long-term solutions to timely global challenges. Focal points of its research include energy supply, risk management,

developing the cities of the future, global food security and human health. In 1993, Switzerland participated for the first time in the Framework Programs of the European Union. The University of Zurich (UZH), with its 26,000 students, is Switzerland's largest university. Founded in 1833, UZH was Europe's first university to be established by a democratic political system; today, UZH is one of the foremost universities in the German-speaking world. Made up of seven faculties covering some 100 different subject areas, the University offers a wide variety of Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. programs. In addition, UZH's continuing education programs offer excellent learning opportunities.

As a member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU), the University of Zurich belongs to Europe's most prestigious research institutions. Numerous distinctions highlight the University's international renown in the fields of medicine, immunology, genetics, neuroscience and structural biology as well as in economics. To date, the Nobel Prize has been conferred on 12 UZH scholars.

Annika, please tell us about your background and what attracted you to research administration?

In 1995 I entered the realm of European research schemes for the very first time. I was working at the Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe's (ZKM) Institute for Visual Media, and the Institute was invited to participate in defining schemata for "Intelligent Information Interfaces," or simply *i3*, an Esprit Long-Term Research program initiated by the European Commission. The head of the Institute and I participated as representatives from the ZKM. The goal of *i3* was to develop new human-centered interfaces for interacting with information, aimed at the future broad population. *i3* aimed at a radical departure from the then-present-day human-machine interface concepts and did this under the assumption that this could only be done guided by a long-term vision intertwining human, societal and technological factors. The initiative focused on launching research on new forms of interaction placing people as active participants rather than passive recipients of information. I was both involved in a consortium formulating these new human-centered visions and from 1996 onward in the first call and two of the first *i3* projects. I was attracted to the boundaries between art and science, fascinated by the innovation potential of new media and engaged in the description and composition of reception spaces for expressive forms in art and science. One focus was the questioning of social reality and the formal analysis of the reality we perceive. Working in international and multidisciplinary teams and contexts was one of the most inspiring experiences that led not only to catalyzing dialogues and cutting-edge results but also to my belief that the status quo is never an option and working in any research area means exploring and defining it as a cultural living environment permanently new.

Despite working as a senior project manager within the strategic design team at Philips Design and for a long time as a curator, before becoming a member of the EU GrantsAccess team I had been engaged in "outside-in thinking" in applying a diversity of perspective, and interested in how the future might unfold. Consequently my interests today are not that far away from my fascination in the 1990s, as one of my current research interests focuses on the impact of social media on intercultural communication and its challenges for networks for international researchers. In other words, working in research administration is an endorsement of my career so far. At EU GrantsAccess I am part of global research endeavors that address the most critical challenges world-wide, and this allows everyone involved to gain the insight, confidence and capabilities we all need to shape the future – and this is a unique opportunity.

Please tell us about your work at GrantsAccess?

John, your introduction of me captured very well the context in which I live and work. My tasks at EU GrantsAccess are varied, inspiring, challenging and rather internationally embedded. On a day-to-day basis we inform and support researchers from the greater area of Zurich in their efforts to find the right funding scheme for their research area and competence – be it regional, national or international, though the European funding schemes are our main area of expertise. We take care of administrative issues when it comes to the researchers working at ETH Zurich or the University of Zurich, we offer custom-made support in the pre-and post-award phase for these researchers as well as the administrative staff of both institutions. Organizing and carrying out events and workshops as well as training modules and conferences are part of our everyday expertise.

Let's not forget, however, that Switzerland, though the global hub of robotics and automation and right in the heart of Europe, has slightly less than 8 million inhabitants, 12 universities, and is not a member state of the European Union but an associated state to the Union only since 2007 (meaning that it does not have the same right as a member state). International collaborations are crucial to the research enterprise, to the scientists and universities, and to us as a support office for the research community. Consequently, EU GrantsAccess is an active member of numerous national and international networks as you outlined in the beginning: LERU, IDEA League, Euresearch Network, EURAXESS, and EARMA and NCURA to name the principal ones. All members of the EU GrantsAccess team need to network, need to know about the (inter)national "research scene," along with regional, national and international funding opportunities, the high-potential researchers, and the international strategies of home institutions, etc. Networks provide access to a range of intellectual backgrounds and professional experiences; they are consortia around new ideas, as they are so much more than an array of experts but professionals, who challenge us to challenge ourselves, to make connections, to ask better questions. Currently, I am involved in two European research projects both as researcher as well as research administrator, which allows me to promote learning as a co-creative process. We are developing generic monitoring tool that can be easily customized to the context within they are used and define indicators as methods for tracking progress, iterating solutions and identifying unintended consequences. Being involved in the definition and implementation of projects targeting at international research administrators and managers reminds me of my state of being in permanent beta and allows us to invest in ourselves.

Annika, tell us something about the personal and institutional benefits of being involved in NCURA?

Being involved in NCURA is an outstanding opportunity as it allows us to intensify our understanding of the US and global research landscape. Via this forum we have been granted unique access to resources of the NSF and NIH, not to mention the contacts we have made during the conferences and via NCURA's *Collaborate!* platform. European research institutions and Europe as a whole are investing in international cooperation as it plays an increasingly important role in tackling major global challenges as energy, environment, climate change, food security and fighting diseases. Going it alone is not an option in research and innovation. The only way to succeed in research, technological development, and innovation is to work together: combining and sharing resources, including best practices; avoiding redundancy; and benefiting from economies of scale. Networking and collaborating with US institutions is crucial for us, to our home institutions, to Zurich, to Switzerland. Thanks to the NCURA network with its information and communication resources we stay informed on the development in the US while being in Europe. ■

Thank you very much, Annika. Thank you. John.



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