



Council of Principal
Investigators

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CPI Newsletter - May 2010
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Summary and follow-up for April CPI meeting on large/prestigious grants

The April 14, 2010 CPI meeting featured a panel discussion on Texas A&M's Relative Lack of Success with Large/Prestigious Awards (e.g., NSF ERCs or STCs, NIH Training Grants) with panelists: Dr. Raymond Carroll, Distinguished Professor, Department of Statistics, Nutrition and Toxicology; Dr. David Huston, Professor of Medicine and of Microbial & Molecular Pathogenesis, HSC; Dr. John Junkins, Distinguished Professor and Regents Professor, Holder of George J. Eppright Chair, Department of Aerospace Engineering; and Dr. B. Don Russell, Distinguished Professor & Regents Professor, Harry E. Bovay Jr. Endowed Chair, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. A video of the meeting and other meeting materials are available at: <http://cpi.tamu.edu/meetings>. The discussion highlighted a number of areas/issues for future discussion and action. Sub-committees may be formed to focus on particular issues. Please contact cpi@tamu.edu if you are interested in participating.

Contact:

Dr. Nancy Amato, amato@tamu.edu

Mr. Jason Whisenant, CPI Coordinator, cpi@tamu.edu

A Discussion about a Research Development Office at Texas A&M

At the April 14, 2010 CPI meeting a panel discussed Texas A&M's relative lack of success with large/prestigious awards. In parallel with this discussion, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies is considering ways the Division of Research and Graduate Studies (RGS) can

enhance its contributions to Texas A&M's higher success rate in large grants for centers, institutes, IGERTs, graduate training grants, and other large multi-investigator grants. Dialogue has been initiated with the University Research Council (URC), the CPI and other stakeholders as appropriate, about a possible reorganization of the Office of Proposal Development (OPD) into an office (tentatively the "Office of Research Development") that can enhance and expand the assistance it already provides to faculty in obtaining support for research and scholarship. Dr. Jeffrey Seemann, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, will provide an overview of the current activities in this area at the CPI meeting on May 12. He invites comments and an open dialog on how to best formulate a new office to serve the needs of the research community at Texas A&M.

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Campus-Wide Open Forum on Bioinformatics Needs planned for Friday May 21, 2010

On Friday May 21, 2010, the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and the Alliance for Bioinformatics, Computational Biology and Systems Biology (ABCS) will host an open campus-wide meeting to discuss and begin to prioritize bioinformatics needs on campus. The Forum will include plenary sessions and breakouts. The topics for the breakout sessions will be informed by the survey found at: <http://sites.google.com/a/tamu.edu/tamu-bioinformatics-survey>.

All interested researchers - faculty, staff, postdocs and students - are encouraged to complete the survey and attend and participate in the forum. Information on the program and (free) registration can be found here: <http://abcs.tamu.edu/2010-bioinformatics-forum.html>

Contact:

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Update on Research Administration Shared Services (RASS) Phase II

After an open request for proposals published earlier this year, Schaefer & Company was recently selected to assist in an evaluation of research administration within the System. Based in Charlottesville, Virginia, Schaefer & Company is a strategic and technology management consulting firm that works with universities and corporations in conducting research productivity evaluations. Members of the Schaefer engagement team have recently benchmarked best practices in research administration and sponsored programs of leading research universities throughout the U.S., including several described as leading and peer institutions in Texas A&M's "Vision 2020" strategic plan. Schaefer will evaluate TAMUS operations in research administration, conduct a benchmark comparison of research administration, and identify organizational and efficiency improvement opportunities for the System. The research and analysis will include 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.

As reported in a previous newsletter the members of the review team are:

- * Greg Anderson, TAMUS
- * Don Bugh, TTI
- * David Carlson, Health Science Center
- * Bill Dugas, AgriLife Research
- * Theresa Maldonado, TAMUS
- * Leo Paterra, Research Foundation
- * Jeff Seemann, TAMU
- * Mark Smock, TEES
- * Andrew Strong, TAMUS
- * Terry Thomas, TAMU

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Update on the Research Foundation Advisory Committee

The Texas A&M Research Foundation PI Advisory Committee met on May 6, 2010. CPI members Michael Weimer, Terry Thomas, and Norman Guinasso attended. The committee heard a presentation by Patrick Schaefer, President and Managing Director Schaefer & Company LLC, the consultant that TAMUS hired to consider changes in Research Administration (see RASS update in this newsletter).

Schaefer is starting a comparative study of research administration by looking at a number of universities including UC Berkeley, Purdue, University of Wisconsin, and perhaps University of Washington and Georgia Tech. Many of these universities are aspirational universities that are most likely ranked in the top 10 nationally. The universities have a wide range of research administration styles which range from highly centralized to highly decentralized. After completing this review the consultant may recommend changes to our research administration scheme at TAMUS.

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Update on Biosafety Advisory Committee

On April 22, the Biosafety Advisory Committee (BAC) was given an overview of the functioning of the IBC from the IBC Chair Dr. Vern Tesh. To broaden the scope and functioning ability of the IBC, two additional members have been recommended by respective departments: Dr. Ry Young (Bio-Bio) and Dr. Jim Eriksson (College of Science). On May 10, the BAC further discussed the presentation of the IBC chair and identified some follow-up questions with regards to the decision making process for applications submitted by the PIs. These queries will be discussed with the IBC chair after the committee assesses the functioning of the Biosafety Office. Dr. Bruce Whitney has been invited to the June 30 meeting. The committee will also invite 1-2 college representatives to the July meeting to get opinions (provided by PIs in their colleges)

regarding biosafety related issues in their college/department. The BAC will provide a summary of the observations to the VPR and recommend ways to increase efficiency in the biosafety office. All PIs are once again strongly encouraged to provide their input either to their college BAC representative or the CPI representatives on the BAC so that these issues could be discussed during BAC meetings.

Contact:

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Update on the Laboratory Safety Committee

The LSC met on Friday, April 30, 2010. The rubric for reviewing the undergraduate laboratory safety reports for laboratory courses was discussed. Packages were received for at least one course in every department from all colleges and are now being reviewed by the committee. The new template for the review of lab safety will be available on the LSC website (<http://ehsd.tamu.edu/LaboratorySafety.aspx>).

Tom Hallmark was elected the new Chair of the committee to replace Tim Scott.

Contact:

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Update on the International Programs Enhancement and Coordination Committee (IPECC)

In the May meeting, IPECC discussed certain MOA processing issues. A justification document is required by most colleges to begin routing for a proposed agreement. Please contact the International Programs Office (rseehruska@ipomail.tamu.edu) for more details and for a list of active international agreements. TAMU provides passport processing services; for more information please contact Jane Flaherty, Director, Study Abroad Administration, jflaherty@ipomail.tamu.edu. An international portal is being developed as a gateway for all international activities at TAMU. Please contact Randy Kluver, Executive Director of International Programs, rkluver@ipomail.tamu.edu, for more details.

Contact:

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Update on the Task Force on the Graduate Experience

Final meetings were held in April to draft recommendations for the Provost on 1) compensation and benefits; 2) professional development and 3) quality of life topics. One of the major recommendations will relate to graduate student stipends and fees linked to credit hours taken. Committee members were reminded of the impact on PI's budgets should new requirements be exacted for those graduate students supported by PI grants and contracts funds. Dr. Christine Stanley will be delivering this report to Interim Provost Karan Watson on May 9th.

Contact:

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Update on Search for the Comparative Medicine Program Executive Director

The search committee for the Comparative Medicine Program Executive Director identified two candidates who recently visited the campus to meet with various stakeholders. A decision will be made soon to fill this critical position. The search is chaired by Sue Bloomfield.

Contact:

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Recognition of Outgoing CPI Members and 2010-2011 CPI Election Results

The CPI would like to extend its sincere appreciation for the hard work and service of the following CPI members, whose terms on the Council will expire on August 31, 2010:

- * Sue Bloomfield, CEHD
- * Lisa Campbell, Geosciences
- * Bill Eisele, TTI
- * Sarah Gatson, Liberal Arts
- * Norman Guinasso, Geosciences
- * Tony Hsieh, Engineering

The CPI would like to congratulate the following newly elected CPI members, whose three-year CPI term will begin on September 1, 2010:

- * Lance Bullard, TTI
- * Steve DiMarco, Geosciences
- * Chester Dunning, Liberal Arts
- * Rafael Lara-Alecio, CEHD
- * J.N. Reddy, Engineering
- * Mary Jo Richardson, Geosciences

The CPI is currently in the process of electing the Vice Chair for 2010-2011, with term beginning on September 1, 2010 and ending on August 31, 2011. The elected Vice Chair will also serve as CPI Chair for 2011-2012.

Election results can found at http://cpi.tamu.edu/committees/10election_results