

Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators
Monthly Meeting
March 21, 2024, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

MINUTES

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

Absent: Valarie Franco, Tye Payne

Alternates: Amy McClure (for Heather DeGrande), Ben Karimi (for Mark Olson), David Hudgins (for Patrick Crowley)

Guests:

Quorum present

1. Guest Speaker(s): *Dr. Florencio Eloy Hernández, Dean of the College of Science, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, (20-minute presentation, 10-minute Q/A).*

1. Dean Hernández provided a presentation about the new College of Science after the split from the College of Engineering.
 - Vision of the COS
 - Strengthen research.
 - Bring more research funds.
 - Develop international relationships and partnerships in Latin America: recruit students, exchange faculty.
 - Direct social impact: develop critical thinking and creativity.
 - Work together through interdisciplinary research, collaborate with every academic unit in the institution, and provide holistic education.
 - Measure impact in at least one of the 17 sustainable goals from the United Nations sustainable development goals.
 - Structure of the COS
 - Three departments: LSCI, PENS, M&S
 - Two centers: CCS, CWSS
 - People: 86 faculty, 25 staff, about 1,655 students (not updated). Hiring 10 new faculty.
 - Facilities
 - College of Science is spread all over the campus.
 - Cannot move forward if don't have the needed facilities.
 - Working on renovations in NRC.
 - Waiting to hear back from a big grant from University of Dubai for some power backups for the buildings (NRC and CS).

Q&A

- Administrative barriers make it hard for different university departments to work together. If you can't get credit for publishing in a non-approved journal from your college, talk to your department Chair or College Dean. Without recognition, faculty won't want to collaborate, as it doesn't count for promotion, but collaborating and publishing in other disciplines is acknowledged. In COS you will get zero credit if you don't publish in recognized peer reviewed journals.
- Do you support interdisciplinary degrees? What sorts of supports do you envision for supporting this work?
 - Dean Hernández fully supports interdisciplinary programs where all Colleges can have PhD students, but we need to address challenges with fixed core courses and be open to new ideas, allowing students and advisors to choose the most beneficial core courses.
 - For a small institution, it's advisable to begin with a few interdisciplinary areas like environmental humanities, then gradually expand to other specific areas.
 - We need \$100 million to build a new facility for the COS, which would involve closing CS and moving out of NRC—then consolidating the COS into two buildings: Tidal Hall and the new facility.
 - We can't offer tuition payments to graduate students, which affects our ability to recruit them, so Deans are discussing ways to support them.

Meeting called to order by Faye at 11:44 am.

2. Alternates/Guests Introduced themselves.

- Amy McClure alternate for Heather DeGrande
- Ben Karimi alternate for Mark Olson
- David Hudgings alternate for Patrick Crowley

3. Agenda was approved.

- MOTION: First-Matt, Second-Tammy, All in favor

4. February 2024 Meeting Minutes were approved.

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

5. Ex-Officio Faculty Senate Update(s) (Alexa Hight)

- I. No updates—Senate hasn't met yet this month; meeting will be tomorrow.

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

- I. There are Open Access Publication funds for one more article to fully cover an APC—apply asap or email Alexa if you are interested.
- II. Colleges and departments should reevaluate how to evaluate research and it shouldn't be where you publish—impacts tenure, promotions, and reviews.
- III. Library is working on a directory/database—like a portfolio of what you've been publishing, working on, it would help to identify who you want to collaborate with across disciplines.

7. CPIRA Committee Updates

- I. Research Administration Development & Training (Carmen Osier)
 - i. CPIRA Forum is April 10, 2024, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.
 - ii. Same format as last year.
 - iii. Will have space for some posters.

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

- III. Facilities (Debra Plowman)
 - i. Committee met with Scott Meares and Freddy Sustaita, Director of EHS, discussed several topics:
 - Facilities has changed the way organic waste is collected/disposed.
 - Start thinking about the limit of disposal.
 - The cost of organic solvent consolidation by contracted third party is very expensive—Grants and departments are not set up to pay the extra cost.
 - Fume hoods issues—One fan is already fixed.
 - Changes in personnel in EHS.
 - Finish revising the facilities form and add work order.
 - If something requires changes to a building or involves electricity, you need to fill out a form and meet with facilities before ordering anything to ensure readiness and determinate associated costs.
 - ECDC will have a roof installed over the summer.
 - Still waiting for the FEMA grant for generators.
 - Science members on the committee should engage with their departments to collaborate on addressing various scientific needs and collectively consider this issue.
 - Meet with Scott Meares again before May meeting.
 - Start writing official memos—Research is going to stop if problems are not fixed.

- IV. Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures (Tianxing Chu)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Time to reach R&I and request the Pls data census for next elections.

- V. Graduate Recruitment & Retention
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Meeting in March with Dr. McCaleb was cancelled.

- VI. Roles and Responsibilities (DeAnna Crites)
 - i. No updates.

8. Other Business

- a. R&I Updates
 - Compliance: NCURA updates
 - Rebecca Ballard, Director of Research Compliance, is leaving.
 - No final NCURA report yet.
- b. RA for COLA, CONHS, COEHD
 - No updates.
- c. Open Share
 - Student Research Symposium on April 26, 2024

- Guest speakers for the next months:
 - Dr. Ma, Dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science, in April
 - Dr. Donaldson, Associate Vice President for Research, in May.
- RAs from CPIRA
 - RAs from CPIRA are offering assistance to other RAs on campus who may be experiencing administrative issues related to research and are unsure where to seek help.
 - Trying to improve communication so everyone knows where to go for help if they have questions.

9. Adjourn: 12:32 pm.

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