



Council of Principal
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CPI Newsletter - August 2010

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Summary of July 14, 2010 CPI Meeting

At the July 14, 2010 CPI meeting, members of the ad hoc working group on the Texas A&M University Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS) discussed the proposal and rationale for the institute and

Dr. Bowen Loftin, President of Texas A&M University, discussed the budget and reallocation process. The July 14, 2010 meeting agenda and materials, including a video recording, can be found at

http://cpi.tamu.edu/CPI_7.14.10.pdf.

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Preview of September 8, 2010 CPI Meeting

The presentation currently planned for the September 8, 2010 CPI meeting is an address by Dr. R. Bowen Loftin, President of Texas A&M University. The CPI traditionally has the President of Texas A&M University provide the address to the Council each September.

The September meeting will also mark the beginning of the terms for the new CPI officers, Terry Thomas (Science) as Chair and Lawrence Rauchwerger (Engineering) as Vice Chair, and newly

elected CPI members (http://cpi.tamu.edu/committees/10election_results), Lance Bullard, Jr. (TTI), DiMarco, Steve (Geosciences), Chester Dunning (Liberal Arts), Rafael Lara-Alecio (Education and Human Development), J. N. Reddy (Engineering), and Mary Jo Richardson (Geosciences).

The agenda including any updates will be posted on the CPI website as they become available.

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A&M Action Plan 2015

On August 3, 2010, President Loftin sent an email to the Texas A&M community on campus news and updates. One of the updates concerned the A&M Action Plan 2015, which is a 5-year strategic plan for the university. It is continuing to be finalized and will be submitted to The Texas A&M University System by August 30. We encourage you to supply feedback on this plan via email to provost@tamu.edu.

The plan is on-line at http://cpi.tamu.edu/AM_Action_Plan_2015_DRAFT-6-2010.pdf

Research Administration Shared Services (RASS): Consultant's PI Survey

The following was provided by Schaefer & Company, the external consultant selected to assist in an evaluation of research administration with the Texas A&M University System.

This update is intended to provide a brief update on the status of the evaluation of research administration by Schaefer & Company LLC to identify organizational and efficiency improvement opportunities for the System. The research and analysis includes an evaluation of organization models that should be considered for contract and grant administration including consolidation of functions, a fully distributed network, or some variations thereof.

The first portion of our engagement involves an internal baseline review, involving: interviews with key executives to understand current perspectives on operational aspects of research administration;

data analyses relating to recent operations and performance and; a survey of TAMUS research administrators, Principal Investigators (PI's) and external research sponsors to understand current satisfaction levels with research administration overall, and within various operational areas of performance.

Select information pertaining to research administration performance/productivity will be used as a basis for comparison with operating characteristics of other select research institutions, as part

of a performance benchmark evaluation currently underway. From these inputs, we will conduct an operational and gap analysis of TAMUS' operations in pre- and post-award services in order to identify potential improvement areas in operations and organizational design. Our current plans are to have a draft report of findings and recommendations completed in early to mid September of this year

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EPIK-MAESTRO Update

The CPI Executive Committee met with Leonarda Horvat, Chief Information Officer and Director of Information Systems at Texas A&M University System – TEES, who is leading the development of the EPIK-MAESTRO system. The CPI EC provided input on how to administer and provide proper credit for multiple PI projects within EPIK-MAESTRO.

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Biosafety Advisory Committee Update

The Biosafety Advisory Committee (BAC) met on June 30. Representatives from two colleges (College of Science, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences) made presentations to the committee providing their individual and collective viewpoint regarding experiences with the Biosafety Office. In the next meeting, representatives from the Health Science Center and College of Engineering will make presentations. **All PIs in these colleges are strongly encouraged to provide their written input to Dr. Pishko (Chemical Engineering) or Dr. James Samuel (HSC) by August 25, 2010**, so that BAC can get a comprehensive overview of the existing difficulties in the functioning of the PIs in light of the biosafety and compliance expectations implemented by the biosafety office. The next BAC meeting is on August 27, 2010.

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Facilities Services Advisory Committee

The Facilities Services Advisory Committee held its first meeting on July 30, 2010. This newly formed committee will be a critical mechanism to encourage proactive and meaningful interaction between facilities organization and the academic, research and administrative constituencies on campus. It will provide valuable information and advice as Facilities Services moves toward a more structured, transparent, and service-oriented organization. The committee received an update on facilities from Mr. Rod Weis, Interim Executive Director for Facilities Services, who is also chairing the committee. A co-chair will be selected soon from the committee members. Updates of particular interest to PIs were that a web-based task order and management system will be released in the spring that will allow customizers to track progress of work orders, and mechanisms are being put in place that will facilitate and expedite the use of approved external contractors. Nancy Amato is the CPI representative on this committee.

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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 and procedures for ensuring compliance with federal export control laws. As reported previously, the Task Force drafted an Export Control regulation approved by the Board of Regents at its September 2009 meeting. <http://www.tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/pdf/15-02.pdf>

The Task Force Chair, Ms. Katherine Rojo del Busto, has conducted export control presentations to groups across the university community about the Task Force's proposed University rule on export controls. She is scheduled to present to the CPI on August 11, 2010. Principal Investigators are encouraged to review the draft rule at http://cpi.tamu.edu/export_draft.

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Bioinformatics Resources Proposal Update

As reported in the June CPI newsletter, the Division of Research and Graduate Studies (RGS) and the Alliance for Bioinformatics, Computational Biology and Systems Biology (ABCS) hosted a campus-wide forum on Friday May 21, 2010 to discuss and prioritize future bioinformatics needs and resources. The forum included presentations on currently available resources and breakout sessions to refine needs and propose next steps. Existing resource presentations and draft reports from the breakout sessions are posted in on the forum webpage: <http://abcs.tamu.edu/2010-bioinformatics-forum.html>.

As a follow on to the forum, a Working Group is now in the process of drafting a proposal to request support for some resources. The Working Group is co-Chaired by Nancy Amato (ABCS Chair) and Dr. Marty Scholtz (Associate VPR). Once a draft is ready, it will be shared with the research community for comment.

Current information on the process will be available on the ABCS website: <http://abcs.tamu.edu/>.

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Federal Regulations Relating to Financial Conflicts of Interest

On May 21 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the HHS Public Health Service (PHS), proposed revisions to regulations on the Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research for which PHS Funding is Sought and Responsible Prospective Contractors and invited comments on the proposed changes. The Division of Research and Graduate Studies requested feedback from the A&M University community on the proposed

amendments and submitted university feedback to the System. The System compiled comments from other System Members and made a single submission to HHS.

HHS has now extended the comments period to August 19, 2010, requesting specific comments on two basic issues: (1) "possible clarification of enforcement authorities" and (2) "whether it should clarify how the regulations apply to circumstances in which an investigator or a PHS-funded research project transfers from one institution to another, or in which a new institution, and investigators at the new institution, become involved in an ongoing PHS-funded research project (e.g., where the new project becomes a sub grantee on the project)". The System plans to send consolidated comments from System members by August 17, 2010. If you would like to provide comments to the University please do so by August 16, 2010 and direct those comments to Ms. Rose Ndegwa at Rose.Ndegwa@tamu.edu, in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. You may also submit your individual comments directly to the agency using the Federal Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regs/home.html#home>.

You can find a summary of the major changes here http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/coi/major_proposed_changes.pdf and the full text of proposed regulations here <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-11885.pdf>

Reminder: PI-DISCUSS listserv established to facilitate PI communication

The CPI has set up a listserv PI-DISCUSS@listserv.tamu.edu to facilitate communication among PIs and others in the research community. The list is not moderated, i.e., messages to the list are not approved by a moderator or editor. However, only people subscribed to the list can send to the list.

The list is not private and membership on the list is not restricted in anyway. We have initially populated the list with the PIs, but after this we anticipate that people will sign-on or sign-off the list on their own. Anyone can join or sign-off from the listserv by following this link: <https://listserv.tamu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=pi-discuss&A=1>

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