



## NIH eRA Commons Working Group (CWG)

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Date: Sunday, September 9, 2007  
Location: Washington, DC  
Chair: Megan Columbus  
Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 9

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### Action Items

1. (CWG Participants) Send examples of the system-generated summary page not matching what was submitted in the application to Megan Columbus ([ColumbuM@od.nih.gov](mailto:ColumbuM@od.nih.gov)) and Scarlett Gibb ([GibbS@od.nih.gov](mailto:GibbS@od.nih.gov)).
2. (Stacey Kocher) Send communication to NIH review, program and grants management staff explaining how the summary page is created, what is presented and what items can be changed and how those changes are made.
3. (Marcia Hahn) Verify to what extent contract data is included in the award data.
4. (Sheri Cummins) Coordinate the placement of a link to the NIH Guide from the Commons page of the eRA Web site.
5. (Megan Columbus) Distribute link to subscribe to Extramural Nexus.
6. (Sheri Cummins) Create new distribution lists for eRA Commons.
7. (Scarlett Gibb) Explore the possibility of adding option to subscribe to Commons distribution lists when creating accounts. Alternatively, provide link to subscription page in account set-up email.
8. (Scarlett Gibb) Remove “Notification” field from Commons personal profile screen and “Policy Announcement and Notification Email Address” field from Commons institutional profile.
9. (Sheri Cummins) Coordinate the creation of a News section on the Commons page of the eRA Web site.
10. (Marcia Hahn) Provide update to NIH institutes with final xTrain pilot participation list and change in pilot dates.
11. (Scarlett Gibb) Consider allowing access to the Ext-UAT environment to exercise the new xTrain functionality.

### Handouts & Presentations

- [Communications Update](#)
- [eRA Commons To Do List](#)
- [xTrain Update](#)
- [xTrain Roles Reference Sheet](#) General Update & Discussion

## eSubmission

Megan Columbus

### Discussion Points:

- There are several initiatives that are pending that will require form changes (transition to Adobe-based forms, adding fields required by Federal Funding Accountability Transparency Act, changes to SF424 (R&R) form set for new OMB clearance). NIH will make every effort to combine as many changes as possible to reduce agency and applicant burden.
- NIH will continue to use PureEdge forms at least through March 2008 standard submission deadlines.
- Due to the delay in deploying the 2007 system, Grants.gov has not been able to work on new forms development. Once new forms are developed, NIH has to code and test its own system to accommodate the new forms. Training (T), Fellowship (F), and Career Development (K) programs will not transition to electronic submission before next summer.
- Megan stressed that the submission process is not complete until you see the application in eRA Commons. She noted one case where an application was submitted to Grants.gov and received a tracking number, but due to a number of reasons it was not made available to NIH for further processing. The application remained “lost” for six months. NIH didn’t know it existed and the applicant had not followed through on tracking the application.
- Questions were raised regarding the system generated summary page that precedes the application image. Some meeting participants reported that the information did not reflect what was in the application. Others indicated they received calls from NIH requesting that they correct the information contained in the summary page.

**Action:** (CWG Participants) Send examples of the system-generated summary page not matching what was submitted in the application to Megan Columbus ([ColumbuM@od.nih.gov](mailto:ColumbuM@od.nih.gov)) and Scarlett Gibb ([Gibbs@od.nih.gov](mailto:Gibbs@od.nih.gov)).

**Action:** (Stacey Kocher) Send communication to NIH review, program and grants management staff explaining how the summary page is created, what is presented and what items can be changed and how those changes are made.

## eRA Commons

Scarlett Gibb

### Discussion Points:

- Since the last CWG meeting there have been two eRA Commons deployments.

## July 20, 2007 Deployment

Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Changes to eSNAP to support multiple PIs<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– The “Manage eSNAP” screen has been modified so that grant applications with multiple Principal Investigators (PIs) are clearly marked. MPI has been added to the right of the grant number to indicate Multi-PI.</li><li>– The “View eSNAP Report” and “View Routing History” buttons are available to Multi-PIs.</li><li>– The “PI Name” field includes all of the PIs with the Contact PI being designated as such. This change is reflected on all eSNAP pages with display the PI’s name.</li><li>– A second page has been added to the PHS2590 report and final eSNAP that shows the Multi-PIs if they exist on a grant.</li></ul></li><li>▪ Changes to “Key Personnel” section of eSNAP<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Multi-PIs are displayed on the “Edit Business – Key Personnel List” screen.</li><li>– PI and Multi-PI records within the “Key Personnel List” are editable. Only “Months Devoted to Project (Annual, Academic, and Calendar)” may be edited for the Contact PI.</li><li>– The Contact PI is identified as “PI (Contact)” within the “Role(s)” column. Multi-PIs are identified as “PI” within the “Role(s)” column.</li><li>– eSNAP Upload Science<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– The “Upload Science” portion of the eSNAP has been modified to include an option to view all PI citations.</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>▪ eSNAP submission<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Any current reviewer on an eSNAP can submit all four eSNAP documents: Progress Report, Research Accomplishments, Other Support and Other SNAP &amp; Progress Report Checklist.</li><li>– The “Months Devoted to Project (Annual, Academic, and Calendar)” fields have been moved to the “Edit Business – Key Personnel List” screen.</li></ul></li></ul>

## August 31, 2007 Deployment

Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Fixed bug introduced in July deployment that prevented the initiation of an eSNAP if any data was being carried over from a former progress report.</li><li>▪ Performance enhancements</li></ul>

- A release is planned for October 26, 2007. The primary focus of the release will be the delivery of xTrain. The release also will include additional performance enhancements, the ability to search by Grants.gov tracking number and will show both the Grants.gov tracking number and the NIH accession number for error-free submissions. There will be some screen changes (especially in the PI view) associated with this release.

## Policy

Marcia Hahn

### Discussion Points:

- A notice was placed in the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts requiring mandatory use of the electronic Financial Status Report (FSR) system in the eRA Commons beginning October 1, 2007 ([NOT-OD-07-078](#)).
- NIH continues to move towards requiring the use of the electronic Closeout system in the eRA Commons. NIH is centralizing the processing of closeout documents to provide timelier and consistent document handling. All NIH Institutes have agreed to use the centralized team. Approximately two thirds of the Institutes are already on board and all will join by December 2007. Marcia noted that there are a lot of variables that require human decisions throughout the closeout process so full automation in this area is not likely; however, centralizing the function will greatly improve the overall process.
- NIH will eliminate all hard copy Notice of Award mailings in 2008. This change will require all institutions to be email enabled. Approximately 50% of the registered institutions in eRA Commons do not have email addresses in their Institutional Profile Files (IPFs). Steps will be taken to address this data issue prior to cutting off paper mailings.
- NIH is changing its system to allow multiple active applications. Due to initiatives to expedite review (e.g., special deadlines for AIDS applications and New Investigators responding to reviewer feedback in the previous round), it is now common to receive the next version of an application before the previous one has made its way completely through the system. The system must be flexible enough to recognize this reality. The receipt of an amended application (i.e., A1) will no longer automatically withdraw the previous (i.e., 01) version. However, if any active application is awarded the others will be withdrawn.
- By the end of the year, NIH Scientific Review Administrators (SRA) will have the ability to upload additional documents to the grant folder and make them available to reviewers through the Internet Assisted Review system in eRA Commons. Any post-submission application changes will continue to go through the SRA and will be accepted at the discretion of the SRA. The original application submission will remain as submitted. Any added documents will be addenda to the original submission.
- The deadline to review fiscal year 2007 grant award data is November 1, 2007. After this deadline, grantee institutions and organizations will not be able to update their information in the official publication file. If your organization has been awarded any grants between October 1, 2006 and September 30, 2007, organization officials have an opportunity to review the information and provide NIH with updated information to avoid errors in assignment of grants in subsequent official NIH reports. (See [NOT-OD-07-094](#))
  - CWG participants questioned to what extent contract data is included.

**Action:** (Marcia Hahn) Verify to what extent contract data is included in the award data.

## Communications

Megan Columbus

Presentation: [Communications Update](#)

### Discussion Points:

- The NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts is considered the trusted source of information. As one participant put it, “I don’t believe it until I see it in the Guide.” Many subscribe to receive the weekly Table of Contents. A suggestion was made to put a link to the NIH Guide from the Commons page of the eRA Web site.

**Action:** (Sheri Cummins) Coordinate the placement of a link to the NIH Guide from the Commons page of the eRA Web site.

- Participants like the additional heads-up and context provided in the listserv mailings.
- Many participants did not subscribe to the Extramural Nexus. Those that did, however, found the information relevant and informative.

**Action:** (Megan Columbus) Distribute link to subscribe to Extramural Nexus.

- NIH currently does not have a distribution list to reach Commons users, although several lists exist to distribute electronic submission information. Two generic Commons distribution lists will be created – one for administrators and another for PIs. The electronic submission lists will be rolled into the new lists.

**Action:** (Sheri Cummins) Create new distribution lists for eRA Commons.

**Action:** (Scarlett Gibb) Explore the possibility of adding option to subscribe to Commons distribution lists when creating accounts. Alternatively, provide link to subscription page in account set-up email.

**Action:** (Scarlett Gibb) Remove “Notification” field from Commons personal profile screen and “Policy Announcement and Notification Email Address” field from Commons institutional profile.

- The eRA team recently updated the <http://era.nih.gov/> website. Suggestion was made to include a News section on the Commons page.

**Action:** (Sheri Cummins) Coordinate the creation of a News section on the Commons page of the eRA Web site.

## Commons To Do List

Scarlett Gibb

Handout: [eRA Commons To Do List](#)

Comments from the discussion have been added to the attached eRA Commons To Do List with changes tracked.

## xTrain

Scarlett Gibb

Presentation: [xTrain Update](#)

A production pilot with nine institutions will take place October 29-30. Pilot feedback will be gathered in December and approved changes incorporated in early 2008.

### Discussion Points:

- Since mid-summer, training grants at participating pilot-test universities have been holding their appointment and termination forms, in order to have sufficient volume of paperwork to put to the test during the xTrain pilot. An initial list of institutions and grants has been shared with the NIH institutes.

**Action: (Marcia Hahn) Provide update to NIH institutes with final xTrain pilot participation list and change in pilot dates.**

- A recommendation was made to open up the External User Acceptance Test (Ext-UAT) environment for pilot testers and others to play with the new xTrain functionality.

**Action: (Scarlett Gibb) Consider allowing access to the Ext-UAT environment to exercise the new xTrain functionality.**