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CPI Newsletter - December 2009

Update on Research Administration Shared Services (RASS) Committee

The Research Administration Shared Services (RASS) Committee was formed by The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Board of Regents (BOR) June 15, 2009 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. These entities are: Texas AgriLife Research (AgriLife), Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health Science Center (HSC), Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) and the Texas A&M Research Foundation (TAMRF). 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 Committees BOR Liaison, Regent Jones on December 3, 2009. The RASS Committee anticipates that its report will be discussed at the January BORs meeting. After the report has been presented to the BOR it will be made publicly available.

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Establishment of 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 and Terry Thomas, and Deans or Associate Deans for Research for colleges with more than five active IBC permits. 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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Update on Task Force on the Creation, Management and Dissolution of Centers and Institutes

In September 2009, VPR Jeff Seemann established a Task Force on the Creation, Management and Dissolution of Centers and Institutes. The Task Force, chaired by Carol Cantrell, was charged 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 force 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. The task force submitted its first draft report to Dr. Seemann to be discussed with him at the next meeting of the Task Force. Once the Task Force has completed its work and final draft, a copy will be made available.

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Establishment of Research Park Advisory Committee (RPAC)

In response to recommendations made by the Research Park Task Force to then President Elsa Murano and Chancellor Mike McKinney, the Research Park Advisory Committee (RPAC) was formed to provide a substantive analysis of the Texas A&M Research Park and provide recommendations to move the Park forward as a community of innovation for the 21st century. The committee membership is comprised of entrepreneurial researchers and representatives from the local community, The Texas A&M System and Texas A&M University. At its inaugural meeting on October 27, 2009, the committee unanimously determined that it was in the University's best interests to secure the services of an external consultant. Once selected through the university's RFP process, the consultant would be retained to visit Texas A&M and review the current situation at the Park and provide an 'outside in' view from which to determine a course of action to propel the Park into a community of innovation. Upon completion of the consultant's final report, the consultant will return to the University to discuss his or her findings with the RPAC.

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Update on University Research Council (URC)

The VPR's office is moving forward with the execution aspects of the academic master plan. In particular, meetings with deans, department heads and relevant faculty are being held to review budgets and to align the disciplinary and interdisciplinary aspects of the proposed programs. Approximately \$11M in base funding will be devoted to implementation of the academic master (AMP) by FY14. By this same year, approximately \$6.3M in base funding will be devoted to implementation of the research road map, including approximately \$4.0 to be spent on faculty hiring and operating expenses for the 8 Initial University Multidisciplinary Research Initiatives. The remainder of these funds will be spent on emerging initiatives discussed in the research roadmap report. Funding for one-time purchases and faculty/program start-up costs, in addition to bridge funding for the early allocation of base funds, will be drawn from one-time allocations totaling \$24M over the next five fiscal years. The search for the Director of the Office of Proposal Development (OPD) is in process, with a national search being conducted to fill this important position. The position of Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies is underway, as well. A search committee has been formed and the call for nominations will be out in mid-December.

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Update on Export Controls task Force (ECTF)

The Export Controls Task Force (ECTF) was formed in January 2009 and was charged with developing TAMU policies, rules & procedures for ensuring compliance with federal export control laws. The Task Force drafted an Export Control policy that was approved by the Board of Regents at their September meeting. <http://www.tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/pdf/15-02.pdf> The Task Force is currently drafting a TAMU Rule.

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TEES Energy Engineering Institute Established

The Board of Regents approved the establishment of the Energy Engineering Institute (EEI) at its meeting on December 4, 2009. EEI will be part of the Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) and will be directed by Dr. Theresa Maldonado, associate dean of engineering. As an umbrella organization, EEI will serve as a central hub for strategic coordination of ongoing and evolving energy-related activities - including basic and applied research, education, and industry and government initiatives. EEI researchers will seek to develop new technologies and integrated systems for sustainable energy resource utilization, conversion, storage, transmission and distribution, as well as efficient use and consumption of energy. Those technologies could then be licensed and commercialized for the public benefit. In addition to research and development, the institute will also study public policy implications related to energy production and implementation of new energy technologies and environmental sustainability as well as provide programs for training students and professionals in energy-related concepts and technologies.

For more information: <http://tees.tamu.edu/news/1954>

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Texas A&M Institute for Preclinical Studies (TIPS) Grand Opening

The Grand Opening of the Texas A&M Institute for Preclinical Studies (TIPS) was held on Thursday December 3, 2009. Governor Rick Perry spoke at the grand opening which was attended by members of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. The primary focus of TIPS is to develop research activities and provide core services in the areas of device development, preclinical studies under Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) and biomedical imaging. The educational mission of TIPS will center on advanced training of graduate and professional students within relevant scientific and engineering disciplines, as well as support the needs of degree programs that train students on regulatory issues within biotechnology. TIPS is directed by Dr. Theresa Fossum and reports administratively to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.

For more information: <http://tips.tamu.edu/>

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