

Effort Reporting System
Technical Advisory Group
Notes of the November 16, 2004 Meeting
DRAFT – 11/16/2004

Attendees: Jon Good (UCOP), Adam Cohen (UCOP), Wayne Kidd (UCOP), Terry Truax (UCOP), Renata Ellis (UCB), Don Rutherford (UCB), Lyle Kafader (UCSD), Judith Freed (UCLA), Mabel Lai (UCLA), Beatrice Cardona (UCSF), Larry Johnson (UCD)

The meeting was conducted via conference call. Notes from the 11/2 meeting were reviewed and no changes were noted.

Project Status Update

Adam reported that the project schedule has been revised and updated and is available on the home page of the project website: http://www.ucop.edu/sysdev1/ers/ers_docs.html. Project tasks have been refined and several milestones have been identified. Percent Complete on many design tasks has been updated to reflect current status.

The recruitment for the user interface designer has been completed and a contractor has been hired. Eli Cochran will start on Wednesday November 17th and will attend the Requirements Group meeting that day. Their first deliverable for the user interface designer will be to produce mockups of the external design for review by the TAG and Requirements groups.

Design Review – ERS Interfaces

Adam reviewed the current design of the interfaces to ERS from Payroll and campus financial systems. The interface diagram is available on the project website. The PPS PAR interface will consist of an extract program that campus payroll PAR files and produces a flat file for transfer and loading into ERS.

Several campuses asked if the extract program could be run on a variable schedule.

Adam responded that the program will be designed to allow any number of PAR files to be processed through the extract program on a scheduled or ad-hoc basis. This will allow campuses to run the extract program once per compute, or monthly when Payroll PAR files have been consolidated, or on any other schedule.

The Financial System interface will include data from the campus chart of accounts, and potentially from a contract and grants system and a cost sharing system.

Lyle pointed out that cost sharing commitments must be expressed in terms of an employee percent of time, or a dollar amount, or a time period, or a combination of these criteria. We need to better define what cost sharing variables will be accepted on the financial systems interface. Several campuses do not have cost sharing in place yet and cannot commit to the cost sharing interface. ERS will provide a mechanism for cost

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sharing commitments to be established for specific sponsored projects in the event that this data is not available via the interface file.

Beatrice asked if there would be any impact to Effort Reporting if the campus moved to a monthly fiscal close from an annual fiscal close, specifically in the area of cost sharing. Jon replied that the fiscal close does not impact Effort Reporting at all. Adam added that as long as the financial system interface file could be provided with accounts to match the Payroll PAR, there would be no issue with changing the closing.

Judith asked whether there was an issue with synchronization of data from the Payroll PAR interface with data from the financial system interface; for example, whether the interface files needed to be loaded at the same time.

The effort report creation process will verify that fund information from the financial system interface file is present before allowing an effort report to be generated. An edit report would flag the situation where the Payroll PAR interface was out of sync with the financial systems interface data. This would allow the financial system interface to “catch up” before effort report generation.

Judith also pointed out that fund numbers are reused at UCLA. The interval of a fund number was unknown.

Adam replied that this was anticipated and that the fund information provided on the interface file will be qualified by start and end dates so that we can keep all variations of a fund for historical and current effort reports.

Judith also mentioned that UCLA processes payroll for UCOP and UC Merced. The interface files will need to be qualified with location code in some way so that UCLA can process each campus independently. The ERS team will evaluate how to provide this capability.

The ERS team will publish draft specifications for the Payroll PAR and Financial Systems interface files very shortly. TAG members were asked to review these specifications and provide any comments or issues at the next TAG meeting.

Issues Discussion

Adam described the process for matching full accounting units (FAU) that appear on Payroll PAR file transactions with account/fund records that will be loaded through the financial systems interface. It is vital that these FAU's match so that we can properly associate payroll with a sponsored project.

Campuses generally agreed that it was feasible to provide an FAU on the financial systems interface file that matched the FAU used in PPS. But the final determination

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will be made once campuses have the opportunity to review the interface file specifications.

A question was raised whether all thirty characters of the FAU would be needed for the match. Jon suggested a “masking” approach where the specific character positions in the FAU examined in the matching process could be selected by the campus. The design team will evaluate including this capability.

Other Issues

Adam alerted the campuses that we may need assistance establishing a development platform for one or more of the Oracle DBMS releases that are not available at UCOP. We would need to have remote access to the database from the development environment at UCOP. Adam will make a specific request later on once we determine exactly what DBMS versions are needed.

The ERS design requires that we load the campus department list and organizational structure for display and reporting purposes. Adam proposed that the department table be loaded once, at installation, and that subsequent maintenance be performed within ERS using an administrative web page.

Campuses were unanimous in their preference for an automated process that would reload the department information on a recurring basis, rather than requiring user entry or update of this information. The ERS team will revise the design to provide an automated data load for department data.

Some campuses reported that they use a two-level hierarchy. UCLA reported that they use a four-level hierarchy. All campuses use an alphanumeric department coding scheme. The ERS team will provide the ability to support an unlimited number of levels in the departmental hierarchy used by ERS.

Next Meeting

The next ERS TAG meeting will be Tuesday December 7, 2004 2-4pm, via conference call. The ERS team will publish agenda and other materials via project website and will announce availability in advance of the meeting.