



On Campus Interview with Eva Björndal

Team Leader at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden

Give us an overview of your professional career and how you happened to start a career in the Research Management Profession.

International matters have been a common thread throughout my studies and work. After I finished university, I started to work for the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium. When I decided to

move back to Sweden, the possibility to work with EU-grants at Karolinska Institutet (KI) opened up. I started out as Financial Manager for two very large EU-projects in oncology and then moved onto being Financial Advisor for International Grants. After that I became the Compliance Coordinator for International Grants and I'm now Team-Leader for the Post-Contract Office, which works with both EU and US funded grants.

What are your current responsibilities at the Karolinska Institutet and what do you find most interesting about your position as a Research Manager?

The team I am leading, the Post-Contract Office, is the result of a comprehensive internal compliance review, and is a young and quickly expanding team. We are currently administrating approximately half of KI's EU and US funded projects, but KI is moving towards full centralization. I am heavily involved in that transformation process. The current team is a real dream team, which is crucial when expanding and developing at the pace that we are moving. I find the expansion and development of processes and quality control truly interesting, challenging and rewarding.

What are the biggest challenges related to managing US funding at your institution?

Those are the things I should not say here because then I might get KI in trouble....LOL! As a foreign organization we have many challenges, from not getting our overhead covered to compliance requirements, such as the FCOI, for which we have established additional internal procedures to satisfy both Swedish and US regulations. The fact that the Swedish laws and regulations sometimes differ to those of the NIH is challenging.

You have hosted NCURA/EARMA International Fellows at the Karolinska. What benefits do you see to this exchange of International Research Management Professionals?

I cannot emphasize what a great learning experience it is. It really works both ways too; both the International Fellow and the host learn a lot. I always think it is good to widen your perspectives and

embrace other ideas, cultures and structures in the working environment. It creates a deeper understanding of how other institutions are organized and is extremely valuable in terms of networking.

You are the incoming Chair for Region VIII, the International Region, and have been active in planning (co-chair) the joint meeting with the Midwest Region in Chicago, Illinois April 26 through 29, 2015. What can we look forward to at this meeting in the Windy City?

We are thrilled to have our first joint meeting together with Region IV and the meeting will be truly remarkable! We will have a great program, excellent speakers, attendance by representatives from both the NIH and the EU-Commission, a research tour hosted by Chicago Universities at the end of the conference, welcome reception at the Museum at Contemporary Arts, a taste of Chicago and the award winning jazz musician Dee Alexander performing on Tuesday night. Do I need to say more.....make sure to register....Chicago, here we come!

Any hobbies you would like to share other than dancing to rock music?

The only thing that would beat dancing to rock music is dancing to pop music...and especially ABBA, LOL! I love doing stuff with my kids and being out in Nature. I also like to cook, travel, read and exercise.