Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators
Monthly Meeting
May 16, 2024, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

MINUTES

Attendees: Faye Bruun, Tianxing Chu, DeAnna Crites, Patrick Crowley, Heather DeGrande, Shannon Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Valarie Franco, Jim Gibeaut, Olga Gil Barrientos, Jordan Greer, Alexa Hight, Xinping Hu, Yajuan Lin, Ruby Mehrubeoglu, Joseph Mollick, Mark Olson, Carmen Osier, Debra Plowman, Jian Sheng, Patricia Spaniol-Mathews (Pat), Mike Starek, Devon Steffan, Matt Streich, Tammy Walker-Smith, Feiqin Xie

Absent: Tye Payne, Trent Thigpen

Alternates:

Quorum present

1. **Guest Speaker(s):** *Dr. Janet Donaldson, Associate Vice President for Research, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, (20-minute presentation, 10-minute Q/A).*
   1. Dr. Donaldson provided a Research Division update. She came with Christina Loftin, Project Coordinator for the Office of Student Research and Innovation.
   2. <u>Research Development Office</u>
      - **Personnel updates**
        —Searching for another Research Development Officer.
      - <u>Internal Funding Opportunities</u>
        —Research enhancement awards: around $62,000
        —Application for the TCRF will be announced on July 1, applications due in early August, and winners announced for September 1.
        —Grant Scholars Program: designed for researchers new to grant writing, guiding them through the entire process with payment for reaching milestones and a grant ready for submission.
   3. <u>ORD Services</u>
      - Proposal reviews—if it is a large grant and the application arrives early, it will be sent off for external review. There are funds available for that service.
      - Research communications, access to templates online and graphic design support.
      - Science CV, biosketch and current and pending support—many sponsors require this format, especially for NSF applicants.
      - Variety of workshops and funding opportunities—especially regarding limited submissions.
      - Access to Pivot.
   4. <u>Sponsored Research Administration (SRS)</u>
      - **Pre-award**
        —Personnel changes in SRS.
        —Notify SRS at least three weeks in advance of deadline if possible.
        —Working on the revision of the Proposal Intake Form.
      - **Post-award**
        —Redistribution in some of the departments, in process of hiring a grant specialist.

5. <u>Technology Transfer and Commercialization</u>
   - System is handling IP and patent filings—Concept Form submission.
   - The Translation Innovation Fund is currently closed—likely to reopen in the fall, offering funding of around $75,000.
6. <u>Student Research and Innovation</u>
   - IFTP and SSIRCA programs
   - Also, S-RISE—provides scholarships to the students to do their research, and financial support to their mentors, weekly check-ins, workshops on presentation and resume writing, and inviting campus guest speakers. It's an 8-week summer research program.
7. <u>Other items</u>
   - NORDP—helping to strategize how to build a research ecosystem, two years and 600 hours of consulting.
   - NSF Engines proposal around coastal resilience—10 years, $160 million, proposal due in August, and if it gets selected for second round, full proposal is due in February.
   - Faculty Fellow Program—feedback needed.

Q&A

   - The Grant Writing Program has been replaced with the Grant Scholars Program to help people with the entire grant process.
   - In the process of analyzing the applicants for the RA position for COLA, CONHS, COEHD. The candidate will need a very defined training program.
   - <u>What are the pre-requisites and responsibilities for the Faculty Fellow position and is there one per college or is it decided in some other way?</u>
     Looking for somebody who is tenured to help with strategic planning in the division. Working with Dr. Donaldson, with flexibility in the fellow's focus and initiatives. It's not one per college—rotating the colleges depends on the applications received.
   - <u>How do you monitor student research projects, when they involve collaboration or mentorship, to know how much is being done and if more help is necessary?</u>
     Christina contacted 8-10 U.S. universities. They face challenges with metric systems for monitoring student research. Tried to implement different programs such as post-graduation surveys and incentives, yet many struggle due to incomplete systems, suggesting a need for better metrics potentially by involving faculty and enhancing data entry methods.

Meeting called to order by Faye at 11:52 am.

Motion to change the amend of the agenda.
- MOTION: First-Tammy, Second-Jordan, All in favor

2. Alternates/Guests Introduced themselves.
   - None

3. Agenda was approved.
   - MOTION: First-Matt, Second-Jim, All in favor

4. April 2024 Meeting Minutes were approved with one edit.
   I. All minutes approved.

- **MOTION: First-Jim, Second-Ruby, All in favor**

5. **Ex-Officio Faculty Senate Update(s)** (Alexa Hight)
   I. Alexa is no longer on Faculty Senate as of end of April.
   II. President Miller was the guest speaker at April's meeting. She is reviewing the budget and the graduate education.
   III. She addressed faculty reviews, focusing on faculty responsibilities and collegiality—why it's included in reviews.
   IV. Budget advisory task force—top priority for the incoming VP of Finance.
   V. Faculty Senate received CUPA data—used for determining faculty salaries, and then shared by the Faculty Senate.
   VI. Dr. Miller discussed changes in scholarships and reassuring that funding graduate education remains a priority.
   VII. An amendment was proposed for the previous Faculty Senate Speaker to serve as ex officio to maintain continuity and facilitate communication among Faculty Senates across different campuses for mutual support and collaboration at the state level.
   VIII. Discussion about interdisciplinary publishing.

6. **Ad-hoc Scholarly Librarian Update(s)** (Alexa Hight)
   I. The Open Access Publication Fund is out of funds for the year.
   II. Replaced the application form with an interest form to monitor interest levels. Notify individuals when funds are available but need to apply for the funding.

7. **CPIRA Vice Chair Nominations**
   - Feiqin Xie accepted the Vice Chair nomination.
   - Faye asked CPIRA Council for additional nominations.
   - Feiqin Xie will be the Vice Chair for FY25.
   - **MOTION: First-Xinping, Second-Jordan, All in favor**

8. **CPIRA Committee Updates**
   I. Research Administration Development & Training (Carmen Osier)
      i. No updates.

   II. Operations & Communications for Sponsored Projects (Xinping Hu)
      i. No updates.

   III. Facilities (Mark Olson)
      i. Committee met with Scott Meares, Associate Vice President for Operations, and Freddy Sustaita, Director of EHS, on May 8th.
      ii. Lab inspections will continue to be unannounced.
      iii. There is an online submission form to request to have waste removed.
      iv. Committee asked for the possibility of having a list of requests and a timeline to track when the requests were made and completed.
      v. EHS is thinking about using the shed facility for waste consolidation but needs to install hoods for safety, potentially involving electrical rewiring, with unknown costs.
      vi. EHS has funding to remove waste if it is correctly labeled. If it is not labeled or has an unclear label, EHS doesn't have a budget for that, and the PI or department will be responsible for the costs since they must be treated as a potential safety hazards.
      vii. Fume hood issues are being addressed.

        viii.   A CPIRA member suggested implementing automatic email confirmations for pickup requests, like the facility services process, to ensure accountability and tracking.

        ix.   Still waste pickup issues in some labs. Committee will pass the documentation to EHS and Scott Meares to resolve this problem.

IV.   <u>Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures</u> (Tianxing Chu)
   - i. Waiting for PI census data from R&I for election process.
   - ii. New members will be invited to attend the August meeting.

V.   <u>Graduate Recruitment & Retention</u> (Ruby Mehrubeoglu)
   - i. Committee met with Dean McCaleb. Salary increases and tuition support are not on the agenda.
   - ii. Discussed if they can open up part time options for MS programs.
   - iii. Students need to have a minimum of 3.0 GPA to be eligible for a TA or RA position—College of Graduate Studies is willing to grant waivers if their GPA is very close to 3.0.

VI.   <u>Roles and Responsibilities</u> (DeAnna Crites)
   - i. No updates.

9. **Other Business**
   a. <u>R&I Updates</u>
      - Compliance: <u>NCURA updates</u>
         - The NCURA report is still not public.
   b. <u>RA for COLA, CONHS, COEHD</u>
      - Already covered.
   c. <u>FDP updates</u>
      - A member of CPIRA will attend the FDP meeting in Washington DC.
   d. <u>New guest speakers</u>
      - Discussed possible guest speakers for June and August.
   e. <u>CCRC (Collaborative Community Research Center)</u>
      - It was a Social Sciences Research Center in the COLA, but it was moved under R&I. It doesn't have a director, causing it to stop providing its previous services. It used to serve COLA, CONHS, and COEHD.
   f. <u>Open Share</u>
      - Jeniffer will be back as Chair of CPIRA in June.
      - <u>Recognition to CPIRA members</u>
        —Faye acknowledged CPIRA members who got P&T and different awards.
      - <u>Student salaries</u>
        —If a project is fully funded by grants, the PI can decide the pay within a reasonable limit, though they can't exceed a certain maximum; however, there's concern about students' salaries dropping if the grants end, so clear communication about funding terms is essential.

10. Adjourn: 12:33 pm.

<u>MOTION: There was no motion.</u>