

The Council of Principal Investigators
(CPI)

**Year-end Report
Dr. Jim Sacchetti, Chair
2004-2005 Academic Year**

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Purpose

The Council of Principal Investigators (CPI) consists of individuals elected to represent Principal Investigators (PIs) from each Texas A&M University college or System agency. The CPI is committed to the continued improvement of the research environment for both undergraduate and graduate students at Texas A&M University. Specifically, the CPI and the PIs it represents continue to develop a team relationship with the administration to provide an effective and efficient university organization, thereby achieving Texas A&M University's goal of being nationally recognized and competitive for teaching and research.

The CPI meets monthly to address specific issues concerning the research and graduate environments. Appropriate recommendations are discussed with and implemented through the appropriate university organizations or administrative offices.

CPI Members 2004-2005

MEMBER	COLLEGE	DEPARTMENT	E-MAIL	PHONE	TERM ENDS
Evan Anderson	Business	Business Analysis	eanderson@tamu.edu	845-1616	2005
Malcolm Andrews	Engineering	Mech. Engineering	malcolmandrews@tamu.edu	847-8843	2008
Tom Blasingame- Vice Chair	Engineering	Petroleum Engineering	t-blasingame@tamu.edu	845-2292	2007
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Lisa Campbell	Geosciences	Oceanography	lisacampbell@tamu.edu	845-5706	2007
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Don Russell	Engineering	Electrical Engineering	bdrussell@tamu.edu	845-7912	2008
Jim Sacchetti, Chair	COALS	Bio-Bio	sacchett@tamu.edu	862-7636	2006
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Dorothy Shippen	COALS	Bio-Bio	dshippen@tamu.edu	862-2342	2008
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Michael Weimer	Science	Physics	weimer@tamu.edu	845-6169	2008

CPI Guest Membership - 2004-05				
Guest	College	Department	E-mail	Phone #
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Jamie Rae Walker	Graduate Student council	Graduate Student Council	jamie-rae-walker@tamu.edu	

CPI Regular Meeting Schedule			
Date	Meeting	Time	Location
September 8, 2004	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
October 6, 2004	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
November 10, 2004	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
December 8, 2004	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
January 12, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
February 9, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
March 9, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
April 13, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
May 11, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
June 8, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
July 13, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC
August 10, 2005	Regular/Monthly	11:30-1:15	MSC

Council of Principal Investigators Synopsis

This year-end report encompasses the activities of the Council of Principal Investigators for the academic year from September 1, 2004 to August 31, 2005. During this time, the CPI addressed many important issues, including the following: tuition remission, system policy and/or guidelines on faculty rights and responsibilities, university research infrastructure, research professor positions, out-of-cycle raises and promotions for grant-paid employees - Form 5G progress and sick-leave pool for grant-paid employees.

ISSUES

Issue 1: Tuition remission for graduate students on stipends

Overview: The CPI began working with Dr. Jim Calvin, executive associate vice president for research, to develop a policy on graduate student tuition and tuition on grants.

Dr. David Prior, executive vice president and provost, met with the CPI and Dr. Calvin and presented his plan to reduce graduate requirements for the summer semester from six credit hours to three. The CPI Executive Committee, along with the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS), and the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, worked with the deans to ensure a provision for GANTs and GATs, as well.

Progress: The Office of Graduate Studies conducted a pilot program for the 2005 summer session. They reduced the required graduate hours from six to three and will evaluate the effectiveness of this project at the end of the summer 2005. If this pilot project goes as well as expected, they would like to designate this as an ongoing program. The CPI supports the Office of Graduate Studies as both entities continue to find ways to help pay tuition for graduate students.

A memo from Dr. Gates stated that researchers must include tuition in their grants. The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) has informed the CPI that they are currently researching programs to provide tuition for full-time GATs and GANTs. Texas A&M defines full-time as at least nine hours in the fall, nine hours in the spring, and three hours in the summer, for a total of 21 hours.

OGS is also planning to request that the Board of Regents drop the 99 hour cap and change this requirement to a six-year completion period. This cap was established when tuition was at a much lower rate. This change would have a significant and positive impact on the University. The CPI is supportive of all measures taken to ensure support for graduate students.

Issue 2: System policy on faculty rights and responsibilities

Overview: The CPI expressed the need for a handbook or set of guidelines describing PI rights and responsibilities.

Progress: After an investigation into System policy, there was some indication that previous guidelines existed. TAES has a policy in place and the Health Science Center is in the process of creating a similar document. The CPI will try to put together a document that will include PI behavior. The Provost has indicated that he is in favor of an official university document. The CPI will look

into involvement from the Faculty Senate in this process, but has requested the Office of the Vice President for Research to indicate how it should be put together and a time-frame. It is possible to create a task force or sub-committee consisting of members from the Office of the Vice President for Research, the CPI Executive Committee, the Research Foundation and the Faculty Senate. This would be a useful document for new faculty.

A key ingredient for PI Rights and Responsibilities is a defined mechanism for faculty research commercialization. This mechanism should be added into the System policy. The CPI Executive Committee will remain in close contact with the Technology Commercialization Center's (TCC) director, Guy Diedrich, for guidance. Mr. Diedrich gave an invited presentation during the January 12 CPI meeting. His presentation was an overview of the TCC. It is expected that much of the information shared by Mr. Diedrich and the TCC will be beneficial to the information gathered for the PI guidelines.

Issue 3: University research infrastructure

Overview: College deans have agreed to participate in a research infrastructure pool. Information will not be disseminated until something is in place.

Progress: The CPI has been asked to be part of the process. TEES will also participate, but details have not been worked out at this time as discussions are in the early stages. One example proposed is that a department/college would put \$100,000 (example amount) into a pool; the Vice President for Research will contribute to the pool, etc. It is hoped that all colleges would participate and these monies would be put into a competitive pool. The deans are not committed at this time because they want to be sure that they get back what they have contributed. Faculty members would need to work with a representative from their college to determine what services on campus they use now and what they might need in the future.

Issue 4: Research professor positions

Overview: Texas A&M University has had the titles of Research Professor (assistant, associate, and full) for years, but a lack of clarity on the appointment process for these positions has resulted in under-utilization and occasionally inappropriate utilization.

Progress - A memo (Appendix A) was distributed on December 16, 2004, via Distribution A from Drs. Richard Ewing and Karan Watson. Guidelines were developed to clarify the expectations and processes for use of these positions. These documents contain guidelines for the appointment, evaluation, responsibilities, and reappointment of Texas A&M research professor positions.

According to the memo, these positions may be created with proper approval. Funding of research professor positions is the responsibility of the originating units. Faculty positions established by the University reinvestment plan are regular faculty positions and hence cannot be used for research faculty positions.

Issue 5: Out-of-cycle raises and promotions for grant-paid employees - Form 5G

Overview: During the past few years the CPI has worked closely with the Office of the Vice President for Research to develop a more PI friendly 5G document. This is the form that the university uses for making changes in all research positions. **This document was to have been tested in fall 2003 semester in the College of Science.** (I would like to get more information on this testing. I will contact Joe Newton to see if this was done, and if so, was it successful? Otherwise, I propose we delete this sentence - AGD)

Progress: Three committees have been set up to move forward on this issue. These committees will address the following:

- I. Update Job Descriptions and Salaries
- II. Update Form 5G
- III. Online Submission of Form 5G

Issue 6: Extended sick leave pool regulations for grant-paid employees

Overview: Currently, there are not any mechanisms in place that will allow a PI to pay grant-paid employees through the extended sick leave pool. Federal grant agencies do not allow this. This puts the PI and/or department in conflict with state law.

Progress: The CPI has argued that employees on grants should be able to participate in the sick leave pool. *Note: Before an employee is able to draw from the sick leave pool, they must have donated to the sick leave pool at least one time.* Dr. Jim Calvin has agreed to contact the Department of Human Resources to develop a protocol.

Appendix A

Guidelines for Texas A&M University Research Professor Positions

1. General

The following guidelines apply to the appointment, evaluation, responsibilities and reappointment of Texas A&M research professors as well as the limitations pursuant to this position.

Texas A&M University System Policy 12.01 and Texas A&M University Rule 12.01.99.M2-University Statement on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, Tenure, and Promotion apply to research professors as appropriate.

2. Definition and Rationale

- 2.1. The purpose of these guidelines is to define procedures and processes that govern Texas A&M research professor positions. References in these guidelines, as well as in the Attachment, "Questions and Answers Regarding Research Professor Positions," to the term "Texas A&M research professor" apply also to the titles of research professor, research associate professor, and research assistant professor.
- 2.2. Among the professional positions in research at Texas A&M University, it is proper to make particular provision for those that most clearly resemble regular faculty positions in regard to responsibility for designing, carrying out, and managing research (including service as principal investigator when appropriate), preparing research publications, supervising research students, and actively participating in the continuing effort to improve departments, colleges, centers, institutes, and the University.
- 2.3. The main distinction between these positions and that of regular faculty members is that these positions do not carry eligibility for tenure. Moreover, holders of these positions are not generally obligated to teach regular courses. A more intensive participation is expected of them, however, in the management of research projects.

3. Requirements

In all instances, selection criteria for appointments to research professor positions will reflect the stated priorities and restrictions established when the position was created. The following general definitions and selection criteria will apply to all positions:

- 3.1. Minimum requirements to be met for appointment of or promotion to Research Assistant Professor:

- 3.1.1. A Ph.D. or terminal degree in a discipline germane to the research programs of Texas A&M University; and
- 3.1.2. Evidence of strong research abilities and potential for scholarship.
- 3.2. Minimum requirements to be met for appointment of or promotion to Research Associate Professor:
 - 3.2.1. An exemplary level of accomplishment as measured against the contribution of others in his or her field;
 - 3.2.2. Professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment and standards of professional integrity that will advance the interests of Texas A&M University;
 - 3.2.3. An area of specialization germane to the research programs of Texas A&M University; and
 - 3.2.4. Evidence indicating a commitment to maintaining the level of competence in research expected of a faculty member.
- 3.3. Minimum requirements to be met for appointment of or promotion to Texas A&M Research Professor:
 - 3.3.1. Continuing accomplishments and evidence of national and international recognition in research; and
 - 3.3.2. Evidence of valuable professional service.

4. Limitations

- 4.1 No appointment (including reappointment, with or without promotion) to a Texas A&M research professor position shall be for a term of more than three years.
- 4.2 Like other faculty members, a holder of a Texas A&M research professor position shall be evaluated annually. The evaluation should focus on performance in the category of research, scholarship, or artistic activities.
- 4.3 The official duties of a Texas A&M research professor shall consist of at least 50 percent research, scholarly, or artistic endeavors, but will have no significant amount of reoccurring teaching assignments.
- 4.4 Other benefits and privileges (e.g., one-year termination notice) may be negotiated and should be clearly stated in the offer letter or the reappointment letter.
- 4.5 Texas A&M research professor positions are non-tenure track, non-tenure accruing, and no form of tenure, implied or otherwise, are associated with these positions.
- 4.6 A Texas A&M research professor is expected to be an integral part of the academic unit and to actively participate in departmental and college scholarly activities within the guidelines of the University and the A&M System procedures and rules.

5. Process of Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion

- 5.1. A request for an appointment to a Texas A&M research professor position (including reappointment, with or without promotion) must be initiated by a Texas A&M academic unit following procedures in place for all faculty appointments, including those in colleges, departments, centers, and institutes. The package must include an approval of offer form and a tenure agreement form showing that the appointment is not tenure accruing, as well as the credentials of the candidate and a letter of recommendation from the unit head(s) justifying the request for the title.
- 5.2. The promotion procedures for the department and college must be followed if the case is for a promotion.
- 5.3. A request package for an appointment to a Texas A&M research professor position (including reappointment, with or without promotion) must be submitted through the academic department and college in which the position is located to the Office of the Vice President for Research which should make the decision on promotion and then forward that decision to the Dean of Faculties. Upon approval of the request, the signed forms will be returned to the requesting unit. An approval process is completed by returning a written acceptance by the appointee and a signed agreement form on details of the appointment to the Offices of the Vice President for Research and the Dean of Faculties.

Attachment to Texas A&M Research Professor Guidelines: Questions and Answers Regarding Research Professor Positions

- 1) **Will a person with a research professor title be allowed to seek a tenure-track position in the future?**

In Section 2.3 of the Guidelines, it is stated that (research professor) positions do not carry eligibility for tenure. However, research professors, as any other candidate, have the option of applying for tenure-track positions in the future. In this case, they shall be treated the same as other candidates.

- 2) **Is a Research Professor considered a graduate faculty member (i.e. can she/he can supervise graduate students)?**

The Office of Graduate Studies has defined a procedure for the membership of graduate faculty in Texas A&M University. A Texas A&M research professor who wishes to be a member of graduate faculty shall follow the procedure and obtain an approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

- 3) **Which funding source will pay the Research Professors salary?**

Texas A&M research professor positions will be usually funded by external research grants which are usually referred as “soft money”. However, it is up to the management of the administrative unit to decide and justify the source of funding and to obtain the approval.

- 4) **Can a research professor teach classes?**

First, in Section 2.3., it is stated that holders of these (research professor) positions are not generally obligated to teach regular courses. Further, in Section 4.3., it is stated that the official duties of a research professor should “... have no significant amount of reoccurring teaching assignments”. That is, teaching significant amount of classes on a regular basis shall not be included in a Texas A&M research professor’s regular duties.

- 5) **Is a research professor’s academic freedom, responsibility and tenure protected as outlined in Texas A&M University System Policy 12.01 and Texas A&M University Rule 12.01.99.M2 (University Statement on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, Tenure and Promotion)?**

Yes. Please see Section 2.2.4 in Guidelines for Texas A&M University Research Professor Positions.

