Effort Reporting System Management Group
Meeting Notes
May 11, 2004 - *Revised   , 2004 - Reviewed and Accepted   , 2004*

Attendees: Sue Abeles, John Ellis, Jon Good, John Plotts, Jorge Ohy, Joyce Freedman, Karen Rust, Mike Allred, Kris Hafner, Pixie Ogren, Dan Gilbreath - Joining by conference call: Eric Vermillion, Ken Orgill

Discussion Topics

VA and Affiliated Hospital Appointments -- The discussion focused on whether or not the payments made by the VA and affiliated hospital should be included in calculating the distribution of effort for faculty members who hold joint appointments. While there is some argument for including these payments in the calculation, there are stronger arguments for excluding them. A-21 guidelines require that only payments made by the institution be included, and since the VA and affiliated hospital payments are made by those organizations directly to the faculty member, there is no requirement to include them in the University's calculation and certification of effort. Including outside data would complicate system design and maintenance, and it is likely that the data would be difficult to obtain with little or no control over the quality of the data. All of these factors argue against including VA and affiliated hospital payments in the University reporting and certification process. It appears that only San Diego is currently including these outside payments in their effort certification calculations and that the inclusion is being accomplished by manual modification to the reports produced by the system. A decision was made that VA and affiliated hospital payments will not be included in the effort report calculation and there are no requirements for the Effort Reporting System to accept input from external sources nor include any external data in its calculations. Jorge will draft an "Advisory Guideline" to campuses stating the University position that VA and affiliated hospital payments are not to be included in effort reporting. As a side issue, there was agreement that we should review how data is included in proposals and progress reports to ensure that we are not documenting effort in conflicting ways. There was also discussion about how appointment letters for those holding joint appointments are worded and whether there is opportunity to reduce compliance risk through further discussions with the Schools of Medicine.

K Awards -- There was discussion about whether or not there is a requirement for the Effort Reporting System to monitor the effort of those faculty members receiving K awards to ensure that they are devoting the amount of effort required by the award. K awards require that a specified percent of professional effort be devoted to project research, with different levels of effort required for different levels of K awards. Since professional effort could include effort outside of the University, e.g. VA or other professional endeavors, the group determined that it was not practical to have the Effort Reporting System monitor for compliance. It also appears that the number of faculty members receiving the K awards is relatively small, that K awards are not readily identifiable except by award number, which is a data element not consistently maintained

in all systems, and that including this as a component of an Effort Reporting System would complicate system design and maintenance with a relatively small payoff. The group determined that instead, data could be extracted from the Effort Reporting Systems with reminders sent to individuals on a post audit basis about the K Award requirements to ensure that certified effort is consistent with those requirements and with any annual certifications being made to the agency. This process of monitoring the K Awards will be considered to be outside the scope of the Effort Reporting System development and will be handled as a separate system development at a later time, as either a group effort or on an individual campus basis.

Additional Policies to be Reviewed -- There were a number of policies/questions identified which should be reviewed and discussed to determine if revisions or guidelines should be issued. The following policies/questions will be added to future meeting agendas for discussion:

1. Should hourly-paid employees be included in effort reporting?
2. Is the +/- 5% tolerance still a valid rule?
3. Have we settled the question of frequency of reporting? Is it campus-specific or should all be the same?
4. Should effort reports be done for federal funds only? Can campuses decide to include non-federal funds? Do all campuses need to do the same thing? (what are system implications?)
5. What is timely certification? 10 days after close of period? 90 days after close of period?
6. Who should certify effort reports? Individuals? Supervisors? PI's?
7. Is there anything we need to do concerning acceptance of electronic signatures?
8. Who is office of record?
9. Do we need a policy to regulate revisions of previously certified PAR's? Under what circumstances can PAR's be revised? How long after original certification can they be revised? How many times can they be revised? Should they ever be revised?
10. What is the maximum percent of effort which can be charged to sponsored projects? Can this limit vary by campus? (this item was previously identified for discussion but not yet addressed)
11. Who decides what is considered as cost sharing? (this item was previously identified for discussion but not yet addressed)

ERS Management Group Chair -- With Jim leaving the ERS Management Group Chair position needs to be filled. Several options, including rotating the chair position and having co-chairs, were discussed and several members of the group--Eric Vermillion, Sue Abeles, and Mike Allred--volunteered to fill the role. As Vice Chancellor Budget and Finance, Jim was invaluable in generating support for the project among the Budget Officers and as a result of his leadership as well as the effort of individual Management Team members on their own campuses, funding has been approved at each of the five campuses and the Office of the President. As we move into the system definition and development phase we will be dealing with policy and functional issues rather than the budget and funding issues of the first phase of the project. This next phase of the project

will require strong leadership as well, especially as policy and implementation issues arise. It was suggested that this phase of the project might best be led by Controllers who have not only the subject matter expertise, but responsibility and influence over the policy and implementation process as well. This leadership is important as issues will undoubtedly arise which will require decisions to be made and buy-in of all Controllers to be obtained. There was general agreement that a co-chair approach would work. Co-chairs could either be responsible for different stages of the development project, or have responsibility for specific areas, such as policy issues and revisions; addressing future funding issues; communications; training strategy and development; meeting management; etc.. Mike, Eric, and Sue will work out the details of who will chair or co-chair and when. The ERS Management Group will evaluate at the end of December to determine whether the existing structure should continue and/or whether the responsibility should be rotated to other members.

Review and Consideration of Vendor Effort Reporting Systems -- There was a discussion concerning whether consideration should be given to vendors who request that we evaluate and/or consider their effort reporting products. The discussion arose because of a contact with Bearing Point who now has a product. The Management Group felt very strongly that this project is too far along to begin actively reviewing and considering options other than the in-house development currently underway. The group felt that to do so would undermine the project in general and would call into question our commitment to complete the project. There was general agreement that the process of evaluating vendor products had already been completed and that it would be counter-productive to keep revisiting the issue and evaluating new products as they become available. It was suggested that if a vendor contacted the University requesting consideration, they could be provided with a copy of our Requirements Document, and, if the vendor provided a detailed document indicating clearly and specifically how each of our requirements would be met by their system, as well as the approximate cost of their system, we could agree, depending on our progress to date, to review their document if we felt that their system would cost significantly less than our in-house system and would provide significant additional benefits.