

Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators
Monthly Meeting
August 21, 2025, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Zoom
MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Besonen, Faye Bruun, Tianxing Chu, Oliver Cruz-Milan, Heather DeGrande, Jennifer Epley Sanders, Shannon Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Valarie Franco, Jennifer Garza-Cuen, Jim Gibeaut, Olga Gil Barrientos, Anna Gongora, Jordan Greer, Yajuan Lin, Amy McClure, Ruby Mehrubeoglu, Mark Olson, Debra Plowman, Pablo Rangel, Mike Starek, Devon Steffan, Matt Streich, Samuel Sugarek, Trent Thigpen, Peggy Valdes, Feiqin Xie

Alternates: Abbey Opoola (for Jessica Parra)

Absents: Sining Kong

Guests: Rose Bond, David Essian, John Gamble, Julie Parish Cantwell, Miguel Perez III, Sarah Scott, Deidre Williams

Quorum present.

1. Guest Speakers: *Andrew Rogers, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, (20-minute presentation, 10-minute Q/A).*

The speaker discussed the university budget for the new fiscal year preview and addressed deferred maintenance across campus.

- **Enrollment projections and research enterprise**
 - Budget growth will likely depend on enrollment, since tuition and state funding are based on student credit hours.
 - Research spending has grown significantly over the past five years, positioning TAMU-CC to qualify for the Texas University Fund (TUF), with permanent status once achieved.
- **FY26 Proposed Revenue and Expense Budget**
 - The Texas A&M University Board of Regents is expected to approve the budget next week.
 - HEF funding will remain fixed for the next 10 years; rising costs and inflation offsetting gains, so the university also relies on tuition and research grants to support expenses.
 - The university's revenue comes primarily from students and government (federal and state), which account for 85% of total revenues, with the remainder from student financial aid, donations, auxiliary services (housing and dining), investment income, and other miscellaneous sources.
 - Nearly two-thirds of the university's budget goes to personnel, while about 20% covers operations and maintenance, and a smaller portion is allocated to system service transfers.
- **Deferred Maintenance (DM)**
 - DM is the estimated cost to bring university buildings and systems up to minimum industry standards to prevent obsolescence.
 - The university has 3.7 million sq. ft. of facilities averaging 21 years old, with a 10-year DM need of \$404 million and a current shortfall of \$185 million.
 - DM pressures budgets due to limited tuition increases, rising costs, and funding gaps that delay building upkeep.

—Most of the \$185 million shortfall is for building systems (HVAC, plumbing, envelopes); safety code updates reflect standards, not unsafe conditions.

—Controlling or reducing the backlog requires \$22–26.6 million annually (9–12% of revenues), likely needing additional external funding.

—Research funds and community/regional sources alone cannot cover the annual costs, so significant government and institutional support is essential.

—To manage current facilities without worsening DM, the university prioritizes student safety, invests in preventative maintenance, focuses on key areas like classrooms and infrastructure, pursues grants (like FEMA funds) for upgrades, improves operational efficiency, and works with partners to fund new buildings and demolish those with high maintenance needs—all while staying flexible and creative in managing campus spaces.

Q&A

- Do the projected faculty and staff expenses include funding for new faculty positions or just equity adjustments, and are there plans to increase graduate student salaries?
Faculty equity adjustments are included in the budget, new faculty lines may be included if discussed during budgeting, and the university is actively working on funding graduate student support, especially for doctoral students, recognizing its importance for student success and revenue growth.
- How does the university decide and allocate resources each year—are there set policies or rules guiding this process, or is it more flexible and based on shifting needs?
The university is shifting from an incremental budget model to one that maintains current funding levels but directs new revenue into strategic investment funds allocated through a proposal and prioritization process.
- During that process, is it something determined internally, or is it mandated by the system?
Resource allocation isn't system-mandated but handled internally, with funding requests submitted through deans or VPs, reviewed by planning and budget offices, and ultimately decided by the Cabinet. The new budget development request process gathers funding ideas annually, which Cabinet reviews to align with priorities and available funds before distributing dollars.
- When will colleges or units see their budgets for next fiscal year?
Colleges can view their new budgets on September 1, once the system loads them, and can contact the budget office if they don't appear.
- How are decisions made for addressing DM, such as leaks and structural damage?
The university uses its Campus Master Plan to guide facility planning and relies on state funding and partnerships for construction and renovation. Leadership is prioritizing unfunded capital projects in the plan to present to the Board of Regents and strengthen funding requests.
- Does the budget, model, or projections also include financial support specifically for centers and institutes like, CCRC, CBI, HRI, etc.?
Yes.

Meeting called to order by Faye at 11:41 am.

2. Alternates, guests, new members

- Abbey Opoola alternate for Jessica Parra
- Deidre Williams alternate for Lucy Huang (new member)

- Rose Bond (new member)
- David Essian (new member)
- John Gamble (new member)
- Julie Parish Cantwell (new member)
- Miguel Perez III (new member)
- Sarah Scott (new member)

3. Approve Meeting Agenda

- I. Agenda was approved.
 - **MOTION: First-Peggy, Second-Amy, All in favor**

4. June 2025 Meeting Minutes were approved.

- I. Minutes were approved.
 - **MOTION: First-Jennifer Garza-Cuen, Second-Tianxing, All in favor**

5. Ex-Officio Faculty Senate Update(s) (Oliver Cruz-Milan)

- I. Faculty Senate needed to revise its bylaws and constitution under SB 37. If changes were not implemented, the Senate would be dissolved as of September 1st. So far, these changes are minimal.
- II. These new bylaws need to be approved by two-thirds of the votes cast for it to continue. Non-responses count as “no,” so faculty are urged to watch for the email, attend the forum, and vote yes to avoid losing shared governance.
- III. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast must vote “yes” in a Qualtrics survey for it to continue.

6. Ad-hoc Scholarly Librarian Update(s)

- I. Library doesn’t have a budget until September.

7. CPIRA Committee Updates

- I. Research Administration Development & Training (Jordan Greer)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Dr. Donaldson is updating the website to include new workshops, training, guides, and other resources. Members are encouraged to send any suggestions for additional content to be compiled and forwarded to her.
- II. Operations & Communications for Sponsored Projects (Matt Streich)
 - i. No updates.
- III. Facilities (Debra Plowman)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Waiting for Scott’s follow-up notes from the May meeting.
 - iii. Committee will have an initial meeting soon.
- IV. Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures (Tianxing Chu)
 - i. All new council members were elected by July, and the council is now operating at full capacity.
- V. Graduate Recruitment & Retention (Ruby Mehrubeoglu)

- i. This year's focus will be on presenting a cost-benefit analysis to advocate for increased graduate student support, emphasizing the importance of funding both Ph.D. and master's students to maintain the pipeline.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities (vacant)

- i. No updates.
- ii. Committee will wait until the AVPRI position is filled up.

8. Other Business

a. R&I I updates

- Compliance
—No updates.

b. Review: 12.99.01.C0.02, External Faculty Fellowships and Awards

—Council reviewed the policy and will share the feedback with the compliance manager.

c. Faculty/CPIRA Representative for FDP

—Pablo Rangel will be the new faculty representative for FY26.

d. Open Share

- The Coastal Council of Teachers of Mathematics is hosting a free community screening of the documentary *Count It Out: Math is Power* on August 24 at the Art Museum Theater at 2:00 pm, highlighting how math impacts everyday life and encouraging a more positive relationship with it.
- Export Control
Due to the difficulty of getting timely responses from Export Control there was a suggestion of having a ticketing system like IRB or IT uses to track requests.
- The university's chemical waste management has long-standing issues: storage and disposal limits are being reached, causing waste to accumulate in labs, which creates safety and compliance risks; efforts and funding are in progress to improve facilities, but gaps remain, making this an ongoing problem that requires continued attention and long-term solutions.

e. Closing Words by Current Chair (Faye Bruun)

- Dr. Bruun thanked all council, and she emphasized CPIRA as one of the best service opportunities on campus, benefiting not only individuals but also their departments and the university community.

f. Closing Words by Incoming Chair (Feiqin Xie)

- A plaque and a card were given to Dr. Bruun for her dedication and hard work as CPIRA Chair (2024-2025).
- New members need to choose a CPIRA committee to serve on.
- Fei thanked the CPIRA members who were completing their terms and noted that this was their final meeting.

9. Adjourn: 12:37 pm.