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CPI Newsletter –March 2021

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**2020-21 CPI roster:** *Chair* — Steve Maren, *Liberal Arts* • *Vice Chair* — David Stelly, *COALS* • *Past Chair* — Daren Depoy, *Science* • *AgriLife Extension* — Craig Carpenter, Jamie Rae Walker • *AgriLife Research* — Anil Somenahally, Lee Tarpley, Qingwu Xue • *Architecture* — Wei Yan • *BUSH* — Laura Dague • *COALS* — Russell Cross, Kerri Gehring, Wes Osburn, Jean-Phillipe 'JP' Pellois, Elizabeth 'Betsy' Pierson, Aaron Tarone • *Education* — Timothy Elliott, Rafael Lara-Alecio • *Engineering* — Debjyoti Banerjee, Akhilesh Gaharwar, Melissa Grunlan, Tracy Hammond, Daniel Jiménez, James Kaihatu, Samuel Ma, Scott Socolofsky, Ramesh Talreja • *Geosciences* — Jessica Fitzsimmons, Ethan Grossman, Brendan Roark • *Law* — Gabriel Eckstein • *Liberal Arts* — Jessica Bernard, Harland Prechel • *Mays* — Korok Ray • *Medicine* — Helene Andrews-Polymenis, Shannon Glaser, Carl Gregory • *Nursing* — Nancy Downing • *Pharmacy* — Jayshree Mishra • *Science* — Jennifer 'Jen' Dulin, Rainer Fries, Alexei Safonov, Frank Sottile • *SPH* — Gang Han • *TAMU at Galveston* — R.J. David Wells • *TAMCD* — Hongjiao Ouyang • *TAMU at Qatar* — Othmane Bouhali • *TEES* — Dean Schneider, Nathan Tichenor • *TTI* — David Bierling, James Kovar, Dennis Perkinson • *University Libraries* — Sarah Potvin • *Veterinary Medicine* — Candice Brinkmeyer-Langford, Dana Gaddy, Jayanth Ramadoss

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## Update from Dr. Stephen Maren, CPI Chair

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**March CPI News** – The Council of Principal Investigators Executive Committee (CPI-EC) met with administrators on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. Discussions and updates during the CPI-EC meeting were on Research Compliance and Biosafety Programs. Discussions were also on buildings that sustained significant damage during the past winter storm. CPI-EC plans to invite Jerry Strawser, Facilities, to provide a post-storm update. Research Compliance and Biosafety Program updates will be shared with all PIs and guests at the March 10<sup>th</sup> CPI General Meeting.

I invite you to contact me, Dr. David Stelly, 2020-2021 CPI Vice Chair at [cpi@tamu.edu](mailto:cpi@tamu.edu) or Rebecca Luckey, [rluckey@tamu.edu](mailto:rluckey@tamu.edu), for more information or to suggest agenda items for CPI's monthly meetings. The CPI Executive Committee continues to meet with the interim president, interim provost and chancellor on a regular basis.

**CPI Contacts** – The complete 2020-2021 roster of CPI Representatives and the CPI Executive Committee can be found on the CPI website at [https://cpi.tamu.edu/membership/2020-2021\\_Membership](https://cpi.tamu.edu/membership/2020-2021_Membership). Previous membership lists can be found in the council [archive](#).

## AnSRS4U presentation – Understanding Research Security

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The next Texas A&M University Sponsored Research Services (SRS) AnSRS4U presentation will be on the topic of Understanding Research Security on March 25, 2021 at 10:00am.

This session will provide an overview of current U.S. Government requirements for disclosing foreign conflicts of commitment and financial conflict of interest. The presenters will discuss the current threat to academia, provide examples of the threat within The Texas A&M University System, and outline a number of measures the federal government has implemented within the research ecosystem to counter this threat.

This program will be presented by Kevin Gamache, Ph.D., Chief Research Security Officer for the A&M System and Lauren Schroeder, System Director of Export Control Programs.

Questions in advance are encouraged. If you have questions on research security that you would like to have addressed, please email them in advance to [ansrs4u@tamu.edu](mailto:ansrs4u@tamu.edu).

SRS will record the presentation and it will be available at a later time for anyone to access. Recordings and slides of the previous AnSRS4U presentations are available via the SRS website at <https://srs.tamu.edu> under the Resources link and then select AnSRS4U.

Participation will be via Zoom. The Zoom meeting information is below. You will need to register in advance for this presentation.

SRS looks forward to your participation. Feel free to forward this on to your colleagues. If they are not receiving this notices via the SRS listserv they can email [ansrs4u@tamu.edu](mailto:ansrs4u@tamu.edu) and request to be added to the listserv.

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.  
AnSRS4U Understanding Research Security  
When: March 25, 2021 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:  
<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/91234567890>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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## Innovation Partners

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It is the mission of Innovation Partners to partner with and educate Texas A&M University and Health Science Center faculty and staff on translating laboratory innovations to the marketplace.

### **SBIR/STTR Webinar Series: March 24, 31, and April 7**

Whether this year will be your first time submitting an SBIR or STTR proposal or you have submitted several before, this three-part webinar series will help get you or your lab/company ready to submit. This informative series will communicate key differences between agencies, what to look for when deciding which agency to submit to, pre-proposal requirements, and best practices for submitting a successful proposal. There is not cost to attend.

Attendees will walk away with a better understanding of what they need to be thinking about before they are ready to submit an SBIR or STTR grant proposal.

All sessions are from 4pm-6pm CST.

Sign up at [this link](#) or on our website at <https://tamuiip.tamu.edu/events/>

### **Latest Publication**

View our latest publication, [the Innovation Partners 2020 Annual Report, State of the Portfolio](#) on our website <https://tamuiip.tamu.edu/about/> under "Quick Links."

## AnSRS4U presentation – Time and Effort Reporting

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The April Texas A&M University Sponsored Research Services (SRS) AnSRS4U presentation will be on the topic of Time & Effort Reporting. The presentation will be held via Zoom on April 15, 2021 at 10:00am.

Texas A&M University receives substantial funding from the federal government and other sources in support of sponsored projects. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires recipients of federal funding to maintain a system that documents and supports individual distribution of activities and associated payroll charges to sponsored agreements. Texas A&M University applies these standards through the SSO Time and Effort System.

Do you have questions about time and effort, or are you familiar with time and effort but need a refresher? The Texas A&M Research Administration Office will be answering all your time & effort questions Thursday April 15, 2021 at 10:00 am.

Questions in advance are encouraged. If you have questions on time & effort that you would like to have addressed, please email them in advance to [ansrs4u@tamu.edu](mailto:ansrs4u@tamu.edu).

SRS will record the presentation and it will available at a later time for anyone to access. Recordings and slides of the previous AnSRS4U presentations are available via the SRS website at <https://srs.tamu.edu> under the Resources link and then select AnSRS4U.

Participation will be via Zoom. The Zoom meeting information is below. You will need to register in advance for this presentation.

SRS looks forward to your participation. Feel free to forward this on to your colleagues. If they are not receiving this notices via the SRS listserv they can email [ansrs4u@tamu.edu](mailto:ansrs4u@tamu.edu) and request to be added to the listserv.



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At this time, you may only have one login.gov account associated with one eRA Commons account. (If you have multiple TAMU affiliated eRA Commons accounts, you will need a login.gov account for each Commons account.)

Guidance for investigators can be found at <https://era.nih.gov/register-accounts/access-era-modules-via-login-gov.htm>, under the “Initial Setup at login.gov” heading. There is also a link for frequently asked questions that may be of assistance. <https://era.nih.gov/faqs.htm#XXIV>

Should you have any questions, you may contact your SRS proposal administrator.

## **FREE Microscopy Consultations MIC (*resubmission from February 2021*)**

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The Microscopy and Imaging Center is offering FREE microscopy consultations if you are willing to *walk* and *talk* around campus following social distancing protocols. How it works: Email the staff member you would like to have a free microscopy consultation with and schedule a walking session. Meet up outside of ILSB at the scheduled time and walk around campus following social distancing protocols and asking all of your microscopy-related questions.

You MUST maintain a distance of 6 feet or greater between you and the staff member of your choice.

You MUST wear a mask. More information can be found at: <https://microscopy.tamu.edu/event/free-microscopy-consultations/>.

## **Maestro Changes Affecting You (*resubmission from February 2021*)**

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In an effort to continually reduce researcher burden and improve research administration processes, the following enhancements will be coming mid-February 2021:

### Proposal processing

Primary Investigator will no longer be receiving Compliance and Reporting code tasks. When proposal is submitted for institutional electronic routing and approval

- Primary Investigator will review proposal and complete 3 research compliance items
  - Human Subjects
  - Animals (Vertebrates)
  - Export Control -International Collaboration,
- Primary Investigator will check if the following 4 reporting codes apply to their research
  - Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill (Y/N)
  - Underrepresented Student Included (Y/N)
  - STEM Education Program (Y/N)
  - COVID-19 Related Research (Y/N), and
- Primary Investigator will confirm reporting credit and conflict of interest applicability for all proposal personnel.

### Award and Project processing

When award documents are received and project record is established, Primary Investigator will receive two tasks:

- Task to review and complete full compliance statement that includes all TAMUS monitored research compliance items. The statement is divided in different compliance groups for easier navigation, clarity of information needed, and user friendliness. Once task completed, any items marked ‘Yes’ (applicable) will send notification to the respective Compliance Official for that item with all data provided in the statement.

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- Task to review and complete Higher Education Research and Development Survey reporting codes.

### **Change to NIH Salary Cap (*resubmission from February 2021*)**

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Since 1990, Congress has legislatively mandated a limitation on direct salary for individuals under NIH awards. The mandate appears in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* ([Public Law 116-260](#)), signed into law on December 27, 2020, which provides authority for NIH to incur obligations for Fiscal Year 2021.

The *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* restricts the amount of direct salary to Executive Level II of the Federal Executive pay scale. The Office of Personnel Management recently released new salary levels for the Executive Pay Scale. Effective January 3, 2021, the salary limitation for Executive Level II is \$199,300.

Reference:

[NOT-OD-21-057: Guidance on Salary Limitation for Grants and Cooperative Agreements FY 2021 \(nih.gov\)](#)

### **Certified Research Administrator Exam Review Sessions (*resubmission from February 2021*)**

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TAMU Sponsored Research Services (SRS) beginning in February 2021 will host a series of review sessions in preparation for the Certified Research Administrator (CRA) exam. These sessions held via Zoom consist of weekly presentations and additional study material. SRS has been continually offering these sessions since 2016. For the fall 2020 session, there were participants from TAMU, TAMHSC, TAMUG, AgriLife, TTI, TEES, TAMUCC and TAMUI.

The TAMU Vice President for Research, Dr. Mark Barteau and SRS encourages their staff engaged in research administration to earn the CRA certification. An eligibility requirement for the CRA is a combination of years of profession experience in research administration and education. The sessions are open to all TAMUS staff. Over 55 employees on the College Station campus have obtained the CRA designation. Earning the designation of Certified Research Administrator means that an individual has met the requirements of the Research Administrators Certification Council's (RACC) eligibility requirements and has demonstrated a level of knowledge necessary for a person to be a professional research or sponsored programs administrator. RACC was created to promote a culture of integrity and competency in the profession of sponsored research administration. To learn more about RACC and the certification process visit the RACC website at [| RACC \(cra-cert.org\)](#).

Contact David Hollingsworth, [dhollingsworth@tamu.edu](mailto:dhollingsworth@tamu.edu) in SRS if you want to participate in the review sessions or want more information.

### **Updates to Existing Proposal & Award Policy-related Guidance**

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The Foundation has made updates to the following guidance on the NSF website based on inquiries that we are receiving from the community:

- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) on NSF's Implementation of OMB Memorandum M-20-26](#);
- [FAQs on Current & Pending Support](#); and
- [NSF-approved Formats for the Biographical Sketch](#) website.

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Updated guidance includes clarifications on professional appointments, research endeavors, principal investigators working outside the U.S. for an extended period of time, and reporting on in-kind support and outside consulting activities. Please direct any questions to [policy@nsf.gov](mailto:policy@nsf.gov).

## Updates to Research.gov

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National Science Foundation (NSF) enabled three new proposal types in the Research.gov Proposal Submission System. These are the Rapid Response Research (RAPID), EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER), and Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE) proposal types.

### **RAPID, EAGER, and RAISE Proposals**

- Proposers can now select a RAPID, EAGER, or RAISE proposal in the Research.gov proposal creation wizard, in addition to the existing Research proposal option.
- New automated compliance checks for RAPID, EAGER, and RAISE proposals have been added to Research.gov

Prior to submission of a RAPID or Eager proposal, PI(s) must contact the NSF Program Officer(s) whose expertise is most germane to the proposal topic to ascertain that submission of a proposal is appropriate. For a RAISE proposal the PI(s) must receive approval to submit a proposal from at least two NSF Program Officers, in intellectually distinct programs, whose expertise is most germane to the proposal topics.

## Limited Submission Proposal Opportunities

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The Division of Research has implemented a brand new proposal submission and review portal. The system will be used for limited submissions and most internal grant programs. You will find available opportunities at: <https://tamu.infoready4.com/#limitedsubmissions>. The limited submission office will be phasing in the portal as new limited submission opportunities arise. If you have any questions, please contact [limitedsubmissions@tamu.edu](mailto:limitedsubmissions@tamu.edu) or Shelly Martin at 979-862-2233.

## Proposal Assistance for Large Multidisciplinary Funding Opportunities

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The Division of Research, Research Development Services, offers free assistance to teams pursuing large multidisciplinary funding opportunities. To learn more about the types of assistance offered or to request assistance, see the one-pager included in this edition of the CPI newsletter, click [here](#), or contact Dr. Candice Jongsma ([cjongsma@tamu.edu](mailto:cjongsma@tamu.edu)).

## Bulletin for Principal Investigators

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The Division of Research at Texas A&M University publishes a weekly bulletin about research. The Research Bulletin accepts news items about researchers and their teams from the colleges, schools, campuses and agencies within the Texas A&M research enterprise, including honors, funding, presentations, and appearances in news media. [Click here](#) to subscribe or unsubscribe to the bulletin.