



## **Sounds of eRA Podcast Transcription**

**Part one of a twelve part series where Edward Johnson Jr. (a.k.a. Eddie) sits down with Sandra Nordahl, President, Society of Research Administrators International (SRA), to discuss the mission of SRA and the effects of sequestration on research administration.**

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# Why SRA?

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Eddie: Welcome to another “*Sounds of the eRA.*” My name is Edward Johnson, a.k.a. Eddie, and I'm the President of InfoEd International. We're going to be speaking today with Sandra Nordahl. She's the president of SRA. We're going to be speaking about SRA's mission and inner workings, and also the effects of sequestration on research administration and its effects on the world around us. Hello, Sandra.

Sandra: Hi, Eddie. Thank you for asking me to participate in your podcast.

Eddie: Glad you were able to accommodate this. What is SRA?

Sandra: Well, SRA is an international group of individuals. Our prime mission is to globally foster and strengthen research management, administration, and knowledge transfers. We recently did our strategic plan for the next five years and we wrote our mission and our vision and our goal is to provide excellent resources for research managers and administrators globally and we're fast working towards that goal.

Eddie: How many members do you have approximately?

Sandra: We have approximately 4,000 members.

Eddie: How many institutions are represented in that?

Sandra: There is quite a large laundry list of institutions. The unique thing about SRA International is that we're not just higher education. We serve the nonprofits. We have members from the federal government. The veterans' administration participates in our meetings very much. They're very involved. We also have members from I think about 40 countries.

Eddie: Fantastic. One of the things I know when I first got involved in the industry, there was two significant organizations if you will. SRA was one. The other was in NCURA and my understanding was, and I think you articulated it well, that NCURA was kind of restrictive to colleges and universities but there is obviously a lot of other institutions that do research.

Sandra: Right.

Eddie: Hospitals and other areas that you guys accommodate where NCURA originally didn't -- I think they've loosened that rule a little bit but I believe that there's still kind of the audience if you will, the group of people they were soliciting.

Sandra: Well, you're, you're exactly right. I know they've changed their member base and I am not very well-versed on NCURA but we do serve all kinds of research administrators and managers globally so we aren't limited just to higher education. We also work with a lot of different hospitals, research organizations, small nonprofits, large nonprofits, the federal government, as well as higher education.

Our organization holds one annual conference every year, an international conference, and we have two regional section meetings that are also offered along with chapter meetings. Those are in different regions throughout the US and globally.

Eddie: That's one of the things I like about SRA is that you do move the meetings around. Selfishly, you get to visit large nice cities and you change it from year to year. NCURA, and I mean no disrespect to NCURA, they hold it at that Hilton in Washington DC religiously. SRA lets you go all over the place for these meetings.

Sandra: Well, I think the advantage of that is the travel expense is spread out across the membership. One year you might be going to the east coast, the next year maybe the west coast. So the person who's traveling isn't always having to pay the same rates. Some years our members get a break financially. Some years, they have to pay a little bit more but I do enjoy that we do move our meetings around the country.

Our next upcoming annual meeting is going to be in New Orleans and I'll get that date for you but I'm very much looking forward to it. It will be my first meeting starting out as president of the organization. Our exchange of command so to speak takes place in October each year at the end of our annual meeting and our next annual meeting will be held October the 26th to the 30th at the Sheraton Hotel in New Orleans.

Eddie: Wonderful.

Sandra: So I hope to see you there.

Eddie: Yeah, I love New Orleans. It's a very interesting place. I think in some ways, no disrespect to New Orleans, I think it should be a different country. The culture down there is very different and in some cases, the language is English but it's a different spin on English at times so you have to get used to that.

I realized that the first time I got into a cab and I thought I wasn't going to be able to get where I needed to go, so --

Sandra: Oh, really?

Eddie: But it is a fantastic – oh, yeah, it is a fantastic town. I mean it's got everything in it but I won't make this a commercial about New Orleans although I, I could very –

Sandra: What I'd like to tell you a little bit about, what we're expecting to have more than 200 speakers 135 sessions, and over 35 workshops.

Eddie: Over how many days?

Sandra: With a variety of topical interest.

Eddie: How many days would that be?

Sandra: It's four days long and then we have a board meeting at the beginning and then we have a board meeting at the end of that and we invite the public to participate in our board meetings. I'd like to just put my hat off to Kate McCormick, Katie Watkins Wendell, and John Westin Seymour who are working super hard for over a year to put on a fabulous meeting for everybody that'll be a true educational experience.

Eddie:

Sandra, this has been absolutely fantastic stuff. I am very excited about the information we've been able to collect from you. I want to point out that on the SRA website, on the home page, there's an entry point to the sequestration resource center that SRA's been able to put together. It is a fantastic place to go look and see some real world examples of the things that are going on with sequestration. I would encourage you to go and take a look at that as well because this information is ever evolving and SRA does a great job of keeping that updated. I would encourage you to bookmark that site and look at it periodically to see what's new.

Again, Sandra, I really appreciate your time, fantastic information.

Sandra:

Great, thank you so much for having me.