

Council of Principal Investigators and Research Administrators
Monthly Meeting
January 15, 2026, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Harte Research Institute (HRI 127)
MINUTES

Attendees: Rose Bond, Faye Bruun, Oliver Cruz-Milan, David Essian, Shannon Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Jim Gibeaut, Olga Gil Barrientos, Anna Gongora, Jordan Greer, Anabel Hernandez, Lucy Huang, Sining Kong, Yajuan Lin, Chuntao Liu, Amy McClure, Ruby Mehrubeoglu, Mark Olson, Julie Parish Cantwell, Miguel Perez III, Phebe Raglin, Pablo Rangel, Sarah Scott, Mike Starek, Devon Steffan, Samuel Sugarek, Trent Thigpen, Jin Zhao

Alternates: Abbey Opoola (for Jessica Parra), Ashley Voggt (for Debra Plowman)

Absents: Albert Bejarano, John Gamble

Quorum present.

1. Guest Speakers: *Kimberly Hawkenson, Director of the Office of Sponsored Research Administration, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, (20-minute presentation, 10-minute Q/A).*

The speaker provided an overview of the role and responsibilities of OSRA.

- **OSRA**
 - It is the University office responsible for overseeing sponsored projects and ensuring compliance with regulations, policies, and sponsor requirements.
 - Team portfolios and grant administrator assignments are available on the OSRA website.
- **Director, Kim Hawkenson**
 - Coordinates with SRS to provide required proposal certifications for TAMU-CC and reviews proposals for key issues (e.g., large equipment purchases, cost share, collaborations).
 - Reviews, negotiates the terms and conditions, and signs the agreement on behalf of the University.
 - Serves as the University’s primary contact for time and effort reporting and sponsored project audits, and reviews and negotiates MOUs, NDAs, and other agreements.
- **OSRA Grant Administrator Responsibilities**
 - The team manages all post-award activities, invoicing, and financial reporting, and reviews and approves grant transactions to ensure personnel effort and project expenses comply with federal and grant requirements.
 - They work with Research Compliance to ensure required approvals before grant funds can be released, support faculty with increasing federal requirements, and use automated Maestro reminders to track grant deadlines.
 - The team serves as the liaison between the University and sponsors, coordinating approvals through the contracts office. It’s expected that faculty and the team keep each other informed of sponsor communications to ensure accurate and coordinated actions.
- **Cost Share**
 - Cost share is discouraged unless required by the sponsor. It covers the portion of project costs not paid by the sponsor and must follow the same rules as direct grant expenses.
- **Time and Effort Reporting**
 - It is now open, and departmental RA will review reports before they are sent to faculty for certification. If corrections are needed, faculty should place the report on hold and contact their departmental RA to process the necessary payroll updates.

- **FCOI Requirements**

—FCOI applies to anyone who can influence a research project, including students, not just the PI, which is why FCOI training and disclosures are required yearly.

Q&A

- Will cost sharing funds be available with the new research system support, and if so, when?
TUF funding is meant to strengthen research infrastructure by adding staff support and investing in doctoral programs. While details on cost sharing are still unclear, the funds may be used as cost share if they directly support a grant.
- While Lisa Marzo from SRS is on maternity leave, Jessica Ramon can help direct proposals to the appropriate staff member.
- OSRA team was thanked for their work, with special recognition given to Deanna Crites as a valuable asset.
- Are there any updates on the indirect cost rate with federal agencies?
NIH attempted to cap indirect costs at 15%, but the court ruled against it, and the cap was put on hold. Meanwhile, OMB is considering new cost-recovery models, which could increase the University's recovery and shift some costs from indirect to direct charges.

Meeting called to order by Ruby at 11:25 am.

2. CPIRA new members and alternates

- Lucy Huang (new member from CBI)
- Chuntao Liu (new member from COS replacing Feiqin Xie)
- Abbey Opoola (alternate for Jessica Parra)
- Ashley Voggt (alternate for Debra Plowman)

3. Approve Meeting Agenda

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

4. November 2025 Meeting Minutes were approved.

Members were asked to review the meeting minutes in advance to save time during the meetings.

- **MOTION: First-Shannon, Second-Mike, All in favor**

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

- I. At the December 12 FAC meeting, members discussed Rule Policy 12.01 on course audits, received an update from the Provost, and some representatives expressed concerns about its unclear impact for TAMU-CC.
- II. Speaker Johnson provided an update on recent changes to Rule 801, which restrict advocacy related to race and gender ideology and require presidential approval for certain topics. The provost followed up with an FAQ providing the latest guidance.
- III. Speaker Johnson also reported on proposed changes to the expressive activities policy, noting that feedback has been provided and updates are pending, while no new information is available on course audit results.

6. Ad-hoc Scholarly Librarian Update(s) (Phebe Raglin)

- I. Open Access Publication Fund has approximately \$10,000 remaining in available funds.

- II. There are plans to post a notice on their website once funding is depleted with an option to sign up for future notifications.

7. CPIRA Committee Updates

All CPIRA members have now joined a committee, and thanks were extended to everyone for their involvement.

- I. Research Administration Development & Training (Jordan Greer)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. The CPIRA mixer will be held in April during Research and Innovation Month—the specific date is still pending.
 - iii. The student research symposium (SSIRCA) is scheduled for April 24, so probably the mixer will be around that time.
- II. Operations & Communications for Sponsored Projects (Jennifer Garza-Cuen)
 - i. No updates.
- III. Facilities (Jim Gibeaut)
 - i. Jim Gibeaut is the interim chair while Debra Plowman is on FDL.
 - ii. Debra drafted a memorandum summarizing the facilities issues addressed, which the committee will review, noting that CPIRA has taken these matters as far as it can.
 - iii. The memorandum will be presented to the full CPIRA council at the next meeting.
 - iv. It was suggested that these issues be shared with the deans due to their significant impact on research.
- IV. Bylaws, Elections, Rules, & Procedures (Shannon Fitzsimmons-Doolan)
 - i. Committee is fully staffed, everyone's been notified and rosters are up to date.
- V. Graduate Recruitment & Retention (Ruby Mehrubeoglu)
 - i. No updates.
 - ii. Committee needs a new chair.
 - iii. It was suggested that departments proactively document graduate student financial needs in preparation for future TUF funding, with CPIRA developing recommendations to support both Ph.D. and master's programs.
- VI. Roles and Responsibilities (Jordan Greer)
 - i. Committee is on hold until the AVPRI position is filled.

8. Other Business

- a. R&I updates
 - Compliance
—An offer for the Export Control position was made before the break, but the hire has not yet been officially confirmed.
 - AVPR Position Update
—Ruby will serve on the search committee for the AVPR position.
 - TUF Update
—TAMU-CC is nearing the TUF 2 threshold, with 22 doctoral graduates to date and 29 required by the end of summer; faculty are encouraged to support Ph.D. students nearing completion.

—After reaching TUF 2, the university plans to pursue TUF 1 and use TUF funding to strengthen Ph.D. programs so it can meet the higher graduation requirements needed for R1 status.

b. CPIRA filing Ad-hoc Committee (Trent Thigpen)

—After reviewing options, MS Teams and SharePoint were recommended over Laserfiche because they are easier to manage and already in place.

—Next steps include creating SOPs and file-naming conventions, organizing and renaming files, and setting up committee-specific and executive folders with appropriate access.

—Using the CPIRA MS Teams with private committee channels will make management easier by organizing members, providing access to historical documents for chairs, and restricting access.

—Using CPIRA MS Teams with private committee channels will provide chairs access to historical documents while restricting access.

c. FDP Update

—Next meeting will be held virtually in January 26-28. Notes from the sessions will be shared with council after the meeting.

d. Research Excellence Fund

—The Research Excellence Fund was discussed in a system webinar, and questions from the session are being compiled into an updated FAQ to be shared later.

—The R&I office encourages faculty to apply because these opportunities are competitive but easier than federal grants. For each one, it's limited submission through each institution.

—Faculty are encouraged to apply by the February 2 internal deadline, with selected proposals notified by February 18.

e. Open Share

▪ NRC building

—There was a discussion focused on a recent chemical odor incident caused by roof construction at the NRC building that required staff to evacuate and raised health concerns. The main issue was the lack of timely and consistent advance notifications about construction, chemical use, and building disruptions, with a recommendation to improve communication protocols.

—The issue that was raised will be brought to the Facilities Committee and followed up with Scott Meares's office to see what can be done.

▪ Grants

Participants discussed difficulties applying for grants with 100% non-state matching requirements because most faculty salaries are fully state-funded and cannot be used for cost sharing. This funding structure may limit faculty's ability to pursue certain large grants and may be a broader issue that CPIRA should be aware of.

▪ Committee meetings

Committee meetings are organized by the committee chair, who will communicate meeting details to members. Members are encouraged to contact their chair to raise issues and propose solutions for consideration.

9. Adjourn: 12:03 pm.

MOTION: First-Shannon, Second-Amy, All in favor