"Bringing research development support for The Texas A&M University System members to support the research enterprise across the System."

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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Issue 50

April 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

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Spring 2026 Chief Research Officers Meeting at Texas A&M University–Kingsville

From the Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute to the Javelina Engineering Academies, **The Texas A&M University System** Chief Research Officers (CROs) engaged with a wide range of research and workforce development initiatives during the Spring Meeting hosted by **Texas A&M University–Kingsville**. Convened twice annually, the CRO meetings serve as a key mechanism for strengthening collaboration across the Texas A&M System's 12 research universities and eight state agencies, with a focus on aligning priorities, sharing best practices, and identifying opportunities to expand research impact.

The meetings featured a presentation from TAMUK Vice President for Research and Innovation, **Dr. Jose Espiritu**, highlighting the university's research portfolio and strategic priorities. The agenda also included engagement with college and center leadership, including **Dr. Shad Nelson, Dr. Heidi Taboada,** and **Dr. Elada Sanchez**. A reception and dinner at the Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute provided additional

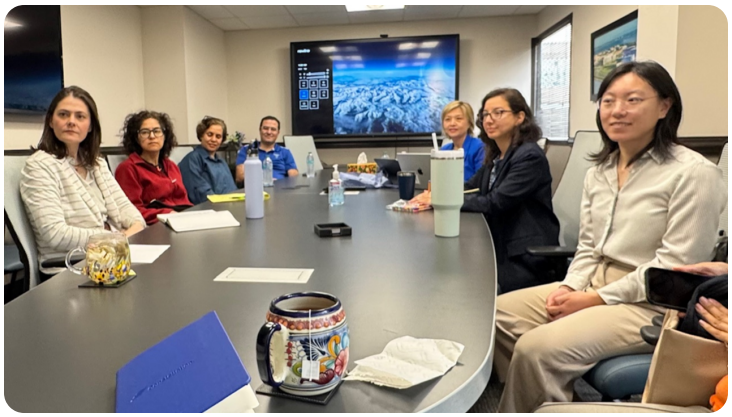
opportunities for discussion and relationship-building, reinforcing the System's commitment to collaborative research advancement.

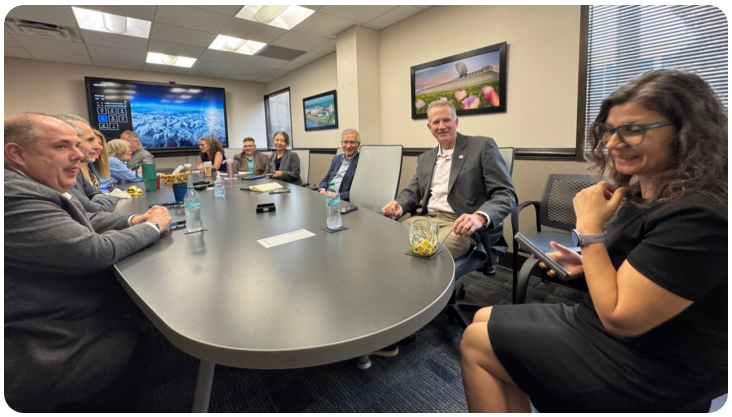
The Texas A&M University System

TAMUS Research Development Visits TAMUCC and TAMUK

Dr. Sharmila Pathikonda, Associate Vice Chancellor and Director of Research Development for **The Texas A&M University System**, met with early-career faculty and institutional leadership at both **Texas A&M University–Kingsville** and **Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi**. These engagements provided an opportunity to discuss research priorities, identify emerging areas of strength, and understand the needs of faculty at different stages of their careers.

The Research Development Office supports these efforts by delivering proactive and responsive services designed to strengthen research competitiveness and foster collaboration across System members. Through targeted programming, strategic guidance, and facilitation of partnerships, the office plays a key role in advancing a cohesive and impactful research enterprise across The Texas A&M University System.





The Texas A&M University System

Growing the Future of Meat Science

Texas A&M University System is making a significant, coordinated push to strengthen its leadership in animal agriculture through major infrastructure investments and strategic decisions. The Board of Regents approved a $133 million meat science center designed to enhance research capacity, student training, and industry engagement, while also affirming that the facility will remain on the main campus to maximize accessibility, collaboration, and impact across academic programs.

In parallel, **Texas A&M AgriLife** continues to expand its footprint in poultry science with the naming of a new farm complex in honor of longtime supporters Barbara J. and William M. “Bill” Huffman. Together, these developments reflect a broader commitment to modernizing facilities, strengthening workforce pipelines, and reinforcing Texas A&M’s role as a national leader in meat and poultry production, research, and extension.

East Texas A&M University

The Texas A&M University System’s Research Excellence Fund Award

East Texas A&M University has been awarded a competitive Research Excellence Fund (REF) Graduate Fellowship grant from the Texas A&M University System to support doctoral students in its Experimental Psychology Ph.D. program.

The funding provides **$381,580** for the 2026–27 academic year, with the opportunity for renewal for up to four additional years. The grant will fund 10 new doctoral fellows, covering in-state tuition and fees, competitive stipends, and specialized research training opportunities.

The fellowships are designed to help grow the university's only STEM doctoral program while strengthening research output and student support. Fellows will also participate in summer workshops at Texas A&M University in College Station, where they will receive hands-on training in advanced research technologies such as functional MRI, EEG and eye-tracking.

Texas A&M University

Building Collaboration and Knowledge in Semiconductor Research

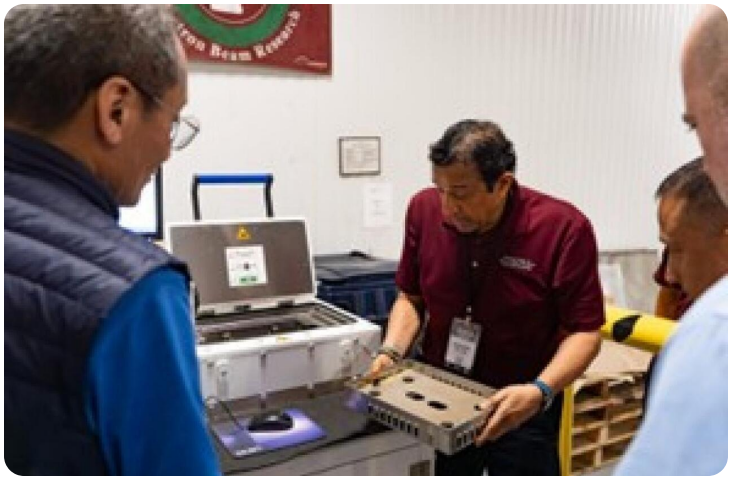
Drs. Derek Murphy Jr., Matthew Baca, Taylor Gurley, Mahjabin Chowdhury, and Clint Patterson of **Texas A&M University** have published an article *Building Collaboration and Knowledge in Semiconductor Research: A Case Study on CHIPS & Science Act Workshops* in the *Journal of Technology Studies*. The paper examines how targeted workshops, supported by the CHIPS and Science Act, can accelerate collaboration across academia, industry, and government in the semiconductor space. Through this case study, the authors highlight how structured engagement opportunities help participants better understand funding landscapes, align research priorities, and build meaningful partnerships.

This work demonstrates the value of convening interdisciplinary stakeholders to strengthen research ecosystems and advance national priorities in semiconductor innovation. The authors suggest that similar workshop models could be scaled or adapted for use in other emerging technology areas, with future efforts focusing on measuring long-term collaboration outcomes, expanding participation, and refining strategies to sustain momentum beyond initial engagement.

Texas A&M AgriLife Research

NNSA and Texas A&M Work Together to Strengthen U.S. Environmental Security

Dr. Suresh Pillai and the team at **Texas A&M AgriLife Research** are collaborating with the NNSA's Office of Radiological Security to advance electron beam (eBeam) technology for environmental applications. Their work focuses on providing a safer, non-radioactive alternative to high-activity radioactive materials, such as cobalt-60, which have traditionally been used to treat sewage sludge and break down toxic chemicals. By leveraging eBeam technology, the team not only mitigates public health and security risks associated with radioactive sources but also expands the potential for more efficient, scalable, and sustainable environmental treatment solutions.



The partnership also focuses on degrading harmful substances like PFAS ("forever chemicals") using eBeam technology, protecting water, soil, and communities. By promoting safer treatment methods and reducing reliance on radioactive sources, this research strengthens national security, supports sustainable environmental practices, and lays the groundwork for future innovation in critical environmental and radiological technologies.

Around the System: Headline News

Texas A&M's new Fort Worth campus opens this fall

The downtown campus, which broke ground in 2023, is opening its first building and starting classes this fall. The campus will house degree-granting programs from **Texas A&M University** and **Tarleton State University**. **Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's** Center for Advanced Aviation Technologies will have a research presence, and six state agencies will be on campus as well.

Dome: World's First Nuclear Reactor Test Bed Ready For Privately Developed Advanced Reactors

Idaho National Laboratory has completed the DOME test bed, providing a dedicated facility for the demonstration and testing of privately developed advanced nuclear reactors. The capability is expected to accelerate reactor development timelines and strengthen public-private collaboration in next-generation nuclear energy.

LeWayne Ballard Creates First Alumni-Endowed Scholarship at A&M–San Antonio

LeWayne Ballard recently made history as the first **Texas A&M University–San Antonio** alumnus to establish an endowed scholarship. Ballard's story demonstrates that the impact of A&M–San Antonio alumni extends beyond economic numbers. Through his generosity, he is helping expand opportunities for future students and strengthening the community.

Texas A&M Researchers Utilize AI to Forecast Air Pollution

Dr. Qingsheng Wang, Professor of Chemical Engineering at the **Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station,** and his team are utilizing the power of artificial intelligence to investigate the relationship between natural hazards and unplanned chemical emissions, aiming to help researchers and policymakers predict and potentially prevent future pollution.

Insights into the MUI-QC Program at Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University hosted the inaugural meeting of the Manufacturing University Initiative for Qualification & Certification (MUI-QC) program. This event marked the official kickoff for students in the program, led by **Dr. Pablo Tarazaga,** a mechanical engineering professor at Texas A&M and project lead, along with TJ Ulrich, Director of University Research & Relations at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

THECB Gives Approval for New Degree in Maritime Operations at Texas A&M Galveston Campus

On March 19, **Texas A&M University at Galveston** received notification that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) had approved the establishment of a new degree program, leading to a Bachelor of Science in Maritime Operations (B.S. MARO). The move by THECB follows the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents' approval of the degree in February.

Texas A&M University–Victoria Cybersecurity program receives affordability ranking

Texas A&M University-Victoria's undergraduate cybersecurity program was recently included in a list of the most affordable programs in the nation. In addition to considering the programs' affordability, the ranking also included programs that feature Center of Academic Excellence designations in cybersecurity, curriculum alignment with industry certifications, state-of-the-art facilities, and excellent online learning options.

East Texas A&M Robotics Team Builds Success Through Skill and Teamwork

The **East Texas A&M University** robotics team, known as Lion Pride Robotics, is quickly establishing itself as one of the top programs in the state and beyond. Currently ranked number one in Texas, the team has compiled an impressive record over the past two seasons, earning a place among the top competitors nationally and globally. Most recently, the team secured a tournament championship at the VEX Robotics competition in Houston. Now, they are headed for the World Championship in St. Louis, Missouri, from April 21 through 30, to take on the highest level of collegiate competition in the VEX U division.

Anonymous Gifts Establish Horn Professorship, Scholarship in WT's School of Music

Gifts from a group of anonymous donors have secured lasting support for the horn studio in **West Texas A&M University's** School of Music. **Dr. Guglielmo Manfredi**, who has taught at WT since 2009, was named the WT Horn Studio Professor thanks to the gift.

Military Talent Pipeline to Include Business Development Center

Texas A&M University–Central Texas is marching toward the start date to open the Military Talent Pipeline (MTP). The initiative is designed to expand the Texas workforce by assisting military-affiliated personnel and their families with training and credentialing in skilled professions. Additionally, the university plans to partner with the City of Killeen to establish an advanced manufacturing facility for small business development.

Prairie View A&M University raises $1.1 million in student scholarships

Prairie View A&M University held its 2026 Presidential Scholarship Gala, and the event raised nearly $1.1 million in support of student scholarships. The event brought together community leaders, donors, and students for an evening centered on opportunity and access.

New Detonation Research Test Facility opens at RELLIS

Texas A&M University recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the new Detonation Research Test Facility at the RELLIS campus.

Strengthening the Gulf Coast's Competitiveness in Energy and Chemicals

The Houston Energy Transition Initiative (HETI) convened national laboratories, Gulf Coast universities, and industry leaders to assess strategies for strengthening the region's competitiveness in energy and chemicals. The workshop highlighted the Gulf Coast's unmatched concentration of refining, petrochemical production, pipelines, and technical talent, while identifying vulnerabilities in supply chains, gaps between research and commercialization, and opportunities for AI and modeling tools to accelerate innovation.

TAMUT introduces new dean for College of Business, Engineering and Technology

Texas A&M University–Texarkana has appointed Dr. Kris Maillacheruvu as the University's inaugural Dean of the new College of Engineering and Computing, bringing experience aimed at advancing academic programs and research initiatives. The new dean commented that the University's mission statement of creating "transformative experiences that foster personal and professional growth for lifelong learning through student-centered teaching, innovative research, and selfless service," fits well with his own philosophy.

Around the System: Funding Success

Dr. Chad Rethorst, Associate Professor at **Texas A&M AgriLife**, has received a $1 million grant for his work on cardiovascular disease prevention from the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA-NIFA. Rethorst's team will utilize a custom digital app to provide nutrition and active living education to 240 women from Texas to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Ram Ray, Professor in the College of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources at **Prairie View A&M University,** has secured a nearly $600,000 grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to support the training of the next generation of students prepared for careers in agricultural trade.

Dr. Emilie Baker, assistant professor of animal science in the Department of Agricultural Sciences in **WT's Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences**, won a $595,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Baker, a geneticist, will study the molecular makeup of

tissues surrounding liver abscesses to see if the rest of the liver is functioning normally and how much of the organ is affected beyond the abscess.

East Texas A&M University has received $371,500 from The Texas A&M University System's Research Excellence Fund to support doctoral fellowships for graduate students. The funding will provide financial support to attract and retain high-caliber doctoral candidates in the field of Applied Psychology.

Dr. Tesfamichael Kebrom, a research scientist in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources at **Prairie View A&M University**, has been awarded a $300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This research highlights a broader concept: understanding how plants grow – down to their smallest branches – can have a significant impact on the future of agriculture, sustainability, and food security.

Dr. Heungman Park, Associate Professor in the Department of Physics & Astronomy at **East Texas A&M University**, received a $300,000 grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for Investigating Protective Transparent Flexible Films for Organic Semiconductor Optoelectronic Devices in the Martian Atmospheric Environment.

State Farm has awarded a grant to the Youth Transportation Safety (YTS) program, part of the **Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI),** strengthening ongoing efforts to reduce crashes and improve safety outcomes among young drivers nationwide.

Texas A&M University-Texarkana, Texarkana College, and Red River Army Depot (RRAD) will share in a $5 million Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance grant from the Texas Military Preparedness Commission that will fund a project to enhance the U.S. Military's Unmanned Aircraft System. The $5 million grant was awarded to the Ark-Tex Council of Governments, which will oversee the distribution of the grants to the three participating organizations in the project.

Around the System: Honors

Nancy A. Welsh, Frank W. Elliott, Jr. University Professor of Law and Director of the Aggie Dispute Resolution Program (ADRP) at **Texas A&M University School of Law,** has been honored with the 2026 Award for Outstanding Scholarly Work by the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution.

Dr. Todd Baughman, Director of the **Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Lubbock**, received a major weed control science award recognizing his contributions to research, education, and outreach in weed science. The honor highlights his decades of work advancing agricultural practices, mentoring students, and supporting producers through research-based extension programs.

West Texas A&M University's print shop earned national recognition in a competitive industry contest, winning multiple awards for excellence in printing and design. The honors highlight the team's high-quality production work and growing reputation on a national stage.

Dr. Evan P. Tanner, Assistant Professor and Meadows Professor of Semi-arid Land Ecology with Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI) at **Texas A&M University–Kingsville,** received the Outstanding Young Professional Award from the Society for Range Management for his outstanding performance and demonstrated promise as a range management professional.

Dr. Danny White, Marine Corps Corporal and Vice Provost for the Student Success Center at **Texas A&M University–Victoria**, is being recognized as 25 News Now's Military Hero of the Month.

Dr. James Finley, Associate Professor of Language, Literature, and Arts at **Texas A&M University–San Antonio,** was recently featured in a new **PBS documentary** about 19th-century author Henry David Thoreau.

Dr. Alexei Sokolov, University Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy at **Texas A&M University, College Station,** was recently honored with the distinction of 2025 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Around the System: Research Highlights

Dr. Billy Quarles, Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy at **East Texas A&M University,** was recently featured in an interview on the YouTube channel of the American Astronomical Society (AAS), where he spoke about his research on the long-term stability of large moons orbiting planets outside our solar system.

Dr. Sarah Hu, Assistant Professor of Oceanography at **Texas A&M University, College Station,** received a Community Science Program New Investigator Award from the Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute (JGI), supporting research that explores how communities of microbes break down organic matter as freshwater from the Mississippi River enters the Gulf of Mexico.

Dr. Natalie Johnson, Associate Professor and Chair of Toxicology at the **Texas A&M School of Public Health**, led a first-of-its-kind study to understand how these plastics are affected by time and weather when they degrade outdoors, and what those changes mean for human health. The findings, published in *Chemical Research in Toxicology*, show that exposure to weather and the environment changes nanoparticles' shape and surface chemistry over time, causing more oxidative stress and inflammation in lung cells than fresh, unaged particles.

Dr. Scott Socolofsky, professor at **Texas A&M University**, and colleagues have developed a new method that uses drones and wave motion data to more accurately measure ocean currents. This approach offers a cost-effective and flexible alternative to traditional techniques, with potential to improve ocean monitoring, climate research, and maritime operations.

Dr. Jeffery Tomberlin, a professor at **AgriLife Research**, is leading a multidisciplinary project using black soldier fly larvae, robotics, sensors, and AI to rehabilitate extreme environments. The larvae can recycle organic waste, produce protein and fertilizer, and remove toxic substances from contaminated soil, while autonomous systems minimize human labor in hazardous conditions.

Dr. Seyed Mohammad Davachi, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at **Texas A&M International University,** recently joined a team of international researchers to research zinc-containing biomaterials for bone repair. Their findings, published in Biomaterials, show the promise of these materials as therapeutic and regenerative agents with strong potential to treat bone-related diseases and induce regeneration in the near future.

Researchers at **Texas A&M University** are contributing to ongoing space exploration efforts through collaborative research supporting mission technologies and scientific discovery. The work highlights the university's role in advancing aerospace research and partnerships with national space initiatives.

RURAL RESILIENCE

Texas Rural Education Collaborative (TREC)

The Texas Rural Education Collaborative (TREC) is a new initiative of The Texas A&M University System designed to strengthen the college-going pipeline for students in rural communities across Texas. TREC reflects our commitment to Place-Based Partnerships connecting universities, schools, communities, and regions around shared goals.

Rising Together: A Framework for Resilience Through Empathy and Shared Purpose

Dr. Subi Gandhi, Professor of Public Health and Co-director of the Center for Rural Resilience at **Tarleton State University**, will be speaking on "Rising Together: A Framework for Resilience Through Empathy and Shared

Purpose," part of Tarleton State University's Last Lecture Series, at 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 21, in the Clyde H. Wells Fine Arts Center on the Stephenville campus.

Equipping Rural Texans With Health Care Through Aggie Collaboration

A cross-campus effort at **Texas A&M University** is expanding access to health care in rural communities by combining expertise, training, and outreach. Through collaboration among multiple programs, the initiative equips providers, supports local clinics, and helps address persistent care shortages across rural Texas.

Texas A&M AgriLife celebrates new home for High Plains Research and Extension Center

Texas A&M AgriLife held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Texas A&M AgriLife High Plains Research and Extension Center, a state-of-the-art facility that combines research and education outreach for the greater Texas High Plains region.

Texas A&M AgriLife Fills Critical Need for Pond Diagnostics

When water quality declines, fish fall ill, or harmful algal toxins emerge, landowners turn to the **Texas A&M AgriLife Aquatic Diagnostics Laboratory** for specialized diagnostic expertise. The state's only public laboratory for private pond and aquaculture diagnostics, the lab offers more than 80 test options and services supporting fisheries and aquaculture, water quality, parasitology, and bacterial histopathology.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

For details and complete and comprehensive monthly updates - please check the funding list - updated every week.

Funding Opportunity List

The Texas A&M University System Research Excellence Fund

The Research Excellence Fund (REF) is a Texas A&M University System–wide, competitive, merit-based funding program designed to strengthen research capacity, foster collaboration among System members, and enhance competitiveness for major external funding.

REF FAQ

NSF - TechAccess: AI-Ready America

AI-Ready America is a national-scale initiative by the NSF to accelerate Artificial Intelligence (AI) readiness and adoption across the U.S. so all Americans can participate in and benefit from emerging AI opportunities. Central to this vision is a strategic approach that focuses on strengthening coordination around AI readiness at local, state, and national levels; leveraging existing networks and resources to accelerate AI adoption; and identifying and addressing gaps to advance AI readiness, i.e., the ability to understand, apply, and create with AI.

This RFP focuses on Coordination Hubs, which will serve as the center of state/territory-wide coordination to accelerate AI readiness and deployment. Each Coordination Hub Award will receive $1M for 3 years. **This funding opportunity is a Limited Submission Opportunity**. Please check with your university's Proposal Administrator if you are interested in applying.

NSF - CyberAICorps Scholarship for Service (CyberAI SFS)—Innovation Track

This funding opportunity by the NSF supports projects that enhance the preparation of AI and/or cybersecurity professionals. Projects may expand existing educational opportunities, curricula, degree programs, educational pathways, methods and interventions, and partnerships among institutions of higher education, government, and employers. Proposals in this track should expand existing education or training opportunities and resources.

Schmidt Sciences: Science of Trustworthy AI

The Science of Trustworthy AI program supports technical research that improves our ability to understand, predict, and control risks from frontier AI systems while enabling their trustworthy deployment. Project awards range from $ 1M to $5M (with 10% cap on IDC). This research agenda has three connected aims:

- Characterize and forecast misalignment in frontier AI systems: Understand why frontier AI training-and-deployment safety stacks still result in models learning effective goals that fail under distribution shift, pressure, or extended interaction;
- Develop generalizable measurements and interventions: Advance the science of evaluations with decision-relevant constructs and predictive validity, and develop interventions that control what AI systems learn (not just what they say); and
- Oversee AI systems with superhuman capabilities and address multi-agent risks: develop oversight and control methods for settings where direct human evaluation of correctness or safety isn't feasible, and address risks that emerge from interacting AI systems.

NSF - Multiple NSF Directorates Invite Research Security-Related Proposals

Multiple NSF directorates invite research security-related proposals that will help foster stronger research security-related practices throughout the community. It is appropriate for those involved in research security policy, implementation, administration, and research itself. The following NSF programs will participate:

- Research on Research Security
- Growing Research Access for Nationally Transformative Economic Development
- Law & Science
- Security and Preparedness
- Security, Privacy, and Trust in Cyberspace
- Science of Science: Discovery, Communication and Impact
- Cybersecurity Innovation for Cyberinfrastructure

To learn more, register for either of the webinars below. Both webinars will be live with identical content.

Thursday, April 2, 2026, at 3-4:30 p.m. EDT. Registration link

Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at 4-5:30 p.m. EDT. Registration link

DOE - Speed to Power through Accelerated Reconductoring and other Key Advanced Transmission Technology Up…

SPARK is an opportunity from the Department of Energy to meet load growth and address critical national, interregional, and regional needs through awards of approximately $10M – $50M. Projects submitted under this NOFO must demonstrate measurable improvements in electric grid capacity and system value (usefulness), combining physical capacity gains, which include solutions such as reconductoring or other infrastructure upgrades, with operational efficiency and/or flexibility from other Advanced Transmission Technologies (ATTs).

This funding opportunity is a Limited Submission Opportunity. An entity may submit only one concept paper and one associated application **for each topic area** of this NOFO. Please check with your university's Proposal Administrator if you are interested in applying.

DOE - Consortium For Nuclear Forensics

The primary purpose of this opportunity is to direct-fund basic research at universities that complement applied research in nuclear forensics at the DOE National Laboratories. This includes foundational disciplines of radiochemistry; geochemistry; shock physics; nuclear physics, science and engineering; radiation detector science; nuclear material science engineering; nuclear chemical engineering; modeling, simulation and optimization methods for nuclear applications; and seismology and infrasound methods supporting yield determination. The award will be incrementally funded in 5 tranches, approximately $5 million per year.

FAA - Aviation Research Grants Program

The FAA Aviation Research Grants Program encourages and supports innovative, advanced research of potential benefit to the long-term growth of civil aviation and commercial space transportation. The FAA encourages the submission of proposals that embrace the entire spectrum of physical, chemical, biological, medical, psychological, mathematical, and engineering sciences. A whitepaper, though not required, is recommended. Awards under this program have a $5M max.

CPRIT

CPRIT offers several funding opportunities for promising cancer research, product development, and prevention programs. All funding opportunities are announced through formal Requests for Applications (RFAs), and applications must be submitted through the online application receipt system. Please reach out to your Proposal Administrators, as some awards may have limited submission.

ARPA-H Launches $144 Million Program to Combat Toxic Microplastics in the Human Body

The Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) has announced a $144 million program to address the health impacts of microplastics in the human body through innovative research and technology development. The initiative will fund multidisciplinary teams to detect, quantify, and mitigate microplastic exposure and its potential effects on human health.

DOE Announces $500 Million to Strengthen Domestic Critical Materials Supply Chains

The U.S. Department of Energy has announced a $500 million funding opportunity to support research, development, and demonstration projects that strengthen domestic supply chains for critical minerals and materials used in energy technologies and advanced manufacturing. Universities, national laboratories, and industry partners are encouraged to apply for projects addressing areas such as materials extraction, processing, recycling, and substitution to advance U.S. capabilities in critical materials.

EVENTS

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The 20th ASCE ASD Biennial International Conference on Engineering, Science, Construction and Operations in Challenging Environments, Earth & Space

Date: April 13-16, 2026
Location: Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center

Website

TEES Annual Research Conference (TARC)

Date: May 19-20, 2026
Location: Zachry Engineering Education Complex

Website

RESOURCES

The Texas A&M University System **Research Development website** features federal agency resources to support System researchers with checklists, outlines, templates, graphic and design concepts, and other information for NSF, NIH, USDA, DOE, DOD, and NASA. We continually add new resources to support specific research opportunities.

RDO Website

Sponsored Research Services (SRS) strongly encourages all individuals on federal awards—regardless of sponsor—to complete Research Security Training as soon as possible to avoid disruptions and stay ahead of federal requirements. Training can be accessed via TrainTraq, Course 2114875 "Research Security Training."

While many researchers are already familiar with the federal requirements for research security training at the proposal stage (pre-award), **NSF has implemented an additional requirement**:

NSF now requires PIs, Co-PIs,Co-Is, and all key personnel to complete approved Research Security Training BEFORE any post-award action can be submitted on the project.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- No-Cost Extensions
- Budget Revisions
- Key Personnel Changes
- Subaward Requests

If this training is not completed, SRS **CANNOT process or submit your post-award action in Research.gov**. NSF now requires that the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) officially certify, at the time of post-award submission, that all senior personnel have completed the required research security training. If the

training is not complete, SRS cannot provide this certification and therefore cannot submit your request. This new requirement is the result of NSF's expanded efforts to comply with federal research security mandates.

Why Is This Important?

These requirements now apply not only at proposal submission but throughout the entire project lifecycle, including post-award modifications.

If the training is not complete for all relevant project personnel, SRS cannot submit your request, which could cause significant delays in project management, critical award changes, and potential loss of funding if the window for a no cost extension is missed.

Existing Requirements (NIH and Other Agencies)

NIH: NIH mandates full compliance with disclosure of foreign affiliations and support both at proposal (JIT) and in annual progress reporting (RPPRs); training mandates are anticipated but not yet formalized for all NIH awards.

Other Agencies (DOE, DOD, USDA, etc.): Disclosure requirements and research security policies are expanding. Formal training mandates are expected in the coming months, and SRS will keep you informed.

What Do You Need to Do?

NSF-funded faculty and all key personnel must have completed Research Security Training both for proposal submissions AND now before requesting any post-award action.

Continue to comply with NIH and other agency disclosure requirements.

Maintain documentation of completed training for submission to SRS

SRS will monitor compliance and cannot process or submit actions unless training certificates are documented. *Save your training certificate/documentation for SRS. SRS cannot see completed training in TrainTraq.*

Next Steps:

Immediately confirm the training status of yourself and all key personnel on your NSF projects.

Complete Research Security Training if not already done so. Found here via TrainTraq: **Research Security Training Course #2114875: https://traintraq.tamus.edu/CourseDetails.aspx?cnum=2114875**

SPONSOR NEWS

Department of Energy

The Genesis Mission Consortium, led by the U.S. Department of Energy and administered by RTI International, unites national laboratories, academic institutions, and private-sector partners to accelerate scientific discovery using AI. The consortium focuses on critical areas including energy, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, materials science, nuclear energy, quantum information, and semiconductors, leveraging shared computing resources, data, and expertise to drive rapid innovation.

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

Synchronizing time in modern warfare – often down to billionths of a second – is critical for mission success. The Robust Optical Clock Network (ROCkN) program enables precision timekeeping, even in contested and/or GPS-denied environments, creating the opportunity for unprecedented endurance and coordination for warfighters around the world.

National Science Foundation

A major reorganization at the **National Science Foundation (NSF)** involving a restructured internal organization, questions about abolished divisions, workforce changes, and ongoing debate among scientists has drawn significant attention from the research community; see **https://www.science.org/content/article/national-science-foundation-just-had-big-reorganization-here-are-five-things-know** for the full explanation.

NSF Supplement 1 to PAPPG 24-1

Applies to all financial assistance awarded on or after Dec. 8, 2025.

NSF Supplement 2 to PAPPG 24-1

Applies to all financial assistance awarded on or after Jan. 22, 2026.

Updated Merit Review Process

NSF uses a merit review process in which expert reviewers evaluate all proposals based on the National Science Board-approved criteria of *intellectual merit* and *broader impacts* to help guide funding decisions and ensure that NSF supports high-quality research with societal value.

National Institutes of Health

NIH's Path to a Simpler Funding Opportunity Landscape

NIH is streamlining the landscape for Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs, or funding opportunities) and the application process. We are placing greater emphasis on investigator-initiated science rather than asking researchers to align their work with highly specific funding opportunities.

NIH Seeks Input on Framework for Next NIH-Wide Strategic Plan

NIH is seeking public input on a framework for the NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2027–2031 through a newly issued request for information (RFI). This RFI provides an opportunity for the extramural research community to help inform NIH's highest-level priorities and goals for the next five years.

Feedback Sought on NIH Draft Resources to Support Participants in Implantable Device Trials

We seek your input on two resources aimed at supporting participants in NIH-funded implantable device clinical trials. Comments on this Request for Information are voluntary and should be submitted electronically until May 25, 2026.

Chief Research Officers

Dr. Angela K. Wilson
Texas A&M University

akwilson@tamu.edu

Dr. Pete van Hengstum
Texas A&M University at Galveston

vanhenp@tamug.edu

Dr. Magesh Rajan
Prairie View A&M University

mtrajan@pvamu.edu
936.261.1585

Dr. Rupa Iyer
Tarleton State University

iyer@tarleton.edu
254.459.5449

Dr. Ruby A. Ynalvez
Texas A&M International University

rynalvez@tamiu.edu
956.326.2643

Dr. Ahmed Mahdy
Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi

Ahmed.Mahdy@tamucc.edu
361.825.3881

Dr. Jose F. Espiritu
Texas A&M University-Kingsville

jose.espiritu@tamuk.edu
361.593.3677

Dr. Angela Spaulding
West Texas A&M University

aspaulding@wtamu.edu
806.651.2731

Dr. Brent Donham
East Texas A&M University

Brent.Donham@etamu.edu
903.886.5964

Dr. Sushil Sharma
Texas A&M University–Texarkana

ssharma@tamut.edu
903.334.6778

Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahman
Texas A&M University–San Antonio

mabdelrahma@tamusa.edu
210.784.1215

Dr. Jeff Kirk
Texas A&M University–Central Texas

Jeff.kirk@tamuct.edu
254.519.5427

Dr. Joann S. Olsen
Texas A&M University–Victoria

OlsonJ@uhv.edu
361.570.4214

Dr. Amir Ibrahim
Texas A&M AgriLife Research

Amir.Ibrahim@ag.tamu.edu
979.321.5929

Dr. Rodney Bowersox
Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station

bowersox@tamu.edu
979.845.0139

Dr. Dan Hale
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Daniel.hale@ag.tamu.edu
979.314.8206

Dr. Aaron Stottlemyer
Texas A&M Forest Service

astottlemyer@tfs.tamu.edu
979.458.6659

Gordon Lohmeyer, CFPS / PI
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service

Gordon.Lohmeyer@teex.tamu.edu

Dr. Joe Zietsman
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

J-Zietsman@tti.tamu.edu
979.317.2796

Dr. Kiril M. Dimitrov
Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory

Kiril.dimitrov@tvmdl.tamu.edu
979.458.7891

Dr. Michael W. Hull
Texas Division of Emergency Management

Michael.Hull@tdem.texas.gov
325.370.5651

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CONTACT US

researchdevelopment@tamus.edu

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