

Effort Reporting System Management Group
Meeting Notes
April 12, 2006
Accepted May 10, 2006

Meeting was held as a conference call. Participants included: Sue Abeles, Mike Allred, John Ellis, Joyce Freedman, Don Larson, Eric Vermillion, Jorge Ohy, Adam Cohen, and Jon Good.

Discussion Topics:

Review and Acceptance of March 8, 2006, Meeting Notes:

The meeting notes of March 8, 2006, were accepted without revision.

Project Status Update:

Schedule

Adam Cohen mentioned that project schedules had been posted to the ERS Project web site. The original project Development Schedule is essentially done. Moving forward, it is intended to refer to the Maintenance Schedule, which has actual and planned releases and related details as well as PPS Release information. Sue questioned whether items showing as “not complete” (less than 100% completion) have been carried over to the Maintenance Schedule. Adam responded that the testing and training deployment items are done, though the latest Development Schedule does not reflect that fact. The pilot support and bug fix task is still not complete, but activity associated with that task has diminished to a trickle. The Load/Stress Testing item was transferred to the Maintenance Schedule. Adam will carry over the pilot support task to the Maintenance Schedule. Adam will also update the Development Schedule and distribute to the management group in final form. The group agreed to this approach with the schedules.

On the Maintenance Schedule, Release 2 was actually shipped on April 10. Release 3 is scheduled for the end of April. Release 4 is planned for the end of May. Current plans are to issue a release each month until the enhancements/issues list is caught up.

Adam mentioned that PPS Release 1697, containing fixes to PPS Release 1669 (Salary Cap), was issued on March 27, 2006.

Jon Good reported that the final formatted training materials had been posted to the ERS Project web site for demonstration purposes only. The materials will be packaged up and made available via the web site for deployment on campus servers. One item remains to be put in place on the web site, and that is a description of some details of what campus ERS teams will see in terms of overall behaviors.

John Ellis asked how campuses would handle differences in terminology and presentation in the training materials. He asked whether the training could be customized by the campus and, if so, is it easy to customize. Jon responded by pointing out two options for providing campus context to these common training materials. Option 1, when there are just a few differences to point out, is to create an introduction page associating campus terms with those in the training materials. Option 2 is to actually modify the training modules. All sources for the training modules will be provided to the campuses, but making modifications may require re-recording the corresponding audio components. Sue suggested that the vendor costs were sufficiently low that the vendor could be contracted to make customizations. Jon offered to help set up contact with the vendor in the event that any campus wanted to pursue this. John asked whether the course materials could be printed easily, and mentioned that others on campus were looking into printing from Breeze presentations. Jon responded that he did not know whether this was possible and would look into this.

Requirements Committee Update

Jon reported that the Requirements Committee met in person on March 9 and spent the entire meeting reviewing enhancement requests. The committee reviewed about one third of the outstanding requests, deciding whether or not to pursue enhancements and relative priority for those to be pursued. The Requirements Committee will again meet in person on Thursday, April 13, to continue reviewing the current list of enhancements requests and work through protocols for addressing future requests as well as for determining the relative priorities of enhancements which the committee agrees should be pursued. Sue asked whether any issues had been raised requiring the Management Group's attention. Jon responded that none had been raised yet.

Technical Advisory Group Update

Adam reported that the TAG met on March 21, and worked through questions and answers on the technical aspects of the ERS. The TAG next will look at the process of maintaining user tables.

Adam mentioned that in the last TAG discussion, a question was raised about whether the ERS Project Team would be issuing source code for each source module. Development of ERS and release packaging has been based on the philosophy that we're building a common system for all campuses and that variations would be handled through the use of parameters and other "soft" customizations rather than modification of the source code itself. As a result, there have been no plans to release source code to the campuses. Sue asked whether this was a hypothetical question or whether there was a real problem that could only be addressed by a local modification. Adam responded that he believed the inquiry to be hypothetical.

Adam suggested moving forward with the current plan to keep a common code base and try to incorporate local needs in the Base system rather than releasing sources for local campus modification. The group agreed that, philosophically, this is the approach to follow and, if there are local requirements that are not being adequately addressed by the Requirements Committee,

those should be raised with the Management Group. Eric Vermillion commented that it was important to preserve the collaborative nature of the project as manifest in a common code base. Sue suggested Management Group members reinforce this philosophy with campus technical staff.

Non-sponsor Campus Status Update

Jon reported that an overview presentation to Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz was in the process of being scheduled for May.

UCOP Hosting Update

Jon reported the following from the UCOP IR&C team that is working on UCOP ERS Hosting:

- Berkeley – the service level agreement should be finalized in about a week. The UCOP ERS Hosting Team is busy setting up the QA environment and preparing to do the initial installation of the Base ERS System and working with Berkeley on details of authentication and the presentation “skin”. Testing with Berkeley data is planned for May.
- San Diego – UCOP IR&C is awaiting feedback on the draft service level agreement; there has been no communication with San Diego for some time. Don Larson commented that he was not aware of the absence of communication and would check on this. Don also mentioned that there was little support from faculty for the idea of one annual reporting cycle. Two reporting cycles, academic year and summer, appear to be emerging as the desired direction. UCSD is looking for broader consensus on this approach and is assessing the implications.

John asked whether the service level agreements were essentially the same or whether campus operations might involve different services. Jon responded that the service level agreements were going to be essentially the same, with the differences being in the details that vary from campus to campus, such as authentication and authorization mechanisms.

Project Finances

Jon pointed out that as of the end of March 2006, revised projections for the remainder of the fiscal year have the project running about \$10,000 (or roughly 1.5%) over the original projections for the fiscal year.

Jon also discussed the “ERS Project Effort Report”, which partly addresses a request from the February ERS Management Group meeting to provide a break out of ERS Project Team activities related to non-sponsor campuses. The report shows project team hours and percent of total hours by month in three categories at present: Base ERS Maintenance and Support, Sponsor

Campus Support, and UCOP Hosting. Another category for non-sponsor campus support will be added to the report when ERS Project Team hours are expended in that category.

Mike Allred asked whether this report showed the contributions of the UC Davis team. Jon responded that the Davis contributions were not shown. Mike asked if that could be incorporated. Mike and Jon agreed to discuss this further offline.

Campus Status Reports

Los Angeles - Sue Abeles reported that UCLA's campus work group had not met since the Management Group conference call. The UCLA pilot has been extended into mid-April. The campus work group meets next week.

Davis - Mike Allred reported that the Davis pilot implementation of the ERS system is finally where they want it to be. The Davis pilot group (about 30 people) met a couple of weeks earlier and walked through the system. The walkthrough went well. Sessions with department academics are now being scheduled.

John Ellis asked whether faculty have looked at this at UCLA or Davis. Sue responded that UCLA has asked for, but not yet received, faculty participation. Mike said that Davis is about to get started involving faculty.

Adam mentioned hearing from Buck Marcussen who was working with a Davis department on straightening out payroll data and that reports from Buck suggest that deep digging into payroll data is taking place but there haven't been any issues of concern. Mike mentioned that clean-up of payroll data has been a 2-year process and, last month, agreement was reached with the affected departments to get all data cleaned up and not put inappropriate data into payroll in the future. Davis will continue piloting ERS into summer. Collection of cost sharing commitment across the Davis campus is currently underway.

Berkeley – John Ellis reported that Berkeley has run into a problem with the campus cost sharing system and that it may not be ready to feed data to ERS. The campus work group has not met since the last Management Group conference call.

San Diego – Don Larson reported that the campus work group has not met since the last Management Group conference call.

San Francisco – Eric Vermillion reported that the campus has been focused on the go-live of the Research Administration System. ERS will fit in as planned. Mike asked whether the Research Administration System will include tracking of cost sharing commitments. Eric responded in the affirmative, and that cost sharing tracking is expected to go live at the end of 2006 or early in 2007.

Policy Update: Contracts and Grants Manual, Accounting Manual

Jorge Ohy reported that he had received comments on the proposed Contracts and Grants Manual and Accounting Manual changes from some campus work groups as well as from academics. A revised document showing changes to the manuals, along with a review “Q&A” document, was sent out to the Management Group shortly before the conference call. The Management Group agreed to review these two documents and provide comments to Jorge by April 30. If there are no substantive comments by that time, the changes will be made official through Mike O’Neill. Jorge pointed out that there is one issue concerning “timeliness” of certification: the proposed changes articulate specific lengths of time for generating effort reports and completion of certification, something which has not been explicitly stated before; once published, what does this mean in terms of compliance for any campus that has not yet implemented ERS? After some discussion it was agreed that the issue would be brought up with the Controllers on their conference call of April 13 for discussion and clarification.

Marketing and Licensing of ERS

Jon started the discussion by reminding the group that interest in the ERS from institutions outside UC was first expressed about a year ago and that the topic of marketing and licensing ERS has come before the group a couple of times.

So far, outside interest in the ERS has been expressed by:

- Northern California Institute for Research and Education (NCIRE) affiliated with the San Francisco Veterans Administration Medical Center
- University of Washington
- Project Kualii (though not recently)

Discussion resulted in the following potential options for licensing of ERS:

- No cost (and no support) model
- Nominal licensing fee (and minimal support) model like COEUS
- Full licensing and support model
- Community/open source model, such as Kualii
- 3rd party model, where a vendor markets and licenses ERS, supports the customers, and pays royalties to UC

Principles that came out of the discussion:

- Providing the ERS software and support, under any model, to non-UC institutions must not detract from the support of ERS to UC campuses
- Avoid costs associated with marketing and licensing that cannot be recovered.

Don asked whether we have a mandate to recover development costs, if possible, or share the ERS freely, or something in between the two extremes. Joyce suggested “somewhere in between”. Sue commented that ongoing costs would need to be recovered as well, if cost recovery was a mandate.

The group agreed that whatever approach the group decided on pursuing be put before the Controllers, Budget and Planning Officers, and the IT Leadership Council for endorsement. Jon will draft an options proposal for discussion at the next Management Group meeting.

Other Topics

Cost Sharing Commitment Tracking – UC Contact for University of Wisconsin – Jon mentioned that in his discussion with the University of Wisconsin, interest was expressed in how UC campuses addressed Cost Sharing Commitment Tracking. Jon asked whether anyone would be willing to provide information about their Cost Sharing Commitment Tracking solution to the University of Wisconsin. Mike offered to be the initial point of contact. Jon will follow-up with the University of Wisconsin.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday May 10, 2006, from 1:00pm to 3:00pm**. This will be an in-person meeting. The meeting will be at UCOP, 1111 Franklin St., Conference Room 10325.

Joyce Freedman suggested that Mike present the UC Davis scenarios for 9-month appointments and the issues raised by those scenarios at the next meeting. The scenarios were well thought out and provide some thoughtful examples for campus pilots.