Commons Working Group (CWG) Minutes

Date: Tuesday, August 31, 2010
Location: Hotel George
15 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
Meeting Chair: Megan Columbus
Next Meeting: TBD

Action Items

1. Process for Ensuring Data Integrity

- Information in the institutional profile for School and Department should match what is being entered into the application. However, NIH will reevaluate and verify whether specific School and Department info is needed and will look to streamline the data quality process as appropriate.

2. New and Updated eRA Resources Feedback

- Sarah will send the group a comprehensive list of all resources discussed at the meeting. (Completed: September 2, 2010)

3. Relaying Application Statuses to Grants.gov

- NIH will open a software change request with Grants.gov to implement a new status code (e.g., "Rejected with Errors by Agency") at Grants.gov so that agencies would be able to provide a final status for all applications.

4. General Discussion

- NIH will look into an expedient way to invite a group of faculty to the January meeting.

eRA Commons Update

Presenter: Scarlett Gibb
Handout: "eRA Commons Update"
Summary:
- **eSNAPS** are now mandatory for all awards that are SNAP eligible (check Notice of Award for eligibility). For more information, see NOT-OD-10-093.
- **My NCBI:** PD/PIs no longer able to manually enter citations into eRA Commons and should enter new citations into My NCBI. As of the October 22 release, citations that PD/PIs manually entered into Commons will no longer be available. For more information and related resources, see http://era.nih.gov/ncbi/ncbi_overview.cfm.

- **FFR Pilot Update**: NIH has accepted 105 FFRs via eFFR as of 9-20-2010. Several pilot participants noted seeing incorrect due dates; Scarlett explained that the due dates appear as though they are not in the pilot. The dates were extended by policy but not in the system for pilot users. Due dates will be correct as we move forward, and the pilot institutions can disregard the incorrect due dates.
- **No-cost Extension:** A new 1-12 month dropdown will be implemented in the October release, allowing grantees to choose to request an extension of anywhere from 1 to 12 months. With this new feature in place, NIH can move toward mandating use of No-cost Extension.
- **xTrain Reminder**: Appointment forms and termination notices for research training, fellowship, education and career development awards must be submitted via xTrain beginning in January 2011. For more information, see [NOT-OD-10-072](NOT-OD-10-072).
- **Closeout:** As part of the new multi-PD/PI functionality in Closeout, PD/PIs will no longer need to verify the Final Invention Statement before the SO can submit it to the Agency (as of the October release). After the October release, eRA Communications will contact SOs whose institutions have Final Invention Statements that need to be approved/submitted by the SO.
- Marcia asked the group if they would have any concerns if NIH were to mandate the use of Closeout; the group said that once we have the upload in place, there are no concerns with mandating Closeout.
- **iEdison:** Incorporating iEdison is on eRA's "long-term wish list," but so far we have only been able to reconfigure it and move it into the Oracle database.
- Please view the handout "eRA Commons Update" for additional information about this agenda item.

Process for Ensuring Data Integrity
Presenter: Mark Siegert, Chief, Data Quality Branch
Presentation: "Ensuring Data Quality in eRA"
Summary:
- Mark noted that NIH experiences problems with our databases, reporting (e.g. FFATA), and/or modules if applicants/grantees provide missing or inaccurate data.
- He also noted that data regulation in Commons is a very manual process and involves three or four staffers talking directly to all of the Commons registered organizations.
- Mark asked the group if someone could send him a grant # (that resulted in data quality phone calls) to use as a training opportunity for data quality staff.
- Mark noted how duplicate Commons profiles create problems for data quality, such as when PIs have one account for their review work and one account for their own research grants. Adam and Scarlett noted that existing Commons users often select "new account" when they begin using Commons with a new organization. MIT asks faculty for their Commons ID prior to registering new users.

- The group noted that the process of how the data quality branch approaches them for corrections needs to be reevaluated (one or two institutions noted receiving several phone calls from a number of different NIH staff in one week). This is often seen with the reporting of departments and schools (for large universities). Mark will speak to the head of the reporting branch that uses this data about whether it is still necessary.
- Please view the presentation "Ensuring Data Quality in eRA" for additional information about this agenda item.

Action Items:
- Information in the institutional profile for School and Department should match what is being entered into the application. However, NIH will reevaluate and verify whether specific School and Department info is needed and will look to streamline the data quality process as appropriate.

Input for Federated Authentication

Presenter: Adam Levy, Development Manager
Handout: Example of how the Commons home/log in page could look once users are asked to choose an institution and role for their session (Role/Affiliation dropdown).
Summary:
- NIH is aiming to implement federated authentication in Commons as part of the July 2011 release.
- The group had a significant conversation concerning what happens when a federated organization's internet access goes down, eRA's IP goes down, etc., and what kind of back-end Commons entry we may be able to supply as a contingency plan. There are security issues with a user still having a separate Commons log in once he or she has a federated log in at his or her institution.
- Adam noted that when a faculty member leaves an institution, the responsibility will be on the institution to "unfederate" that faculty member.
- He also noted that logging out and logging back in (to switch roles) will no longer be necessary, as there will be a link to return to the home page, where a user can switch roles.

New and Updated eRA Resources Feedback

Presenter: Samuel Smith, Project Manager
Presentation: "eRA Resources"
Summary:
- A number of institutions reported receiving better help desk support since the May meeting.
- The group suggested that we try to give more exposure to various resources, including the Nexus, eRA Virtual School, and the new annotated application forms.
- The group suggested that unexpected, large help desk queues be posted in the Hot News section of the Self Help page in the future.

- Sam pointed out that the new Commons User Guide includes a direct feedback form.
  - Direct link to Commons User Guide: http://era.nih.gov/docs/COM_UGV2630.pdf
  - Direct link to eSNAP User Guide: http://era.nih.gov/docs/eSNAP_UG_v2.25.0.0_041210.pdf
- Please view the presentation "eRA Resources" for additional information about this agenda item.

Action Items:
- Sarah will send the group a comprehensive list of all resources discussed at the meeting. (Completed: September 2, 2010)

eSubmission Update and Impact of Minor Changes to eSubmission Validations on S2S Community

Presenter: Sheri Cummins

Handout: "NIH eRA eSubmission Update"

Summary:
- Two guide notices released in September 2010 detail the transition to ADOBE-FORMS-B1 for the majority of applicants (NOT-OD-11-007) and for F, T, K and D applicants (NOT-OD-11-008).
- The updated "B Series" Application Guide is expected to be available in mid-December 2010.
- On the updated Project/Performance Site Location(s) form, a DUNS # is no longer required for the primary site, but this information is required for FFATA and remains an NIH requirement. An eRA validation enforces including a DUNS # in this field.
- S2Sers indicated that when eRA simply changes the text of a message, they are not affected. Downgrading from an error to a warning, as well as removing errors or warnings, should be communicated at least 90 days in advance. Upgrading a validation to an error should be communicated as far in advance as possible (more than 90 days).
- The 2011 eSubmission budget will help us move towards goals of updating each form with Grants.gov changes, revisiting new activity codes to implement activity code-specific validations, and posting multiple activity codes on a single funding opportunity announcement.
- NIH business rules and the Adobe forms enforce that only 10 Appendices can be included with an application. eRA will process S2S submissions that include more than 10 appendices (schema limit is 100), but such applications may later be identified as non-compliant, since our instructions are very clear that the limit is 10.
- Please view the handout "NIH eRA eSubmission Update" for additional information about this agenda item.

Relaying Application Statuses to Grants.gov

Presenter: Adam Levy, Development Manager

Summary:
- Adam explained to the group that eRA is not always updating the Grants.gov side to put their "Received by Agency" status and the tracking number on all applications that we have downloaded

successfully. We have identified one bug that has contributed to this problem that will be fixed in an upcoming release.

- NIH will continue to attempt to update the status in Grants.gov three times and then stop. Once we address the known issue, we will continue to monitor these attempts and determine our rate of success. We'll revisit the issue if necessary.

Action Items:

- NIH will open a software change request with Grants.gov to implement a new status code (e.g., "Rejected with Errors by Agency") at Grants.gov so that agencies would be able to provide a final status for all applications.

Engaging Users in Testing

Presenters: Scarlett Gibb & Sheri Cummins

Note: This agenda item was tabled until our next meeting.