Electronic Research Administration
A program of the National Institutes of Health

eRA Commons Working Group (CWG) Meeting Notes

Meeting Details:

Tuesday, May 12, 2015
1:00-3:00 p.m.
Ballroom Level: Regency B
Hyatt Regency Washington
400 New Jersey Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Map and Directions
Floor Plan

Agenda Items:

1. **eRA Commons Update**
   Presenter: Scarlett Gibb
   No Cost Extension (NCE)
   - Updated in January with Justification text box to meet Uniform Guidance policy,
   - Removed in April Development team is working on solution that will meet requirement but reduce burden on grantee

   Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) Fixes
   - Removed Links for Submitting FCOI Annual Reports for Closed Grants
   - Corrected Abilities Granted to FCOI Roles

   Federated Login
   - Started with non-critical roles (Trainees, Undergraduate, Graduate, etc.)
   - Has now been expanded to include Principal Investigators (PI)

   Federal Financial Report
   - Coming this summer, new user interface
   - Will match style and functionality of new Personal Profile (PPF) and Institutional Profile (IPF)

2. **New Commons Mobile**
   - Discussion/Sharing

   Presenters: Krishna Collie
   Mobile website, not an application
   - Application development has challenges when having to distribute via Apple Store or Google Play Store
   - Nothing to download
   - Current focus and functionality on PI view of Status
   - Based on research Status is the most visited page by PIs
   - Need feedback on the best way to present information/data
     - What do SOs need / want to see?
     - What do PIs need / want to see?
   - Includes smart search feature (displays matches as you type)
   - Tile design allows to be expanded to collapsed as needed
   - Can switch between mobile version and web version with a click
   - Addition needed for PIs – access to Notice of Award
   - What do Admins want:
     - Tracking # and application status
     - Rename “Contact Info” to “Contacts”
     - Create/View profile of Graduates, Undergraduates, Trainees, etc.
     - Notifications of status/submission issues (alert to problems)
     - Access to view Notice of Award for both the PI and the SO
     - Ability to review uploaded documents (pdfs) for reports like RPPR

        - Ability to Submit reports
        - Make parts of ASSIST mobile friendly
        - Deadline driven, time sensitive actions that they need to do for the PI, even submitting an application via mobile.
        - Run business rules on a submitted application to see what the issues are, if any
    - Top 4 Wish-List for Admin
        1. Submit RPPR and NCE, Closeout
        2. Account Management
        3. Seeing Errors and Warning of application submission
        4. manage notifications in user preferences

3. Account Management Redesign

- Discussion/Sharing

Presenter: Christine Yeh-Bien

- Account Management is required for both internal and external users
- Two different Account Management Systems used
- Redesign will consolidate applications, without loss of functionality

Proposed Changes

- Create Account without Search
    - Current workflow
        - ✓ Search, Review Search Results, Create Account
    - New Workflow
        - ✓ Create Account, Automatically Search for duplicate account, Manage Account
    - Usage Data indicates users are searching without any Criteria just to get to the Create Account screen, leading to duplicate accounts
    - What other search criteria / parameters should be used to check for duplicates:
        - ✓ User ID
        - ✓ Middle Initial
        - ✓ Last 4 digits of SSN. However, the SSN is not captured in the AMS system. This criteria will not be used for checking duplicate account/profile.
        - ✓ Same validation provide in the Search will also be provided to users during account creation
    - Option: Let users create their own accounts, then affiliate them to institution
        - ✓ Have them search
        - ✓ Complete required data
        - ✓ Institution affiliates or approves account
    - Search needs to account for new characters – use a “fuzzy” search to account for accent marks, etc.
- Assign Roles
    - New workflow needed – the ADD button is confusing
    - Select multiple roles simultaneously to add
    - Easy removal of selected roles
    - Validation of user ID as you type it on the Create Account screen
- Search
- New default search set to Search Outside Your Organization that includes your organization
- Options in search results to view basic profile information or few funded projects.
    - Done via icons ( ) = profile, and ($) = funded projects
    - Or by a drop down menu in the Action column?
- Consensus of group: Use drop down for actions, make person’s name linked for displaying the NIH Support and the profile information on the same page, get rid of the icons
- What Profile information should be available?
    - Name – currently available
    - Email – currently available
    - Work / Employment History – not currently available
- Account Management will be consolidated as options in Action drop down menu on Search Results
    - Affiliate
    - Unaffiliate
    - Edit

        - View
    - Reporting
        - New features/Reports
            - ✓ Incomplete Personal Profile
            - ✓ List of accounts by Role within user's own organization
            - ✓ Search by role still needed? Yes, limited to own organization
        - Issue with display limit to be removed with pagination functionality later this year
        - Question: Can there be an "Inactive" Status on accounts that have not been used in x number of months? (24?)
            - ✓ To be used to determine if accounts should or need to be unaffiliated with the institution
            - ✓ Yes, a report can be provided to indicate accounts that have not been used to login eRA system for a dynamic number of days.
    - Review notifications for actions of Affiliation and Unaffliliation – go to SO? AA?
    - Reports can be exported to Excel

4. **Safeguarding PI Profile Information**
    - How to best safeguard data when an account is mistakenly affiliated

    Presenter: Mark Siegert
    - One of the challenges with the affiliation process is SOs and AOs not fully confirming the account they are affiliating is the correct account.
    - Subsequently email addresses get changed, passwords get changed and account data gets combined.
    - How can this be prevented?
        - Get the PI to initiate the affiliation process to new institution
        - Allow PIs to create their own accounts so they have a User Name they identify with, thus making it easier for them to identify their account
        - Provide a unique personal email address that can used to identify the account, make this a possible search criteria
        - Use security prompt questions (i.e. What was the color of the first car your grandmother bought after 1948?)
        - Allow for a personal cell phone field to identify the account and to send text messages to for validation

5. **Feedback on User Experience with ASSIST**

    Facilitator: Jessie Floura

    As ASSIST moves into supporting single projects, feedback on features, concerns, issues and likes is appreciated. Jessie can be reached at Jessie.Floura@nih.gov

6. **Seeking Volunteers for Administrators' Federated Login**

    Facilitator: Scarlett Gibb

    As Federated Login is expanded to include administrative roles, Scarlett is looking for volunteers to help test process. She can be reached at Scarlett.Gibb@nih.gov
    - Challenge is the security of information
        - 1 admin person at multiple institutions
        - Multiple Commons accounts (SO and PI) but one federated login

7. **Brainstorming: Biggest Application Pain-points**
    - From FOAs to Instructions to Systems

    Facilitator: Megan Columbus
    - ASSIST for single projects – confusing PIs who use S2S solutions
        - Need to improve communication that it is not required
        - An option for traditional forms users
        - They should check with their Office of Sponsored Research
    - Will there be the option to pull data in from ASSIST to S2S solutions?
        - Would help greatly with collaboration since outside users may not have access to host's S2S solution
    - xTrain – difficult

        - Difficulty using search feature
        - Help Desk personnel do not seem familiar with functionality
        - Often get bounced (ping-ponged) around
        - Needs improvement in routing controls
    - Administrative Supplements have had issues submitting them by S2S, Commons and Grants.gov
        - With Grants.gov solution, challenge is to make sure grantee gets the correct Admin Supplement FOA, not to use parent FOA
    - Validations – what causes some mid-cycle changes?
        - Moving to all FOA specific validations, but transition is not complete
            - ✓ Referred to as System Validation Services (SVS)
            - ✓ Changes will need to be made for specific FOAs
            - ✓ As Activity Codes are transitioned to SVS, FAOs need to be updated, but some get missed.
            - ✓ Results in a change mid-cycle
            - ✓ Most changes are related to 'opt-out' flags which need to be set correctly for validations to work
        - A blunt tool for fine tuning!
    - Could there be a Just-in-Time upload delegation?
    - Possible webinar or agenda item: Agency Partners – what is the relationship with eRA?

8. **General Discussion / Wrap-up**
   Facilitator: Megan Columbus