INTRODUCTION

Research Development Professionals (RDPs) represent an emerging career path that draws people from a wide variety of backgrounds to accomplish many diverse activities within the research enterprise. NORDP is the only professional organization solely focused on research development (RD) activities and formalizing RD as a recognized profession. To address the goals of NORDP, work needed to be done to characterize the RD work force, including common job tasks, titles, and compensation. The Metrics Subcommittee of the Member Services Committee expanded the 2012 NORDP salary survey to include new dimensions and adjust salaries to account for cost-of-living variances nationally.

At the launch of the survey, NORDP was comprised of 584 members representing 277 institutions across 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Eight international countries were also represented in the membership.

OBJECTIVES

The goals of this NORDP-sponsored salary survey were:

• To begin to develop a longitudinal dataset by updating the original 2012 membership survey and,

• To provide members with information about RD positions, duties and compensation that might be needed to grow and maintain research development functions at member institutions.

Notably, the College and University Professional Association (CUPA) for Human Resources provides no salary guidance or supports positions focus largely on proposal development functions.

Results shared here address the probing questions:

1. What research development duties are most commonly performed by NORDP members?

2. How are research development positions structured?

3. What are the annual salary ranges for NORDP members across demographic, geographic, functional, and educational training variables?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Terri Soelberg received IRB approval from Boise State University to administer a confidential online survey.

2. In February 2015, NORDP invited all members with a valid email address to participate in its second organization-wide salary survey.

3. The Qualtrics-based survey was started by 359 members, with 212 members (37%) providing complete data and 231 members providing partial data.


ANALYSES

• Normalized salaries were computed by dividing each reported annual salary by the COLI index for the area indicated by the reported institutional zip code.

• One-way, two-way and three-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted.

• One-way and two-way median analyses were also computed.

• Thematic analyses were completed on open field responses.

• 'Consultants' and other job titles associated with few respondents were combined in an 'Other' category to protect anonymity.

FACTORS IMPACTING SALARY & MODEL

P-values of factors from backward-selected reduced model

Factor Degrees of freedom P-value

Degree 3 0.011

Job Title 8 <0.001

Organization 1 <0.001

Institution Type 1 0.133

Region 6 0.088

Estimated Mean COLI-adjusted Salary = Intercept + Degree + Job Title + Organization + Institution Type + Region

As a result of this survey, a new salary calculator has been built and is available as a new benefit to membership. Visit: https://nordp.memberclicks.net/salary-survey

CONCLUSIONS

• Overall, Job Title has the greatest impact on both the mean and median salaries, with Vice Provost/Chancellor/President earning the highest, followed by Assistant/Associate Dean; Grant Writer and Coordinator/Officer/Analyst/Administrator earning the lowest wages overall.

• Degree also has an impact, with Doctorate-holding professionals earning more on average than their peers.

• Additionally, Doctoral Universities seem to provide the highest average and median salaries compared to other Organizations, but the Other category encompasses a number of other types of organizations.

• There is a difference in mean salary for Region, with those in Northeast having the lowest mean, marginal mean, and median salary, and those in the Southwest having the highest marginal mean.

• Gender is not a significant factor in salary after accounting for the other five factors in the model (with P-value of .435). The three-way analysis, along with the fitting of the full and final reduced models, suggest that Gender does not appear to significantly affect the mean salary.

• RD professionals frequently split their effort across a broad spectrum of tasks.

• Overall, RD professionals spend less time in communication of research opportunities and enhancement of collaboration, relative to the other major activities of their role.

LIMITATIONS

• Small sample size

• Interpretable groups

• Possible lurking variables

• Limited scope

NORDP colleague Ann McGuigan, PhD, of the University of Arizona, provided valuable input to the original survey topics and questions.

Penn State University Statistical Consulting Center members S. Austin, M. Niu and J. Rosenberger provided exemplary data analysis and developed the described compensation model.

Thank you to NORDP for providing funding to support statistical analysis.