

Effort Reporting System Management Group
Meeting Notes
October 10, 2007
Accepted November 14, 2007

Participants in this in-person meeting included: Sue Abeles, Mike Allred, Jim Corkill, Don Larson, Joyce Freedman, Jorge Ohy, Mark Cooper, Adam Cohen, Pixie Ogren, Jane Meyer, Steve Hunter, and Jon Good.

Discussion Topics:

Introductions

Jim Corkill joins the ERS Management Group as the Santa Barbara representative.

Mark Cooper from San Diego is present as a guest for discussion of the “Removing Cost Share Column From Effort Report” topic. Mark is also a member of the Requirements Committee

Jon Good introduced Jane Meyer of UCOP IR&C. Jane oversees Undergraduate Admissions applications systems within IR&C and is assuming responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of Base ERS support. Steve Hunter now reports to Jane. As activities on the Base ERS move further into the maintenance mode, Jane will take over the coordinating role from Jon.

Review of 9/13/2007 Meeting Notes

Jorge commented on page 3, last paragraph under “Actions When Effort Is Not Certified” that the “consequences” statement should go to Larry Coleman for coordination with the Vice Chancellors for Research and that Jorge will arrange to incorporate the statement in the Contracts and Grants manual. The revised paragraph now reads as follows:

“Sue will take editorial comments and revise the consequences statement for another quick Management Group review before sending to Larry Coleman for coordination with Research Vice Chancellors. Jorge Ohy will arrange for incorporation in the Accounting Manual and inclusion in the Contracts and Grants Manual.”

With this change, the September 13, 2007, meeting notes were accepted.

Project Status

Steve Hunter reported on recent and upcoming releases:

- Release 8.2 is planned for release in mid-October. The highlight enhancement for this release is the implementation of weighting 11/12 pay. Also included in this release will

be the top tier of bug fixes identified by the Requirements Committee as well as a recently identified bug fix to searching which requires a structure change.

- Release 9.0 is planned for December 2007. The highlight enhancement for this release will be enhancements for searching and permissions by organizational hierarchy and modifications to compliance reporting.

Beginning with release 9.0, the intent is to move to quarterly releases and provide support only for the two most recent releases. Any releases between quarterly releases will be for urgent fixes only.

Requirements Committee Update

Jon reported that the Requirements Committee met via conference call on September 13th.

One issue that generated discussion on the Requirements Committee call was a request from UCLA to consider allowing “reviewers” to re-open already certified effort reports when errors are discovered during a post-certification review. The example cited was UCLA’s Department of Medicine: when a PI certifies an effort report that has been improperly revised by a “reviewer” prior to certification, in the “post-review” performed by the department, the director of research administration wants to be able to re-open the effort report to have the appropriate corrections made and for the PI to recertify. Two of UCLA’s largest departments have a sufficient number of instances where this capability would be very useful. The Requirements Committee discussion concluded without consensus on pursuing an enhancement to allow reviewers to re-open effort reports after certification, with the key factor being the concern that the PI should be responsible for the certification and therefore, should be the one to re-open, correct, and certify the report.

Pixie Ogren explained that there is a balance between certifier taking responsibility and reviewer (who may have modified the ER before certification) checking accuracy after-the-fact. The Base ERS already allows any certifier to re-open an effort report. A reviewer cannot certify or recertify an effort report on his/her own. Don noted that if a reviewer is given the capability to re-open and change the report, then there needs to be an audit trail showing that the reviewer took such action. Adam commented that there is such an audit trail in the ERS.

Joyce and Mike expressed concern that the message at their campuses of PI’s taking responsibility for certification could be undermined by providing too much capability in the hands of reviewers. Mike added that if this were to be incorporated in the Base ERS, then it would need to be a campus configuration option as this functionality would not be used at Davis.

Sue Abeles mentioned that she had not heard of this issue and will follow-up with folks on campus.

In addition to what’s noted in the September 13th Requirements Committee meeting notes, Pixie will prepare a brief write-up of the issue and circulate to the Management Group.

The Requirements Committee will next meet via conference call on Wednesday, November 14th.

Technical Advisory Group Update

Adam Cohen reported that the Technical Advisory Group did not meet since the last Management Group meeting.

Actions When Effort Is Not Certified

Sue Abeles asked for comments on the revised “consequences” statement that she had emailed the group on October 9th. This version reflects comments from last conference call as well as feedback from the Requirements Committee.

Joyce commented that holding proposals back as a lever for completion of effort reports doesn’t really work due to the long lead time associated with the preparation of proposals. Sue and Mike noted that the wording indicated that this was an example of possible actions and not an absolute. Additional wording about “withdrawing proposals” was suggested.

It was pointed out that costs may be disallowed at any time, not just “at close-out of an award”.

Don Larson commented that the statement should be clear that the department is responsible for timely certification.

Sue will send a revised draft out for a quick turnaround review and then send along to Larry Coleman for coordination with Vice Chancellors for Research.

Removing Cost Share Column From Effort Report

Background: Several months ago, San Diego had requested an enhancement to the Base ERS to eliminate the cost sharing column from the effort report (via toggle), since San Diego certifies cost sharing in a separate local system. The Requirements Committee did not endorse this request, since San Diego is the only campus certifying cost sharing in this manner. During the ERS Management Group discussion on the September 13th conference call, the Group concluded that it would be better to review in person and see examples of the proposed modified effort report.

Don Larson indicated that San Diego is trying to balance risk. There may be a lot of cost shared effort certified in the effort reporting context that doesn’t reconcile to cost-sharing commitments. With the local San Diego cost-share system, cost-share effort can be reconciled to commitments and certified separately.

Mike Allred remarked that certifying effort absent committed cost-share effort seems incomplete and problematic.

Mark Cooper reviewed discussions with various agencies and concurrence with San Diego's interpretation of the regulations that set the stage for the proposal to certify cost-shared effort outside of ERS and remove the cost-share column from the effort report. A lengthy discussion followed.

Points raised during the discussion:

- San Diego's interpretation of the regulations differs substantially from that of the rest of the participating UC campuses
- exclusion of cost-share effort from the effort report does not provide for a complete picture of effort
- there is a long list of audit findings at many institutions where the cost-share component of effort was challenged and repayments to sponsoring agencies resulted
- the Base ERS was never built to measure actual cost-sharing against cost-share commitments, but WAS built with the intention of certifying all effort, including cost sharing effort.
- campuses with local systems containing cost sharing commitments are importing that information as an aid for certifiers
- the genesis of the Base ERS was to create a singular UC effort reporting solution that would stand up to federal audit across UC – there are serious questions about whether the exclusion of cost-share effort from the effort reports at San Diego would jeopardize the consistency of effort reporting methodology in the eyes of federal auditors

The discussion concluded that the Management Group could not support the San Diego proposal that cost-share effort could be excluded from the effort report (by campus preference) and that the proposed modification was not appropriate for Base ERS.

Campus Participation Description

A follow-up from the September 13th conference call was to prepare a high-level description of campus participation obligations to memorialize the arrangements on Base ERS support. The document, "University of California Base Effort Reporting System; Campus Participation", is a draft of that description. After a very brief discussion, it was agreed that the description served the purpose. The description document will be amended for formatting and to include "Issued by the ERS Management Group", and then added to the Base ERS web site.

Non-sponsor Campuses - Status

Jon reported that Riverside is close to completing the process of working out a service level agreement with UCOP for ERS hosting, and plans to begin participation in the Base ERS groups once that SLA is in place.

Jorge Ohy mentioned that he has been contacted by Santa Cruz about participating in ERS.

It was agreed that the campus participation description document should be sent to the Controllers. Jon will arrange distribution.

Campus Status Reports

San Diego– Mark Cooper reported that San Diego is hosting a 2nd annual Users Group meeting on November 7th. Functional and department people are coming to share with others ERS implementation experiences and ERS knowledge in general.

Davis – Mike Allred reported that Davis now has about 200 reports remaining to be certified to complete their first 6-month cycle. In a few months they will be preparing for 1/1/2007-9/30/2007 certification cycle.

Los Angeles – Sue Abeles reported that Los Angeles is currently in the process of completing three quarters: Summer 2006, Fall 2006, and Winter 2007. These cycles are at the mid-70% level of completion. UCLA EFM is in the process of following up on the uncertified effort reports. The campus will shortly issue the Spring 2007 quarter and Summer 2007 ERs.

San Francisco – Joyce Freedman reported that San Francisco – has gone through 3 cycles now and the process is going well.

Berkeley – Adam Cohen reported that Berkeley is targeting to go live with a pilot of 3-6 groups in November, and rollout campus-wide for Fall cycle in February.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled as a conference call for **Wednesday, November 14, 2007, from 1:00pm-3:00pm.**

**Effort Reporting System Go-Live Plans
October 10, 2007**

Campus	Effort Reporting Period Start	Calendar Start	UCOP Hosting?	Notes	Status/Comments
Berkeley	Fall semester 2007	February 2008	Yes		
Davis	July-December 2006	March 2007	No		In Production March 2007
Los Angeles	Spring quarter 2006	Mid-August 2006	No		In Production September 2006
San Diego	Summer Qtr 2007	August 2007	Yes	Will follow quarterly cycle awaiting annual cycle resolution	To be in limited production week of 6/18/2007
San Francisco	Fall 2006	April 2007	Yes		In Production 4/16/2007
Merced				Will use UCLA ERS	UCLA Overview presentation scheduled for 7/24/2006 at UC Merced
UCOP				Will use UCLA ERS	
Irvine	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		ERS Overview presented 12/5/2005
Riverside	Unknown	Q1 2008	Unknown	Implementation planning about to get underway	ERS Overview presented 12/5/2005 – Overview presented to expanded campus audience 6/19/2006.
Santa Barbara	Unknown	Q1 2008	Unknown		ERS Overview presented 5/22/2006
Santa Cruz	Unknown	2008	Unknown		ERS Overview presented 5/25/2006
DANR				Will use Davis ERS	