

**Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators**  
**Monthly Meeting**  
**October 17, 2024, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm**

**MINUTES**

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**Attendees:** Mark Besonen, Faye Bruun, Tianxing Chu, DeAnna Crites, Oliver Cruz-Milan, Heather DeGrande, 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, Jessica Parra, Tye Payne, Debra Plowman, Pablo Rangel, Devon Steffan, Samuel Sugarek, Trent Thigpen, Peggy Valdes, Feiqin Xie

**Alternates:** Hua Zhang (for Ruby Mehrubeoglu), Feri Billiot (for Mark Olson), Deidre Williams (for Mike Starek, Tara Topping (for Matt Streich)

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Quorum present

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

- Dr. McCaleb talked about the changes after the decentralization of the Graduate Studies College.
- Each college, except COB, has a graduate advisor assigned to work with the advising center—though this may change in the future.
- Amanda Bocanegra is now in Missy Chapa's office and will continue handling final graduation clearance.
- The oversight of the degree plan will now be managed by Andrew Johnson from COB, with Amanda assisting.
- Susan Wolf Murphy will assign graduate faculty representatives and oversee graduate council, while Linda Buckley will continue helping dissertation students upload their work to ProQuest at least for this semester. She will also be the contact person for MFA.
- GROW, under OSRI, will continue offering events like the 3MT competition and Pathway Symposium, while some programs will remain, others have been reduced or moved.
- Andrew Johnson is taking over Brenda Harms who is now over enrollment management, and Brenda has taken over for Jerel Benton.
- There has been a decrease in ABDs.
- Teri Ruiz will continue advising for SAMC and COLA.
- The GARA letters and waivers now go directly to Dr. McCaleb. She will be doing scholarships, and the SAGE program along with assistantships and tuition waivers.

Q&A

- Dr. McCaleb will provide CPIRA with a flow chart with names and new titles.
- For questions about forms contact Amanda Bocanegra
- Since 2018, the graduate student population has grown with new programs added, and successful initiatives like the SAGE Fellowship and CIRTLL Program are expected to continue.

- Juan will now be the approver in Workday for routing new hires or changes for GAs—he is under R&I at the Office of Graduate Excellence.
- Graduate admissions for international students applying for an F-1 visa are handled by the Enrollment Management Office of Graduate Admissions with Sandra Kureska.
- Efforts to increase funding for graduate students, including higher stipends and for more graduate students, have been ongoing, and new plans may lead to more resources if successful.
- The timeline for funding plans is unclear, but students facing financial difficulties can contact Enrollment Management for support like scholarships or assistantships.
- Enrollment Management tracks the number of applicants, admissions, acceptances, and those who don't follow through.

**Meeting called to order by Faye at 11:35 am.**

**2. Alternates/Guests introduced themselves**

- Jessica Parra, new RA for HRI
- Hua Zhang alternate for Ruby Mehrubeoglu
- Feri Billiot alternate for Mark Olson
- Deidre Williams alternate for Mike Starek
- Tara Topping alternate for Matt Streich

**3. Agenda was approved.**

- **MOTION: First-Amy McClure, Second-Jennifer Garza-Cuen, All in favor**

**4. September 2024 Meeting Minutes were approved.**

- I. All minutes were approved with one correction under Faculty Senate.
- II. 1 abstain (Heather DeGrande)

- **MOTION: First-Jennifer Garza-Cuen, Second-Feiqin Xie, All in favor**

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

- I. Andrew Rogers, VP for Finance and Administration, gave a talk at the Faculty Senate about the financial situation of the university.
- II. President Miller is requesting an increase in HEAF funds and permission from College Station to raise tuition.
- III. Changes are coming regarding how courses are classified as face-to-face or hybrid, which could have financial implications.
- IV. Full-time faculty typically teach 15 credit hours per semester, with tenure-track faculty getting a three-hour research release and sometimes additional course release time.
- V. Dr. Catherine Rudowsky is officially the Provost.

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

- I. The library has \$24,000 left from a \$60,000 budget for Open Access Publication Fund.
- II. The timing for securing funding seems unclear—whether it's when the paper is submitted or when it's accepted—and there are concerns about funds being locked up by other applications, potentially leaving some papers without support.

- III. Faculty may apply for funding at the time they submit their article to a journal rather than the time of acceptance. Faculty may only apply for funding once per quarter, and only if they have no other work pending acceptance for publication. The best thing to do is apply for funding immediately when you submit.
- IV. Brief discussion about contributions to Open Access Fund.

## 7. CPIRA Committee Updates

- I. Research Administration Development & Training (Jordan Greer)
  - i. RADT and OCSP committees met with Dr. Donaldson.
  - ii. She is working on a way to share funding opportunities and event calendars through the research news Listserv and newsletter.
  - iii. Dr. Donaldson is working on acquiring a software platform called InfoReady, which will help organize funding opportunities and deadlines in a searchable calendar.
  - iv. The proposal Intake Form is still in use, and although there were some routing issues, they have been fixed.
  - v. The Research Development Academy is a 9-month grant writing program that helps participants prepare a grant for submission, and all 12 spots are filled.
  - vi. Dr. Donaldson is planning a grant writing workshop for new PIs on January 31—still working out the details, including the schedule and whether it will focus on specific research areas.
  - vii. The committee also discussed the possibility of creating a clear, comprehensive roadmap for new faculty and PIs that outlines the process of getting involved in grant writing, submitting grants, and understanding the grant lifecycle, similar to the detailed resources available at other institutions.
  - viii. The university is aware of the issue of how funding is reported in Maestro and is working on fixing it.
  - ix. Brief discussion about how business administrators across campus enter summer pay.
- II. Operations & Communications for Sponsored Projects (Matt Streich)
  - i. No updates.
- III. Facilities (Debra Plowman)
  - i. No updates.
  - ii. Committee plans to invite Scott to speak at CPIRA in the spring.
  - iii. Faculty should contact the facilities committee directly if they have any issues with facility requests for their research.
- IV. Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures (Tianxing Chu)
  - i. Council has no open seats except for one library ad-hoc position—still in the process of hiring; unknown timeline.
- V. Graduate Recruitment & Retention (Ruby Mehrubeoglu)
  - i. Already covered during Dr. McCaleb's presentation.
- VI. Roles and Responsibilities (DeAnna Crites)
  - i. The committee is uncertain about what direction to take, as there are many options and questions about who has the authority to make decisions.

- ii. The upcoming change to Chrome River will cause changes with P Cards and travel.
- iii. Committee talked about the real impact of staffing shortages on campus.

**8. Other Business**

- a. R&I updates
  - Compliance
    - There is no search presently for the AVPRI position—the first one failed.
- b. GA for COLA, CONHS, COEHD
  - No updates.
- c. CPIRA filing Ad-hoc committee
  - Mark Besonen, Jennifer Epley Sanders, and Trent Thigpen will be on this committee.
- d. Open Share
  - None

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

**MOTION: First-Heather, Second-Tianxing, All in favor**