

Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators
Bylaws
Approved: October 16, 2025

1. Purpose of the Council:

The Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators (CPIRA) consists of individuals elected to represent Principal Investigators (PIs and Co-PIs) and Research Administrators (RAs) from members of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) research community. The Council is an advisory body committed to the continued improvement of the research environment for students, faculty, and staff. Specifically, CPIRA and the faculty and staff it represents endeavor to work with administration to provide an effective and efficient university organization, to achieve the goal of being nationally recognized and competitive in research, other sponsored activities and teaching.

The Council meets monthly or as needed to address specific issues concerning the research and graduate environments on campus. Appropriate recommendations are discussed with and implemented through appropriate organizations or administrative offices.

2. Representation:

Members of the Council are elected PIs or Co-PIs or appointed research administrators from the Colleges, Centers, Institutes, and other University Departments (hereafter referred to as units) representing the TAMU-CC research community. As such, it is the responsibility of Council Members to maintain an effective dialogue with their constituents.

A member of the Faculty Advisory Council will also serve as a non-voting, ex officio member of the Council. It is suggested that this person be an eligible constituent of CPIRA. The member will be appointed annually by the Speaker of the Faculty Advisory Council.

An ad hoc, non-voting member from the Mary and Jeff Bell Library will also serve on the Council to provide updates on scholarly communication, institutional access and subscriptions to major publishers, research support services, and so forth. This member will be appointed annually by the Library Dean subject to availability and as requested by the Council.

Representation excludes those who are primarily administrators such as Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs. An exception to this restriction may be granted by the Council Chair, on a case-by-case basis.

A. Definition of Principal Investigator:

CPIRA defines a PI as an individual who has primary responsibility and is significantly involved in the design, execution, and management of a research, education, or other sponsored project and is a PI or Co-PI who has submitted and/or received extramural funding, Texas Comprehensive Research Fund, or University level Research Enhancement awards in the previous three fiscal years as determined by the PI census and other data sources.

B. Definition of Research Administrator:

CPIRA defines an RA as any assistant/associate director, business manager, business coordinator, business support specialist or other staff position whose primary job duties include at least one of the following:

- Providing pre-award administrative support for preparation and submission of proposals.
- Providing post-award administrative support for a sponsored project.
- Providing support for research compliance aspects of a sponsored project.

An RA, as defined above, from the Office of Sponsored Research Administration within the Division of Research and Innovation may not be allowed to serve on the Council.

C. Meetings:

Meetings shall be open to all observers, but only elected Council Members or their Alternates, as detailed in Section J, may vote. An Alternate shall only convey the Member's vote to the Council if an item to be voted on has been released for review prior to the upcoming Council meeting. If the Member declines/fails to provide a vote, the Alternate shall abstain from voting. However, an Alternate has the right to vote on behalf of the Member if an item to be voted on during the meeting has not been released beforehand. Meetings will generally be informal, but at the request of the majority of the Council Members present, the operating procedures adopted by the Faculty Advisory Council, or other procedures as agreed upon by those present, will be followed.

D. Quorum:

A quorum shall consist of at least 50 percent of the members of the Council.

E. Elections:

Elections to replace Council Members whose terms have expired or to fill other vacancies will be held immediately after the spring semester annually, or as needed, after compilation of the PI census. The Bylaws, Elections, Rules, and Procedures Committee (BERPC) or the Council Chair, shall inform all PIs in those units that have expired terms or unfilled seats regarding the need for nominations.

The BERPC, and Council Coordinator shall compile the list of nominees, shall prepare separate ballots for each unit with vacancies and shall initiate a ballot to be voted on by all eligible PIs in that unit as determined by the census results. Where multiple vacancies exist, the voters shall have as many votes as there are vacancies. The nominees receiving the most votes will be named Council Members until all vacancies have been filled.

The BERPC and Council Coordinator will compile a list of the eligible RAs and inform the respective units of RA eligibility to serve on the Council. Units with eligible RAs will determine who will fill that seat.

F. Census of Principal Investigators:

A census shall be conducted annually by the Division of Research and Innovation for review by BERPC and the Council Coordinator who will then update the list of PIs who are eligible to vote and to participate as a candidate. Additionally, the Council, with the approval of the Executive Committee, will consider adjustments or changes as necessary including the need to update the census.

G. Allocation of Seats:

The Executive Committee will review the census data of all eligible PIs and RAs and allocate the number of seats by unit based on the following formula.

1. Fixed PI Seat:

All units that locally manage their own sponsored projects and/or have a minimum of three (3) PIs who submit proposals, regardless of funding outcome, are allocated one “fixed” PI seat.

If a unit declines/fails to provide a representative for a “fixed seat,” that seat would remain unfilled for that fiscal year with the term limitations for that seat remaining intact. The following year, at the unit’s discretion, another election could be held to fill that seat for the remainder of the original term.

2. Flexible PI Seats/PI Weighted:

One (1) PI weighted “flexible” seat will be allocated if more than five (5) PIs in a given unit are submitting proposals, regardless of funding outcome, to ensure that those in larger units are appropriately represented.

If a unit declines/fails to provide a representative for a “flexible seat,” that seat would remain unfilled for that fiscal year with the term limitations for that seat remaining intact. The following year, at the unit’s discretion, another election could be held to fill that seat for the remainder of the original term.

3. Flexible PI Seats/Funding Weighted:

One (1) PI funding weighted “flexible” seat will be allocated to each of the three units receiving the highest dollar amounts of funding to ensure that those in units that are most successful in obtaining sponsored project funds are appropriately represented.

Units that do not fill all available PI “fixed” seats and PI weighted “flexible” seats would be ineligible for the allocation of a PI funding weighted “flexible” seat. If a unit declines/fails to provide a representative for a funding weighted “flexible” seat, that seat would pass to the next highest income producer.

4. Fixed RA Seats:

RA input is valuable and needed to meet the goals of CPIRA. Therefore, RAs are allocated five (5) fixed seats; this number could increase as more designated RAs are hired on campus. Units with designated RAs will determine who will fill that seat. At the time of adoption of these bylaws, units with designated RAs include the Harte Research Center, Conrad Blucher Institute, College of Science, College of Engineering and Computer Science, and an RA position shared by the Colleges of Education and Human Development, Liberal Arts, and Nursing and Health Sciences, and School of Arts, Media, and Communication.

H. Membership Term and Limits:

Principal Investigator membership on the Council shall be for a three-year term, to coincide with TAMU-CC’s fiscal year, starting September 1 and ending August 31. A member may be elected to serve a maximum of six consecutive years. This rule is suspended if the Vice Chair's

term on the Council expires during the year that the Member serves as Vice Chair or Council Chair. In this case, the Vice Chair's term will be extended to the end of their term as Immediate Past Chair. The Council Chair may invite members to extend their terms for one year at his/her discretion with the approval of the Executive Committee.

I. Transfers and Reappointment:

A Council Member who steps down, or transfers units, or who assumes an administrative position that precludes Council membership shall recommend a temporary replacement to serve until the end of that term year or until a special election is held. Recommendations are contingent upon approval by the Council Chair.

J. Alternates:

If a Council Member has an extended time conflict arise (e.g., teaching commitment at the time of Council meetings, sabbatical, extended travel, illness, etc.) such that the Member is unable to attend two or more consecutive meetings, the Member will enlist an Alternate preferably from the same category (either PI or RA), who is not another Council Member, from the Member's unit and notify the Council Coordinator of the conflict and the Alternate's name. If the Member is unable to enlist an Alternate from the Member's unit, the Council Chair may do so. If the Member's unit does not have another eligible PI or RA, the Council Chair may use his/her discretion to enlist an Alternate from the same unit who is considered the best candidate to temporarily serve in that capacity.

K. Failure to Participate:

Council Members are encouraged to enlist an Alternate if they are unable to attend a Council meeting. However, absences for Council Members are limited to four per year, including those missed when an alternate is sent. A "Failure to Participate" notice will be sent to the Council Member, by the Council Chair, after two meetings have been missed. Consequently, any Council Member who misses more than four meetings during the year will be replaced and an Alternate from the Council Member's unit will be appointed by the Council Chair to serve the remainder of the Council Member's elected term. In the event of unforeseeable circumstances that would result in missing more than four meetings the member may discuss the matter with the Council Chair to obtain a waiver on attendance.

3. Council Officers and Committees:

A. Officers:

Officers of the Council are: Council Chair, Vice Chair, and Immediate Past Chair.

1. Selection of Officers:

The Vice Chair will be elected to a one-year term, which coincides with the September-August fiscal year. Nominations for Vice Chair will be solicited from Council Members. The Vice Chair will be elected by the Council annually. In the event that there are no nominations for Vice Chair, the Council Chair may appoint a Vice Chair at his/her discretion with the acceptance of the appointee and the Executive Committee. The Vice Chair will serve a one-year term as Council Chair the following year, and then serve an additional one-year term as Immediate Past Chair. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Vice Chair, a special election will be conducted to fill the office with a Council Member for the remainder of the vacated term.

2. Duties of Officers:

The Council Chair will preside over meetings and serve as liaison between the Council and the broader University community. The Council Chair will call the meetings and, in concert with the Executive Committee, establish the agenda. The Council Chair will ensure that the census is conducted, and elections held. The Vice Chair shall serve in the Council Chair's absence and shall assume the role in the event the Council Chair can no longer serve. The Immediate Past Chair provides historical perspective and continuity between the previous and present year's Council activities.

B. Executive Committee:

An Executive Committee of seven will advise the Council Chair on Council activities. The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Council Chair, Vice Chair, Immediate Past Chair, and four Council Members that are recommended by the Council Chair and ratified by the Council. Membership on the Executive Committee shall be for a one-year term, from September 1st to August 31st.

C. Ad hoc Committees:

These may be created when needed to address issues of importance to CPIRA. Composition and supervision of the ad hoc committees will be done under the discretion of the Council Chair with advisement by the Executive Committee.

4. Changes to the Bylaws:

These rules and operating procedures can be changed by majority vote of a quorum at any Council meeting. Recommendations for changes must be presented to the Council Chair one week prior to the Council meeting to be included on the meeting agenda.

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