



Council of Principal Investigators

CPI Newsletter – February 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

Update from Dr. Penny Riggs, Interim CPI Chair

Colleagues,

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.

Government Relations

Texas A&M's state and federal relations specialists are attentive to legislative actions that affect our teaching, research and extension activities. I want to thank them for their willingness to address faculty concerns. I'm pleased to welcome Assistant Vice Chancellor Scott Sudduth to address CPI at our February monthly meeting. Dr. Diane Hurtado, Associate Vice President for Federal Relations, provided an update on current events at the CPI Executive Committee meeting, February 1, 2017. Texas A&M joined other universities in a letter opposing the recent Executive Order "travel ban" that was suspended by a federal judge's ruling. A related letter from President Young can be found at: <http://tx.ag/travelban>.

Texas A&M, in conjunction with higher education associations, continues to be engaged on the Hill regarding travel and immigration issues in both the House and Senate. Mr. Mario Rojo del Busto, Assistant Dean of Faculties and Director of Immigration Services for Faculty and Scholars will provide an update on travel and immigration restrictions. This office does a great deal to assist the University community. More detail and contact information can be found at: <http://isfs.tamu.edu/>

Update from the CPI executive committee meeting

At the February 1 Executive Committee (EC) meeting, Dr. Glen Laine noted the funding success of TAMU PIs in the past year. Katherine Rojo del Busto announced the hiring of a consultant in the area of Export Control and two new staff coordinators. New rules regarding human subject research will take effect in 2018, and more information about changes will be provided to CPI soon. Kristi Billinger provided an update on SRS and evaluation of MAESTRO replacements. In the meantime, updates to the MAESTRO dashboard are in progress.

CPI News

The update to the CPI bylaws related to subcommittees was approved by the Council membership.

The Spring Principal Investigator Census 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 will have an open seat(s) for the upcoming academic year, then a nomination and election process is held to fill the open seat(s). CPI members serve a 3 year term on the Council, beginning on September 1 and ending on August 31, and may serve two consecutive terms. The census is expected to be completed at the end of February, with CPI nominations/elections to follow shortly thereafter. 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, r-luckey@tamu.edu for more information.

The March 8 CPI meeting is canceled; the next regular CPI meeting will be held April 12. In the interim, I encourage CPI members to communicate with their constituents, and bring forward items of concern or interest for the research community.

Provost Search Committee Update

The Provost Search Committee would like to announce 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 our CPI Representative on the Search Committee, Jodie Lutkenhaus, with any questions or comments.

Research Development Fund (RDF) Update

The RDF management committee approved funding of a RDF application to establish a multidisciplinary soft matter facility.

Summary cover pages for the next round of RDF application requests are due February 15, 2017, and the full application deadline is extended to March 14. Templates and more information can be found at the RDF website <http://rdf.tamu.edu>

Sigma Xi

The Texas A&M University Chapter of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society, seeks **nominations for the 2017 Outstanding Distinguished Scientist and the 2017 Outstanding Science Communicator awards.**

Award nominations are due **February 13, 2017**, and should include a nomination letter, curriculum vitae and letters of support. Recipients will receive a plaque and a \$750 cash prize at the Sigma Xi Induction and Awards Banquet in the spring of 2017. The recipient of the Outstanding Distinguished Scientist Award will present the 2017 Distinguished Scientist Lecture, hosted by Sigma Xi. To be competitive, each nominee should have credentials equivalent to those of previous recipients. See <http://sigmaxi.tamu.edu/awards> for information on the awards and previous winners.

Membership Nominations, including self-nomination are also encouraged. Obtain an application form at <http://sigmaxi.tamu.edu/membership> .

Submit nominations via email, campus mail or U.S. mail to:
Texas A&M Chapter of Sigma Xi
Division of Research
1112 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1112

For more information, or sponsorship assistance, email: sigmaxi@tamu.edu

Student Research Week

2017 Student Research Week (SRW) will be held the week of March 27-31, 2017 in the Memorial Student Center (MSC) at Texas A&M University. This premiere program of Graduate and Professional Student Council provides a high-impact learning opportunity for all individuals involved and is a valuable tool in meeting the university's mission of academic, research, and service excellence. This year SRW celebrates its 20th Anniversary. SRW is the nation's largest single-university student-run research symposium. Registration is open until March 1 at TX.AG/SRWapps.

Participants include competitors (undergraduate & graduate students or groups), judges (faculty, staff, and graduate students at Texas A&M), and volunteers. Participation at all levels is strongly encouraged. More detail can be found at <http://srw.tamu.edu/>

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.

NIH Peer Review: Advice from Experts

NIH Study Section Discussion, Study Section Reviewers Panel

When: 2:00-3:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 23, 2017
Where: 601 Rudder
Contacts: John Ivy, Sr. Research Development Officer, john-ivy@tamu.edu
Christina Papke, Research Development Officer, cpapke@tamu.edu

What happens when the grant proposal you've worked on for months arrives at the NIH? How do study section reviewers discuss and score proposals? What makes some proposals more powerful than others? These and other questions will be addressed during this 90-minute seminar and include discussions with Texas A&M faculty who have served as NIH study section reviewers.

Registration now open at <https://u.tamu.edu/NIH-PR-Feb23>. Register by 2:00 p.m., February 23, 2017

Writing Successful Proposals

Workshop, Q&A

When: 1:00-4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 2, 2017
Where: 103 Henderson Hall
Contact: Jim Izat, Sr. Research Development Officer, jimizat@tamu.edu

The workshop covers the best practices for successful proposals to federal and other funding agencies. Questions will be taken at the end of the session until all have been asked.

Registration now open at https://u.tamu.edu/WSP_Sp2017. Register by 12:00 Noon, March 2.

NSF CAREER & Other Young Investigators Programs

Proposal Workshop Sponsored by TEES and the Texas A&M Division of Research

When: 8:00-12:45 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2017
Location: 301 Rudder
Contacts: Laurie Garton, Sr. Research Development Associate, lsgarton@tamu.edu
Jim Izat, Sr. Research Development Officer, jimizat@tamu.edu

Registration information will be provided soon. This workshop will be followed by the 2017 NSF CAREER Proposal Writers' Group.

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 workshop covers the strategies and considerations relevant to creation of successful proposals submitted to 2017 NSF CAREER Grant Program. Questions will be taken at the end of the session until all have been asked and answered.

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.

Write Winning Grant Proposals – NIH and NSF

Seminar, Writing Program

When: Seminar on September 21-22, 2017 (tentative)
Writing Program to run Fall 2017 through Spring 2018.
Where: 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 22 afternoon: NIH; (3) Sep 22 morning: NSF.

In the 2018 AY, the Division will expand the proposal writing program with GWSW to include NSF, as well as NIH. A maximum of 30 candidates will be accepted to the program.

Office of Government Relations Update (Jan 31)

State

As noted in our last update, the 85th Legislative Session began a few weeks ago with lots of activity in the House and the Senate, mostly related to appropriations. The House (HB1) and Senate (SB1) appropriation bills are approximately \$4.2B apart (not accounting for a recent proposed cut by the Senate – see below). The Senate's two-year budget came under the budget revenue estimates of the Comptroller, whereas the House is \$4B over. Regarding higher education, the most dramatic difference is the Senate removed all funding for "special items" and the House gave them a "haircut."

The good news is the formula is funded in both bills at the current rate. Since Texas A&M has grown in semester credit hours compared to other institutions, it is the only university with an increase in appropriations in the Senate bill.

There is plenty of concern for Texas universities that rely on special item funding to fulfill their core mission of teaching, service and research. However, the Senate Finance Committee indicated the removal of funding for all special items from the budget doesn't necessarily mean funding won't be available; they plan instead to examine each one and determine if the original intent was for either one-time or continuous funding. This approach shouldn't be surprising given the tight budget revenue estimates, and we are working to see that special items are restored, but how many and at what amount we do not know.

One recent example of fluid developments during the session is an additional across-the-board cut of 1.5% that has been added to the Senate's proposed budget, with the exception of the protected Foundation School Fund. While the original budget proposed by the Senate was approximately \$210M lower than the Comptroller's revenue estimates, with this 1.5% cut, it now is closer to \$1.1B below the Comptroller's estimates.

The House's budget reflected a 1% increase over last biennium's budget, with the expectation that tax revenues and oil prices (already on the upswing) will continue to grow and accommodate for the 1% increase. There is also some indication the House may tap the Rainy Day Fund to back fill their budget, again with the expectation that increased oil revenues would replenish the fund. The Senate and House appear to be at odds about use of the Rainy Day Fund and both are likely to debate the issue heavily in the coming weeks. It should also be noted that both the Texas House and Senate appropriation bills are subject to change as committees continue to meet and bills go back and forth between chambers.

If you didn't see the testimony of Chancellor Sharp and President Young before the Senate Finance Committee on Jan. 25th, (see http://tlcsenate.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?clip_id=11575 at the 1:28 mark for Chancellor Sharp and 3:58 mark for President Young), members of the dais expressed gratitude to Texas A&M's service to the state and were pleased with our student outcomes (highest enrollment, most degrees awarded, shortest time-to-degree, highest 6-yr grad rates, & lowest student debt burden) combined with our low administrative cost ratio (3.6% at Texas A&M; 9.8% is the state average).

As you can imagine, at this stage of the session everything is very fluid with regards to filed bills and predicting changes that will be made to those 20% that will actually make it to the Governor's office to be signed into law. We'll continue to track and report out updates as appropriate, on key pieces of filed legislation and their movement throughout the session. In the interim, should you have any questions or would like to meet during the session to discuss any proposed legislation or other state matters relating to higher education, please contact us anytime.

Federal

As the new Administration begins to make policy decisions, we are closely assessing and engaging members of our Texas federal delegation as appropriate. We are also in communication with faculty and student leaders across campus to provide relevant and timely information that is responsive rather than reactive.

You have likely been following the travel ban restrictions, and the situation regarding federal international travel and travel policy is fluid. Please know in this situation we are engaging with policy makers regarding this issue on behalf of our students, faculty, staff and their families.

Questions?

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

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.