

**Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators**  
**Monthly Meeting**  
**September 19, 2024, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm**

**MINUTES**

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**Attendees:** Mark Besonen, Faye Bruun, Tianxing Chu, DeAnna Crites, Oliver Cruz-Milan, Jennifer Epley Sanders, Shannon Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Valarie Franco, Jennifer Garza-Cuen, Jim Gibeaut, Olga Gil Barrientos, Jordan Greer, Taoran Ji, Ahmed Kamara, Sining Kong, Yajuan Lin, Amy McClure, Ruby Mehrubeoglu, Debra Plowman, Pablo Rangel, Mike Starek, Devon Steffan, Matt Streich, Samuel Sugarek, Trent Thigpen, Peggy Valdes, Feiqin Xie

**Absent:** Tye Payne

**Alternates:** Miguel Perez (for Heather DeGrande), Feri Billiot (for Mark Olson)

**Guests:**

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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).*

- Dr. Donaldson provided an update on the Division of Research and Innovation. She shared a brief overview of the R&I division, highlighting the roles of the main offices.
- There are some changes to the timeline that SRS is requesting. SRS requests that the new proposal intake form be submitted three weeks before the deadline so that Dr. Donaldson can arrange an external review, and if you can't do that, contact Dr. Donaldson at least two weeks in advance so she can assist.
- SRS is based in College Station—any changes to their information are posted on the research website and shared via Kim's listserv and the Research News listserv.
- Office of Research Development
  - Manage internal seed funding opportunities, offer consultations with research development professionals, and coordinate multidisciplinary proposals among other tasks.
  - Research cafes are coming back in-person.
- Personnel Changes
  - Dr. Brad, Research Development Officer
  - Michelle Chavez, Research Development Associate
- Research Development Academy
  - Open to eligible PIs—will announce the winners on September 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - Nine-month project aims to help PIs develop a strategic plan for their research portfolio and create a strong idea for their first proposal. Hoping it will be a continued program.
- Office of Student Research and Innovation (OSRI)
  - For undergraduate and graduate students.
  - Professional development workshops, ambassadors, student research competition, development, student research and innovation summer experience, and the student creative competition.

- The R&I website has been updated to include all events which are now linked to the University's calendar.

#### Q&A

- For the Summer Students Program you only need to sign up for one credit to receive a scholarship, and they get \$500 upfront to cover that cost, followed by \$2,000 upon program completion, which allows quicker access to funds, especially for international students who may face delays in receiving a paycheck.
- There was a suggestion about putting events in I-engage so the students get the information.
- What does the intake form do? Now, instead of contacting your SRS person for a file, you can fill out an online form that automatically routes to them, research development, college administration, and the Dean, ensuring everyone is involved early in the process to ease the approval burden on you.
- RAs need a clear yes or no on course buyouts, answers like "maybe" slow down the process, so it's important for PIs to address these issues early to avoid delays in applications. Dr. Donaldson mentioned that she can remove the "maybe" from the options.

**Meeting called to order by Faye at 11:33 am.**

#### **2. CPIRA New Members, Alternates, and Guests**

Dr. Brunn introduced all CPIRA members. These are the new members for FY25:

- Peggy Valdes (CASA)
- Samuel Sugarek (CCS)
- Oliver Cruz-Milan (COB)
- Ahmed Kamara (COB)
- Pablo Rangel (COECS)
- Amy McClure (CONHS)
- Mark Besonen (HRI)
- Jennifer Garza-Cuen (SAMC)
- Sining Kong (SAMC)

#### **Alternates**

- Miguel Perez for Heather DeGrande
- Feri Billiot for Mark Olson

#### **3. Agenda was approved.**

- **MOTION: First-Amy, Second-Matt, All in favor**

#### **4. August 2024 Meeting Minutes were approved.**

I. All minutes approved.

- **MOTION: First-Jennifer Garza-Cuen, Second-Jennifer Epley Sanders, All in favor**

#### **5. Ex-Officio Faculty Senate Update(s) (Taoran Ji)**

- I. Reorganization of the graduate education functions and the College of Graduate Studies. The goal is to improve efficiency and reduce redundancies.
- II. Study Abroad Program  
Faculty-led study abroad programs, available to TAMU-CC students and taught by TAMU-CC faculty at various global locations. Deadlines for proposals:  
—Oct. 1st for Summer/Fall 2025  
—Feb. 1st for Spring 2026
- III. Acadeum  
It is a TAMU course-sharing platform that helps students find needed courses not offered at their institution—all courses requiring approval from the college, department, and faculty.
- IV. Transition to Canvas: Nursing instructors reported issues accessing their courses due to a system where only the primary instructor can access the course, and the standard procedure to resolve this requires approval from the college dean or department chair before the DLAI office can grant access.
- V. President Miller has begun a campus-wide workload review due to concerns that some colleges are receiving fewer course releases for the same services, and while no changes have been made yet, there may be future adjustments, including the possibility of offering stipends instead of a course release for smaller commitments.
- VI. The search committee is still actively looking for a new Provost.
- VII. Professional Development Week will take place from November 12th to 14th, featuring an event called EPIC that calls for presentation proposals, although the deadline for submissions has already passed.

#### **6. Ad-hoc Scholarly Librarian Update(s)** (Lisa Louis via email)

- I. The library is now accepting applications for its Open Access Publication Fund, which has \$60,000 available.
- II. Only journals that publish exclusively in open access are eligible; those that offer both open access and print versions do not qualify.
- III. There is more information and the application form at this link:  
<https://guides.library.tamucc.edu/OpenAccess/OAFund>.
- IV. The library is offering OER Faculty Stipends and is accepting applications. There is more information in the following link: <https://guides.library.tamucc.edu/oer/stipends>.

#### **7. CPIRA Committee Updates**

- I. Research Administration Development & Training (Jordan Greer)
  - i. The committee will meet with Dr. Donaldson monthly.
- II. Operations & Communications for Sponsored Projects (Matt Streich)
  - i. No updates.
  - ii. The OCSP and the RADT committees will meet jointly with Dr. Donaldson every month.
- III. Facilities (Debra Plowman)
  - i. There are three types of reports for facilities: one for general work requests, the second for hazardous waste pickup, and the third for projects that may affect room capacity that need to be submitted to Scott's group, especially for changes like adding a hood or electrical modifications.

- ii. The facilities committee work order form is for CPIRA to address faculty concerns by gathering information and clarifying work orders to ensure proper resolution.
- iii. The university is aware of the limited generator capacity—they are looking for funding from FEMA.
- iv. The committee suggested inviting Scott Meares as guest speaker in the near future.

IV. Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures (Tianxing Chu)

- i. Committee needs new members.
- ii. The Council is fully staffed, with only the RA position from HRI still open.
- iii. Committee will propose some changes to the bylaws to potentially address some issues related to the election process.
- iv. It's important to decide how to distribute funding contributions for people with multiple affiliations, as this affects the number of seats for those units.

V. Graduate Recruitment & Retention (Ruby Mehrubeoglu)

- i. This committee used to meet monthly with Dr. Karen McCaleb and while the College of Graduate Studies has been dissolved, the contacts remain the same until everything is finalized.
- ii. The Chair of the committee gave a summary of what the committee worked on last year. The committee will rethink its strategy this year.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities (DeAnna Crites)

- i. No updates.

**8. Other Business**

a. Provost and R&I Updates

▪ Graduate Education Reorganization

- Reorganization in graduate education—Academic Affairs sent a letter on September 5th explaining all the changes.
- The goal is to increase graduate enrollment and have more people graduating with Masters and PhDs.
- They are trying to improve communication through listservs for program coordinators, as not everyone is receiving the necessary information.

▪ Compliance

- The search for the AVPRI position did not succeed, so they will begin the process again.

b. GA for COLA, CONHS, COEHD

- Anna will also serve as a GA for SAMC. She is housed in R&I.
- Once research increases in each college, they plan to have an administrator for each college.

c. Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP)

- Mark Besonen will be the new FDP representative. He explained what FDP does.
- There are three meetings yearly. Next meeting will be virtually in January 2025.
- Mark will share the minutes when they are available.

d. VIVO Task Force

- Trent Thigpen is going to be on the VIVO task force.
- VIVO is a research database at TAMU coordinated with the UN 17 goals that allow faculty to input and update their research information, helping them find

potential grant partners, while also considering privacy and public access issues.

e. ResearchNews listserv

- Everybody on CPIRA needs to be on this listserv—check with Olga to see if you are on the listserv, she can add you.
- Not everybody got the email with the NCURA report—it was distributed via the ResearchNews listserv.

f. Open Share

- Supplemental Funding and Maestro  
Brief discussion around whether PIs should request supplemental funding through SRS or directly, since the process is not competitive and depends on the program director's discretion. The cost to the university for submitting proposals is unknown, which may affect the decision.
- RAs discussed some issues related to Maestro when using it to record supplemental funding.
- Plaque was given to Jennifer Epley Sanders for her dedication and hard work as CPIRA Chair (2023-2024).

9. **Adjourn: 12:42 pm.**

**MOTION: First-Shannon, Second-Mike, All in favor**