Vision Statement
Implement a compliant, streamlined, electronic effort reporting process by June 2012 that reduces administrative burden on campuses.

Effort Reporting Essentials
What a Principal Investigator (PI) Should Know About Effort Reporting:
- You are committing your effort to the sponsor when you include yourself in the proposal as a person who is contributing to the project outcome
- Most federally-funded research programs should have some level of committed faculty or senior researcher effort—paid or unpaid by the federal government
- Effort is the amount or percentage of time you are agreeing to work on a specific sponsored award—it can be provided at any time (academic year, summer months or both) within the approved project period
- Some research programs, e.g., equipment, doctoral dissertations, student augmentation, do not require committed faculty effort
- If you reduce your effort on a federal award prior approval from the sponsor may be required—depending on the award terms and conditions
- Many activities cannot be charged to a federal sponsored award, e.g., time spent serving on an IRB, IACUC or other research committee
- Effort must be certified by the PI, or someone with first-hand knowledge, who can verify that the work was actually performed

Providing Outstanding Sponsored Programs Administration Services and Stewardship

Critical Project Success Factor: Internal Audit Review
An independent internal evaluation of the project structure, methodology and the ecrt software is necessary to assure that the project will achieve operational effectiveness and efficiency, reliable financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Internal audit staff is a key partner in helping monitor the project, including:
- Determining whether business objectives and project milestones are being met.
- Ensuring administrative and automated controls are in place and functioning.
- Providing management recommendations and controls guidance.

Members of the project functional team worked with internal audit staff to help them complete their first review. Internal audit will release their draft report within the next two weeks, and a management response will be developed by the functional team. A second review will be conducted after the ecrt implementation.

A-21 Task Force – Effort Reporting
The A-21 Task Force was established earlier this year to consider potential revisions to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21. It was charged with identifying potential revisions that could reduce the cost and administrative burden associated with conducting federally-sponsored research. The task force issued a “Request for Information” and the Research Foundation (RF) submitted a response, based in part on a response prepared by the Council of Government Relations (COGR), on July 28, 2011.

On November 9, 2011 COGR sent the task force a document proposing that institutions could adopt a framework that would demonstrate that existing payroll distribution systems already in place provide a strong compliance infrastructure and ensure that salary charges to federal awards are appropriate. Each institution that adopts the model framework would implement it in a fashion that is appropriate to their business practices.

The foundation of this model includes active financial management practices that are designed to incorporate the following:
- Preventive controls (including employee training)
- Ongoing monitoring and review (including periodic reviews of payroll allocations)
- Detective controls (including error and exception reports)

The RF is closely following these recommendations and the A-21 Task Force activities, and will report updates in future newsletters.
Quick Fact
Over 2,000 principal investigator e-mail addresses will be uploaded to the Oracle Business System in December 2011.

Core Campus Team
CNSE: Chris Waller
University at Albany: Paula Kaloyeros
Binghamton University: Paul Parker
University at Buffalo: Scott Shurtleff
Stony Brook University: Aaron Rosenblatt
SUNY Downstate Medical Center: Gary Leipzig
Upstate Medical University: Gina McMahon
SUNY ESF: Don Artz
SUNY New Paltz: Julie Majak
Buffalo State College: Linda Dubrawsky

Operational Excellence in Effort Reporting Project
November 2011 Newsletter
www.rfsuny.org

Project Activities

Shared Service with Campus-Specific Configurations
The Effort Certification and Reporting Technology (ecrt) software the RF is implementing offers the flexibility of a shared service implementation with campus-specific configurations. This provides the opportunity to eliminate inefficiencies and drive cost savings by leveraging technology that is customized to meet the needs of the campuses.

Huron consultants and members of the project functional team just completed configuration meetings at each of the 10 core project campuses to better understand their processes and needs. Almost 100 campus stakeholders, including seven vice presidents for research, eight operations managers and seven principal investigators, participated in these meetings. These stakeholders responded favorably to ecrt and the general consensus was that effort certification using ecrt would be easier to understand.

Next Steps
- The next project call will be held on Wednesday, December 14—calls through May 2012 are scheduled and posted to the project web page. Additional calls will be added as needed.
- The functional team is discussing the process to collect committed effort for all federal and federal flow-through awards with campus staff.
- The technical team will upload PI e-mail addresses to the Oracle Business System in December in preparation for the ecrt implementation.
- The preliminary training plan will be developed.

Technical Update
To upload data from the Oracle business system to ecrt the technical team needs to collect, test and validate information for the following files:
- Sponsor (sponsor name, identification number, etc.)
- Department (campus organizational hierarchy)
- Project (award information like project titles, award amount, periods of performance, etc.)
- Human resources (people records of those who may have an effort report in ecrt)
- Payroll (salary expenditures, including salary cost transfers)
- Commitments (committed effort)

The team has uploaded the sponsor and department files to ecrt and is working on the data structure for the project file.

Key Project Milestones
- December 2011 Campus-specific configurations set up in test environment
- January 2012 Configure and review data
- June 2012 Launch of electronic effort reporting solution

More Information
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