



Office of Sponsored Research Services (OSRS) Principal Investigator/Faculty Advisory Committee (PIFAC)

Introduction

The Texas A&M University System Chief Research Officer (CRO) was directed (02/04/11) by the Chancellor and the Board of Regents to develop a shared services research administration entity to enable system members to efficiently and effectively address their growing research enterprises. To that end, the Research Administration Shared Services-Development and Implementation Committee (RASS-DISC) was formed. The RASS-DISC was charged to develop and implement a plan to meld the research administration activities of the Brazos Valley-centric system members (i.e. Texas AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research), Texas AgriLife Extension (AgriLife Extension), Texas A&M University (Texas A&M), Texas A&M Health Science Center (TAMHSC), Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), and the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) into a single research administration entity—the Office of Sponsored Research Services (OSRS). A portion of the research administration for these members is and has been managed by the Texas A&M Research Foundation. It was also envisioned that the research administration function from other system members would to some degree, in the future, be integrated into OSRS as appropriate. The RASS-DISC prepared a final Proposed Plan and Model for OSRS¹.

A key component outlined in the plan for the governance of the OSRS is the Principal Investigator/Faculty Advisory Committee (PIFAC) that would “... *represent the interests/concerns of the system-wide research community in the area of sponsored research administration. They will serve as advisors to the A&M System CRO and to the director of OSRS. The committee will provide feedback to the OSRS, for example, on service levels and best practices. The membership of this committee will be representative of system members participating in the OSRS.*”

Structure of the OSRS PIFAC

The OSRS serves multiple stakeholders of the Texas A&M System. The current major OSRS stakeholders are six system members: AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension, TAMHSC, Texas A&M, TEES, and TTI. Each of these system members will have one representative on the OSRS PIFAC ($n = 6$) who will be appointed by the respective CEO. In the future, additional OSRS stakeholders will include other system members (e.g., other universities and agencies). For the moment, these members will have two representatives to represent the entire group ($n=2$) who will be appointed by the Chancellor or designee. As other system members become more integrally involved in OSRS, PIFAC membership will be expanded to more formally and appropriately represent other system members.

¹This Plan is available at: <http://www.tamus.edu/assets/files/cro/pdf/RASSDISCOSRSPlanModelFinalDraft.pdf>

In addition, the Council of Principal Investigators (CPI), which represents investigators from system members that make up a vast majority of current research funding across the Texas A&M System, and the CRO will both appoint one member to the PIFAC (n = 2). Additional *ex officio*, non-voting members will include the executive director of OSRS, legal counsel, and others as deemed appropriate by the PIFAC and CRO.

Thus, the PIFAC will initially consist of ten voting members—one from each of the above six system members, two representing other system members, one from the CPI, and one appointed by the CRO.

Function of the OSRS PIFAC

The OSRS PIFAC will provide input to the CRO, system member CEOs, and the leadership of OSRS on issues that impact OSRS operations, including, but not restricted to, service levels and best practices. The PIFAC will also address “hot-button” issues as they arise (e.g., recent issues of tuition reimbursement and travel policies). In addition, the PIFAC will participate in the implementation of the Maestro research administration interface and in the integration of research compliance software with Maestro. Activities of the PIFAC will entail regular meetings with the CRO, OSRS leadership, and other A&M System and OSRS personnel as appropriate.

The OSRS PIFAC will maintain a dialogue with relevant system components, including middle management (e.g., department heads), Executive Committees of the CPI, Distinguished Professors, the Faculty Senate, and etc. in order to ensure high quality two-way communication of issues and solutions.

OSRS PIFAC Governance

The PIFAC will be responsible for writing its bylaws with input from major stakeholders and the CRO. These bylaws will define term limits of members, meeting schedules and agendas, and other activities as appropriate. The CRO will appoint the PIFAC Chair.
