

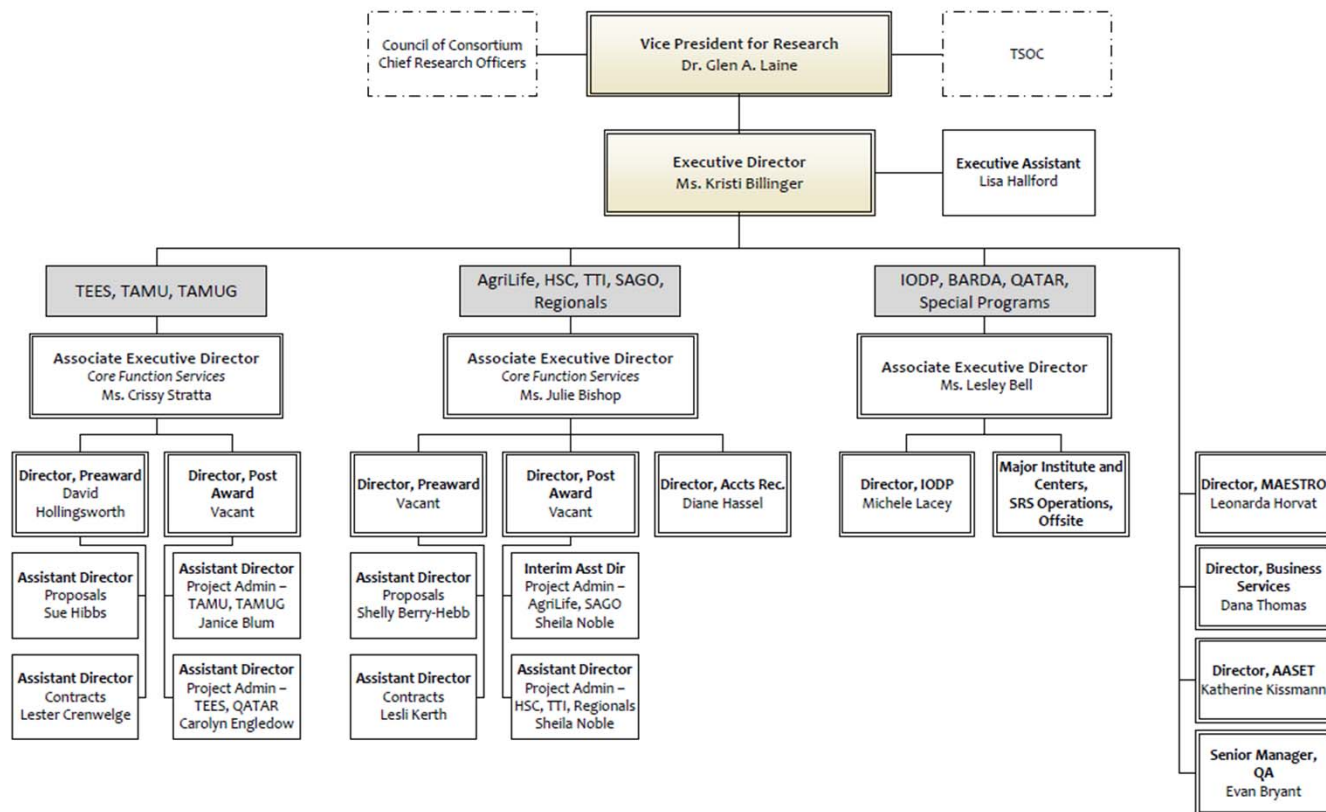
# Sponsored Research Services (SRS)

- SRS Overview
- Pre-Award
  - Proposal Administration
  - Contract Negotiation
- Post-Award Administration
  - Project Management
  - Accounts Receivable
- Hot Topics/SRS Initiatives
- Audit at SRS – Evan Bryant



# SRS Organizational Chart

Sponsored Research Services  
Organizational Structure



# About Sponsored Research Services

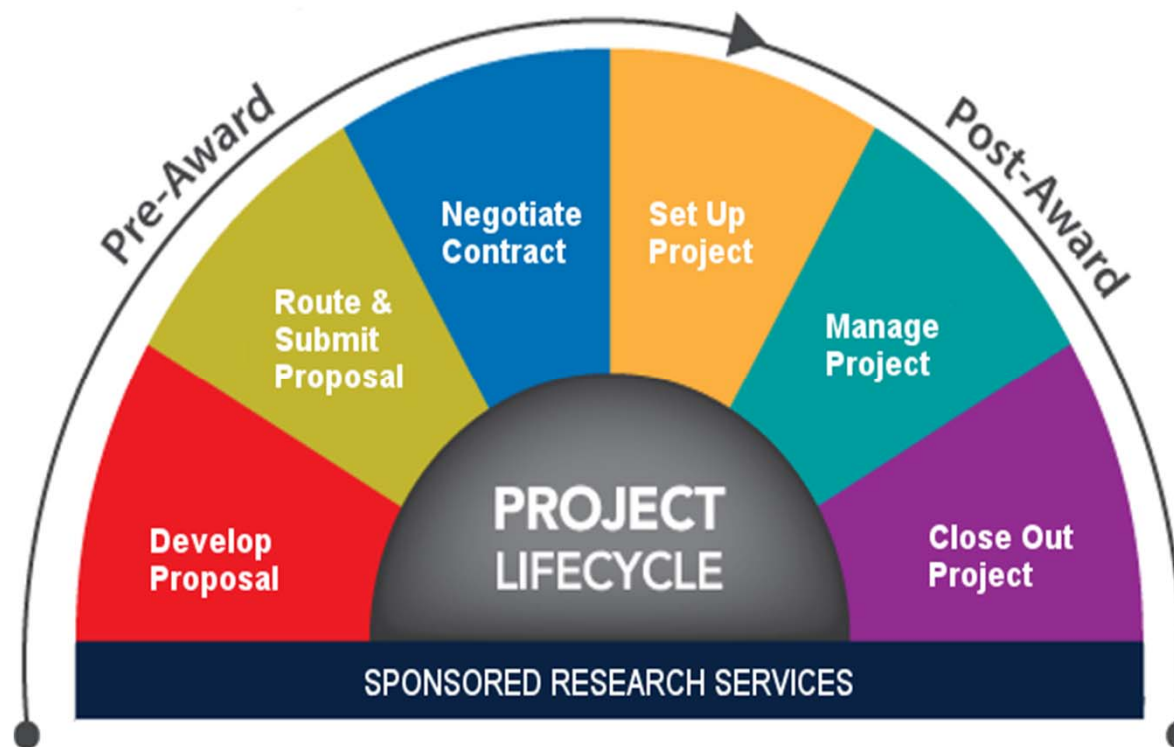
Texas A&M Sponsored Research Services (SRS) is a consortium of The Texas A&M University System members who bring together expertise in research administration to enhance the research mission.

## Our Vision

- Exhibit leadership in research administration
  - Collaborate to develop consistent and efficient procedures
  - Engage in training and professional development
  - Maximize the benefits of technology
- Minimize the administrative burden of the research process
  - Deliver outstanding customer service to our members
  - Improve communication through the research community
  - Promote and maintain transparency to our members in order to foster excellent working relationships



# Life Cycle of a Project



# Pre-Award Proposal Administration



# Pre-Award – Proposals

- Proposal Development
  - Work with faculty (or designee) on budget preparation
  - Complete all administrative information in application package
  - Upload administrative documents required by the sponsor
  - Review proposal for compliance with sponsor's guidelines, RFP, or solicitation as well as AgriLife Policy, SAPs and System Policy
- Proposal Routing
  - SRS routes each proposal for external funding for approval by all investigators, department head or unit director, dean or appropriate vice president, and the AgriLife Administration
- Proposal Submission
  - After thorough quality review, SRS submits proposal per sponsor requirements, AgriLife Policy, SAPs and System Policy



# How can we work together to submit a successful proposal?

- Communicate with the faculty benefits of submitting early (Proposal Submission Guidelines)
- Communicate with faculty the importance of complying with sponsor and agency requirements
- Be aware that during proposal development, SRS Proposal Administrators may contact you (DRA's) for:
  - Cost sharing account numbers
  - Salary Verification
  - Other questions that may arise during the proposal preparation process



# Pre-Award – Contract Negotiations





# Pre-Award – Contract Negotiations

- The role of contract negotiators is to protect the interests of the Texas A&M System while considering the risk or impact of proposed agreement terms on the researcher, students, AgriLife, and sub-recipients. Contract negotiators:
  - Review and negotiate the terms and conditions of agreements to ensure compliance with applicable A&M System policies and applicable local, state and federal regulations
  - Review and address any exceptions included in the Request for Applications at the time of proposal preparation
  - When necessary, negotiators engage the Office of General Counsel, Texas A&M Technology Commercialization, Risk Management, and System member offices to seek approval on agreement terms
- If a sponsored research contract is received at the department it should be sent to SRS ([awards@tamu.edu](mailto:awards@tamu.edu)).



# How can we partner together to complete negotiations in a timely fashion?

## Items required to complete negotiations:

- **Proposal:** A Contract Negotiator (CN) will verify a proposal has been routed and has been approved. If one has not then it will be prepared and routed at negotiations.
- **Terms & Conditions (T&C):** A CN will negotiate T&C if they do not adhere to System Policy. Non-standard T&C may require PI and AgriLife approval.
- **Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI):** Verify FCOI has not changed since the proposal was submitted.
- **Security Compliance:** If specific security requirements are part of the agreement. CN will notify the designated security officer for that system.
- **Animal, Human and Biohazards Compliance:** If applicable an IACUC, IRB or IBC may be needed.



# Post-Award Administration



# Post-Award Management

- Account Establishment
- Determining Available Balances
- Making Changes to Budgets
- Requesting No-Cost Extensions
- Expenditure Compliance
- Cost Share Reporting
- Audit Coordination
- Payroll Compliance
- Subaward Initiation and Monitoring
- Sponsor Billing and Financial Reporting
- Project Closeout



# How can we work together to manage a successful research project?

- Process timely payroll/non-payroll corrections on research accounts
  - This will help in accurate budgeting, billing, timely closeout and avoidance of potential audit findings
- Submission of technical deliverables
  - Assistance with the submission of technical reports to ensure receipt of funding



# How can we work together to manage a successful research project?

- Cost Sharing
  - Assistance with account establishment
  - Timely application of charges as allowed by sponsor guidelines
- Project Communication
  - Communicate with Project Administrator on any sponsor, project progress or staffing changes
- Creating Support Accounts on SRS Accounts
  - Should only be created by SRS



# Post-Award Accounts Receivable

- **Sponsor Billing**
  - Sponsored project invoicing for cost-reimbursement, fixed-price, and fixed rate research projects. The sponsor award document dictates the type and frequency of invoicing
- **Drawdown Accounts**
  - Under the terms of some awards, accounts receivable can draw down funds using the sponsor's electronic payment system
- **Collections**
  - Outstanding invoices are monitored by accounts receivable and, when necessary, stakeholders are engaged regarding aged receivables
- **Financial Reports**
  - Preparation and submission of financial reports required by sponsors



# How can we work together to ensure billing/reporting compliance on a project?

- Process timely payroll/non-payroll corrections on research accounts
- Timely application of cost sharing charges
- Partner with your project administrator to ensure any budget category restrictions are adhered to
- Shortly after the project end date, confirm that all project expenses have posted and clear all encumbrances
- Keep pro-card receipts readily available in order to meet invoice deadlines on projects that require receipts to be included with invoices.
- Review travel receipts after uploading to ensure readability. This will prevent sponsors such as TPW from rejecting expenses due to their inability to read the documentation





# Hot Topics/SRS Initiatives

- ezFedGrants - USDA
- Website Redesign
- Post Award Reorganization
- Set up Team



# USDA ezFedGrants

- The USDA solution that will let you apply for and manage USDA grants and agreements online.
  - Standardized across USDA
  - Single source of input
  - Expedited claim approval
  - Automated work flow process and electronic signatures
- Requires Level 2 authorization access
  - Allows the user to do business with USDA
  - Register for Level 2 access online, receive confirmation email, visit USDA Service Center in person for identity proofing and then GAO will grant permission/access on behalf of Member to ezFed Grants.



# USDA ezFedGrants System

- **Grant Processor (Principal Investigators, Negotiators and Project Administrators)**
  - Search and view funding opportunities
  - Create, edit, and submit applications;
  - Create, edit, and submit performance reports; and
  - Create, edit, and submit financial reports.
- **Signatory Official (Directors and Proposal Administrators)**
  - Search, view, edit and sign applications, agreements, and amendments; and
  - Sign claims and financial and performance reports, if applicable.
- **Grant Administrative Officer (limit 2 per System Member)**
  - Grant Processor functions; and
  - Manage ezFedGrants permissions/access



# SRS Website

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY



SPONSORED RESEARCH SERVICES

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[Proposals](#)

[Contracts](#)

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## My Contact



Please select a system member below.



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[State of Texas](#) · [Texas Veterans Portal](#) · [Risk, Fraud & Misconduct Hotline](#) · [Statewide Search](#) · [State Link Policy](#) · [Open Records](#)  
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Texas A&M University is a member of The Texas A&M University System



# Pre-Award – Proposals

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# Post Award Reorganization

- Recommendation through the CROI and TSOC was to ensure one point of contact for PI's (to be the Project Administrator)
- Initiative was started in September 2015.
- Nearing completion with several business practices being changed and implementation of the “set up team.”





# *ASET* Team

- Priority to establish projects account timely
- Reduce cost transfers and payroll corrections
- Ensure data integrity of award data
- Solution: dedicated team, highly trained to establish projects within 5 days of receipt of award



# Audits at SRS



# Volume of Audit Activity at SRS

## Audits by Sponsor

July 2014 through  
December 2016

CPRIT	55
Federal (A-133)	10
Texas Office of the Governor	5
Texas Access to Justice Foundation	4
Sandia National Labs	3
TCEQ	3
NSF	2
TWC	1
Los Alamos National Lab	1
Univ of North Carolina	1
TCDD	1
US Department of Justice	1
US Department of State	1
GoMRI	1
US Department of Agriculture	1
NASA	1
THECB	1
Grand Total	92



# Volume of Audit Activity at SRS

Audits by Member

July 2014 through  
December 2016

HSC	27
TAMU	20
AgriLife Research	14
TEES	10
AgriLife Extension	9
Research Foundation	5
Various	2
TTI; AgriLife	1
TEES; TAMU	1
AgriLife Extension; TAMU	1
TEES; PVAMU	1
TAMUG	1
Grand Total	92



# Common Areas of Focus

- Costs incurred within the Project Period
- Allowability of Costs
- Participant Eligibility
- Cost Sharing / Matching



# Common Areas of Focus

- Costs incurred within the Project Period
  - Ensure that expenses charged to the sponsored project were incurred prior to the project end date.
  - Stop recurring payments so that they do not post to the account after the project end date (e.g. Telecommunications expense).
  - Process EPAs timely to prevent payroll charges on the account after the end date.
  - Process corrections timely so that project accounts can be closed.
  - Promote awareness of upcoming project end dates among those who use internal service centers (e.g. lab services, lab supplies, print/copy services).



# Common Areas of Focus

- Allowability of Costs
  - Ensure proper approvals are captured during the purchasing and accounts payable process.
  - Retain supporting documentation for procurement card purchases.



# Common Areas of Focus

- Participant Eligibility
  - If you assist in screening potential project participants, ensure the eligibility requirements are clear and are being met. Confirm eligibility requirements with the sponsor if necessary.





# Common Areas of Focus

- Cost Sharing / Matching
  - We must ensure cost sharing commitments are being met. Payroll costs are a common element of cost sharing so management of payroll allocation is often key.



# Potential Impact to AgriLife

- Loss of funding
- Fines and Penalties
- Damage to the University's Reputation
- Susceptibility to False Claims Allegations



# Questions??

