

**Submitted by:** Robert H. Wells, Office of Research, Interim Director of Research Communications

**Submitted on behalf of:** Winston Schoenfeld, Interim Vice President for Research and Innovation

**Subject:** Tamara Gabrus Promoted to Director, Research Initiatives at UCF

### **Tamara Gabrus Promoted to Director, Research Initiatives at UCF**

Tamara Gabrus, program director II for the [Faculty Cluster Initiative](#) (FCI) and Pre-Award Shared Services (PASS), has been promoted to the position of Director, Research Initiatives, in UCF's Office of Research.

In this role, Gabrus will lead the university's efforts to foster research excellence and collaboration across multiple disciplines, further enhancing UCF's reputation as a hub for cutting-edge research and innovation.

"Tamara has a long history as one of the most tireless and dedicated employees at UCF, demonstrating excellence in every aspect of her work," says Winston Schoenfeld, UCF's Interim Vice President for Research and Innovation. "With a more than 15-year career at UCF that has included increasing responsibilities, I am excited to promote her to her new role where she will undoubtedly continue to have a significant impact on the advancement of our research enterprise."

Gabrus joined the Office of Research in 2007. In 2016, she took on the role of Assistant Director for Research Administration within FCI, a program that brings together faculty members from various colleges, institutes, and centers to tackle complex global challenges through interdisciplinary research and education.

Throughout her tenure with FCI, Gabrus' responsibilities expanded to encompass programmatic oversight of faculty hiring, financial management, space and facilities coordination, and proposal preparation support for all nine clusters involved in the initiative.

In 2020, Gabrus launched the Pre-Award Shared Services team (PASS), a secondary unit she oversees, which provides proposal preparation support to core units that do not qualify for full-time support individually but collectively require administrative assistance. PASS also offers temporary, ad-hoc proposal preparation support while units are actively undergoing replacement searches for pre-award vacancies.

Most recently, Gabrus and her team at PASS collaborated with Research Development to create "[EARLIER](#)," a joint initiative that offers comprehensive support to large, interdisciplinary, complex, and high-impact proposal efforts. A dedicated website for PASS and EARLIER teams is currently in development and will be available soon to provide more information on their services.

"I think this promotion blends the different areas I support better under one unified umbrella of Research Initiatives," Gabrus says. "I am working toward launching the third component of the PASS unit, called EARLIER. Once we've successfully implemented EARLIER and really understood the needs of the principal investigators leading these large, complex, collaborative efforts, we're going to explore other ways to mitigate the administrative burden on our research faculty and their administrative units."

For FCI, she says they've reached a point where they are no longer hiring for new lines, and many of their pre-tenure faculty are now receiving promotion and tenure.

"It's time now to find ways to cultivate the collaborative ecosystem at UCF further, strengthen our relationships with all of our members regardless of their funding source, and position our clusters to the next level of success whether that be greater research funding, academic programs, or working toward center status," she says. "I am excited to help the Cluster Leads form a cohort that really empowers them to execute their respective clusters' visions into realities."

Gabrus is supported by a team of professionals, including Sarah Lardizabal, James "Jim" Smith, Rebeca Santana, and Jordan Rich. Lardizabal has recently been promoted to Manager, Contracts & Grants, and Smith has been promoted to Contracts & Grants Specialist IV. These promotions are aimed at enhancing pre-award activities within FCI.

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