



Council of Principal
Investigators

Texas A&M University
1112 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843-1112
(979) 845-8585 Fax (979) 845-1855

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CPI Newsletter - March 2010

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Update on Research Administration Shared Services (RASS) Committee

The Research Administration Shared Services (RASS) Committee was formed by The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Board of Regents (BOR) to explore opportunities for increasing efficiencies and reduced costs through shared services. In response to the advertised request for proposal for a Research Administration Consultant, four proposals were received by the due date of February 17, 2010. A Proposal Review Team has been selected.

The members of the 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

The goal will be for the review team to have a recommendation on the final consultant prior to the Board of Regent's meeting on March 25, 2010. In addition, as part of the standard practice of the System's Procurement Office, each team member has signed a statement agreeing not to disclose or otherwise divulge any information pertaining to the contents, status or ranking of any of the proposals.

Contact:

Dr. Mary Meagher, m-meagher@tamu.edu

Dr. Terry Thomas, tlthomas@tamu.edu

Update on Biosafety Advisory Committee

The Biosafety Advisory Committee (BAC) met for the second time on Friday, February 26, 2010. This meeting was chaired by Dr. Bhanu Chowdhary, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. The second meeting focused on the structure and function of the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) and the Office of Research Compliance (ORC). It was agreed we would continue to meet monthly, and we would in the next few meetings receive briefings from various individuals involved in biosafety compliance. To reiterate, the BAC consists of 9 members, including CPI representatives Terry Thomas and Greg Reinhart. The BAC is charged to provide advice and council to the Vice President for Research in matters related to biosafety on campus, including the actions of the IBC and the ORC. The latter is directed by Dr. Bruce Whitney. The website describing ORC activities is <http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/>. The IBC meets monthly and meeting times and locations are available at the biosafety website: <http://biosafety.tamu.edu/institutional-biosafety-committee/ibc-meeting-schedule.html>. PIs should note that IBC meetings are open to the public. PIs are encouraged to attend the IBC meeting when their biosafety permit application is being reviewed. This would be beneficial to all concerned, since items might be clarified, if necessary, during the meeting, thereby avoiding the approval being deferred to the IBC's next meeting. Please inform Terry and/or Greg about any issues or concerns you may have regarding the implementation of biosafety compliance on campus.

Contact:

Dr. Bhanu Chowdhary, bchowdhary@cvm.tamu.edu

Dr. Greg Reinhart, gdr@tamu.edu

Dr. Terry Thomas, tlthomas@tamu.edu

Update on Laboratory Safety Committee

The Laboratory Safety Committee (LSC) met on Monday, February 8, 2010. The preliminary report on undergraduate laboratory safety was discussed; however, it was noted that not all colleges had complied with the request for this information. Ideas on how to encourage faculty to complete the report were also discussed. Recommendations by the committee included having a template available for the required safety material to be included in laboratory course syllabi information, using the CPI monthly newsletter as venue for distribution of information on laboratory safety, and easier methods for documenting student safety training. Implementation of the student acknowledgement form into the electronic (registration)

system, thereby eliminating the need to keep paper copies of each student's signature, is possible and the goal for implementation of this system is for the fall 2010 semester.

Contact:

Dr. Lisa Campbell, lcampbell@ocean.tamu.edu

Update on Export Control Task Force

An Export Control Task Force was formed about one year ago to develop and implement a uniform and appropriate export control compliance program for Texas A&M. The Task Force was asked to develop and implement a Texas A&M University System policy and University rule relating to export controls, as well as a compliance and educational program. In September 2009, the Board of Regents approved a policy developed by the Task Force that requires all A&M System members to develop a rule implementing an export control compliance program. As of March 1, the Task Force has completed development of a recommended University rule that specifies responsibilities for various University offices and identifies specific areas that warrant export control screening mechanisms and procedures. The proposed rule also sets out a framework for Texas A&M's export control compliance and educational program, including development of an Export Control Compliance Program Manual, a draft of which is anticipated in the spring. The Task Force has also developed a basic online training course, which is currently being implemented by the A&M System IT group, with completion anticipated in the spring. Outreach presentations to the University community on export controls began in spring 2009, and follow-up presentations are being scheduled at this time, including presentations to the Faculty Senate Research Committee, the Council of Principal Investigators Executive Committee, and the University Research Council in March 2010. The draft rule will be placed on the CPI website when available.

Contact:

Dr. Richard Mercier, rsmercier@tamu.edu

Draft TAMUS Policy 15.03, Research Compliance

The Research Compliance Policy Working Group has been working to draft a System Policy for Research Compliance. The Working Group is co-chaired by Andrew Strong, General Counsel, TAMUS, and Dr. Brett Giroir, Vice Chancellor for Research, TAMUS. A draft of the TAMUS Policy 15.03, Research Compliance, has been developed and can be found on the CPI website:

http://cpi.tamu.edu/TAMUS15.03_DRAFT

Contact:

Katherine Rojo del Busto, krdb@tamu.edu

Update on the Responsible Conduct in Research Working Group

The Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) Working Group met again on February 15th, 2010 to finalize its recommendations regarding the University meeting the NSF requirement that all undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF complete training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research. Some of the highlights of

the preliminary recommendations are to: (1) accept Citi RCR training as the baseline/minimum requirement for all RCR training; (2) establish an RCR Training Requirements Committee to review/approve requests for substitution of Citi RCR training; (3) look into developing a supplemental face-to-face RCR training symposium for students who take Citi RCR training in the event that this becomes an NSF requirement in the future; (4) determine if students need training if supported under specific circumstances; (5) allow students to substitute approved campus RCR taught courses for Citi RCR training and develop guidelines for acceptance of substitution; and (6) identify existing campus courses taught on RCR or similarly titled courses that could qualify for substitution. Other recommendations center on linking Citi training to TrainTraq and determining responsibilities and assistance needs for principal investigators. Keep in mind that these recommendations are only preliminary at this time and may change before formal submission to the Vice President for Research by March 10, 2010. Beverly Kuhn, TTI, is the CPI representative to the RCR Working Group. If you are interested in additional information or have any questions regarding the Working Group's efforts, feel free to contact her.

Contact:

Dr. Beverly Kuhn, b-kuhn@tamu.edu, 979-862-3558

Update on Maestro Working Group

Epik-Maestro, an enterprise-wide system to support researchers and research administration across the Texas A&M University System, is now available for PIs to use. PIs can access the system by going to <http://epikmaestro.tamu.edu> and using their UIN and Single-Sign-On (SSO) password. Maestro will be officially rolled out and announced by the System members over the next two months. There is a feedback button on each page which can be used to alert those working on the System to errors or user requests.

Contact:

Dr. Norman Guinasso, guinasso@tamu.edu

Dr. Charles Phillips, phillipsd@srph.tamhsc.edu

Update on Task Force on Faculty Performance Evaluation

The three subcommittees composing the Faculty Performance Evaluation Task Force, which has been created to align faculty evaluations with the 2020 Vision and the Academic Master Plan, met Feb 26th to: (1) get updates from the other subcommittees; (2) Discuss changes to the rules, and (3) Develop action items and set the next meetings. Each subcommittee presented its recommendations. The Engagement subcommittee endorsed teaching, research/creative contribution, and service as the three criterion for evaluating faculty performance. The subcommittee also endorsed the definition of engagement as proposed by the Scholarly Engagement Roadmap Committee. It also proposed various charges to the Rule 12.01.99M2. Some committee members objected on the definition of "engagement" that is endorsed by the Engagement subcommittee. The Teaching and Research subcommittees presented their conclusions and identified examples of best-practices to faculty performance evaluation. The teaching subcommittee proposed a comprehensive spreadsheet to objectively evaluate teaching. The idea seemed interesting to everybody and will be further discussed. The next

meeting of the Faculty Performance Evaluation Task Force is March 15th. The final draft for the recommendations of the Committee is due Monday, May 3, 2010. Input can be provided to the CPI representatives on this Task Force listed below.

Contact:

Dr. Jean-Luc Guermond, guermond@math.tamu.edu

Dr. Clint Allred, callred@tamu.edu

Update on Task Force on Enrollment Management

The Task Force for Enrollment Management has been charged with making recommendations to the president and provost regarding an overarching Enrollment Management Plan for the University. It has met frequently since December, and is still in the data collection stage of the project. The Task Force has been briefed on existing models of student revenue and cost at TAMU, on the role of special partnerships for incoming students, and on historical data regarding enrollment patterns, transfer rates, graduation rates and student migration among programs. The Task Force has held extensive discussions about the appropriate balance of graduate and undergraduate population in total enrollment and about the appropriate balance of enrollments across programs. Input can be provided to the CPI representatives on this Task Force listed below:

Contact:

Dr. Bhanu Chowdhary, bchowdhary@cvm.tamu.edu

Dr. Lori Taylor, ltaylor@bushschool.tamu.edu

Update on Task Force on the Graduate Experience

The Task Force on the Graduate Experience continues to meet every other Monday, with discussions continuing on prioritizing important suggestions for enhancing the graduate student experience at Texas A&M in 3 major categories: (1) quality of life issues on- and off-campus climate; (2) compensation and benefits provided to graduate students; and (3) professional development opportunities beyond the classroom. A number of data bases from peer institutions around the country are being surveyed, particularly with regard to graduate stipends and tuition practices. A formal report to the Interim Provost and Executive Vice President Karan Watson is due by April 26, 2010. Input can be provided to the CPI representatives on this Task Force listed below.

Contact:

Dr. Sue Bloomfield, sbloom@tamu.edu

Dr. Jane Welsh, jwelsh@cvm.tamu.edu

Status Report on Initial University Multidisciplinary Research Initiatives (Whitepapers)

Plans are moving forward in the implementation of the eight initial university multidisciplinary research initiatives (IUMRIs) that emerged out of the whitepaper process. The Office of the Vice President for Research has worked with the conveners and college deans associated with each

initiative to set up processes for hiring faculty and providing funds for operating expenses. Several IUMRIs will receive authorization to move forward in the coming months.

Contact:

Dr. Charles Johnson, cjohnson@tamu.edu

The Energy Engineering Institute

The Energy Engineering Institute (EEI) was approved by the TAMUS Board of Regents on Dec. 4, 2009. The EEI Director is Dr. Theresa Maldonado, Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Research at the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS). Administered by the Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), the EEI creates a collaborative framework for its range of research programs in oil & gas, nuclear energy, electric power, bioenergy, wind, solar, geothermal, and energy efficiency. A new EEI wind center of excellence, supported in part by Vestas Wind Systems, is expected to be approved by the TAMUS Board of Regents later this month. This wind center is a strategic addition to the existing portfolio of over 18 energy-related centers and institutes in TEES. The plan for EEI is to offer a holistic approach to advancing and integrating sustainable energy technologies and systems - including energy efficient buildings and transportation - with consideration of economics, logistics, safety, environment, water, and policy. Partnerships with TAMU, other universities, TAMUS members, industry, and national laboratories enable solutions to energy challenges through basic research, applied research, and actual demonstration and implementation. Collaborative research opportunities are open to anyone. More information can be found at the EEI web site: <http://www.energyengineering.org/>.

Contact:

Dr. Theresa Maldonado, Maldonado@tamu.edu

Update on Search for Assistant Vice President for Graduate Studies

Four candidates for the Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies, all members of the Texas A&M faculty, have been meeting with various constituencies on campus. The four candidates are: Dr. Karen L. Butler-Purry, a professor and associate head in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Texas A&M University; Dr. Charles R. Ridley, a professor in the Counseling Psychology Program and director of Integrated Research, Education, and Training Core in the Center for the Study of Health Disparities in the College of Education and Human Development; Dr. Mardelle McCuskey Shepley, Director of the Center for Health Systems & Design, and Professor and Holder of the William M. Penã Endowed Professorship in the Department of Architecture; and Dr. Robert C. Webb, current Interim Dean in the Office of Graduate Studies, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Research, and Professor and Ed Rachel Chair in High Energy Physics in the Department of Physics at Texas A&M University. Additional information on the candidates and the search can be found online at <http://rgs.tamu.edu/srch/avpgs>.

Contact:

Dr. Charles Johnson, cjohnson@tamu.edu

Report on Joint A&M and UT Faculty Senate Meeting

The annual joint meeting of the Texas A&M University Faculty Senate and University of Texas at Austin Faculty Council took place in College Station on March 1, 2010. Other than the faculty representatives from both institutions the presidents and provosts from the two flagships participated. After welcome and introduction a Q&A session took place where the presidents and provosts addressed concerns about budgets, faculty governance, the roles of Boards of Regents at the two systems, etc. Three breakout sessions then followed where some of these issues were discussed further. There were striking similarities in many of the concerns at both institutions.

Contact:

Dr. Ramesh Talreja, talreja@tamu.edu

Proposals for 2010 Program to Enhance Scholarly and Creative Activities due March 31

Dr. Jeffrey R. Seemann, Vice President for Research, is pleased to invite proposal applications for the 2010 Program to Enhance Scholarly and Creative Activities. The Division of Research and Graduate Studies established this competitive program to promote the scholarly and creative activities of Texas A&M University faculty, and particularly to support scholarly activities in disciplines such as the social sciences, humanities, arts, and related fields where external funding is limited. All Texas A&M tenured or tenure-track faculty are eligible to apply for these grants. Applications must show originality and the potential to advance their field or discipline. Deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 31, 2010. No late applications will be accepted. Full details regarding the program and application criteria are available here: <http://researchpolicy.tamu.edu/internal-grants-programs/program-to-enhance-scholarly-and-creative-activities.html>