

**Effort Reporting System Requirements Group**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**September 9, 2004 - Revised , 2004 - Accepted , 2004**

In attendance were: Amy Kimball; Buck Marcussen; James Ringo; Maribel Ganal; Sandra Brierly; Dan Gilbreath; Mike Anthony; Jon Good; Bruce Irvine; Jorge Ohy; and Pixie Ogren

**Discussion Topics:**

Review and Acceptance of Meeting Notes:

The notes for the Meeting of August 12, 2004 were accepted with the following clarification. Semi-annual should be added to the section dealing with frequency of effort reporting. In the last paragraph suggesting additional wording to describe the reporting period, language needs to be specific about excluding summer research payments from the July through October Fall Quarter period.

Cost Sharing

The group had a lengthy discussion about cost sharing focusing on two key points.

- Recording the cost sharing offset to "below the line" fund sources - All cost sharing recorded on sponsored projects needs to have a corresponding offset on non-sponsored funds. For example, an employee is paid 50% from a sponsored project and 50% from 19900 funds. An effort report is produced and the employee indicates an additional 10% of effort as cost sharing on the sponsored project, so that the effort on the sponsored project is now 60%. If the employee actually devoted 60% effort to the sponsored project that means that they devoted only 40% effort on the 19900 activities. The effort report needs to be adjusted to reflect that reduction on non-sponsored funds. In this example, it's fairly simple because there is only one non-sponsored fund. But what if there are additional categories of non-sponsored funds such as practice plan funds? If that were the case, someone (or the system) would need to determine how to distribute the 10% offset.

The question was raised: Should logic be built into ERS to automatically assign the cost sharing offset to non-federal fund sources based on some agreed upon logic such as prorating to fund sources or assigning the offset to funds based on an agreed upon order? Or, should the user be required to designate the fund sources to be offset? It's important to understand that this assignment of the cost share offset will be used in the F&A calculation but will not affect actual charges to the fund sources. This question will be taken to the ERS Management Group for their input.

- Recording of cost sharing in situations in which the project is charged for less effort than is stated in the proposal. In this case there would be a commitment of effort which needs to be certified. The conclusion of the Requirements Group was that this is really a policy issue which should be referred back to the Management Group for decision.

Review of Screen Mockups - The group reviewed some very basic mockups of screens to be used to access effort reports. The conclusion of the group was that different types of users would want to access the reports by different selections. For example, PI's might want to access reports by employee or by project, while coordinators may want to access by department, PI, project,

employee, etc. Screens will be developed to accommodate the various views and will make use of drop down menus or listings. The system should provide for favorites and defaults so that a particular user will have the opportunity to set the default for the first item on any dropdown list. This use of favorites and defaults will need to be further refined.

Separating funds into "Above the Line" and "Below the Line" - The Requirements Group talked about how various fund types would be displayed in ERS. In an earlier discussion, the Management Group agreed that only funds requiring certification would be certified. In the interests of consistency, it was further agreed that any non-federal or non-federal flow through funds which required certification would be agreed upon at a systemwide level and that all campuses would comply, certifying only the required funds. That means that effort for most non-federal funds including private, state, etc. awards would not be certified. If we use the current "above the line" and "below the line" terminology, federal and federal flow-through funds along with a few other designated sponsored project funds would be "above the line" while all other funds including all other sponsored projects would be "below the line". Since the ERS system needs to monitor reports to ensure that certifications are complete, it is important to clearly separate funds requiring certification from funds not requiring certification. On the current PAR reports all sponsored projects are listed "above the line" with any non-federal funds being lumped into a category titled "other sponsored projects", while non-sponsored projects are listed "below the line". The question: Is there any problem with moving non-federal sponsored projects not requiring certification to "below the line" ? The Requirements Group agreed that there is no problem doing that so long as the headings are clear about what is included in each group.

Multiple Certifications - The group had a discussion about how some of the system processes should work when multiple certifications are required. Several questions were raised, primarily dealing with the questions of when the system should perform edits and consider the report certified and final. Although we had a discussion concerning multiple certifications at our July 14 meeting, there are several issues which remain and should be discussed further. The notes on the subject from our July 14 meeting read:

*The group agreed that a significant number of effort reports will require more than one certification and it is not reasonable to expect Effort Report Coordinators to manage the process of obtaining multiple certifications without system assistance. The problems with multiple certifications occur for many reasons, but primarily because it is not possible for the system to determine how many certifications are required for each effort report nor is it possible for the system to determine who the certifiers should be. This is because for any given employee there are a number of people who could legitimately certify the effort. For example, Principal Investigators (PI's) can certify for anyone paid from their funds, other academics and staff supervisors can certify for any employee for whom they have first hand knowledge of the work performed, and employees can certify their own. PI's may have funds in more than one department, employees may be paid from multiple funds (with multiple PI's) and may work for more than one supervisor and in more than one department.*

*The group concluded that if each effort report contained a list of all fund sources--displayed in such a way that employees are accustomed to seeing fund source information for their*

*campus--it would be reasonable to expect that each certifier could be asked to check off a box indicating for which fund source they were certifying. It was generally felt that as long as the full name of the fund source was displayed along with the numbers that certifiers would be able to recognize and designate the appropriate fund sources to which their certification applied. The system could then simply monitor to verify that all boxes had been checked off. If boxes for some fund sources were not checked off, the system could determine which department those fund sources belonged to so that appropriate follow up could be done to ensure that the certification process was completed.*

This discussion will be continued at a future meeting.

The next meeting is September 22.