



# Council of Principal Investigators

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CPI Newsletter – April 2016  
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## Update from Dr. Helene Andrews-Polymenis, CPI Chair

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Colleagues-

I would like to briefly review the goings on at the Council of Principal Investigators in the last month.

At the March CPI General meeting, we honored colleagues who passed away unexpectedly this spring. Dr. Timothy Hall was Distinguished Professor of Biology and a founding member of the Council of Principal Investigators, and Dr. Tom McKnight kindly agreed to provide a remembrance. Dr. Hall was a fixture at CPI General meetings and we will miss him. Dr. Anna Morrison provided a remembrance of Dr. Josie Coverdale, a faculty member in the Equine Initiative. CPI also acknowledges the passing of faculty members, Brock Faulkner and Susan Wagner.

Also at the March general meeting, Dr. Michael Benedik, the Vice Provost at TAMU, provided an overview and answered faculty questions regarding ScienceWorks ( <http://www.scienceworksdc.com/> ). Scienceworks is a Washington D.C. based company that has been hired by TAMU to assist with all aspects of the development and submission of large collaborative grants, projects, and centers. Dr. Kathy Olsen, the founder of Science Works and former Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the National Science Foundation (NSF), has visited campus and met with administrators and faculty to identify opportunities and assist with various initiatives.

In other news, progress continues to improve sponsored research services. As you are aware, SRS is now in the Division of Research. Ms. Kristi Billinger (formerly at the University of Kansas), began as Executive Director of Sponsored Research Services as of April 1. I am hopeful that SRS services to the research community will continue to improve under Kristi's leadership, and I am also hopeful that we can continue to have a strong and positive working partnership between the SRS leadership, the Division of Research, and the Council of Principal Investigators. Thanks to the CPI members who participated on the search committee (Dr. Loren Skow) for the SRS Executive Director, and for those of you that participated in the interview process for this critical position.

The CPI Executive Committee has taken the opportunity to meet with President Young on several occasions this semester to discuss issues of concern to the research community. The topics discussed in our meetings have included SRS, technology transfer, the Research Development Fund, faculty morale and shared decision making. I believe that that our meetings have been very positive and productive. The CPI Executive Committee will continue to advocate for you, for improvements in the research environment, and for innovation in all aspects of research and education.

Finally, thank you for your continuous participation, feedback, and support of the CPI! The CPI Executive Committee spends considerable time bringing your concerns and suggestions regarding improvements to the research environment to the attention of the administration. The CPI Representatives for your college, department or unit can be found on the CPI website at <http://cpi.tamu.edu/membership/15unit>. Please feel free to alert us to any issues or concerns you may have regarding research at [cpi@tamu.edu](mailto:cpi@tamu.edu) or email/call me directly at [handrews@medicine.tamhsc.edu](mailto:handrews@medicine.tamhsc.edu) or 979.436.0340.

**I would like to close by reminding all of the PIs that our next election for CPI members will be coming up in just two weeks. We encourage you to consider taking an active role in the research development at Texas A&M University by running for a position on the CPI.**

## CPI Executive Committee Meeting Summary

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The CPI EC met for its monthly coordination meeting on April 3, 2016 with invited guests from the Texas A&M Health Science Center and Texas A&M University at the meeting.

Dr. Andrews-Polymenis, represents CPI on the SRS Transition and Services Operations Committee (TSOC). She reported the TSOC committee continues to meet to assist with implementing recommendations on improvements where identified. A draft timeline for submission of documents from PIs to SRS is being worked on with CPI and

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SRS. Further issues discussed at TSOC included the handling of individual postdoctoral fellowship awards (F32) within the University. Currently, F32 recipients are treated as independent contractors and lose their benefits, ability to purchase parking and other benefits associated with being a university employee when they accept the F32 fellowship. This unnecessarily penalizes recipients of prestigious fellowship awards, and should be changed. TSOC and others in the Division of Research are working on fixes to this problem.

Dr. Glen Laine provided the CPI-EC Committee an update on the Division of Research and introduced the new Executive Director for SRS, Kristi Billinger who also attended the CPI-EC April meeting. Dr. Laine informed the CPI Executive Committee that Texas A&M Technology Commercialization (TTC) effective April 1, 2016 transferred back to TAMU and under the Division of Research. He indicated that he is excited to learn about more opportunities that TTC can provide in involving students and faculty to expand larger to benefit to Texas A&M. Dr. Laine also communicated that the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) is beta testing the “EXEMPT WIZARD” for determining whether an IRB protocol is exempt. Using this tool should allow researchers to determine whether their studies involving human subjects are exempt under federal guidelines for human subjects research. Texas A&M will be a pilot test site for the this online tool. An expanded update on the Division of Research updates can be found below under *The Division of Research Updates*.

The April CPI General meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2016 and topic will be Research Compliance and Biosafety here at Texas A&M University. The Research Compliance and Biosafety directors will provide an overview and address questions and concerns that have been collected from PIs along with the chairs for each committee group will be present to provide additional information if needed.

## **Updates from Dr. Glen A. Laine - Division of Research**

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### **Changes in the Vice President for Research’s Office:**

The Division of Research has grown significantly in the past six months. This growth has necessitated a vital expansion in the administrative leadership of the Division. I’m pleased to announce two key additions to the Division of Research leadership team: Dr. Costas N. Georghiades and Dr. Allison C. Ficht.

As a senior associate vice president for research, Dr. Georghiades will be engaged in many aspects of program development and support, with a primary focus on science, mathematics, technology or engineering (STEM) areas. He will actively enhance the Division’s support of core and technical core facilities, provide additional management support to the colleges for their centers and institutes, and develop university-wide programmatic initiatives. Dr. Georghiades will be an integral part of my support of faculty-led research programs. In addition, he will be actively involved in the research enterprise as the Division continues to provide service and facilitate growth.

A Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Dr. Georghiades comes to the Division from the Dwight Look College of Engineering, where he served as associate dean for research and TEES associate agency director for strategic initiatives and centers. He joined the College of Engineering in 1985 as a faculty member of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and served as department head from 2005 until moving to the Office of the Vice Chancellor and Dean in 2012. He is the holder of the Delbert A. Whitaker Endowed Chair.

Dr. Allison Ficht will assume a senior associate vice president for research position and will also emphasize program development and support, with a principal focus on the biomedical, health, and life science areas. Her knowledge of the health-related aspects of Texas A&M’s research portfolio will prove invaluable in the remaining integration of the Health Science Center. She will serve as the acting director of the Biocontainment Research Facility and assist in overseeing its construction. This state-of-the-art facility will enable us to study infectious diseases in animals and develop new vaccines and treatment modalities. Dr. Ficht, as an essential member my

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team, will provide guidance as I develop additional programs and services that will support the researchers at Texas A&M.

Dr. Ficht recently served as both interim associate vice president for research and associate vice president for research at the Texas A&M Health Science Center, is a Regents Professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Medicine in the College of Medicine, and serves as director of the Center for Microencapsulation and Drug Delivery.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Costas Georghiadis and Dr. Allison Ficht to the Division of Research.

**New Executive Director for SRS:** Ms. Kristi Billinger officially joined Sponsored Research Services (SRS) as its new executive director.

Ms. Billinger comes to Texas A&M University from The University of Kansas—a member of the American Association of Universities— where she served as assistant vice chancellor and director of research administration. Prior to joining the research office, Ms. Billinger was the associate director for finance and administration at The University of Kansas Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies. She holds a bachelor's degree in business accounting and business administration from The University of Kansas.

The executive director of SRS is responsible for managing the life cycle of sponsored grant administration, ensuring that the organization is structured and staffed appropriately, and for coordinating with leadership and stakeholders to address their research service needs. Ms. Billinger's experience and leadership should prove essential as we move forward in strengthening SRS as a resource to the Texas A&M research enterprise.

At this time, I want to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Jim Joyce for his service as interim director. I also want to thank Dr. B. Don Russell for serving as the SRS transitional facilitator.

In addition, I want to recognize the efforts of Mr. Steve Schulze and the entire search committee and to thank them for their dedicated and arduous service.

**The Texas A&M Technology Commercialization (TTC)** office recently joined the Division of Research. Since 1992, TTC has worked closely with researchers across The Texas A&M University System to build relationships and provide invaluable services to the research enterprise. These services are key to transferring important discoveries and innovations from the workbench to the open market. In addition, TTC gives students at Texas A&M the opportunity to interact with inventors and fully experience the commercialization process. TTC's quarter century of service will continue and be enhanced as a member of the Division of Research as it continues to serve and support principal investigators and their teams.

**Pilot of FDP's Exempt Wizard:** The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) has been piloting an Exempt Wizard that allows principal investigators to work through a series of questions to determine if their research is exempt from IRB review. The idea of a wizard has support from both universities and federal agencies. As some of you may know, proposed regulatory changes to the Common Rule include the use of a smart form to allow investigators to self-determine exempt and excused research.

FDP is currently seeking volunteers for the pilot to get the project past the proof-of-concept stage. A successful completion of the pilot will enable FDP to take the next step, which could be to develop a demonstration using the new Common Rule criteria to allow investigators to determine when they are working on exempt research.

I am pleased to announce that Texas A&M University has chosen to participate in FDP's test of the wizard. To obtain sufficient data, we have been asked to dual review 50-100 projects that have received an exempt determination and 50-100 projects that received an expedited determination. Our Human Research Protection

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Program (HRPP) will randomly select 100-200 projects that meet FDP's criteria and ask investigators to participate in testing the wizard. I encourage investigators to participate in the pilot if they are selected. Instructions will be made available at the time of selection.

If the pilot is successful and the project continues with the updated Common Rule criteria, the potential exists for a reduced burden on investigators, reviewers, and staff.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Human Research Protection Program at [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu) or 979-458-4067.

## Research Development Services (RDS)

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### Give Your NIH Grant Application a Second Chance With OnPAR

If your meritorious grant application misses NIH's payline, a new private-public partnership pilot called Online Partnership to Accelerate Research ([OnPAR](#)) could offer a second chance to receive funding. Currently, seven research sponsor foundations are on OnPAR's member list. If you wish to have a current or future member give your NIH proposal further consideration, you initially need to register. For more information, specifics, FAQs, and relevant links, see the April 6, 2016 [NIAID Funding News](#).

### CDMRP Biomedical Research Funding Opportunities

The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs ([CDMRP](#)) manages Congressional Special Interest Medical Research Programs encompassing breast, prostate, and ovarian cancers, neurofibromatosis, military health, and other specified areas (visit [here](#) for a full list of topics). Since fiscal year 1992, the CDMRP has managed over \$7.7 billion in Congressional appropriations for peer-reviewed research aimed to prevent, control, and cure disease. [FY2016 funding opportunities](#) are currently being announced. To be notified directly when a funding opportunity is announced, sign up for the CDMRP [listserv](#) by topic.

#### Research Development Services Contacts:

Dr. Christina Papke, Research Development Officer, [cpapke@tamu.edu](mailto:cpapke@tamu.edu), 979-458-1861

Dr. John Ivy, Senior Research Development Officer, [johnivy@tamu.edu](mailto:johnivy@tamu.edu), 979-458-4280

## Graduate and Professional Student Council – Graduate Student Spotlight

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The Graduate and Professional Student Council has been publishing a weekly series called the Graduate Student Spotlight. This series highlights the research efforts of graduate students all across campus. Check it out here: <http://www.gpsctamu.org/research-spotlight.html>

## Immigration, Health, and Security Open Forum

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Wednesday, April 20, 2016 from 2:00–4:30 p.m.

ILSB Lobby and Auditorium

The **Immigration, Health, and Security Research Interest Group** is hosting an **Open Forum and Poster/Networking Session** focused on bringing researchers together to identify current research efforts and engage the broader community in interdisciplinary efforts in the areas of immigration, health, and security, with associated border issues such as, but not limited to, food-water-energy security, trade and commerce, human-animal-crop health, financial impacts, education and workforce implications, and environmental impacts. The registration deadline is 12:00 noon, Friday, April 15. Additional information and a registration link are available online at <https://u.tamu.edu/IHS>.

## **Healthy Aging Open Forum and Networking Event**

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All researchers interested in promoting healthy aging are encouraged to attend this campus-wide Open Forum, Poster Session, and Networking Event on April 27, 2016, from 2:00-4:30 p.m. in the auditorium and lobby of the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building (ILSB). Additional details will be posted as soon as they are available at [https://u.tamu.edu/Healthy\\_Aging](https://u.tamu.edu/Healthy_Aging)

Investigators interested in the topic of aging are encouraged to join the group's listserv at [https://u.tamu.edu/Healthy\\_Aging\\_Listserv](https://u.tamu.edu/Healthy_Aging_Listserv). Questions may also be addressed to Dr. Christina Papke, research development officer in the Division of Research, at [cpapke@tamu.edu](mailto:cpapke@tamu.edu).

## **Texas A&M ENG-LIFE Workshop: At the Interface of Engineering and Life Sciences**

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Save the date! A workshop promoting multidisciplinary interaction and scientific communication in the field of engineering and life sciences will be held on Friday, April 29, 2016, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. in Room 2005 of the Engineering Technology Building (ETB). This full-day workshop will include oral presentations, a poster session, and networking opportunities. Additional details will be posted at <https://u.tamu.edu/ENG-LIFE> as they become available.

## **College of Pharmacy Research Colloquium**

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The Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Pharmacy will hold its 2016 Research Colloquium in College Station on the Texas A&M campus on June 2nd and 3rd. This year's colloquium features **Healthy South Texas**, a novel effort to reduce preventable diseases and their consequences throughout the region.

Registration opens April 15, 2016. See <http://pharmacy.tamhsc.edu/research/colloquium.html> for more information.

## **Upcoming Seminars and Workshops for Texas A&M Researchers**

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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>.

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## Sponsored Research Services (SRS)

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

[http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf16001/gpg\\_index.jsp](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](mailto:jrjoyce@tamu.edu), 979-458-5852

## Sign up for notifications about Limited Submission Proposal opportunities

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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](mailto:shelly.martin@tamu.edu).

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

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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