



Council of Principal Investigators

CPI Newsletter – March 2017

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Texas A&M University - Texas A&M Health Science Center – Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station -
Texas A&M AgriLife Research – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Texas A&M Transportation Institute

March 2017 CPI Update from Dr. Penny Riggs, Interim Chair

Colleagues,

Welcome back from spring break. Although the March 8 meeting was canceled, a few updates are included in this newsletter. The **next general CPI meeting will be held April 12, 2017**. CPI has invited the Research Compliance and Biosafety Directors, and the faculty chairs for each area, to provide updates on recent changes and address general topics of importance from each area.

Please submit questions in advance for our speakers, so they will be prepared to address those items of greatest concern. As always, I encourage CPI members to communicate with their constituents, and bring forward items of interest to the research community. Thanks for your input over the past month. The CPI will continue to communicate with administrators regarding topics and issues of importance for the research community. Please bring research-related issues (and solutions) to my attention at cpi@tamu.edu, or contact me directly at riggs@tamu.edu or 979.862.7015.

Congratulations to all those who become the inaugural Presidential Impact Fellows this week, including several CPI members or members of CPI committees! Thanks to all for your service to the Texas A&M research community and important scholarly contributions. CPI applauds President Young and Provost Watson for creation of this prestigious award to honor up-and-coming TAMU Faculty who are “rising stars” in their fields.

CPI News

The Spring Principal Investigator Census is complete, and the nomination/election process is underway. Each year, the CPI conducts a PI census for each college/unit of Texas A&M, AgriLife Research and Extension, HSC, TEES, and TTI. Census results are used to allocate CPI seats to colleges/units represented on the Council. If a college/unit has an open seat(s) for the upcoming academic year, then a nomination and election process is held to fill the open seat(s). Members serve a 3 year term on the Council, beginning September 1 and ending August 31, and may serve two consecutive terms. Currently CPI represents 2,375 PIs on campus and across the state. For 2017-18, nominations are in process for 25 open seats. Additional information on the PI census and CPI elections can be found at <http://cpi.tamu.edu/archives/pi-census-and-cpi-elections>.

Contact Rebecca Luckey, rluckey@tamu.edu for more information.

Government Relations Update

Executive Order

- March 6, President Trump signed a new executive order (EO). Here is the fact sheet and Q&A issued by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as well as an implementation memo for Secretary of State, Agriculture, and DHS. Association of American Universities issued a statement and Association of Public and Land-grant Universities issued a statement on the EO yesterday afternoon. This order differs from first in the following ways:
 - The old order is fully rescinded once the new order takes effect on Thursday, March 16
 - The EO is in effect for 90 days and it could be extended and countries could be added/removed at a later time. The EO also reinstated the 120-day pause on refugee programs but no longer imposes an indefinite ban on Syrian refugees.
 - New guidelines name 6 of the 7 countries included in the first EO but leave out Iraq
 - New visas: nonimmigrants from the 6 countries will be unable to get new visas issued to enter the US from abroad (for instance, first-time H-1Bs)
 - Green card holders and dual nationals presenting the passport of a country that is not listed are not prohibited from entering the US

OPT, H-1B Visas

- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that starting April 3rd it will suspend “premium processing” for up to six months, USCIS Memo (3/3/2017)

State

The two state budget writing committees—House Appropriations (HAC) and Senate Finance (SFC) – marked up their respective versions of higher education appropriations last week. Unlike the filed versions, the effect on Texas A&M has grown considerably in the marked-up versions.

Both HAC and SFC have closed out Article III, the education article. However, it has not been printed and voted out fully in committee to then move for a floor vote. We expect this to occur sometime this week. After voting by each body, a conference committee on SB 1 will be named and the differences hammered out.

So, where are we?

For Texas A&M, the impact is the same in the House filed bill and the markup version, with an increase of approximately \$24M or 4.3% in biennial general revenue from current FY 16-17 appropriations. The increase is due to the committee choosing to keep the formula rates the same as last biennium and Texas A&M has had enough growth in SCH's to generate an increase, even despite a haircut to all universities' existing special items.

As Monty Python's John Cleese used to say, "And now for something completely different!"

The Senate eliminated special items in their filed bill and the effect was not as great on Texas A&M since we have few relative to our appropriations. In the markup, the committee sought to zero out special items but hold institutions harmless as they transition off of this funding.

The committee also wanted to distribute cuts so ALL institutions were cut a minimum of 6% and no more than 10% from the FY 16-17 appropriations. In order to fund this plan, the committee chose to move money from growing institutions that increased in the formula. This created a shift in dollars and a claw back (called an "equity adjustment") of \$76M from Texas A&M (11 other universities who grew in the formula were also affected). This resulted in a \$29M biennial reduction for Texas A&M from FY 16-17.

Needless to say, the SFC proposal negatively impacts Texas A&M's appropriation in order to address some of the desired equitable outcomes sought by the committee. See the March 15, 2017 Texas Tribune article that recounts the SFC actions at <https://www.texastribune.org/2017/03/15/texas-university-budget-cuts>.

However, we have miles to go before we sleep. And there are those who want to help.

Questions?

For any questions or to discuss any state matters relating to higher education, please contact us at GR@tamu.edu or at 979.458.0282.

Search Committee Updates

Provost Search Committee announced that the website, provostsearch.tamu.edu, is now active and live. All of the details, resources, and a timeline for the position can be found at this website. Please feel free to apply, leave feedback, and submit nominations. Contact the CPI Representative on the Search Committee, Dr. Jodie Lutkenhaus, jodie.lutkenhaus@tamu.edu with any questions or comments.

Dean of Geosciences Search Committee – The website for the search is <http://geosearch.tamu.edu/>.

The committee received a strong response to the call for nominations. Airport interviews will be conducted in late March with on campus interviews scheduled for April. Chair of the Search Committee is Dr. Jay Maddock - maddock@tamhsc.edu

Vice Chancellor and Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The committee has met to discuss their charge with Chancellor Sharp and President Young. Dr. Katherine Banks chairs the 26-member committee that will soon meet to begin the search process. Dr. Banks assured CPI that the committee will engage diverse stakeholders for input during the search process. Principal Investigators who represent the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension are located at TAMU, as well as at the 13 Research and Extension Centers around the state. PIs from the College of Veterinary Medicine may also conduct research activities through Texas A&M AgriLife Research.

Council for the Built Environment Update – Dr. Jim Grau

The January and February meetings of the Council for the Built Environment were canceled. On January 9th, the CBE Co-Chairs (Watson and Strawser) released a plan for building reassignments and funding to the Deans. The plan outlines both the timeline for completing new construction and how this will impact other space assignments. In addition, it details the one-time funds that will be made available to units for essential renovations.

In mid-February, a revision of the Standard Administrative Procedure detailing the policies govern External Client Events was distributed to the CBE for review. The procedures were thoroughly rewritten and a vote to approve the document was submitted. The document clarifies how External Client Event Requests should be processed and the responsibilities of the Space/Facility Manager.

Since the January CPI meeting, a number of proposals have been routed via "Track B". These items are provisionally approved, unless directed otherwise by the CBE Co-Chairs. Items routed in this manner include:

- The replacement of a failed generator at A.P. Beutel Health Center.
- A request to establish a campus standard for interior and exterior recycling containers.

Technology Transfer Advisory Committee (TTAC) Update – Dr. Victor Ugaz

No TTAC meetings have been scheduled during January and February, as the committee awaits guidance regarding refinement of the division of roles and responsibilities among Texas A&M Technology Commercialization (TTC) and the System members.

Sigma Xi Outstanding Distinguished Scientist Lecture – March 21st

Dr. Vijay P. Singh, the 2016 Texas A&M Chapter of *Sigma Xi* Outstanding Distinguished Scientist, will present "Connecting the Dots: A Unifying Theory for Modeling in Water Engineering" on Tuesday, March 21, at 10:30 a.m., in 2300-E Bethancourt in the MSC. A reception will immediately follow the presentation.

Dr. Singh will discuss the entropy theory and illustrate its application to a wide spectrum of questions in water engineering that have been dealt with using seemingly disparate techniques. He will also show that the theory has potential in engineering as well as non-engineering areas.

Dr. Singh is a University Distinguished Professor and holder of the Caroline and William N. Lehrer Distinguished Chair in Water Engineering in the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He holds a joint appointment with the Zachry Department of Civil Engineering, College of Engineering. He is a world-renowned scholar in water research and educational areas including hydrologic science, hydraulic engineering, water-resources engineering, environmental engineering, and irrigation engineering. Singh has made original contributions and significant advances in kinematic-wave modeling, entropy theory-based modeling, stochastic modeling of hydrological extremes using copulas, hydrologic systems, point and non-point source water quality modeling, landfill hydrology, saltwater intrusion, groundwater modeling, hydrologic impacts of climate change, dam breach modeling, watershed modeling, ecosystems management, risk

and reliability analysis, and social engineering. His contributions have shaped water resource management and education throughout the world. He holds doctoral degrees from Colorado State University and The University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.

For more information [click here for the calendar events page](#) or visit <http://sigmaxi.tamu.edu/events/outstanding-distinguished-scientist-lecture>.

New Process Means Fewer AUP Amendments Needed: VVC – What is it? And how can it help researchers?

VVC – Veterinarian Verification and Consultation is an expedited process researchers can use to make changes to an AUP without having to submit an Amendment. If a researcher would like to make a change in one of the following areas: Anesthesia, Analgesia, Antimicrobials, Sedation, (some) Experimental substances, or Euthanasia, the researcher can speak with one of the CMP veterinarians (Dr. Elliott or Dr. Gresham) by calling 979-845-7433. The IACUC has authorized the CMP veterinarians to allow certain changes to an AUP. This process will reduce the paperwork needed to submit to the IACUC and changes may be incorporated into the study immediately. Only changes authorized by the CMP veterinarians are allowed to be made outside of the normal submission and IACUC approval process. The CMP veterinarians will email the change authorization to the IACUC office and documentation of the change will be incorporated with the AUP documents. The researcher will receive an acknowledgement letter from the IACUC office for their records. For any questions about the process, contact the Animal Welfare Office at animalcompliance@tamu.edu.

International Roundtable on Genetic Regulation of Physical Activity

This Wednesday, an outstanding lineup of speakers will be on campus for the International Roundtable on the Genetic Regulation of Physical Activity. The talks will occur March 22, from 8am-5pm in room MSC 2401. The full schedule is listed at <http://huffinesinstitute.org/news/roundtable> and includes talks on diverse research topics, broadly addressing interdisciplinary analyses across the intersection of genetics, genomics, and physical activity. For more information: Dr. Tim Lightfoot - tlightfoot@hlkn.tamu.edu

TAMU ENG-LIFE 2017 – Theme: Biomanufacturing and Synthetic Biology

Mark your calendar and get registered for the TAMU ENG-LIFE 2017 workshop. The TAMU ENG-LIFE workshop, which was first held in 2013, is now holding its fourth annual workshop. This year, for the first time, we will have a theme: Biomanufacturing and Synthetic Biology. We will continue to have a theme each year, focusing on emerging areas of broad interest to the campus community. The workshop will have a plenary talk, followed by a series of short, 12 minute talks by faculty, and a poster session. Even though we have created a theme for this year's workshop, the poster session is open to all topics. **The workshop is scheduled for Friday, April 14, 2017 in the MSC, and is open to faculty, researchers, their students (graduate and undergraduate), and postdoctoral researchers.** This workshop will be promoting interaction and scientific communication across the fields of engineering, physical sciences, and life sciences. For the schedule of events and additional information, please see the flyer at the back of the March CPI Newsletter or go online to the registration site at <https://u.tamu.edu/ENG-LIFE17>. **The registration and poster submission deadline is Friday, March 24th.** We will soon announce a more detailed program that includes speakers.

NSF DCL Posted: Request for Information on Future Needs for Advanced Cyberinfrastructure (NSF CI 2030)

A new NSF Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) has been posted: *Request for Information on Future Needs for Advanced Cyberinfrastructure to Support Science and Engineering Research (NSF CI 2030)*, https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf17031.

NSF Directorates and Offices are jointly requesting input from the research community on science challenges and associated cyberinfrastructure needs over the next decade and beyond. Contributions to this Request for Information (RFI) will be used during the coming year to inform the Foundation's strategy and plans for advanced cyberinfrastructure investments. We invite bold, forward-looking ideas that will provide opportunities to advance the frontiers of science and engineering well into the future.

The DCL points to an external submission website. Please note that the deadline for submissions is April 5, 2017 5:00 PM ET. Questions about this effort and the submission process should be sent to **William Miller**, Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure, at the following address: nsfci2030rfi@nsf.gov.

2017 NSF CAREER Proposal Writers' Group Inaugural Meeting

Inaugural Meeting, Q&A, Subsequent Writing Group Meetings

When: 2:00-3:30 p.m. on March 22, 2017

Where: 103 Henderson Hall

Contact: Jim Izat, Sr. Research Development Officer, jizat@tamu.edu

The fourth year of the TAMU NSF CAREER Proposal Writing Group will begin with an inaugural meeting in Room 103 of Henderson Hall at 2:00pm on March 22nd, 2017. We will discuss how the group works, the meeting schedule and the CAREER solicitation itself. Registration now open at <https://goo.gl/VFN2yq>. Register by 12:00 noon, March 22.

Demystifying the NSF!

Workshop, Q&A

When: 1:00-3:30 p.m. on March 28, 2017

Where: 103 Henderson Hall

Contact: Jim Izat, Sr. Research Development Officer, jizat@tamu.edu

This workshop familiarizes participants with the mission and structure of the National Science Foundation, the NSF merit review process, how to navigate the NSF website, and how to find relevant funding and other NSF related information. Registration now open at <https://u.tamu.edu/DNSFSp2017>. Register by 12:00 noon, March 28.

NSF Broader Impacts Workshop

Workshop, Q&A

When: 2:00-3:00 p.m. on April 12, 2017

Where: 103 Henderson Hall

Contact: Jim Izat, Sr. Research Development Officer, jizat@tamu.edu

The workshop covers the strategies and considerations relevant to the Broader Impacts requirement of grant proposals submitted to the National Science Foundation. Questions will be taken at the end of the session until all have been asked and answered. Registration now open at <https://u.tamu.edu/NSFBISp2017>. Register by 12:00 noon, April 12.

NSF CAREER Mock Review Panel

NSF Workshop, Mock Review Panel and Workshop

When: May 22, 2017 8:00am – 4:00pm

Where: Rudder Tower 401

Contact: Jim Izat, Sr. Research Development Officer, jizat@tamu.edu

This all day session co-sponsored by TEES and the Division of Research is planned to feature a mock review panel participation experience, with an overall program including a keynote speaker providing an overview of the NSF CAREER solicitation, a panel of faculty discussing the NSF proposal review process, a presentation by CAREER awardees, and a several concurrent mock review panels in breakout rooms with a debriefing on the process to conclude the day.

Write Winning Grant Proposals – NIH and NSF

Seminar, Writing Program

When: Seminar on September 21-22, 2017 (tentative)

Proposal Writing Program to run Fall 2017 through Spring 2018.

Where: Seminar Venue TBD

Contacts: Shannon Prescott, Senior Administrative Coordinator, sprescott@tamu.edu

Jorja Kimball, Executive Director, jkimball@tamu.edu

The Division of Research will host a powerful 1-1/2 day seminar for researchers interested in submitting grant proposals to the NIH and NSF on September 21-22, 2017. Featuring consultant John D. Robertson of Grant Writers' Seminars and Workshops (GWSW), the seminar is composed of three units: (1) Sep 21 morning: CORE – Principles, Funding Priorities, and Preparation of the Overview / Executive Summary; (2) Sep 21 afternoon: NIH; (3) Sep 22 morning: NSF.

The Division will expand the 2018 Grant Proposal Writing Program (with GWSW) to include both NIH and NSF. A maximum of 30 candidates will be accepted to the program.

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

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.

