Council of Principal Investigators

CPI Newsletter – April 2014

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PIs are encouraged to contact their elected college/unit representatives to bring forward any issues for the Council to address during the monthly meetings. PIs can also contact me directly at slowey@ocaean.tamu.edu or 845-8478.

Update from CPI Chair

Change to the distribution of collected F&A costs

As you may have already read in the April 2nd memo (click here for an on-line version) distributed by Dr. Hussey, Dr. Dugas and Dr. Banks, they have decided to change the distribution of collected F&A costs from funded projects for Texas A&M University (TAMU), Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), and Brazos county-based projects for Texas A&M AgriLife Research.

As far back as October, the CPI Executive Committee and other faculty constituent groups were solicited for input and suggestions regarding the potential for changes to the distribution of collected F&A costs.

The CPI consistently lobbied to the TAMU administration that the fraction of F&A returned to PIs should remain unchanged and has repeated this position in multiple full and executive committee meetings and during the CPI-sponsored open forum for all faculty on March 7th (see video). It is our understanding that in early drafts of this proposal, the percentage that was initially discussed to return to PIs was much lower than 10%.

When this proposal was still in a “DRAFT” stage, the CPI also lobbied for direct PI input on the decision-making and allocation process for the proposed “Research Development Funds”, if the proposal were implemented.

As outlined in the aforementioned April 2nd memo, the CPI will have direct input into the allocation process for “Research Development Funds”.

SRS

Services through SRS were identified as a top priority by our constituents in a survey at the beginning of the 2013 CPI term in September, and I have made this a priority to address during my term as Chair.

It has been encouraging that the Vice Chair and I have been continually invited to meet with System administrators and SRS officials to discuss issues relating to the services through SRS. We are being solicited for solutions on how to fix many of the issues affecting our constituents. As these discussions develop, we will dutifully report back through the CPI membership to our PI constituents.

Summary of CPI EC meetings with administration

The CPI Executive Committee (EC) met with the Provost on March 17th and discussed follow up items relating to the March 7th open forum, updates on TAMU administrative changes, and items of importance for the upcoming Board of Regents meeting. The CPI EC will also hold its next monthly meeting with the Interim President and Provost on April 16th from 1-2 p.m.

The CPI EC accepted an invitation to meet with Regents Phil Adams, Cliff Thomas and Charles Schwartz on March 24th at the Regents Board Room in the Memorial Student Center. The meeting was productive and there seemed to be genuine interest from the Regents about the activities of researchers and those issues that burden PIs in conducting research. The Regents want to meet again and discuss ways they can support research-active faculty.

The CPI EC held its monthly coordination meeting with invited research administration representatives from AgriLife, HSC, Texas A&M, TEES and TTI on April 2nd. Attendees discussed a draft “Graduate and Professional Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities; updates on deliverables from the SSC/Compass contracts; updates on research compliance; research compliance committees; follow up from the March 24th meeting with Regents; and finalizing the April 9th full meeting agenda.
SRS Suggestion Box and Survey Results
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SRS has created a suggestion box for PIs to provide feedback regarding how Sponsored Research Services (SRS) can provide improved service. The suggestion box can be found at srs.tamus.edu/contact-us/feedback/.

In November 2013, the Public Policy Research Institute conducted a survey of researchers and research administration personnel who interacted with Texas A&M System Sponsored Research Services. The SRS Survey Report is available at srs.tamus.edu/srs-survey-report/.

DRAFT System Regulations relating to Research Compliance
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Ms. Katherine Rojo del Busto, Associate Vice President for Research and Research Compliance Officer for Texas A&M University, provided updates to the CPI Executive Committee at their April 2nd meeting on draft System Regulations relating to the use of biohazards in research and the use of animals in research.

The drafts are available at cpi.tamu.edu/meetings/CPI_EC_4.2.14.pdf, and PIs are welcome to review and provide feedback to Ms. Rojo del Busto by noon on Monday, August 14th at krdb@tamu.edu.

Update from the Texas A&M Institute for Advanced Study (TIAS)
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The vision of the Texas A&M University Institute for Advanced Study (TIAS) is for Texas A&M to become a distinctive university measured by world standards of academic excellence. How do we accomplish this? We must move the University’s academic quality to an even higher level. That’s exactly what we created TIAS to do. TIAS creates a streamlined structure for moving our academic programs to the top-tier of universities and to a position of global academic leadership.

We designed TIAS to identify and attract National Academy and Nobel caliber academic talent to work at Texas A&M for up to 12 months to collaborate with our faculty and students. By fostering these collaborative relationships in all disciplines, TIAS advances the university’s research productivity and deepens the students’ educational experience.

Two years into our five-year start-up plan, we have recruited 15 scholars that embody the highest standards for excellence in their diverse fields. We invite you to examine their bios in the links provide on our web site, tias.tamu.edu. Among the recognitions awarded within this eminent group are two Nobel Prizes, the National Medal of Science, the Wolf Prize, and the Hubbell Medal in Literature, as well as other highly competitive awards and multiple memberships in national and international academic academies. Learn more about TIAS – the new academic excellence program at Texas A&M University.

Contact:
Dr. John L. Junkins, Director, TIAS – junkins@tamu.edu, 979-845-3912
Dr. Clifford Fry, Associate Director, TIAS - cfry@tamu.edu or 979-458-5723

2014 Texas A&M University Immigration Symposium
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Registration is now open for the 2014 Texas A&M University Immigration Symposium on April 22, 2014 in the Memorial Student Center, room 2300D. Breakfast and lunch is provided by International Faculty and Scholar Services. The agenda and registration information can be found on the symposium flyer at cpi.tamu.edu/resources/immigration_symposium/.

Update on 2014-15 PI census and CPI seat allocations
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The PI census and CPI seat allocations for 2014-15 were recently completed (goo.gl/RVU9Os). The total number of PIs (those who have been a PI or Co-PI on an externally reviewed and funded grant within the last three years) the CPI will represent in 2014-15 is 2,077. Colleges/Units current holding CPI elections for open
seats on the Council, as of September 1, 2014, include: Agriculture and Life Sciences; AgriLife Research; Architecture; Bush School; Engineering; Liberal Arts; HSC-College of Medicine; HSC-School of Public Health; Science; TEES (not affiliated with College of Engineering); Texas A&M University at Galveston; Texas A&M Transportation Institute; and the University Libraries.

Election results will be posted at goo.gl/xhDMdm. When all 2014-15 CPI elections have been completed for the colleges/units with open seats on the Council, the 2014-15 elected CPI members will then be solicited for nominations to elect the 2014-15 CPI Vice Chair. All elections are expected to be completed by the end of April and will be announced in the May CPI newsletter.

Point of Contact for SSC/Compass Contracts

The point of contact for any questions or concerns relating to services (landscape, custodial, dining and facilities) provided through the SSC/Compass outsourcing contracts is Mr. Ralph Davila at r-davila@tamu.edu or 979-458-5500.

Pending reports from CPI representatives serving on external committees (CPI representative)

- Council for the Built Environment (Paul Hardin)
- Council for the Strategic Budgeting and Strategic Reallocation Sub-Council (Mary Bryk)
- Email Selection Advisory Committee (Terry Thomas)
- EPIK-Maestro Working Group (Beverly Kuhn, Terry Thomas, Victor Ugaz)
- Federal Demonstration Partnership (Wolfgang Bangerth)
- Graduate Student Copyright/IP Policies Review Task Force (Jean Luc-Guermond, Sandy Tucker)
- Intellectual Property Constituent Committee (Wolfgang Bangerth)
- Laboratory Safety Advisory Committee (Susanne Talcott)
- PricewaterhouseCoopers Administrative Review Advisory Committee (Lawrence Rauchwerger, Eva Shipp, Heather Wilkinson)
- SRS PI/Faculty Advisory Committee (Terry Thomas, Lawrence Rauchwerger, Niall Slowey)
- Texas A&M University Research Administration Committee (Terry Thomas)
- Texas A&M University Multidisciplinary Accounting Committee (Steve DiMarco)
- Transportation Services Advisory Committee (Sandy Tucker)
- University Research Council (Clint Allred)

See the full list of CPI members serving on external committees and committee descriptions at goo.gl/rP41nF.

Limited Submission Proposal Opportunities

Up-to-date limited submission proposal opportunities, including deadlines for required letters of intent, are available on the website of the Division of Research at vpr.tamu.edu/researchdevelopment/funding/lsp/lsp/#limited-submission-proposal-opportunities.