

Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators
Monthly Meeting
November 16, 2023, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

MINUTES

Attendees: Jordan Greer, Tianxing Chu, Xinping Hu, Shannon Doolan-Fitzsimmons, Devon Steffan, Trent Thigpen, Joseph Mollick, Carmen Osier, Feiqin Xie, Faye Bruun, DeAnna Crites, Jennifer Epley Sanders, Patricia Spaniol-Mathews (Pat), Heather DeGrande, James Gibeaut, Olga Gil Barrientos, Yajuan Lin, Mark Olson, Debra Plowman, Tammy Walker-Smith, Alexa Hight, Ruby Mehrubeoglu, Matt Streich, Tye Payne

Absent: Erin Hill, Jian Sheng

Alternates: David Hudgins (for Patrick Crowley), Seneca Holland (for Mike Starek)

Guests:

Quorum present

1. Guest Speaker(s): *Dr. Karen McCaleb, Dean, College of Graduate Studies, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, (20-minute presentation, 10-minute Q/A).*

1. Dr. McCaleb gave a general review of the College of Graduate Studies.
 - Steady increase in graduate enrollment from 2019 to 2022—18.6% to 27.4%.
 - Working with PAIRS office—requested a graduate retention dashboard.
 - Not solid retention numbers—difficult to determine what our retention is like overall.
 - Virtual and on-campus orientation—attendance increased.
 - Changed the advising method.
 - CGS does a lot of data collection to know with what students are struggling with
 - Assistantships and scholarships (see presentation).
 - SAGE orientation and Meet & Greet events—will continue doing these each year.
 - GROW program in the library: activities, social events, professional development, etc.
 - More proactive with student outreach & assistance (see presentation).
 - Networking & professional development (see presentation).
 - Is most of the growth attributable to the online MBA in terms of enrollment?
 - Our numbers have been very tied into the online MBA. Computer science is growing and has been for a couple of years. Most of our other programs are either up or flat. There are only a couple that are not increasing currently.
 - Have you seen differences between programs that are totally online versus in person in terms of retention and success at graduation?
 - I haven't been able to get the retention data yet. Students like the flexibility of being online, but they also don't want to lose contact with faculty and professors. The “Super Saturdays”, one Saturday a month where online students come in, really helps with that and we've heard great responses from those students.
 - Is there any progress or further discussion for research scientists to be the Chair of graduate student committees?

- II. It's not the researcher scientists versus the tenure-track issues, it's the role that they play. The Co-Chair model appears to be the most effective and offers something that has worked very well for our students in the past.
- III. Do you have a breakdown of the 2,700 registered grad students—how many are from the online program, how many in person, and from the different colleges? How do you evaluate the online program?
 - You can go to the PAIRS website, pull down the data center, and you can see how many are in which program. Right now, they are not coded as online or not online.
 - Online programs are evaluated by the same class evaluations as regular programs.
- How does support from the CIRTL program (Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning) benefit current projects? And can it be written into or support proposals for grants?
 - It benefits by teaching our current grad students to become effective teachers in the STEM field. It's all volunteer and open to the whole University, not only to the STEM students.
 - It depends on your grant proposal, and if you feel that it would enhance and benefit the students that you're seeking to support. We are happy to offer what we can and to work with different programs.
- Is there anything either in the immediate term or long term, that CPIRA can do to facilitate the ways in which the research enterprise is connected with graduate students?
 - At this moment, I don't have anything concrete in mind that we haven't already started.

Meeting called to order by Jennifer at 11:40 am.

2. Alternates/Guests Introduced themselves.

- Seneca Holland alternate for Mike Starek
- David Hudgins alternate for Patrick Crowley

3. Agenda was approved

- MOTION: First-Jordan, Second-Ruby, All in favor

4. October 2023 Meeting Minutes were approved with a minor change.

- MOTION: First-Xinping, Second-Tianxing, All in favor

5. Ex-Officio Faculty Senate Update(s) (Alexa Hight)

- I. Faculty Senate met with guest speakers last Friday to discuss the Learning Management System (LMS) transition from Blackboard to Canvas—Every college should have two faculty representatives on the implementation committee.
- II. Senator Rao presented a course schedule template generator.
- III. Senator Gevrek shared her salary survey results. Survey will be implemented this year and will come from the Faculty Senate.
- IV. Exit surveys.
- V. Nomination for the Faculty Excellence Awards is still open until the end of November.

- VI. The Faculty Affairs Committee shared a couple of documents that are being reviewed. One related to tenure, the other related to promotion of faculty.
- VII. Reviewing sick leave procedures for faculty members.
- VIII. Blackboard will not be available after August 31, 2024. But the university is paying a third party for archiving so there will be access for 2 or 3 years.

6. Ad-hoc Scholarly Librarian Update(s) (Alexa Hight)

- I. IT provided instructions about how to transition from EndNote to Zotero.
- II. Open Access fund is still available.
- III. Pivot-RP Workshop to find funding opportunities for research, conference travel, post-docs, etc., tomorrow at 10:00 am in UC Marlin.

7. CPIRA Committee Updates

- I. Research Administration Development & Training (Carmen Osier)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Reestablishing meetings with Dr. Donaldson.
- II. Operations & Communications for Sponsored Projects (Xinping Hu)
 - i. No updates.
- III. Facilities (Debra Plowman)
 - i. Debra Plowman is the new Chair of the committee.
 - ii. No updates on generators, but will keep the issue on the radar.
 - iii. Still funds available to use on STEM students, nursing, kinesiology, or health sciences. Email Dr. Patricia Spaniol-Mathews with a quote of what it is and some statement of justification.
 - iv. New revised form for requesting support will be available online.
 - v. Debra and Jennifer thanked Pat for all her commitment, great work and service as the Chair of this committee.
- IV. Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures (Tianxing Chu)
 - i. Ongoing discussion about the change of bylaws, may or may not happen.
 - ii. Discussion is about increasing the bar to be awarded with a PI-weighted seat.
- V. Graduate Recruitment & Retention
 - i. The committee has been meeting with Dr. McCaleb monthly.
 - ii. Needed sustainable funding to support students.
 - iii. Approach Institutional Advancement's Office.
 - iv. Any student who receives a competitive \$1,000 scholarship is eligible for in-state tuition—very valuable for international students.
- VI. Roles and Responsibilities (DeAnna Crites)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Issues with PCards, travel, and payroll.

8. Other Business

- a. R&I Updates
 - Compliance: NCURA updates

- Dr. Mahdy’s office received a draft of the NCURA report.
 - He is in the process of forming a task force to review the report and brainstorming together the top priorities. The slots have not been finalized but there will be representation from CPIRA and Chairs from other committees.
 - Anticipated final copy of NCURA report to TAMUCC by December 15.
 - Unknown how and in what ways the report will be shared with others.
- b. Major Research Instrumentation Program (MRI) NSF equipment grants-approval process (related to limited submissions process)
 - Collecting inquiries about this.
 - Making sure we have the facilities to house any MRI equipment should be one of decision-making criteria for internal applications.
- c. External Faculty Fellowships and Awards
 - Still potential issues for people who are applying for external faculty fellowships.
- d. RA for COLA, CONHS, COEHD
 - Position is with HR—not sure if it is posted yet.
 - Position will report to the interim CCRC Director.
- e. IT updates
 - Brainstorming about how moving forward with the technology issues as they are related to research.
- f. “Faculty Fellows” in Academic Affairs and/or R&I (e.g., process, timeline, roles, communications, etc.)
 - First time for R&I—a pilot program, not a formal position.
 - The fellow will be mostly working with Dr. Mahdy and Dr. Donaldson.
 - Faculty member would get training on the administrative side and the fellow will contribute from the faculty perspective.
 - R&I provided a brief synopsis to college Deans to ask for 1-3 nominations from each college, then R&I had their selection process made internally.
 - Dr. Veysel Avsar is the first Faculty Fellow in R&I.
- g. December CPIRA meeting
 - No council meeting on December 21st.
- h. Open Share
 - Nothing

9. Adjourn: 12:45 pm.

MOTION: First-Xinping, Second-Jordan, All in favor