

Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators
Monthly Meeting
January 18, 2024, 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, Patricia Spaniol-Mathews (Pat), James Gibeaut, Olga Gil Barrientos, Yajuan Lin, Mark Olson, Tammy Walker-Smith, Alexa Hight, Ruby Mehrubeoglu, Matt Streich, Tye Payne, Mike Starek

Absent: Patrick Crowley, Jian Sheng

Alternates: Collin Webster (for Debra Plowman), Amy McClure (for Heather DeGrande)

Guests:

Quorum present

1. Guest Speaker(s): *President Kelly Miller, President/CEO Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, (20-minute presentation, 10-minute Q/A).*

1. President Miller provided a budget overview and some comments about enrollment.
 - Budget:
 - Received small increase from State this year.
 - Enrollments have stayed relatively flat.
 - Monies picked up from State placed into inflation and to cover faculty and staff merit pay increases and equity plans for faculty and staff.
 - Freshman enrollment increased by 14%.
 - Retention is the key to enrollment. Graduating the students is also very important.
 - Trying to get into the Texas University Fund—will depend on the number of PhDs we have graduating.
 - Continually looking for resources and places that we could tap into additional money for research.
 - Great reputation—Different agencies always looking to partner with us.
 - If the budget is not increasing—bringing in a group of business budget consultants to help us to look at how we could maximize the budget we currently have.
 - Figuring out a way to get summer school funded, so salary savings go back to the departments.
 - Talked to System about investing in our institution for graduate assistantships—waiting to hear back.
 - Investigating two areas related to student population from the budget perspective:
 - international students
 - Graduate College
 - Means/support for international students need to be considered when they are admitted [so they are not left in dire straits when they come to the US needing financial support].

- Three new generators are coming in from FEMA.
- For facilities related work, start with Scott Meares, do not go directly to SSC, it helps to save time and money.

Q&A

- Audit division internally—issues with travel [currently outsourced] not moving fast enough
- There are no current plans to move any more central offices off campus, but can be considered if it would be more efficient. The goal is to keep as much internally as possible.
- President Miller will investigate with Mark Stone, head of IT for System, whether we are moving away from Concur into Chrome River beginning summer.
- Is there any push or plan to audit or implement and support us through more centralized communications like an Intranet?
 - Looking into a couple of things, student portal and bringing back some sort of announcement system which we went away from, trying to get this back.
 - We may need to run some surveys or audit to know if people are regularly getting information from their supervisors. Same issue with the students, investigating how to get them information in an effective manner
 - Student portal will go first, and Intranet would go behind that.
- If major issues arise with travel, IRB, or items that have had major changes in the last year or so, inform President Miller or Dr Mahdy.
- Impact of Senate Bill 17 (SB 17)
 - In August 2023, the University generated a list of items to be addressed regarding historical or archival documents. The list was sent to various VPs to be addressed for compliance.
 - SB 17 does not apply to research or teaching as long as the content is related to a course. Nonetheless, everything/anything with the prohibited words (including research, teaching, magazines) have been removed to avoid any potential issues by January 1, 2024 deadline.
 - Going back through everything that was removed now to determine what can be restored.

Meeting called to order by Faye at 11:48 am.

2. Alternates/Guests Introduced themselves.
 - Amy McClure alternate for Heather DeGrande
 - Collin Webster alternate for Debra Plowman
3. Agenda was approved.
 - MOTION: First-Carmen, Second-Jordan, All in favor
4. November 2023 Meeting Minutes were approved with a minor change.
 - MOTION: First-Xinping, Second-Jim, All in favor
5. Ex-Officio Faculty Senate Update(s) (Alexa Hight)

- I. In December Faculty Senate had two guest speakers:
 - Dr. Mahdy discussed the Provost’s absence.
 - VP Jaclyn Mahlmann talked about funding from the State. Funding has to do with enrollment numbers.
- II. Merit raises should have appeared in everyone’s January 2024 paycheck or second December paycheck.
- III. More transparency is needed on how to improve communication in terms of merit, how merit is awarded, how salaries are determined from CUPA data.
- IV. New ombuds person - gets a [course] buyout for the summer.
- V. New hierarchy structure with John LaRue (compliance).
- VI. Faculty Senate sent out a survey in December—trying to collect feedback from faculty (general climate survey).

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

- I. The library at TAMU-CC is now a member of the HathiTrust—library consortium.
- II. Library has new read and publish agreement with American Chemical Society.
- III. Library also has agreements with the Association for Computational Machinery publishers, and Cambridge University Press journals (not Cambridge books).
- IV. If anyone (from TAMUCC) is publishing a journal article with these publishers and wants to make it open access (OA), there is no additional fee.
- V. A couple of discounts with article processing charges (APCs):
 - Elsevier for all of their journals, for gold OA 15% discount, hybrid 10%
 - MDPI, which is a fully open access publisher, 10% for authors when publishing with OA funds.
- VI. The library currently has around \$22,000 in OA funds left for the year.
- VII. Alexa Hight will send a link with all the agreements over to the CPIRA list.

7. CPIRA Committee Updates

- I. Research Administration Development & Training (Carmen Osier)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Reestablishing monthly meetings with Dr. Donaldson.
- II. Operations & Communications for Sponsored Projects (Xinping Hu)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. FDP—three-day virtual meeting next week.
- III. Facilities (Debra Plowman)
 - i. Will follow up about the location of the three new generators.
- IV. Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures (Tianxing Chu)
 - i. CCS has lost their representation at CPIRA.
 - ii. In the process of evaluating the criteria and standards for adopting new PIs in the future from different units—waiting for PIs census data from R&I.
- V. Graduate Recruitment & Retention
 - i. The University has requested funding to support graduate students’ stipends.
 - ii. Want to pursue additional resources for graduate students besides the stipends—new scholarships that are specifically for graduate students.
 - iii. Dr. McCaleb reached out to Institutional Advancement’s Office to seek new opportunities for scholarships.
 - iv. Initial recommendations—see if current donors will allow to open their funds from undergraduate to grad students.

- v. VP Jaime Nodarse Barrera will be the guest speaker in February.
- VI. Roles and Responsibilities (DeAnna Crites)
 - i. No updates.

8. Other Business

- a. R&I Updates
 - Compliance: NCURA updates
 - NCURA peer review task force had their first meeting.
 - There are 8 members on the committee, CPIRA has two representatives.
 - John LaRue is the acting Chair of the committee.
 - It's not an audit, it's a program review—taking the recommendations one by one and prioritizing them to see which ones need to be addressed first. Facilities were one of the first recommendations.
 - The report shows a lot of input from our research community.
 - Unknown exactly when the report will become public (potentially March)
- b. Major Research Instrumentation Program (MRI) NSF equipment grants-approval process (related to limited submissions process)
 - Concern about how the internally competitive proposals were being handled:
 - There wasn't clear guidance as to how the internal evaluation was being done.
 - When selecting internal grants to move forward, one of the criteria should be to have the needed infrastructure.
 - Requesting clear guidelines of what the selection criteria are for the internal selection/evaluation and once these criteria are identified and shared, to stick to them during evaluation process.
- c. External Faculty Fellowships and Awards
 - No updates.
 - Dr. Doolan-Fitzsimmons gave an overview/background about the external faculty fellowships and awards.
 - Brainstorming about how to approach it.
 - Task force or committee to pick up the topic to collect cases and make recommendations.
 - Keep it on the agenda.
- d. RA for COLA, CONHS, COEHD
 - No updates.
- e. IT updates
 - They are restructuring the technology governance committees.
 - The website will be updated.
- f. Open Share
 - Office of Research Engagement—Impact Multiplier Grant (IMG) application deadline is February 9, 2024, internal for community engagement related programs. Awards: \$1,000 - \$7,500. Email with IMG info will be shared with Council.

9. Adjourn: 12:35 pm.

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