

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

11:30am-1:00pm – Zoom Meeting

Members Present	Members Unable to Attend	Others Present
Sandra Acosta, EPSY Rick Kreider, KNSM Marc Goodrich, TLAC Karen Rambo-Hernandez, TLAC Daniel Bowen, EAHR Luis Ponjuan, EAHR Hector Rivera, EPSY Ben Herman, TLAC Zohreh Eslami, EPSY	David Wright, KNSM Bugrahan Yalvac, TLAC	Michael de Miranda, Dean Jim Fluckey, Associate Dean for Research Ann Savell, SEHD REO Amy Jurica, SEHD REO Clayton Holle, SERD Post Award Paul Hernandez, University CPI Representative Rafael Lara-Alecio, University CPI Representative Nicolaas Deutz, KNSM Zhe Wang, EPSY Gabriella Ten Have, KNSM
Agenda Item	Comments	Recommendations/Actions/Follow-up
I. Review of Meeting Minutes	Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of October 13, 2022 were approved. Minutes will be posted at this link: https://mycehd.tamu.edu/faculty/research-office/council-of-principal-investigators/	The minutes, bylaws, and current list of members are available on the SEHD CPI website.
II. Updates from Interim Associate Dean for Research	Dr. Jim Fluckey said the job posting for a Research Development Officer is now up for the REO office. Please recommend it to people experience in developing research proposals. The award announcements for the Catapult grants will be coming at the end of January; this is a revised date from the initially planned	Dr. Fluckey will relay comments and concerns about the new ASCEND internal funding program to the VPR's office.

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	<p>announcement for mid-December. It will now coincide with the announcement for the new Teaching Excellence grants.</p> <p>The Teaching Excellent Grant proposal deadline is December 16th.</p> <p>The VPR has released a draft of a new seed grant offering titled “ASCEND” to replace the X-Grants for review and comments. The program will consist of two proposals types: Research Leadership Fellowships (RLF) supporting newer faculty and Targeted Proposal Teams (TPT) supporting already successful tenure and full professors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Lara-Alecio commented that the \$250,000 annual award is not a very large sum for many of the proposal teams that would be targeted for the TPT opportunity. He also hopes this competition is equitable, as some academic units have far more resources than others. - Dr. Kreider is concerned that the RLF also does not provide for mentors, which could impact the success of the newer applicant. <p>Dr. Fluckey congratulated Dr. Lara-Alecio for his newly announced role within the University CPI. He h has been selected to serve as the CPI representative on the “Contracts Committee” that is being formed by Mr. John Crawford’s office.</p> <p>This committee will hopefully address the many problems and delays in the current process.</p>	
<p>III. Updates from SEHD REO</p>	<p>Ann Savell with the SEHD Research Enterprise & Outreach (REO) office (formerly SERD Pre Award) provided an update on the MINT Initiative (Maximizing Investigator Networking Tools) that is being piloted in the REO office. They have begun to meet with a few PI’s to finetune the software package before moving on to the second stage.</p> <p>The Teaching Excellence Grant program RFA has been released and the REO is office is starting to receive proposals for review and feedback ahead of the December 16th deadline.</p>	
<p>IV. Updates from SERD Post Award</p>	<p>Clayton Holle announced that, with the centralization of finance and human resources, his office now reports through Jill Hobbs, Assistant Dean for Finance, rather than through the Associate Dean for Research. Their</p>	

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	<p>information will soon be housed on the SEHD Finance webpage, but links will remain on the SEHD REO webpage. The role his team performs will remain the same, but roles between individuals may shift. They are training new staff and determining workloads, and then hope to assign points of contact for each department. He will continue providing updates for his team on the CPI meetings.</p>	
<p>V. SEHD-CPI Meeting Schedules</p>	<p>To help avert scheduling conflicts for future CPI meetings, Ann Savell and Sandra Acosta proceeded with arranging the dates for the remaining CPI meetings for FY23. The dates were run by the dean’s office and then discussed with the CPI members. No objections were raised. Going forward, the CPI meetings will be scheduled for 11:30-1:00 on the first Tuesdays of the month in October, December, February and April. This follows the school-wide conversation hosted by Dean De Miranda on those days.</p> <p>As agreed upon in the previous CPI meeting, REO is now sending the SEHD CPI meeting invitations to all SEHD faculty.</p>	<p>Going forward, the CPI meetings will be scheduled for 11:30-1:00 on the first Tuesdays of the month in October, December, February and April. This follows the school-wide conversation hosted by Dean De Miranda on those days.</p>
<p>VI. Updates SEHD CPI Fall Reception</p>	<p>Dr. Sandra Acosta said the SEHD Fall Reception for Incoming and Outgoing CPI members that occurred 11/1/22 went well. Everyone that attended had a good time both socializing and networking. Thank you to Dean de Miranda for supporting it. It has been approved to continue next year.</p>	
<p>VII. Updates SEHD Junior Faculty Initiative – Podcasts</p>	<p>We have the interview guide prepared and guest speakers lined up for this year. Thank you to the CPI members for your contributions. All the interviews should be wrapped up in January so the podcasts can be released throughout the end of the year. We will then form a committee to determine what changes need to be made so it can continue and be sustainable.</p>	<p>Committee to be formed after podcast are ready for release to discuss how to continue this into FY2024 and beyond.</p>
<p>VIII. Updates from University CPI</p>	<p>Dr. Hernandez said the University-level CPI spent much of their last meeting their last meeting discussing the new ASCEND program that is replacing X-Grants and other internal funding from the VPR’s office. One of the primary concerns is the requirements put on the time of early career faculty that would be pursuing this and the expectation for engaging faculty in multi-disciplinary research before they’ve been able to establish their name in their own field. They are taking these concerns back to the VPR.</p>	

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IX. Establish CPI Priorities and Issues to be Addressed 2022-2023	<p>Carried over from the previous CPI meeting is the need to set the priorities and issues to be addressed by the CPI in FY2023. Attendees were briefly broken out into three working groups to discuss what items are important for us to focus on, make a statement on, or to create an action on this year. Upon reconvening, the groups presented their topics.</p> <p>After lengthy discussion (see attached raw transcription), three areas of focus came out for which subcommittees will be created. Ann will send out a signup for each member to determine which subcommittee they would like to join:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating Research Communities - Investment and Relations with Federal Agencies - Interdisciplinary Grants and Research Committee <p>We will send these out to the CPI members to see which subcommittees they would like to serve on. Each subcommittee will decide who their chair would be and define what it is specifically they want to focus on and then report back in February where we are.</p>	<p>Send suggestions on priorities to Dr. Acosta or through the Suggestion Box on the SEHD CPI webpage. Discuss with your colleagues and other PI's to see what they would like addressed at the school level.</p>
X. Other Topics	<p>No other business was presented.</p>	

Brief Transcript (raw data)

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Upon reconvening, the groups presented their topics.

Dr. Kreider discussed what his group brought forth:

1. Support needed not only for junior faculty as they onboard and team them with senior faculty that have been here for a while and may need reinvestment to get the latest equipment so they can continue and expand upon the good work they're doing. That will also help provide resources and methodologies to support the junior faculty. It's a continuous support that has to be done.
2. Challenges of going from IRB to compliance to contracts, etc. Those have to be streamlined. You have a lot of faculty that put their hands up and say they don't need to be doing that because of the burden and effort.
3. We need support from departments, but it should start at the dean's level - the dean needs to make sure the department heads understand the issues and provide release from time and effort so that people trying to go after larger grants can invest their time and effort in order to be successful and put those teams of people together.

Dr. Lara underlined the word Investment. He came from a private business in a different country, and he was shocked the way private businesses invest in grants, train people, send people to where the opportunities are. He has mentioned this to deans for twenty years and the answer is always "it's a good idea, but we don't think we can do that". But if we don't invest, we will continue with only little grants.

Dr. Kreider said we need effective, knowledgeable advocacy, particularly since the perception is that we've been downsized from a college to a school. We're competing with Engineering and all these larger colleges that have different footprints. It's important that our leadership understands the research going on and fully support and advocates for our needs. Otherwise, a lot of PI's feel like they're left on their own, particularly if they've been here a while. They need to be reinvigorated. In order to get these team grants, you need to have senior faculty that are well published and have a lot of funding to help lead that and then mentor the beginning individuals. You're not going to get large team grants by just investing in junior faculty and expecting them to put collaborations together. They need to partner with the senior faculty.

Dr. Ponjuan spoke for the second group:

They discussed more micro-level, while the things the previous group mentioned are more at the macro-level: where we need to create a culture of collaboration that allows junior and senior faculty to engage in meaningful work that allows us to leverage their knowledge capital. The investment that Dr. Kreider was mentioning was how to leverage our knowledge capital in these different silos to really position ourselves for a succession plan of principal investigators.

But we work at the micro level, where we considered the challenges and concerns about what we would consider the brass tacks of starting out from engaging with a program officer to getting the nitty gritty things done. Sometimes it can feel like a labyrinth. We need a taxonomy of all the initials of all the resources we have: SRS, REO, iRIS, and IRB, etc. They get emails saying we want to encourage you to seek external funding. But how do we incentivize the desire to create intellectual entrepreneurs. How do we incentivize faculty who are interested in doing this and not making it so daunting, whether it's creating partnerships with senior faculty, navigating the bureaucracy of what it means to do this. Because at the end of the day, if you don't incentivize this to make it a worthwhile effort, you've got to think about the zero sum game that these folks are going to say "I've got to get publications out, I've got to get my teaching scores up, and now you're asking me to navigate a labyrinth that quite frankly can be rather frustrating to say the least. We need to simplify the message and create a clearer narrative about the way that CPI – our community – can help smooth the track to create the partnerships that Dr. Kreider's talking about, to create the clarify on how to identify not just the offices we need to contact, but how to build the relationships with the individual people in those offices that are going to be critical to the success of submission. Let's not forget Postaward. We focused on how to navigate the bureaucracy.

Ponjuan then added in the chat: "higher education is a loosely-coupled, complex organization that creates a zero sum game for institutional support against 17 very different types of schools and colleges. The higher education research clearly points out that we need to reframe how we create a better ROI argument to central administration."

Dr. Goodrich discussed the challenges brought up by the third group, which consisted of the non-members in attendance:

We are a large university in a relatively small community, and a lot of us are doing work in local school districts or health populations. How can the school develop relationships and partnerships and facilitate communication. They discussed current resources that exist in the school, such as Amy Jurica, but could there be other types of partnerships rather than people having to go to Amy individually to recruit for every project – knowing what district is interested in what type of research so they can target districts better that way?

How can we setup funds to have more space available? Some people do laboratory-based research and they need participants to come to campus and need spaces to store equipment, to run experiments, and we don't have much space. Is there some sort of solution to that? And related to that, how do we update equipment? Should there be funds budgeted for updating old, outdated equipment used for research that is funded using indirect costs that are coming from grants? This would allow us to continuously have cutting-edge equipment available to researchers for use.

Sandra summarizing:

She would like us, by the end of this meeting, to think about how we can focus on at least two of these issues. It seems to her one of the things we're talking about is the mentoring and identification of junior faculty that can participate in some of our collaboration on some of our bigger grants to learn as they go through the process. (macro part)

And the other one seems to be the bigger money issues, which have to do with release time, support from the departments, and some of the challenges going to other departments to receive the money and implement the grant. (micro part)

One possibility on the micro might be having people come from the different departments to the CPI meetings to talk about what they do and maybe walking us through the process or creating a workshop for that purpose.

We've got the information; what do we want to do with it?

Dr. Lara:

He's happy to see us all reacting in a way that it shows we know in what direction we want to move. He suggests the SEHD CPI creates subcommittees to address the different critical issues: some to work with Interdisciplinary, Investing in personnel. We need the college to say we have a set amount of money to do some of these things. He believes we have the human resources, capability, and commitment to carry out those important endeavors.

Dr. Kreider:

It would help for upper administration to send out requests for proposals that involve collaboration between more success faculty with newer faculty who have not yet had success.

Dr. Eslami would like to add to what Dr. Kreider mentioned: we need successful faculty should be encouraged to expand collaboration with other senior faculty that have not been as successful but have resources and intellectual capital to contribute. Consider that bringing new members to already successful teams, it will add capital and they can apply for different types of funding. She'd like to emphasize expanding our horizons and including faculty members that have the capital but have not been involved or successful in grant activities.

Dr. Lara returned to the issue of mentoring. Submitting grants is like a business, and it takes a lot of time and effort. In the end, junior faculty are concerned primarily with what efforts will count toward them getting their tenure. Junior faculty have such trouble getting success in grants after all the work of developing and submitting. This is part of the advocacy of CPI. To change culture, we need to think and act differently.

Ponjuan in the chat: "that is my earlier point....we have different demands on our time and seeking external funding could be viewed as fool's gold."

Acosta: good points. This is the advocacy aspect of CPI.

Acosta: Is there willingness to create two to three working meetings to address some of these and invite working members to these committee meetings? Other PI's outside the CPI can also be invited to be on these committees. They would meet in January and come up with recommendations to create some of the change that Dean de Miranda is talking about. They would report on what they reached when we return for the February meeting.

Kreider: By end of the year, if we can give a list of our recommendations on what our view of the Path Forward needs to be, it will help the dean understand what our needs are.

Acosta: Our view of what the Path Forward is a great focus for presenting these recommendations.

The committees should each decide what their focus is:

1. Interdisciplinary Committee that would be about how to get the information out to junior, mid, and senior faculty, creating those relationships for collaboration. Grants and research together.
2. Investment in relations with federal agencies. The investment is looking from the standpoint of the university investing in the research process, the people that are involved, and certainly, long overdue.

Ponjuan: we've got to think about this through different lenses. There's a macro lens about what we just mentioned, and there's a micro lens of things we considered, and there's also a mezzo lens if we can think about this through an ecological perspective. We operate this world of grant and external funding and internal funding through an ecological perspective. There's macro that requires us to have these communities that are focused on developing research agendas that are collaboratively created and thought out to develop into a fundable research. There's a mezzo that involves the kinds of relationships junior and senior faculty need to have to get into those types of relationships to achieve those macro goals. And then there's the micro – how do you deal with all the different levels of [internal] bureaucracy that we have to try to figure out. And again, it's all of those pieces at once. It's not an either/or; it's all at the same time: the micro, the mezzo, and the macro.

Acosta: give me a name for the committee for that.

Ponjuan: 1) Dr. Kreider mentioned that we need to identify communities that are interested in connecting senior with pre-tenured faculty. Have a committee that develops research communities. "The Development of Research Communities". 2) A committee that focuses on development of what we consider we have to operate not only externally with outside foundations and outside federal governments, we also have to deal with internal, so we need to have a committee on "how to deal with research grant relations within the institution and beyond." How to navigate that. "Internal and External Relations with Funding Communities." You can't do the relationships and building those relationships if we don't also have a committee focused on ways we can develop what we consider critical relationships with foundations and federal government and things of that nature. And I would argue that's it's a really different beast when we talk about getting funding from the federal government than getting funding from a foundation. We haven't really made that distinction yet. I've worked on both sides and the expectations are different across the organizations, and we need to have a committee focused on how we deal with those realities of dealing with very different entities that give money to do research. I think that's the second committee. 3) As Dr. Lara mentioned, we also need to figure out how to navigate the internal bureaucracy and what that looks like. We need to stop creating the lemonade stand model and create something and think people will come buy our lemonade, and we need to start being proactive and draft the

faculty that we believe have potential and say “we’ve identified you as someone that has potential”. I can tell you for one: there are a lot of junior faculty in my department that are potential go-getters but are intimidated by the process. So we need to be more proactive and have a committee that helps identify the talent that can help connect them with senior faculty and help them navigate the bureaucracy of getting the process moving. We are literally in a loosely coupled organization, and we are fighting against colleges and schools that have far more resources than we do, and we need to be more savvy and more niche in how we develop our ability to procure funds. That means we need to be in partnership with those other schools rather than fight against them.

Acosta: we need three committees. Starting from the last one:

- 1) Creating Research Communities. Task: coming together and if Luis decides to be on that community, the task would be coming together
- 2) Investment and Relations with Federal Agencies. Task: investment by the university and maybe not just looking at federal agencies, but some of the private agencies as well.
- 3) Interdisciplinary grants and research Committee. This one’s a little different. We’re looking at a more formalized: what is the university doing to support interdisciplinary collaboration and research committee relations I would see that as looking at the people that are actually in SRS, REO, talking about ways of walking through some of these grants as you’re in the process of applying.

We’ll need to figure out how these committees are different from each other.

We would send these out to the CPI members to see which subcommittees they’d like to serve on. And each subcommittee would decide who their chair would be and define what is it specifically they want to focus on and then report back in February where we are.