Effort Reporting System
Technical Advisory Group
Notes of the October 19, 2004 Meeting
Accepted 11/2/2004

Attendees: Jon Good (UCOP), Bruce Irvine (UCOP), Wayne Kidd (UCOP), Terry Truax (UCOP), Adam Cohen (UCOP), Renata Ellis (UCB), Kate Riley (UCB), Larry Johnson (UCD), Lyle Kafader (UCSD), Karen Bliman (UCB), Judith Freed (UCLA), Mabel Lai (UCLA)

Adam Cohen was introduced as the Effort Reporting System Project Manager, taking over from Bruce Irvine.

The agenda and project schedule were distributed. Notes from the 9/21 meeting were reviewed and no changes were requested.

Project Overview/Update – Bruce Irvine

- Terry Truax was brought on in the database designer role and has started work on data element definitions.
- System design work has been started – Wayne presented design of security roles, authentication and authorization later in the meeting
- Next step to hire graphic design/user interface designer – to develop "look and feel"

Jon reported that although some individual items may be a little behind the schedule, progress continues to be made on many items, with the result that the overall project is on target with no delays expected.

Open Items from Previous Meeting - Bruce Irvine

- Report generation and tools – survey of campuses found only four unique products/tools in use.
- Using Requirements, we have developed a list of standard reports that will be provided as part of the system. Other requirements will be met by ad-hoc reporting tool, or the TAG can identify additional standard reports that can be added to the base system.

Jon reported on discussion of cost sharing with management group. Cost sharing has three contexts: commitment – the agreed-upon terms in a contract; effort – actual cost-sharing representative of effort; financial – accounting of cost sharing contributions to the research project. The ERS will take in committed cost sharing information as a starting point for the certification of cost sharing in the context of effort reporting. Cost sharing in ERS is limited to just the context of effort reporting.

Authentication/Authorization Design Approach - Wayne Kidd

Wayne presented a design approach for an access control system. [Powerpoint presentation will be posted to the TAG web page separately.]

Jon asked if campuses have a mechanism for non-employees to be authenticated so that they can view/edit/certify effort data. There is a potential requirement for non-employees to be able to access the system at some level – for example, an employee of a K-12 school or district who performs research on a federally funded UC research project.

- UCSD has a system for "affiliates" who are not employees but have access to various campus systems. Lyle asked for the authentication and authorization system to support replaceable authorization class(es) for a campus implementation to interface with local authorization/role databases. UCLA also has a local system that needs to be supported.

- Lyle asked when specs for session object will be provided for campuses to interface to authentication. Wayne estimates that this spec will be ready the end of the year.

- Larry reported that Davis has computer account system that supports visitors, sponsored non-employees, with account expiration; the system maps account to other identifiers such as Employee ID, Student ID, etc.

A discussion followed of how to handle the case where Employee ID might not exist for an ERS user. Is there such as case? We know about possible users of ERS who are not employees but what about someone who must file an effort report, but is not an employee. This can impact how we design the database keys. Jon asked campus representatives to determine whether this situation exists at their campuses. Specifically, the question campuses need to respond to is posed as follows:

> Does your campus allow an "affiliate" (neither UC employee nor UC student) to access applications systems where access to information within the application system is controlled by one or more attributes typical of an Employee or Student record? For example, consider an application system which limits a user's access to financial information by the home department code of the individual user. Home Department typicall is obtained from the Employee record. For "affiliates", no employee record would exist. Are there examples of campus systems set up in this manner where "affiliates" have access?

Audit Trail Approach – Bruce Irvine

We need to clarify requirements; specifically do we need to be able to audit viewing of data in addition to the more typical audit of data modifications.

Wayne presented a preliminary design approach in which "versioning" will be used behind the scenes to snapshot an entire effort report as of the point where it is modified, certified, or other action is taken. Additional data elements will be captured at snapshot including date, time, comment, user performing action.

Authorization – if you have permission to certify an individual line item on an effort report you can certify the entire effort report for the employee. Requirements group has said yes to this. There is concern for "checks and balances" and accountability with multiple departments being able to update the same employee's effort report. Bruce explained that the design of ERS is meant to be more open and accessible; PPS has the tighter authorization controls and transfer of expense transactions would provide the formal record of allocation of expense across multiple distributions and/or FAU's for the same employee.

Performance issues need to be considered; retention period (5 years or longer), database performance impact.

Discussion of reporting tools continued in the context of audit trail. What tools are in use currently at campuses for reporting. What needs exist for working with audit trail data. What kind of audit trails are in place for other campus applications.

Follow-up item for the ERS Team: develop an outline of the different type of audit trails and design options; bring back to TAG for review and discussion at next meeting.

Judith mentioned a system from Stanford called "Signet" and applicability to ERS development. Works with the identity management system "Shibboleth." We will discuss this authentication and authorization solution at the next ERS TAG meeting.

Ad-Hoc Discussion

Jon asked what sort of information campuses would like to be able to review and comment on during the design and development phases of the project to make best use of the time of the TAG members' time.

- UCSD is interested in seeing early external design of the user interface.
- UCLA would like to see an early data model to be able to evaluate impact of key selection on campus database performance.

ERS development team will produce ERWIN diagrams of the data model and UML outputs via the project website at the earliest opportunity.

Next Meeting

Next ERS TAG meeting will be November 2, 2004 2-4pm, via conference call. ERS team will publish agenda and other materials via project website and will announce availability in advance of November meeting.