



Council of Principal Investigators

CPI Newsletter – January 2016

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Update from Dr. Helene Andrews-Polymenis, CPI Chair

Top CPI priority areas, Sponsored Research Services and improving graduate student education and support, remain discussion topics with administrators at all levels.

On the SRS front, things continue to move forward in many positive ways. I continue to represent you on the Transition Services Operations committee, along with two other faculty members to offer the PI perspective (Wolfgang Bangerth (Science) and Les Morey (Liberal Arts)). In addition, CPI leadership communicates frequently with Dr. B. Don Russell- Transitional Facilitator for SRS, to ensure that the PI community is aware of and has input into the current state of things at SRS. Dr. Russell issued a memo in December directly to Principal Investigators that provides some rough guidelines for best practices in working with SRS staff, and he continues to work closely with SRS staff and PIs to address concerns as they occur. I urge you to think of SRS staff as integral members of your “grant getting team” -and as such to communicate early and frequently with them throughout the process of grant submission. Finally, the search for an executive director for SRS is well underway and several outstanding candidates have already been interviewed. Myself and other CPI members participated in these interviews on your behalf. I’m hopeful that new leadership for SRS can be recruited rapidly. ***As usual, as these transitions proceed, please feel free to bring your questions and concerns regarding this process either to Dr. Russell or myself.***

The CPI leadership, on the invitation of President Young, will provide input regarding big picture research ideas and areas where investments in graduate education will have high impact. In order to formulate these plans, I have established two new CPI committees (tentatively called the Comprehensive Campaign Committee, and the Graduate Education Committee), that will be established and charged within the next month. I welcome your suggestions and nominations for faculty that you feel would be outstanding contributors to these two committees.

Thank you for your continuous participation, providing feedback, and attending CPI meetings! You continue to provide very valuable input on the research environment, gathered from your colleagues and units. The CPI Executive Committee and I work diligently to bring issues, concerns and suggestions regarding improvements to the research environment to the attention of the administration. Please feel free to alert us to any issues or concerns you may have regarding research at cpi@tamu.edu or email/call me directly at handrews@medicine.tamhsc.edu or 979.436.0340.

CPI Executive Committee Meeting Summary

The CPI EC met for its monthly coordination meeting on January 6, 2016 with invited guest from SRS and administrators from the Texas A&M Health Science Center, Texas A&M University, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, TEES and TTI.

The group received updates that the SRS Transition and Services Operations Committee (TSOC) is making progress. Dr. Andrews-Polymenis reported that PIs involvement on this committee continues to be very positive. Dr. B. Don Russell provided an update on SRS. The shortage of SRS personnel continues to be a concern, but positions are being filled with qualified staff as quickly as possible. Dr. Russell commented that the SRS staff are doing an outstanding job with the limitations that they have dealt with over the last 90 days, but are making plans for additional improvements when new permanent leadership is identified. Dr. Russell urged the PI community to make him aware of issues of concern as they arise.

Dr. Loren Skow provided the CPI-EC Committee an update on the progress of the search for a new Executive Director at SRS. Three competitive candidates for this position have been identified and several have been invited to interview. The first candidate was interviewed, January 5th, a second candidate was interviewed January 12th. CPI-EC members and distinguished faculty have been among the groups that have been involved in the interview processes.

Dr. Penny Riggs provided the committee with an update on the Research Development Fund-Advisory Committee (RDF-AC) and its completion of reviewing 18 applications that were submitted for RDF Round2. The RDF-AC recommended to the RDF-Management Committee that four applications be approved for funding. The funding details are in process with the PIs and a more complete update will be provided at the January 13, 2016 CPI meeting.

The CPI EC discussed the January CPI meeting and its plans for it being a closed meeting for CPI members only to plan further plan for 2016 and establish two new committees: 1) CPI committee to formulate list of high impact research areas with Dr. James Batteas to chair the startup of this committee; and 2) CPI committee to focus on areas where investments in graduate education would have high impact. Dr. Teresa Wilcox will chair the startup of this second committee.

The CPI EC further discussed CPI meeting plans to invite another round of college deans to come discuss their college capital campaign strategies and highlights. Questions for the Deans will be solicited from CPI members during the January CPI meeting.

Texas A&M University's Research Compliance Committee Update, Katherine Rojo del Busto

Texas A&M University's Research Compliance Committee met December 11, 2015. An overview of the prior fiscal year's accomplishments and challenges was discussed, and updates were provided on completed and ongoing System audits, and the recent site visits by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC) and USDA.

Efforts to enhance efficiencies and ease burdens on researchers continue to press forward. All three committee based programs (IRB, IBC and IACUC) have made adjustments to training requirements resulting in less frequent training and/or the elimination of certain refresher training for investigators. With input from the research community, IACUC and IBC submission forms have been updated. Updated IRB submission forms are expected to launch soon. Opportunities to reduce the number of items requiring committee review were also identified and processes modified. For example, in the case of animal use, the attending veterinarian/designee is now authorized to pre-approve specific allowable changes to a previously approved AUP resulting in fewer items requiring full committee or designated member review. Similarly, in the case of transgenic field studies conducted under USDA/APHIS regulatory oversight, a certification process was implemented making an IBC permit no longer necessary.

The Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC) visited Texas A&M in July for a triennial site visit. The AAALAC team provided observations from their visit. To follow up with some of the recommendations, the Vice President for Research has launched an education and outreach initiative. The IACUC Chair, Attending Veterinarian, and the Animal Welfare Office Director have begun touring campus to discuss the federal regulations and best practices to maintain a high quality animal welfare program.

Dr. Garry Adams has concluded his service as chair of the IBC. Dr. Carlos Gonzalez, from Plant Pathology and Microbiology, succeeds him as chair beginning January 1st. Dr. Gonzalez previously served as the IBC's vice chair. The new vice chair will be Dr. Paul de Figueiredo from Plant Pathology & Microbiology, Veterinary Pathobiology, Microbial and Molecular Pathogenesis.

IRB, IBC and IACUC submission activity levels for FY15 were up from FY14. IACUC data from FY15 indicates that annual average median approval times for new submissions improved by 11 calendar days from FY14. During FY15, two regularly scheduled IBC meetings had to be cancelled/rescheduled due to failure to make quorum. This has negatively impacted IBC turnaround times. Alternate IBC members have since been added to the IBC to ensure uninterrupted service to the research community. Identifying and implementing changes to streamline processes, enhance efficiencies, reduce turnover times and improve service to faculty and researchers continues to be a priority.

In response to the U.S. Government's Policy for Institutional Oversight of Dual Use Research of Concern ("DURC"), the University has established a new compliance committee, known as an Institutional Review Entity ("IRE"). The IRE is responsible for reviewing research for potential DURC and executing the requirements of the

U.S. Government Policy. Presently, the IBC serves as the University's IRE per University Rule 15.99.06.M1 *Use of Biohazards, Biological Toxins and Recombinant DNA and Dual Use Research of Concern*. The IRE is supported by the Biosafety Office.

System Internal Audit is in the planning stages of reviews of export controls and controlled substances at Texas A&M University. System internal audit plans to review export controls at TEES and AgriLife when it concludes its review at the University.

During FY15, a Research Integrity and Compliance newsletter was launched to keep the research community informed about changes and updates locally as well as on the national level.

On March 24, the University will host a research integrity and compliance symposium in the Memorial Student Center. Details are expected to be announced later this month.

Many federal regulatory changes are on the horizon including significant changes in the areas of export controls, human research and select agents. The University will continue to monitor these changes, and keep the research community informed.

Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Committee Update, Steve DiMarco

The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) is an association of 10 federal agencies, and 155 academic research institutions and research policy organizations with administrative, faculty and technical representation that work to streamline the administration of federally sponsored research. FDP members of all sectors cooperate in identifying, testing, and implementing new, more effective ways of managing the more than \$15 Billion in federal research grants. The goal of improving the productivity of research without compromising its stewardship has benefits for the entire nation.

The FDP uniquely offers a forum for individuals from universities and nonprofits to work collaboratively with federal agency officials to improve the national research enterprise. At its regular meetings, faculty and administrators talk face-to-face with decision-makers from agencies that sponsor and regulate research. They hold spirited, frank discussions, identify problems, and develop action plans for change. Then – again working jointly – they test the new ways of doing things in the real world before putting them into effect.

Our Chair and Vice-Chair are Cynthia Hope from the University of Alabama and Dr. Sandra Schneider from the University of South Florida. The FDP is a program convened by the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable of the National Academies. Its purpose is to reduce the administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts. The interaction between FDP's 450 or so university and federal representatives takes place in FDP's 3 annual meetings and, more extensively, in the many collaborative working groups and task forces that meet often by conference calls in order to develop specific work products.

Dr. Steve DiMarco is the CPI-EC Committee representative for FDP. The Winter FDP is currently going on as this newsletter is being distributed and Dr. DiMarco is in attendance. If you have questions or would like additional information regarding FDP, the website is <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fdp/index.htm>.

The link for the meeting agenda being held at Capitol Hill this week is:
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/pgasite/documents/webpage/pga_169471.pdf

Research Development Fund - Advisory Committee Update, Penny Riggs

The Research Development Fund Advisory Committee (RDF-AC) completed its second round of application reviews. The RDF Management Committee has authorized use of funds for research infrastructure enhancements based on the RDF-AC recommendations. Summaries of resources to be developed will be posted at rdf.tamu.edu. The committee will proceed with two application dates per year. For the next round (Round 3), application summaries are due February 15, and complete applications are due March 11. The application template, RFA, and other information are available at rdf.tamu.edu.

Questions should be directed to rdf@tamu.edu or to 862-9166.

Office of Government Relations

On December 18, 2015, the Office of Government Relations sent highlights from the Omnibus appropriation bill to the Texas A&M campus community (see http://cpi.tamu.edu/resources/gr_update_12.18.15).

For any questions about the Omnibus appropriation bill or other matters related to State and Federal Government Relations, please feel free to contact us at any time at **979.458.0282** or email us at GR@tamu.edu. You can also follow us on Twitter [@Aggie GR](https://twitter.com/Aggie_GR).

- Mr. Michael O'Quinn, Vice President for Government Relations - irishmike@tamu.edu
- Dr. Diane Hurtado, Associate Vice President for Federal Relations - d-hurtado@tamu.edu

Sponsored Research Services (SRS)

NOTICE OF UPCOMING NSF AND NIH PROPOSAL SUBMISSION CHANGES

NIH

NOT-OD-16-004: The first phase of changes take effect with applications to **due dates on or after January 25**. Phase 2 will be implemented with proposals due on or after May 25, 2016.

Here are the changes and links to the notices that will include more detail:

- Use the correct application guide for your due date
 - There are currently two sets of [application guides](#) posted
 1. Application guides for due dates on or before January 24, 2016
 2. Application guides for due dates on and between January 25 and May 24, 2016 that include guidance in support of announced changes in rigor and transparency, vertebrate animals, definition of child and research training (**NOT-OD-16-029**)
 - The new FORMS-D application guides will be posted by March 25, 2016 for use with applications on or after May 25, 2016
- Use the correct Institutional Research Training data tables for your due date
 - There are currently two sets of data tables posted
 1. **Data tables** for applications to due dates before May 25, 2016
 2. **Data tables** for application to due dates on or after May 25, 2016 (**NOT-OD-16-007**)
 - Hint for determining which training tables were used to prepare the data tables attachment: The header rows for the data tables for use before May 25 have no shading, while the ones for use on or after May 25 are shaded gray.

NSF

The new NSF GPG becomes effective for proposals with a **due date on or after January 25, 2016**.

Two of the more notable changes involve the format of the biosketches and changes in the Collaborator and Other Affiliations Information.

- **Collaborators & Other Affiliations Information**, is a new single-copy document that requires each senior project personnel to provide information regarding collaborators and other affiliations. This information used to be provided as part of the Biographical Sketch. The new format no longer requires proposers to identify the total number of collaborators and other affiliations when providing this information.

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- **Chapter II.C.2.f, Biographical Sketch(es)**, has been supplemented to inform proposers that they may use third-party solutions to develop their biographical sketch, however, the information they submit must be compliant with NSF proposal preparation requirements. In addition, it is no longer allowable for the biographical sketches of all senior personnel to be grouped together in a single PDF file. Biographical sketches must now be uploaded separately for each individual identified on the proposal as senior personnel. Biographical sketches for Other Personnel and for Equipment proposals (Chapter II.C.2.f(ii) and (iii) respectively), however, should be uploaded as a single PDF file in the Other Supplementary Documents section of the proposal

The link to the GPG (NSF 16-1) can be located at:

http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf16001/gpg_index.jsp

The complete **Summary of Significant Changes** can be located

at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf16001/sigchanges.jsp>

To assist you in preparing your NSF proposals, SRS has developed a Tip Sheet that can found at:

<http://vpr.tamu.edu/researchdevelopment/proposal-development-resources>

Sponsored Research Services Contact:

Dr. Jim Joyce, Associate Executive Director – jrjoyce@tamu.edu, 979-458-5852

Sign up for notifications about Limited Submission Proposal opportunities

The list of current Limited Submission Proposal (LSP) opportunities, maintained by the Division of Research, is available at <https://u.tamu.edu/LSP>.

To receive notifications about new LSP opportunities as soon as they are announced, email Ms. Shelly Martin at shelly.martin@tamu.edu.

Bulletin for Principal Investigators – Issued weekly by the Division of Research, Texas A&M University

The Division of Research at Texas A&M University issues a brief weekly bulletin for Principal Investigators that highlights research accomplishments and projects, funding opportunities, honors and promotions, workshops, and other items that may be of interest to the PI community.

[Click here](#) to subscribe or unsubscribe to the bulletin. [Click here](#) to submit items for consideration for an upcoming bulletin.

Upcoming Seminars and Workshops for Texas A&M Researchers

Imaging Sciences Spotlight Series event, February 3, 2016; imaging sciences researchers, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students are invited to attend. Registration & information at <http://vpr.tamu.edu/researchdevelopment/registrations/imaging-sciences-spotlight>

The Division of Research (DOR) offers seminars and workshops throughout the year relating to professional development in research proposal planning and writing. All of these events are coordinated by [Research Development Services \(RDS\)](#), a DOR unit providing a wide range of support to Texas A&M researchers. The new RDS calendar can be found at <http://vpr.tamu.edu/researchdevelopment/calendars>.