Research at UTSA

Vice President for Research

The Office of the Vice President for Research (http://research.utsa.edu/texas-university-research) supports the research community by facilitating growth, enabling productivity, and pursuing excellence. The UTSA Research Office comprises the Vice President’s office, which includes the central finance and communications functions, and four subunits: Sponsored Project Administration (OSPA), Research Support (ORS), Research Integrity (ORI), and Commercialization and Innovation (OCI). The VPR serves as the Institutional Official for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Committee on the Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Office of Sponsored Project Administration

The Office of Sponsored Project Administration (http://research.utsa.edu/texas-university-research/utsa-research/research-grants) (OSPA) promotes, supports, and administers sponsored program awards and provides the highest quality pre- and post-award services in generating and administering external awards in the pursuit of research, scholarly activities and public service. OSPA ensures that the administration of sponsored programs from proposal submission to award close-out is consistent with applicable laws, regulations and policies. OSPA operates six Research Service Centers (RSCs), the Grants and Contracts Financial Services (GCFS) unit, and the Contracts and Industry Agreements (CIA) unit.

Research Service Centers (RSC) are designed to provide direct service to faculty and staff in all areas of research administration. The six RSCs are in the following areas: Engineering; Sciences; Liberal and Fine Arts, Business and Honors College; Education; Institute for Economic Development; and UTSA’s Downtown Campus.

The Grants and Contracts Financial Services (GCFS) unit is in charge of post-award operations including account set-up, account management, invoicing, financial reporting, and close-outs.

The Contracts and Industry Agreements (CIA) unit facilitates and supports UTSA’s sponsored projects and research enterprise by drafting, negotiating, and executing a variety of contracts and agreements, such as Sponsored Research Agreements, Service Agreements, Material Transfer Agreements (MTA), Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA), Confidential Disclosure Agreements, Proprietary Information Exchange Agreements, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA).

For the OSPA directory, please visit the staff directory (http://research.utsa.edu/contact-research/staff-directory).

Office of Research Support

The Office of Research Support (http://research.utsa.edu/texas-university-research/utsa-research/research-support-officer) (ORS) provides a variety of services and support programs for research-engaged faculty and students to develop and successfully manage their respective research programs.

Undergraduate Research

The mission of the Office of Undergraduate Research (http://research.utsa.edu/academic-research/undergraduate) (OUR) is to sustain a collaborative network of programs to engage and support undergraduate student participation in research and scholarly activities in all areas of academic inquiry. This includes facilitating relationships between exploratory students and faculty members performing research, as well as progressively more competitive experience opportunities such as comprehensive undergraduate research projects.

Research Faculty Development

The ORS serves as a catalyst for research through the promotion of innovative scholarly activities that cross college and departmental boundaries and reach externally to academic and industry partners. In partnership with UTSA Libraries and the Vice Provost’s Office of Academic and Faculty Support, ORS offers a comprehensive program in research professional development for faculty through The Faculty Center at UTSA (http://faculty.utsa.edu). The ORS offers a robust calendar (http://research.utsa.edu/events/list) of opportunities throughout each semester, ranging from workshops on grant writing and communication skills development to research-specific seminars and conferences. The ORS also provides faculty development funding to UTSA researchers through institutional seed grant programs and builds strategic partnerships with research-based organizations and institutions at the local, regional and national level.

Research Faculty Support

To further expand UTSA’s research potential, the ORS develops strategies and infrastructure to improve institutional interdisciplinary proposals that are nationally competitive. To assist faculty in securing research funding (http://research.utsa.edu/research-funding/opportunities), the ORS provides grant development resources to individual researchers including funding search tools and grant writing resources. In addition, the ORS offers customized proposal development support to research faculty engaged in the pursuit of large, multidisciplinary funding programs. Personalized services may include strategic consultation, project management, technical writing assistance, and grantmanship editing and review. The ORS also manages the universities internal selection process to assist with limited submission opportunities.

Research Centers and Institutes

Under the purview of the Dean’s Research Council (DRC), the ORS provides support and administrative guidance to research centers and institutes (http://research.utsa.edu/partners/research-institute) (C&Is). C&Is are dedicated to addressing a wide variety of challenges and opportunities that exist globally, regionally and locally. They facilitate research work at UTSA, support teaching and learning and facilitate outreach and engagement within the community. The ORS is also responsible for conducting strategic reviews for C&Is to ensure fiscal responsibility and programmatic growth and success.

Research Core Facilities

The ORS provides strategic guidance and support of research core facilities at UTSA. Research core facilities (http://research.utsa.edu/texas-university-research/research-cores) offer both advanced technologies and equipment with a goal to make instrumentation and expertise available to UTSA research faculty, their staff and students, who all benefit from the shared cost of these resources.
Office of Research Integrity

The Office of Research Integrity (ORI) supports the UTSA research community in its commitment to high standards of research integrity and scholarly excellence. The Office promotes ethical behavior and best practices by anticipating risk and communicating research compliance standards for meeting research goals. ORI promotes the ethical conduct of research in the following areas: use of humans and animals in research, biosafety, chemical safety, radiation and laser safety, conflict of interest in research and intellectual property, export control, BSL3 facilities, and the responsible conduct of research training. The Assistant Vice President of Research Integrity serves as the Research Integrity Officer related to research misconduct allegations.

Institutional Review Board

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects is the university committee that reviews and approves human subject research for the purpose of protecting the rights and welfare of those subjects. The IRB advises and educates researchers, staff and students on research with human subjects and promotes best practices for the ethical conduct of research with these individuals.

Institutional Animal Care and Use

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) assures the well-being and proper care of all vertebrate animals used for research and educational purposes at UTSA and serves the public by ensuring institutional compliance with all legal and ethical standards regarding the use of animals in research.

Laboratory Animal Resources Center

The Laboratory Animal Resources Center (LARC) advises and educates researchers, staff and students on animal experimentation issues and promotes best practices for the responsible use of animals. LARC provides high-quality, cost-effective research animal resources, veterinary and personnel training, and expertise in laboratory animal technology and medicine.

BSL3 Laboratory Facilities

Under the direction of the Laboratory Compliance Manager and in close partnership with the Office of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management, UTSA’s BSL3 facilities are managed in support of faculty research in a variety of research areas.

Biosafety, Radiation & Laser Safety, and Chemical Safety

Committees are in place to support all faculty and staff whose research involves biosafety, radiation and lasers, and chemicals. These committees operate in close partnership with staff in the Office of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management.

Conflict of Interest in Research and Intellectual Property

The Committee for Conflict of Interest in Research and Intellectual Property assures that a high level of objectivity in the development and reporting of research results will be implemented and maintained at UTSA.

Export Control

Following federal criteria, ORI assures international partnerships and exchanges and research with non-U.S. persons while protecting the export of certain controlled technologies. These efforts restrict access to goods and technology in order to advance U.S. foreign policy goals, prevent terrorism, protect the economy, promote trade goals, and prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, chemical).

Office of Commercialization and Innovation

The Office of Commercialization and Innovation (OCI) promotes the creation and commercialization of intellectual property at UTSA by faculty, staff, and students. OCI manages the university’s portfolio of intellectual property, engages companies in research and commercialization partnerships, and provides intellectual property education and training to faculty, staff, and students. OCI also helps bridge the gap between basic research and applied innovation by operating a proof-of-principle fund, supporting commercialization development programs such as the NSF I-Corps™, and promoting entrepreneurship. OCI also manages the UTSA New Venture Incubator (NVI), which enables university start-ups and partner companies to be co-located on campus and participate in the growth of UTSA’s research and commercialization activities. OCI strives to maximize the movement of UTSA’s innovations into the hands of commercial partners who can create new products and services to benefit the public.