eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2003
Time: 9:00–10:40 a.m.
Location: 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205
Chair: JJ McGowan

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 25, 9:00 a.m., 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205

Action Items

1. (Marcia Hahn) Report back to the policy office the recommendation to consider discrete data elements for stem cell data items.
2. (Project Team) Send suggestions of ways to categorize grant team members (e.g.; key personnel and budget personnel; Other Important Folk-OIF).
3. (Scarlett Gibb) Convene offline meeting to discuss ways to capture budgeted information for people not named as key personnel. Team members interested in attending this meeting should email Scarlett Gibb.
4. (Scarlett Gibb, JJ McGowan) Finalize wording of security certification document for OPDIVs.
5. (Project Team) Review the eRA Outreach Brochure and email comments or send marked-up brochure to Scarlett Gibb or Sandy Seppala.
6. (Scarlett Gibb) Add a paragraph description to each priority item listed on the scoring sheet and distribute the sheet to project advocates.
7. (Advocates) Return prioritized scoring sheet to Scarlett Gibb by November 6, 2003.
8. (Advocates) Email Scarlett Gibb with any questions regarding items listed on the scoring sheet.

Attachments

- Summary of Proposed Changes to the PHS398 (Marcia Hahn): **http://era.nih.gov/docs/Summary of Suggested_Changes_PHS398-ERA_Implications.pdf**
- ERA Password Policy Update for eRA Project Team (Tracy Soto): **http://era.nih.gov/docs/ERA_Password_Policy_update_10-28-2003.pdf**
- The eRA Project Team Retreat (Scarlett Gibb): **http://era.nih.gov/docs/Project_Team_Retreat_2003_follow-up.pdf**

Project Report

JJ McGowan

JJ mentioned that the budget and project status briefing with Dr. Zerhouni that was supposed to take place last week has been postponed until November 14. JJ noted that the delay would allow him to incorporate greater detail of the team's top 10 priority recommendations. He hopes to convey a message that the eRA project is on budget, within scope and on time for scheduled activities. He will clearly identify which of the prioritized items have been scheduled and budgeted for and which have not. New requirements must be traded for scheduled activities or developed with additional funding.

JJ noted that normally at this time of year he sends a memo out to the advocates to ask if they would like to continue with their eRA project responsibilities or have him find a replacement in their area. He asked that the current advocates remain in place as he transitions from his current leadership position on the project. JJ stressed the importance of project stability and keeping principle players anchored and engaged during times of leadership and contract transition.

JJ noted that he was interviewed for an article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* titled "Grant Applications Make their Debut at NIH". The main focus of the article is the electronic acceptance of 14 grant applications, despite JJ's attempts to include a broader picture of the eRA System and its benefits.

NOTE: eRA also received a nice amount of press in an October 29, 2003 article in the *Washington Fax*, a news and information service specializing in science policy. The article, titled "Interagency Grants Data Set Submitted to OMB", contains several quotes from JJ that convey the eRA vision of becoming a premier grants research tool.

PHS398 Revision–eRA Implications

Marcia Hahn

Marcia walked the team through the handout titled "Summary of Proposed Changes to the PHS398 (2004 Version)". The document summarizes upcoming changes and highlights items that will require further analysis from the eRA team.

Discussion points:

Form Page 2: Description/Abstract

- Sherry Zucker recommended that new discrete data elements be considered for stem cell data items.

  Action: (Marcia Hahn) Report back to the policy office the recommendation to consider discrete data elements for stem cell data items.

Form Page 2: Key Words

- Carlos Caban asked if we could capture description and specific aims information at time of receipt. Although it can be done technically, JJ felt funding would be better spent on other initiatives since this will become a non-issue down the line.

Policy Changes: Definitions

- "Intellectual contributors" need to be captured (e.g., mentors).
- JJ noted that a distinction could be drawn between key personnel and budgeted personnel.

Action: (Project Team) Send suggestions of ways to categorize grant team members (e.g.; key personnel and budget personnel; Other Important Folk-OIF).

- The team agreed that a small offline meeting to discuss ways to capture budgeted information for people not named as key personnel would be beneficial.

  Action: (Scarlett Gibb) Convene offline meeting to discuss ways to capture budgeted information for people not named as key personnel. Team members interested in attending this meeting should email Scarlett Gibb.

Carlos Caban reported that as OPDIVs start using the NIH forms, they have a lot of questions regarding what is NIH policy and what is required of them. JJ reiterated the DHHS position that eRA should treat OPDIVs like an IC. They will have the same opportunities as ICs to participate in Project Team activities and raise their issues and concerns to appropriate advocates. The top leadership within the OPDIVs have been directed to work within the framework of NIH's eRA System unless they can demonstrate to the department that there is a legal or business need for a change.

Password Policy

Tracy Soto

Tracy reviewed the password policy that was approved in July and is scheduled to take effect with the November release. Although the expected future implementation of the single sign-on initiative will drastically reduce the burden on system users to maintain passwords in multiple applications, immediate password changes were necessary to address issues revealed during the eRA security audit by the March deadline.

Tracy's handout titled "eRA Password Policy Update for eRA Project Team" clearly outlines the policy basics and application/user impact of the changes.

JJ noted that as OPDIVs are brought up on the system it is important that upper management within the OPDIV sign a document certifying that all users of the eRA System will adhere to the security policies in place.

Action: (Scarlett Gibb, JJ McGowan) Finalize wording of security certification document for OPDIVs.

eRA Priorities–Retreat Follow-up

Scarlett Gibb

Scarlett thanked the team for their enthusiastic participation in the annual eRA Retreat. She asked the team to submit their feedback on the eRA brochure that was distributed at the retreat so that we can have them printed and available for eRA exhibitions, demonstrations, and training.

Action: (Project Team) Review the eRA Outreach Brochure and email comments or send marked-up brochure to Scarlett Gibb or Sandy Seppala.

Scarlett quickly reviewed a few slides outlining the decisions made at the retreat regarding system maintenance activities. She highlighted the approved recommendations to hold client-server maintenance to 5% and J2EE maintenance to 15% of the overall funds for software development.

Scarlett shared with the team the list of high priority items identified by the three remaining groups (1-new needs; 2-mandated by policy/legislation; 3-migration). The items were categorized as "Recommendations within Current eRA Scope and Budget" or "Recommendations NOT within Current eRA Scope and Budget-Mandated".

Scarlett will distribute an electronic scoring sheet to the Project Team advocates as the final step in compiling the prioritized list. The team will rank each item from 1-n (the lower the number, the higher the priority). The scores of co-chairs will be averaged for a single vote. Scarlett will compile the results and report her findings back at a future project team meeting.

Action: (Scarlett Gibb) Add a paragraph description to each priority item listed on the scoring sheet and distribute the sheet to project advocates.

Action: (Advocates) Return prioritized scoring sheet to Scarlett Gibb by November 6, 2003.

Action: (Advocates) Email Scarlett Gibb with any questions regarding items listed on the scoring sheet.

The top 10 prioritized list will be one of several important drivers considered in the creation of an eRA strategic plan for 2004 and beyond.

Policy Discussion–Visibility of R&R Notes

JJ McGowan

It was recently brought to JJ's attention that Receipt and Referral notes that R&R users thought were restricted to approved users of the Referral Module are now also visible through Peer Review and Grants Management module reports. Although the "Meeting At a Glance Report" in question is working as specified, JJ used this issue to highlight the need for greater communication of activities across user communities and more interaction between group advocates.

JJ challenged the Project Team to think about how open eRA should be in sharing information between modules. Should there be private data areas? What are the benefits and disadvantages of an "open" information philosophy? JJ pointed out that policy can change at any time and any stored information may at some point become more openly accessible. Although it is easy to see why some "internal" information can be irrelevant to users outside a business area, it is not as clear why information that is "inappropriate" for viewing outside a business area would be stored.

Issues, questions, and concerns of this nature should continue to be raised to the Project Team advocates and further discussion on this topic should take place once the team has a chance to give the matter proper consideration.

Attendees

Austin, Patricia (OER/COB)	Cummins, Sheri (LTS/COB)	Hughes, Stephen (OD)
Burns, Amy (LTS/COB)	Diggs, Lana (OER)	Lederhendler, Israel (NIMH)
Caban, Carlos (OER)	Gaines, Patti (OER)	Lynch, Peggy (IBM)
Collie, Krishna (RN Solutions)	Gibb, Scarlett (COB)	Markovitz, Paul (OER)
Copeland, Zoe-Ann (OD/OER)	Hahn, Marcia (OER/OPERA)	Martin, Carol (NHGRI)
	Hausman, Steve (NIAMS)	McGowan, JJ (NIAID)

Morton, Larry (OER)	Sachar, Brad (Oracle)	Tucker, Jim (OER)
Newburgh, Janet (CSR)	Shingler, Felicia (OER/COB)	Van Brunt, Virginia (LTS)
Panniers, Richard (CSR)	Silver, Sara (Z-Tech)	Walker, Catherine (OER)
Patel, Kalpesh (Ekagra)	Sinnett, Everett (CSR/OD)	Wilson, Mike (NGIT)
Ratnanather, Chanath (Z-Tech)	Soto, Tracy (OD/DEIS)	Zucker, Sherry (DEIS