




TEXAS A&M SYSTEM
**Sponsored Research
Services**

November 12, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Research Faculty and Staff
FROM: B. Don Russell 
SUBJECT: SRS Transition to the University

I need not tell you that, largely due to your efforts, Texas A&M is a great research university. We aspire to become even better. However, for you as research faculty and staff to achieve your objectives, it is necessary that you have excellent research support services. You deserve no less.

In part due to your collective concerns, Chancellor Sharp and President Young have transferred oversight of Sponsored Research Services (SRS) to the university. I have agreed to assist with this transition. I have been a faculty member at Texas A&M for 40 years and I have been research active over my entire tenure. I believe I know how you wish to be supported and what constitutes excellent research services.

A search is underway to find an experienced leader who can take our research services operation to a new level. Until that person is hired and during this transition period, I will assist in implementing certain changes, both structurally and culturally, to better serve you in the near term. To achieve even greater improvement and to provide faster response to problems, I need your help.

While we know of certain changes which will provide near-term improvement, it is only with your assistance that I can fully understand how your needs are not being met. Vague comments such as "it is not as good as it used to be" may well be correct from your perspective, but are not particularly helpful to me or SRS. As research professionals, we know how to define and analyze problems. I ask you to use those skills when you communicate to me your concerns. I need specifics about problems, as they occur, so I can fully understand what you are experiencing.

SRS currently has post-review processes in place for evaluating its services. Most of the time, researchers indicate they are satisfied. The majority of proposals are submitted in a timely fashion and project administrators meet your needs; however, SRS staff are committed to do better. I am providing you a link, SRS-TransitionHotline@tamu.edu, where you can register your problems, concerns, or frustration with the services you are receiving. This is not a place to gripe about the past. Rather, it is intended to be a vehicle for me to acquire timely information on current service issues. Your input will be evaluated immediately and you will receive a response with appropriate action taken.

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I am here to help you. However, I am aware that our expectations as researchers are sometimes very demanding and occasionally unrealistic. There are times when I will have to say to you, we cannot, at this time, meet your expectations. I ask for your patience in this transition process, but I pledge our best efforts to make sure that every proposal and contract is handled in a way that supports your success.

You may in confidence, at any time, contact me directly. I am here to serve and assist.

B. Don Russell
Office: 979-845-7912
Cell: 979-229-8963
Email: bdrussell@tamu.edu

cc: President Young
Dr. Karan Watson
Dr. Glen Laine
Deans
Division Heads
Department Heads