

# FY2024 Annual Report

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INSTITUTE FOR  
PUBLIC POLICY  
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS  
*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA*

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# Letter from the Director

Dear IPPRA Colleagues and Friends,

I'm excited to share our FY 2024 progress at IPPRA—a year characterized by fresh collaborations, expanded influence, and tangible solutions that bridge academic research with real-world impact. As we look back, we see not just another twelve months of work, but a meaningful step forward in our commitment to shaping public policies that matter.

Over the past year, we've joined forces with partners across the University of Oklahoma, throughout the state, and across the country to address some of our most urgent public policy challenges. From climate resilience and national security to public health and education, our projects have taken on pressing issues head-on. One standout effort—our Socially Sustainable Solutions for Water, Carbon, and Infrastructure Resilience in Oklahoma (S3OK)—brings together public policy, science, and technology to forge innovative, actionable strategies for a more sustainable future.

Our research program is as diverse as the challenges we tackle. From refining severe weather risk communication to exploring how social diversity shapes educational outcomes, to engaging communities in decisions about nuclear waste facility siting, we're committed to evidence-based approaches that spark positive change. With 72 new publications, expanding data resources, and an increasing number of partners, IPPRA's influence continues to grow.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the energy and expertise of our faculty, staff, post-docs, and student researchers. Our students, in particular, have developed valuable analytical and project management skills, preparing them to be tomorrow's policy leaders. At the same time, our partnerships with agencies at every level ensure that IPPRA's work not only informs policy decisions but helps shape them.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to driving meaningful policy discussions and solutions that improve lives. Thank you for your ongoing support and collaboration. We invite you to stay engaged with IPPRA by visiting [ou.edu/ippra](http://ou.edu/ippra) and following us on LinkedIn. Together, we'll continue turning research insights into real-world impact.

Warm regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HJ Smith'.

Dr. Hank Jenkins-Smith  
Director, IPPRA

# Mission and Vision



## Mission

The IPPRA team builds partnerships and conducts research by integrating public policy scholarship with the physical and engineering sciences to increase human well-being, improve our social choice infrastructure, and enhance resilience by addressing complex public policy problems and creating opportunities that span natural, technological, and social systems.

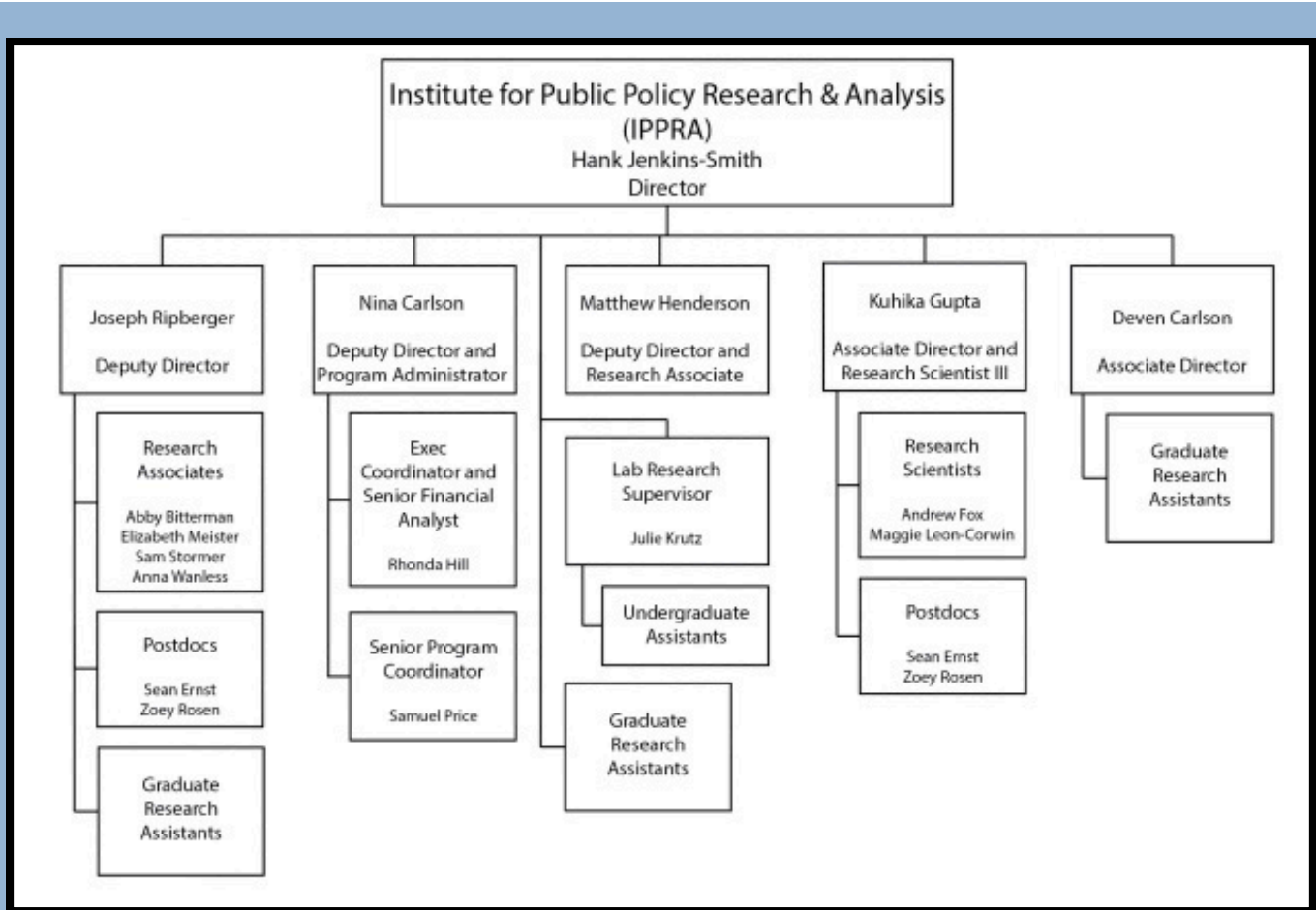


## Vision

IPPRA is an interdisciplinary team with decades of experience in addressing public policy challenges such as those posed by extreme weather and the changing climate, energy policy, environmental policy, the role of government intervention in pandemics, and national security. IPPRA employs a diverse range of modeling and state of the art social science methods to achieve a common systems perspective, seeking to integrate the social, natural, and technological components of a problem area. Our applications range from local to international in scope. The institutional culture at IPPRA is grounded in transdisciplinary thinking and collaboration.

We emphasize finding new ways to bridge basic and applied research, thereby bringing fundamental knowledge to bear on urgent public problems.

# Organizational Structure



# Organizational Structure (Cont.)

As one of the OU Vice President for Research and Partnerships' three Cross-Cutting Research Institutes, IPPRA brings public policy expertise to collaborative research projects with topics including public health, national security, public education, disaster management, and risk communication. IPPRA has the unique ability to serve as a research center-of-gravity in forming cross-cutting research teams, offering both substantive expertise and collaborative support for campus-wide research efforts. IPPRA offers:

- Teaming and partnerships
- Operational support and sponsored research capabilities for affiliates and collaborators
- Data infrastructure and analytical support



# Outcomes and KPIs

## High Quality Expertise

**Collaboration on  
Interdisciplinary/Transdisciplinary  
Proposals**

8

**Policy Reports/Presentations/Briefings**

52

**Workshops/Conferences/Policy  
Events**

37

**Consultation/Collaboration with  
Decision Makers/Officials/Industry**

57

IPPRA-led and supported projects tackle complex, “wicked problems” across various levels, working closely with policymakers to develop solutions that positively impact local, state, national, and global communities. In FY24, IPPRA delivered 52 presentations or briefings, hosted or attended 37 applied workshops and policy events, and collaborated on numerous interdisciplinary proposals focused on real-world applications. Additionally, our team engaged in almost 60 collaborations and consultations with practitioners and industry professionals on applied research projects, ensuring our work remains relevant and influential both within academia and beyond.

# | Outcomes and KPIs (Cont.)

## Exceptional Research Products

	FY24	Total since FY2016
<b>Publications</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>Citations/Impacts</b>	<b>1346</b>	<b>4968</b>
<b>Public Datasets/Data Sharing Tools</b>		<b>15</b>

In FY24, IPPRA maintained an outstanding record in research output, consistently meeting AAU Quality benchmarks by delivering a growing body of impactful, policy-focused scholarship. This past fiscal year alone saw 72 new publications, bringing the total since 2016 to over 270. These works received substantial recognition, with nearly 1,350 citations of IPPRA faculty, staff, and affiliates in the past year.

In FY24, IPPRA expanded its collaborative efforts across campus and beyond, further enhancing research output. Our robust data infrastructure supported broad partnerships and complex analyses, resulting in the release of 11 public data sets and the update and development of 4 interactive data-sharing tools, incorporating AI, text analysis, and innovative data sources.



# Outcomes and KPIs (Cont.)

## Exceptional Research Activity

**FY24 Research Expenditures**

**\$3,237,989**

**FY24 Submitted Core Proposals (17)**

**\$7,418,251**

**FY24 Submitted Partnered Proposals (6)**

**\$10,292,224**

**Value of New Sponsored Research Awards Received in FY24**

**\$1,736,410**

**Active IPPRA Core Awards**

**\$7,367,366**

**Active IPPRA Awards (Led + Partnered)**

**\$22,204,197**

IPPRA also continued our to serve as a research center-of-gravity in forming cross-cutting research teams, offering both substantive expertise and collaborative support of campus-wide research efforts. Our FY24 research portfolio included \$7 million in sponsored research conducted solely at IPPRA, but grew to over \$22 million in awards when including our research with significant partnerships across OU and outside the university.

# Outcomes and KPIs (Cont.)

## Workforce Development

**Post-Docs/Graduate  
Students/Undergraduate Students**

19

**IPPRA Supported Trainings**

3

**Job Placement of Post-Docs/Graduate  
Students/Undergraduate Students**

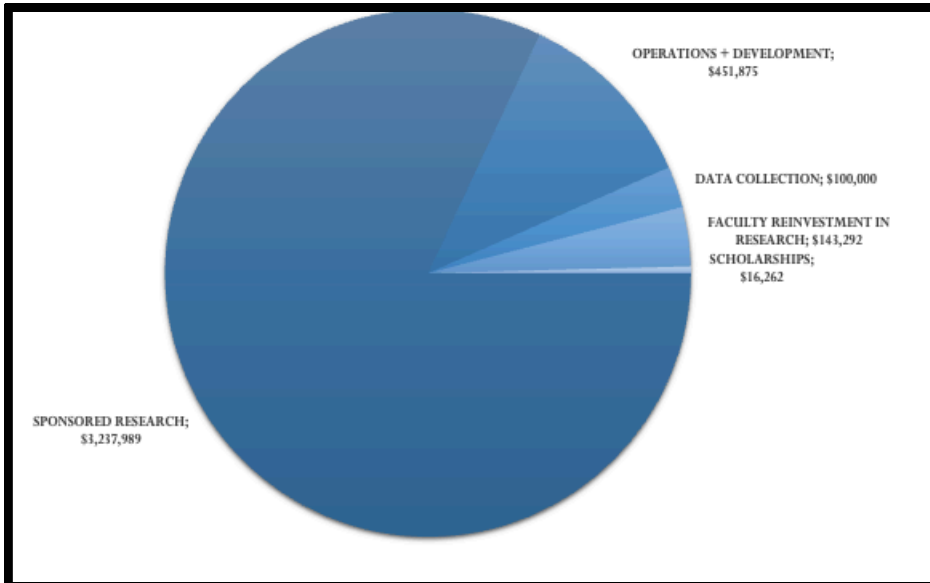
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In FY2024, IPPRA employed 2 post-docs, 12 graduate research assistants, and 5 undergraduate research assistants, each deeply involved in sponsored research across numerous projects. Through this work, students developed valuable skills in quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as research management, equipping them for future career success.

IPPRA also offered professional development training for graduate students, with sessions on topics such as academic writing. These experiences have made IPPRA students competitive candidates for internships and jobs; this year, IPPRA saw students transition into roles at engineering firms, national labs, renowned universities, and more!

# Financials

## Total Departmental Expenditures



Total Expenditures by Sponsor	Amount
Sponsored Research	\$3,237,989
Operations and Development	\$451,875
Scholarships	\$16,262
Data Collection	\$100,000
Faculty Reinvestment in Research	\$143,292
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,949,418</b>

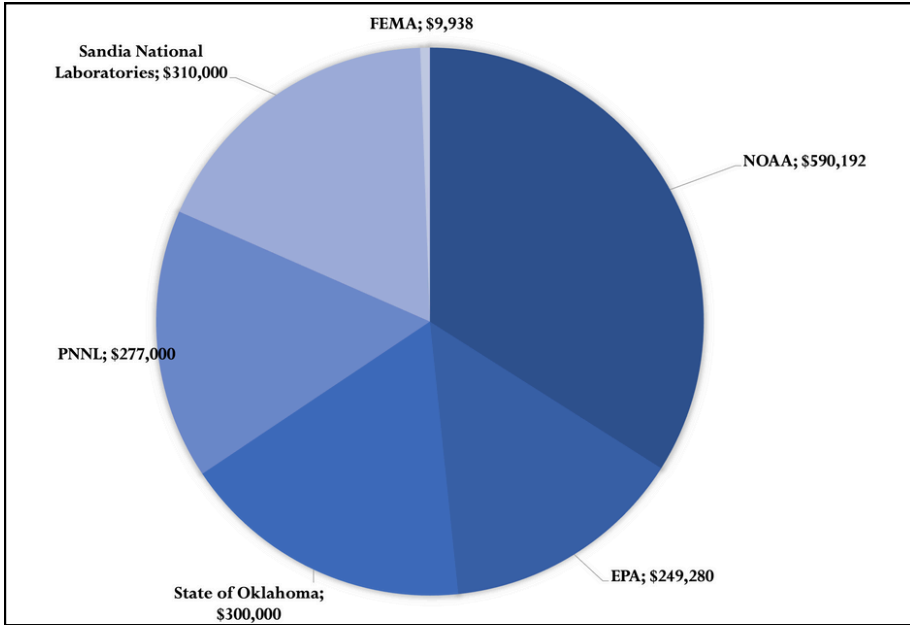
In FY24, IPPRA expended approximately \$4 million across our institute. As has been the case in previous fiscal years, the majority of these expenditures were in support of sponsored research.

Our institute spent \$3,237,989 in sponsored research, roughly 82% of all expenditures, but also spent a significant \$451,875 (11%) in operations and development.



# Financials (cont.)

## New Sponsored Research



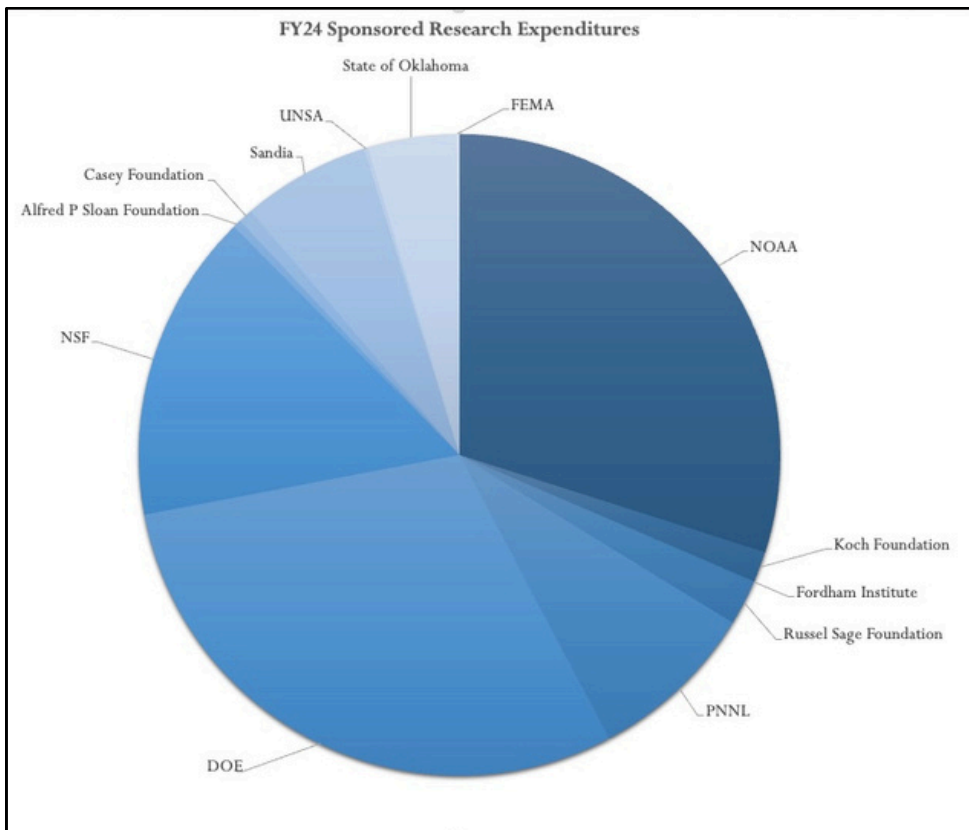
Sponsor	Amount
NOAA	\$590,192
EPA	\$249,280
State of Oklahoma	\$300,000
PNNL	\$277,000
SNL	\$310,000
FEMA	\$9,938
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,736,410</b>



In FY24, IPPRA received approximately \$1.7 million in new funded awards from 6 distinct funders, with some funders providing awards for multiple projects. FY24 funders included federal agencies, the state government, and multiple national laboratories.

# Financials (cont.)

## FY24 Total Sponsored Research Expenditures



Sponsor	Amount
NOAA	\$968,442
EPA	\$249,280
State of Oklahoma	\$144,256
PNNL	\$275,258
SNL	\$209,173
FEMA	\$4,970
Koch Foundation	\$49,497
Fordham Institute	\$942
Russell Sage Foundation	\$74,510
Casey Foundation	\$23,226
UNSA	\$6,722
DOE	\$963,155
NSF	\$504,569
Alfred P Sloan Foundation	\$13,269
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,237,989</b>

**\$3,237,989.27**

In FY24, IPPRA continued our growth in sponsored research expenditures, with a total of roughly \$3.3 million spent on funded research. This figure represents a significant growth over our previous fiscal year expenditures of approximately \$2.9 million. Sponsors are comprised of federal, state, and private organizations funding a wide variety of interdisciplinary research efforts.

# Research Highlights

## IPPRA in the News

IPPRA Director Dr. Hank Jenkins-Smith was featured on CBS News Prime Time twice this year to discuss emerging nuclear energy issues.

Dr. Deven Carlson was featured in multiple interviews, with outlets such as NPR and SoonerMag, where he discussed various education policy issues.

“What to know about nuclear fusion amid congressional push”



“China outpacing U.S. in nuclear power development, report finds”

## Project Highlights

### **Socially Sustainable Solutions for Water, Carbon and Infrastructure Resilience in Oklahoma (S3OK)**

As part of the National Science Foundation-funded S3OK project, IPPRA leadership continued to recruit new membership for the innovative Opinion Leader Advisory Network (OLAN), which connects researchers from multiple Oklahoma research institutions to dozens of opinion leaders across the state of Oklahoma. OLAN members are drawn from the public, private and non-profit sectors and represent high level decisionmakers with deep expertise across a variety of subject matter areas. Currently, the OLAN provides in-depth feedback to and applied collaborations for researchers under the National Science Foundation-funded S3OK project, which includes researchers from multiple Oklahoma institutions working collaboratively to iterate towards a framework for actionable and sustainable solutions to Oklahoma’s wicked problems in water, agriculture, land use and infrastructure.

### **Integrating socially led co-design into consent-based siting of interim storage facilities**

Why have efforts to site nuclear waste storage and disposal facilities so often failed? One common element is that siting efforts have rarely enabled the potential host community to meaningfully shape what it is that they are being asked to host. This project explores a qualitatively different approach to engaging with Potential Host Communities (PHCs) about siting interim nuclear waste storage facilities (ISFs), using in-person workshops and online surveys to understand public and community views about facility design and the siting process.

# Research Highlights (cont.)

## School Diversity and Long-Term Student Outcomes

IPPRA Associate Director for Education Dr. Deven Carlson serves as PI on a study that aims to investigate the impact of racially diverse K–12 schooling environments on various long-term outcomes for students, focusing on education, economics, civic engagement, and social behavior as they enter adulthood. The research examines how students’ exposure to racially diverse peers correlates with outcomes such as higher education participation, employment, voting behavior, and criminal justice involvement. It further seeks to understand if these correlations vary based on the student’s race or ethnicity, the policy responsible for creating diverse environments, and the level of racial disparity within schools and classrooms.

The research, set within the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) in North Carolina, will analyze a sample of students who attended WCPSS high schools between 2000 and 2010. Using descriptive and regression analyses, the study will explore the associations between peer diversity and students’ early adult success, while also considering the influence of policy mechanisms and racial inequality levels. This work seeks to clarify the broader implications of K–12 racial diversity on adult achievement and behavior, offering insight into the long-term benefits and challenges of diverse educational settings.

## WxEM: The Extreme Weather and Emergency Management Panel

Around the country, severe weather events present emergency managers (EMs) with complex challenges that require them to make swift, critical decisions. EMs are a diverse population, but little is known about how they receive, process, and use forecast information. After many months compiling contact information, creating an initial database of over 5,000 emergency managers, and fielding a preliminary recruitment survey, IPPRA formed the Extreme Weather and Emergency Management (WxEM) Panel: an “active” catalog of over 700 emergency managers who have agreed to provide routine feedback on NOAA/NWS data, products, information, and decision support when addressing high impact weather events. This study seeks to understand how emergency managers use NOAA/NWS data, products, information, and decision support when addressing high impact weather events.



# Research Highlights (cont.)

## Data Security

In a significant advancement of our data security infrastructure, IPPRA has developed and implemented a comprehensive Data Security Policy that aligns with the University of Oklahoma's enterprise-level security framework while addressing the unique needs of our research environment. This policy establishes clear protocols for data classification, handling, and sharing, with particular attention to research data management and collaborative workflows. By codifying best practices for data stewardship and implementing robust encryption standards, we have created a security-conscious ecosystem that enables innovative research while maintaining the highest standards of data protection. The policy's emphasis on scalable security measures and clear incident response protocols positions us to meet the evolving challenges of managing sensitive research data in an increasingly complex regulatory landscape.

Further strengthening our technical infrastructure, we have deployed a new high-capacity secure server environment specifically designed to handle Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) and other sensitive data types. This advanced computing environment enables secure processing of significant data volumes while maintaining stringent access controls and monitoring capabilities. The system has been architected to support collaborative research partnerships, allowing external collaborators from major research institutions to engage with sensitive data in a controlled, compliant environment. This investment in secure computing infrastructure significantly enhances our capability to undertake complex research projects requiring robust data security measures, positioning us as a trusted partner for high-stakes research initiatives requiring careful data stewardship.

## IPPRA Staff Highlight

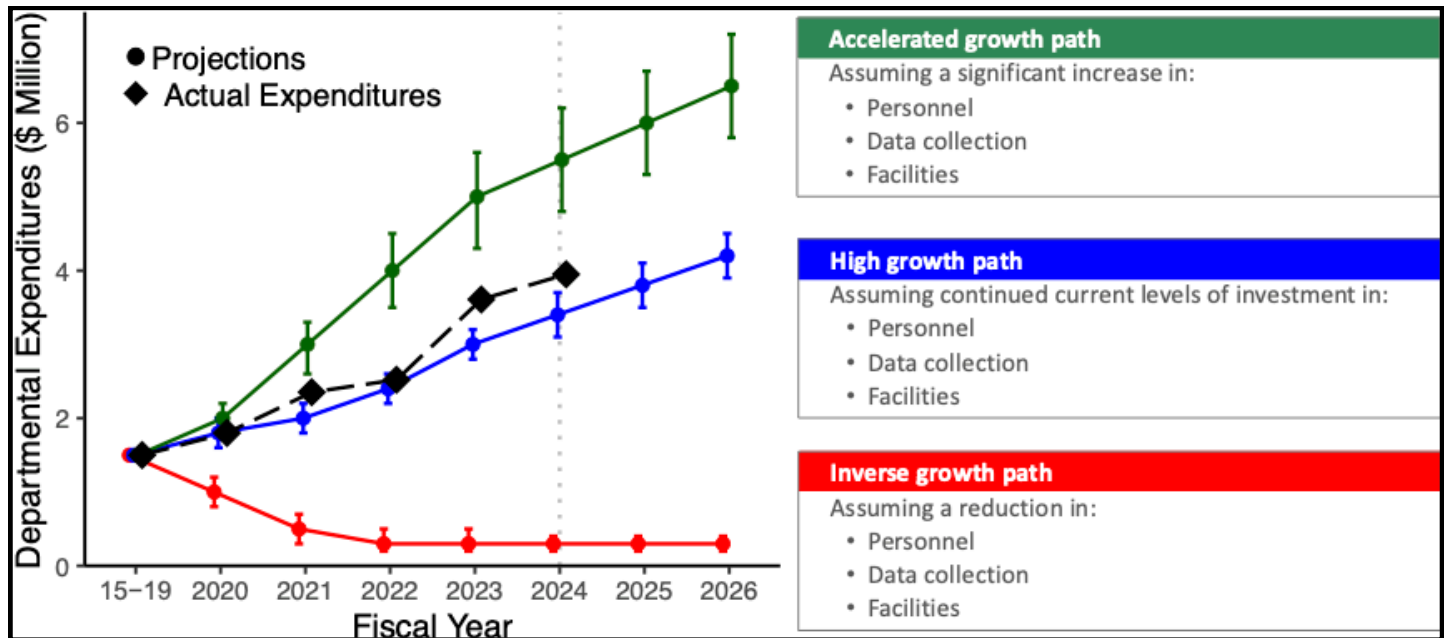
For the 2023-2024 academic year, our very own Rhonda Hill served as the OU Staff Senate Chair. Rhonda has worked at OU for 33 years across numerous departments around campus. Currently, she is IPPRA's Executive Coordinator and Financial Analyst.

As Staff Senate Chair, Rhonda advocated on behalf of all OU Staff on issues such as pay changes, administration-staff communication, regular compensations adjustments, and much more.





# Looking to the Future



As we advance into FY25, IPPRA proudly continues to exceed its ambitious growth trajectory. In FY24, we reached new milestones, including increasing research expenditures to \$3.3 million, up from \$2.9 million—a testament to the sustained success of our sponsored research initiatives. Additionally, we have broken new ground with the implementation of a dedicated IPPRA server and enhanced data security protocols, ensuring that our infrastructure meets the highest standards for cutting-edge research.

Interdisciplinary collaboration remains at the heart of our mission, as we have strengthened partnerships with institutions across the country and expanded our connections within the University of Oklahoma community. To support these efforts, we continue to prioritize the expansion of faculty affiliations and research staff, empowering our team to take on larger and more complex projects.

IPPRA's reputation as a premier research institute is made possible through the expertise and commitment of our faculty, staff, and students, as well as sustained investments that uphold the longevity of our research programs. These efforts allow us to not only maintain but expand our participation in large-scale, cross-disciplinary initiatives. With these accomplishments and an unwavering focus on growth, we are excited to continue forging impactful collaborations and continuing our growth into FY25 and beyond!



405-325-1720



ippra@ou.edu



www.ou.edu/ippra



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