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CPI Newsletter - January 2010

Update on Task Force on Faculty Performance Evaluation

A Faculty Performance Evaluation Task Force has been created to align faculty evaluations with the 2020 Vision and the Academic Master Plan. Revisions are called for to include recognition for inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary collaborations, enhancement of diversity and internationalization, public engagement. The Task Force is charged with three tasks: (1) Identify and recommend examples of best-practice approaches to faculty performance in research-extensive, land-grant universities; (2) Develop a flexible set of guidelines to steer the colleges and departments in the development of their own annual faculty performance evaluation guidelines; (3) Make recommendations on how the proposed changes should be addressed in colleges and departmental guidelines. The Task Force met for the first time on December 8th, 2009. Three subcommittees have been created. The next meeting of the Task Force is January 19th, 2010. The Task Force is expected to make recommendations to the Interim Provost and Executive Vice President by April 1, 2010. Input can be provided to the CPI representatives on this Task Force, Jean-Luc Guermond (Science) and Clint Allred (COALS).

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Update on Task Force on the Graduate Experience

In light of the critical need to enhance graduate education to fulfill Vision 2020 goals, including attracting and retaining the most competitive students, this task force is charged with making focused recommendations on how we can improve the overall experience of all graduate and professional students at Texas A&M University. Chaired by Dr. Christine Stanley, Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, the Task Force members include 14 faculty, 6 graduate students and 1 community individual. At the first meeting on December 16, the group was divided into 3 sub-groups: 1) Quality of life issues on- and off-campus climate: housing, social interactions/climate, childcare; 2) Compensation and benefits provided to graduate students: stipends, travel funding, health care coverage; and 3) Professional development opportunities beyond the classroom. The next meeting of the Task Force is January 25, 2010. A formal report to the Interim Provost and Executive Vice President Karan Watson is due by April 26, 2010. Input can be provided to the CPI representatives on this Task Force, Sue Bloomfield (Education and Human Development) or Jane Welsh (Vet Med).

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Update on Task Force on the Creation, Management and Dissolution of Centers and Institutes

The Task Force on the Creation, Management and Dissolution of Centers and Institutes was

charged by VPR Jeff Seemann with reviewing and suggesting revisions for current university rules, processes and criteria for the creation, management, and dissolution of university centers and institutes. The Task, chaired by Carol Cantrell, proposed a draft TAMU rule to address the administration of TAMU centers and institutes, including joint centers and institutes. It also developed draft guidelines to standardize processes, routing, approvals and evaluation procedures, to ensure feedback is provided to center and institute directors, and to put in place mechanisms for the timely notification of the research community about new centers and institutes. Currently, feedback on the draft guidelines is being solicited from the research community. Please provide any comments to the CPI representatives on this Task Force, Nancy Amato (Engineering) and Norman Guinasso (Geosciences). The November 30, 2009 Final Report from the Centers and Institutes Task Force can be found on the CPI website here: http://cpi.tamu.edu/committees/Final_Report.CentersandInstitutes.pdf

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Update on Research Administration Shared Services (RASS) Committee

As reported in the December CPI Newsletter, The Research Administration Shared Services (RASS) Committee was formed by The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Board of Regents (BOR) to explore opportunities for increasing efficiencies and reduced costs through shared services. The RASS Committee focused its efforts on the costs of grants administration (pre- and post-award to termination) of the primary research administration entities within TAMUS. The Committee conducted a cost analysis of research administration for the System members and TAMRF. It was concluded that research grant administration costs across TAMUS were roughly comparable. The Committee also agreed that it would be useful to collect data from peer institutions in order to benchmark TAMUS processes. A complete report of the RASS study was submitted to the Committee's BOR Liaison, Regent Jones, on December 3, 2009. The RASS Committee anticipates that the BOR will use these findings as a baseline for the recommended bench marking process.

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Update on Biosafety Advisory Committee

In November 2009, VPR Jeff Seemann established a Biosafety Advisory Committee. This committee will report to the VPR and will provide advice and input to the VPR and to the Office of Biosafety on biosafety matters. The committee consists of two representatives from the CPI, Greg Reinhart (COALS) and Terry Thomas (Science), and Deans or Associate Deans for Research for colleges with more than five active IBC permits. The first meeting of this committee is scheduled for January 29, 2010. This committee was established in part because PIs brought their issues and concerns to the CPI, which in turn relayed them to the VPR. For this committee to be effective, PIs must bring their issues to its attention.

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Board of Regents Agenda Items

At the January 21, 2010 meeting of the TAMUS Board or Regents, concept papers to establish three institutes were discussed. After a concept paper is presented to the BOR, the next step is the development of a full proposal for consideration by the BOR.

<http://www.tamus.edu/regents/AgendaBooks/archive/2010-01/ELECTRONIC%20AGENDA%20BOOK%20c.pdf>

The TAMU Institute for Advanced Study (TIAS) proposed by TAMU will be a multidisciplinary program with its primary aim to attract stellar researchers as Fellows to Texas A&M, to facilitate their research and teaching collaboration with current faculty and students, and to provide an opportunity to evaluate the Fellows as potential faculty hires. (pp. 57-63 of Agenda Book)

The Texas A&M Institute for Neuroscience (TAMIN) will be a multidisciplinary program between TAMU and TAMHSC that will provide an organizational structure for investigators to strengthen interdisciplinary, collaborative research and enhance research funding opportunities among members. (pp. 64-69 of Agenda Book)

The Wind Energy Center (WEC) will be established as one of at least five planned energy-type specific research centers within the TEES Energy Engineering Institute (E²I). (pp. 70-75 of Agenda Book)

Theresa Maldonado named Associate Vice Chancellor for Research

Dr. Theresa Maldonado, recently named the Director of the Energy Engineering Institute, will also devote a portion of her time to a new role as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research for The Texas A&M University System. Dr. Maldonado will have the primary responsibility for supporting the development of comprehensive research programs at our regional campuses, as well as working collaboratively to achieve the goals of the System's Research Strategic Plan. Her main programmatic focus will continue to be the organization and advancement of high-impact research programs that will transform the world's ability to provide secure energy resources for the next century. See TAMUS announcement: <http://news.tamus.edu/2010/01/20/theresa-maldonado-named-associate-vice-chancellor-for-research/>

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