



## eRA Commons Working Group (CWG) Meeting Notes

### Meeting Details:

January 29, 2013  
 1-3 p.m.  
 Washington Court Hotel  
 Room: Springwood Hall  
 525 New Jersey Ave, NW  
 Washington, DC 20001  
 202.628.2100

### NIH Staff in Attendance:

Megan Columbus
Dave Curren
Dave Hunter
Sheri Cummins
Scarlett Gibb
Marcia Hahn
Maria Koszalka
Al D'Amico
Catherine Fishman
Scott Cooper
Susan Deme
Deven Tines
Joe Schumaker

### Attendance

Attendee Name:	Institution:	Attendee Name:	Institution:
David Hull	Northwestern University	Rebecca Balentine	Columbia University
David Earwicker	CSU Sacramento	Roger Wood	Info Ed
Dave Hoffman	Colorado State	Tim Rinner	OHSU
Dave Becker	Evisions/Cayuse	Todd Swavely	Univ of Pennsylvania
Ben Priest	Evisions/Cayuse	Bill Hunn	Washington U in St. Louis
Pattie McNulty	Evisions/Cayuse	Rick Feager	Univ of Washington
Jason Myers	Univ. of Washington	Jim Kresl	Univ of Washington
Elizabeth (Liz) Garcia	UT San Antonio	Susan Anderson	College of Charleston (SC)
Corey McCowan	Dana-Farber Cancer Inst	Cindy Gilbert	UCLA
Susan Lasley	Duke University	Tom Drinane	Dartmouth College
Debbie Nixon	Duke University	Kellie Guentert	OHSU
Lynette Arias	Univ of Washington	Carolyn Pappas	University of Michigan
Sue Ross	Columbia University	Frances Spalding	University of Minnesota
Steve Dowdy	MIT	Tammy Cluster	Cornell University
		Chris Ashdown	Cornell University

### Introduction

Megan Columbus started the meeting with a reminder of the longevity and goal of the Commons Working Group (CWG). The group was formed in the 2000/2001 time period to provide a forum for NIH to discuss with users ideas for NIH system development that would help streamline grants processing for our grants community and avoid inadvertent inefficiencies that could arise from designing systems without the perspective of the end user.

### Agenda Notes:

#### 1. eRA Commons & eSubmission Update

- What's New and What's Happening – **Scarlett Gibb**
  - RPPR and FCOI are the two main additions to Commons this past year – Newest features are reviewed in the [Release Notes](#)

- xTrain has seen improvements and new features as well. The [Release Notes](#) will also have the specifics.
  - Moving forward, looking to April for fixes to minor issues that may still exist in RPPR and xTrain
  - Planning on the full transition to RPPR retiring eSNAP module
- Commons Usability Review for Personal Profile – **Scarlett Gibb**
  - New Personal Profile interface in development, wireframes (demo pages) are available at [Commons Working Group Meeting Handouts](#) page, under 2013, January 29. You can see what the interface will look like and get an idea of how it will behave.
  - **Request for Feedback:** Please look at the pages and tell us what you like and provide suggestions for changes/improvements.
  - Please send comments to [Scarlett Gibb](#).
- Seeking input on changes to resources section of Commons home page - **Scarlett Gibb/Joe Schumaker**
  - eRA Communications and Training groups trying to ensure self help resources are available from the eRA Commons Home Page in a way that makes sense to users
  - Hope is to make needed resources easier to find, more accessible
  - Handout of mockups available on the [Commons Working Group Meeting Handouts](#) page, under 2013, January 29
  - **Request for Feedback:** Which of the options do you like best?
    - First 4 slides represent a tabbed layout with various resources categorized by each tab
    - The remaining slides are very similar and are more icon based to the help use visual markers to guide user to information of interest to them
  - What information or types of information not presented in the mockups might you like to have?
    - The [eRA website](#) has a ton of resources.
  - What information within the mockups should be removed because you think it is not pertinent or needed on the eRA Commons Home Page?
  - Do you have someone who works with you who uses the full range of eSubmission and eRA resources who might have a particular interest in how and where we display this info? If so, please let us know. We would love to identify some folks who can help us think about organization and presentation to ensure easy access to resources.
  - Send responses to [Joe Schumaker](#).
- Feedback on Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) – **Scarlett Gibb**

Have received 1293 RPPR submissions to date which would indicate the process is working well. We have some concern about Fellowships (Fs) because some institutions seem to be starting with RPPR then stopping and submitting the report by paper.



## 2. Forms Transition – Changes coming to the SF424 Form

- Reflecting on previous experience to make the transition as smooth as possible - **Megan Columbus, Sheri Cummins, Dave Curren**
- FORMS-C for both single-project and multi-project applications
  - Updated SF424 RR & PHS forms
    - Development in progress; implementing as forms are made available from Grants.gov
  - Two new forms
    - Cumulative Inclusion Enrollment Report
    - Planned Enrollment Report
  - For S2S participants, DAT File information and Mockups for PHS forms can be found on the [System-to-System Testing](#) page.
- Working towards consolidation of agency processing of single and multi-project applications downloaded from Grants.gov - **Sheri Cummins**
  - Implement new form validations in Submission Validation Service
  - Move to the use of style sheets for all application images
  - Use of Grants.gov V2 end point
- Because of the large number of changes to forms, and the addition of new forms, transition will use a hard cut-over day, scheduled for summer 2013. We will confirm our timeline this spring. - **Sheri Cummins**
- Question to participants: **Were the [Guide Notice](#) and [Items of Interest](#) clear?**
  - **Answer:** Going to be difficult no matter what.
  - **Answer:** Sometimes confusing / difficult when multiple versions of packages are available (ADOBE-FORMS-B1, ADOBE-FORMS-B2), please make sure language remains “to use the most recent version” as that helps resolve the question quickly
  - **NIH Answer:** New application packages will be posted and old application packages expired, but in most cases the FOA number will not change
  - **NIH Answer:** Multi-project FOAs will be expired and reissued as they will transition from paper to electronic

## 3. ASSIST Updates

- Early Input – Thoughts, Impressions, Experiences - **Sheri Cummins**
- First pilot opportunities successfully submitted - **Sheri Cummins**
- Resources that Support ASSIST, Multi-project Applications – what’s needed beyond what exists? - **Megan Columbus**
  - Web pages – Go to [Applying Electronically](#) page and click [Submitting a multi-project application?](#)
  - [Annotated Form Set](#) resource
  - [Transition Timeline](#)
  - Guide Notice [NOT-OD-13-011](#)

- Web information divided between two resource outlets, OER and eRA - **Megan Columbus**
  - OER – covers much of the “big picture” information about grants and policies
  - eRA – relates to systems used by applicants, grantees, reviewers and NIH staff
- Application processes now split for electronic submission of single projects and multi-project applications - **Megan Columbus**
- We are struggling on how to best present needed information - **Megan Columbus**
  - Question to participants: **Suggestions? Does the [Applying Electronically](#) page help?**
    - **Answer:** Few of the CWG members personally navigate through the pages
    - **Answer:** Many participants “Google” for information
    - **Answer:** Tend to use bookmark to access Commons and use Commons as the starting point rather than [eRA](#) pages to find information
    - **Answer:** ASSIST is still too new to even know what kinds of resources are needed. Revisit at future meeting.
  - As mentioned above, if CWG members have anyone at their institution who uses these resources heavily and wants to chat with us, let us know!

#### 4. **Help Desk Web Ticket Application Update**

- Thoughts, Impressions, Experiences – **Dave Hunter**
- Overall response is positive – **Dave Hunter**
  - System will have processed some 20K requests by end of next month
  - Messages seem a bit “busy,” possibly too much information, click here for [sample messages](#)
  - With new system, new support contract at the start of the year, lots of changes in eRA’s user Support Branch.

**Please contact Dave with feedback on the ticket system and support phone calls:**

Dave Hunter  
 Chief, User Support Branch  
 OD/OER/ORIS/DCSS  
 301.435.0226  
[HunterD@mail.nih.gov](mailto:HunterD@mail.nih.gov)

- Development of Additional Functionality – **Dave Hunter**
  - Starting the development of the feature to look up tickets based on organization as requested from last CWG meeting
  - New phone system to go in later this year that will have more integration with ticketing system
- Question from Participants: **Where are the entry points for NIH help?**

- RePORT/RePORTER?
- GrantsInfo Help?
- eRA Help?

**NIH Answer:** This is a topic that NIH has been discussing. Need an intuitive help assistant to direct requests to the right place for the quickest and most correct response.

## 5. General Discussion

- Discussion needed around eRA Commons roles, particularly the Signing Official (SO) role
  - ASSIST only provides the Submit action to users with the eRA Commons SO role. After the Submit button is clicked, the user is also prompted for active Grants.gov Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) credentials.
  - At some institutions, the SO role is assigned more liberally to allow users to perform some functions in Commons that are restricted to the SO role
  - Not all AORs at institutions have eRA Commons accounts
  - By NIH policy, eRA Commons SOs and Grants.gov AORs have similar signature authority within their institutions
  - Currently, Commons roles do not allow sufficient granularity in assigning users to be able to do appropriate tasks. Group suggested that we look at roles & privileges at the next meeting.
  - What will happen when Federated Login process is implemented?
  - Current [eRA Commons user roles and privileges](#).
  - Include roles and privileges on the next CWG agenda.
  - Attendees requested a review of Organization Hierarchy options within Commons at the next meeting as well
- Concerns with Multi-PI assignments vs. Senior/Key Personnel
  - After Primary PD/PI information, what comes next?
  - Other people with PD/PI role (Multi-PI status), or Alphabetical per instructions of Senior/Key Personnel
  - Concern is that PD/PI's will get not be identified in final application image if they are not listed before Senior/Key Personnel (people without the PD/PI Project Role assigned)
  - No validation is run against this, nor alphabetical order of Senior/Key Personnel
  - Only validation is that if PD/PI role is assigned then Credentials field must contain a valid eRA Commons Username and the Multiple PD/PI Leadership Plan is required
- Whose information should go into the Person to Be Contacted box?
  - Should be an institution administrator or the PI who is most knowledgeable about the application/science?
  - From NIH perspective it does not matter, either depending on what how the institution would like to process any requests made from NIH to that contact person
- Anyone still having issue with the Just-in-Time (JIT) link showing even if not required?

- Still a point of contention for many
- Wanting to develop IC specific triggers to activate link
- Time and resources currently not available for this development

## 6. System to System Discussion

- Concerns from S2S admins and Service Providers regarding Multi-project submissions due to complexity of applications
- Need a solution that allows institutions collaborating on an application to participate in application development without providing access to restricted S2S systems. Prefer a familiar, consistent way to create component data rather than learning each solution used by an applicant organization.
- Many S2S solutions have internal processes that gather, manage, and calculate specific information (budgets etc.) because they are integrated with other institutional systems. In some cases, they don't even allow for straight data entry of specific form fields.

### 3 potential scenarios to consider

- S2S is the primary and external institutions need to get their information to the S2S system.
- Non-S2S institution is primary and S2S institution needs to get information into ASSIST (without manual key entry).
- Sub-Award forms that are PDF attachments
- S2S solution providers indicated that the following items would help facilitate multi-project application preparation where the applicant or collaborating institution uses an S2S solution Post a single project 'UBER' package with all the forms that could potentially be included in a multi-project component (standard SF424 RR cover and all other forms as optional)
  - External institutions complete downloadable forms in a similar manner as they do now for single-project applications
  - This package would never be sent to Grants.gov, but would be used to extract the needed component XML
- Provide import/export services for use with ASSIST when collaborating institutions have S2S solutions
- eRA will consider the requests, but under current budget situation cannot confirm implementation or timeline.

## Next Meeting Information

### eRA Commons Working Group (CWG) Meeting Agenda (Tentative)

#### Meeting Details:

Tuesday, May 14, 2013  
1-3 p.m.  
Washington Court Hotel  
Room: Springwood Hall  
525 New Jersey Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202.628.2100

#### Agenda Items:

1. **eRA Commons**  
**Presenters:** Sheri Cummins and Scarlett Gibb
2. **Inclusion Project**
  - Forms have changed, new look and feel
  - Timing of transition to structured forms
  - The workflow for making updates after submission (new screens)
  - Progress reports, filling in the actual**Presenters:** Lana Diggs, Meredith Temple-O'Connor, Daniel Fox
- 3.
- 4.
5. **General Discussion**