

Department of Medicine
Research Services Administration Unit Monthly Meeting

July 20, 2006

Present: Deborah Airo, Connie Archea, Olive Burk, Jeff Colley, Christianmichael Dutton, Alicia Forbrich, Brett Friberg, Annie Handajani, Christina Hsu, Kathy Judd, Nyya Lark-Wilson, Susan Lau, Anne Lawrence, Victoria Lee, Linda Lew, Lourdes Ocbena, Kitty O'Connor, Sarika Parekh, Christine Razler, William Rypcinski, Maxine Selesky, Renuka Sippy, Mayra Sustaita, Suzanne Sutton, Kapo Tam, Joyce Troiano, Bill Walzer, Jack Whiteford

Grants.gov

Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) IT Manager Jeff Colley presented an update on Grants.gov, the portal for electronic submission of federal grants, and on the most recent electronic submissions by UCSF (please see handout, attached).

Twenty-six federal grant-making agencies eventually will mandate the use of Grants.gov. NIH implemented its use for all R21 submissions beginning with the July 1, 2006 deadline. Currently, the Department of Defense, NASA, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention use their own electronic portals but they will be required to convert to Grants.gov in the future.

To submit through Grants.gov, applicants must first download Pure Edge Viewer. Pure Edge is a free, PC-based software available from the site and must be used to identify a specific funding opportunity announcement (FOA) to submit applications to. Mac users will need to submit proposals using the NIH Citrix server or a virtual PC. Please e-mail Jeff for instructions.

When the proposal is uploaded to the site, it is searched for errors at three stages: first by Grants.gov, then by the NIH Commons, and lastly, by the study section. Generic e-mails about the existence of any errors at each of these stages are sent to the OSR. Errors must then be fixed in the application and the application resubmitted to Grants.gov. However, only the PIs are able to log on to the NIH Commons to view the actual errors, make corrections, and then resubmit the application through OSR. Once it is uploaded to Grants.gov, PIs have 2 days to review the uploaded proposal to ensure that the application did not become garbled during transmission. If the PI finds mistakes, then s/he must alert OSR who has the only authority to delete proposals.

An error-free submission generates 10 e-mails from NIH that do not contain the PI's name or the title of the proposal. The e-mails are sent for the purpose of confirming that the application was received, it was verified, and that it has been forwarded to the next review stage. Each message does have a unique identification number so that it can be crosschecked against OSR information, but the time involved in this research would be prohibitive considering the number of grants that are submitted.

The new system has lengthened the time required to submit proposals to the NIH due to the possible errors that need to be fixed and has placed a large volume of work on the OSR to receive and distribute the correspondence received from the NIH. As a result, the OSR is now in the process of identifying an external vendor that can provide system-to-system transmission of applications to Grants.gov. The vendor's product will allow data entry via the web and will provide immediate verification of errors, before the application is sent to Grants.gov. UCSF is aiming for vendor selection in November 2006 so that training for RSAs and PIs can begin in December 2006 or January 2007. The NIH has mandated that all R01s be submitted electronically beginning with the February 2007 deadline. The cost of using a vendor may be prohibitive expensive, in which case the Campus will develop a solution to ease the use of Pure Edge software, such as by providing auto fill of certain fields.

Some of the functions OSR hopes to achieve through a vendor include copying previous proposals to use to submit revised proposals and allowing more than one person to work on the proposal at once. Whichever solution is implemented, Grants.gov and RAS will not be linked, and so double data-entry will be necessary.

Additional Information

Although the new system is aimed at reducing the amount of paper used, the UCSF OSR still will require a hardcopy of the proposal because RAS is not programmed to manage documents or accept electronic signatures. The process may become entirely electronic, as at UC Riverside, but not for at least 2 years.

The OSR expects to recruit a new trainer soon to replace Pat Clausen. The trainings provided to the PIs and staff on Grants.gov when Pat was here were very useful. They were recorded and are available as a CD to anyone who wants a copy.

A Signatory Official (SO) can view and/or delete any grant that is routed through the University. Due to security issues related to the delegation of an SO for Grants.gov, RAP-delegated authority will be suspended for any Grants.gov submissions. The NIH may create additional roles that would accommodate delegated signature authority, or another solution may be found.

DOMBO Express

June prelim closed last Friday, July 14, but was not available on Monday, July 17, because the data did not upload automatically to DOMBO; however, the problem is being solved. In a departure from instructions in previous years, divisions are asked to focus on resolving DPA Fund overdrafts instead of Fund overdrafts because the DPA Fund summaries currently provide accurate information for all funds, whereas anomalies exist for the Fund summaries in certain accounts.

The next RSA Meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2006 from 8:30 am to 10:00 am in LH 430.