

## University of Florida Integrated Research Support Tool Project Summary

Processes supporting sponsored project administration at the University of Florida do not take advantage of current technologies and national best practices. As a result, there have been challenges to supporting investigators effectively. The University looks to reverse that trend and through engagement of the entire sponsored program community, develop new business models and tools that can increase administrative capacity to support the desired growth in sponsored programs at UF.

During discussions held in the summer of 2013, an integrated lifecycle approach to managing sponsored programs was laid out. This lifecycle includes routing proposals, presenting targeted information to approvers, integrating award setup and management more efficiently with the PeopleSoft Financial System, integrating with fiscal and non-fiscal compliance and training systems, and improving reporting capabilities.

One of the major process changes needed is a shift from focus on administrative review of 100% of proposals to targeted reviews in situations that present a higher risk to the institution. These reviews and approvals would take place by those who would ultimately be held accountable for their quality and compliance. New dashboards must provide easy access to all actions and changes to interested parties (even if their approval is no longer required); the tool should put the user first - being easy to use and providing transparent access to information and customized ways to stay informed.

The pages that follow outline, at a high level, processes that would best provide:

1. Increased administrative **capacity** by:
  - a. Reducing data entry into duplicate and shadow systems
  - b. Reducing duplicate reviews of low risk information (i.e. the formulas on an excel spreadsheet)
  - c. Providing focused attention to information pertinent to the user
2. Reduced institutional **risk** and increased **compliance** through:
  - a. Increasing transparency to the issues for which the user is accountable.
  - b. Reallocating effort from low risk/low reward activities (entering information in shadow systems) to focused attention on high risk transaction activity
  - c. Reallocating resources from low priority activities to higher priority activities such as increased monitoring
  - d. Improving documentation and standardization of practices
  - e. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in the process
3. Improved **resource** allocation:
  - a. To items for which the individual has responsibility rather than reviewing all materials related to a project
  - b. To high risk items such as cost sharing, F&A waivers, proposals with very high or very low effort commitments, and proposals from units with limited grants support

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- c. From low risk items such as modular budgets without cost sharing and those submitted using systems with internal controls such as Cayuse
  - d. Through recognition of valued expertise in certified sponsored research administrators
- 4. Increased **transparency**:
  - a. To important events and issues occurring throughout the award lifecycle (including proposals, negotiations, budget revisions and critical changes)
  - b. Through a destination site for sponsored program information from proposal to closeout
  - c. Into the activities all parties are performing on a sponsored award
  - d. By providing highly customizable notifications
- 5. Better **reporting** tools and data access for ad hoc and custom reporting needs

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### Proposal Development

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Earlier access to a proposal in development for all PI, Co-I and Key Personnel, and their Chairs and Deans means more time to support the development of a quality, competitive proposal.
2. Elimination of triplicate entry of budgets into spreadsheets, PeopleSoft and application forms through a budget building tool that will be: utilized by all of campus; integrated with UF data sources; create outputs such as a data feed to the grants.gov/Cayuse package or budgets easily submitted to non-federal Sponsors, and integrated with the routing tool.
3. Less time on resource sections, and Current & Pending or Other Support by creating repositories of information that can be cut and paste as needed, or output to commonly used forms.

#### Summary

UFIRST discussions focused on ways to increase the ability for Chairs and Deans to have earlier access to support the development of quality, competitive proposals. As of now, many Chairs and Deans are only provided a nearly final version of the proposal at a moment so near the deadline that the ability to influence the competitiveness is limited. By providing information that a proposal is in development from the time any administrator is aware of its existence, those who wish to support improved quality can have more time to do so.

The University learned valuable information from its implementation of Cayuse. Through personal and institutional profiles mapped onto forms; budget calculators leveraging institutional salaries and fringe rates; and information on missing required elements and incorrect data (errors and warnings), the time required to complete and review the administrative components of a proposal can be greatly reduced. Any system implemented would need to have at minimum this functionality, if not more.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Document roles and responsibilities of PI, Chair, Dean, Division of Sponsored Programs, and the Division of Research Program Development in the Office of Research
- Resource sections can be written and maintained
- Contacts by department can be compiled and published
- Document and communicate challenges in current UF HR data systems (degrees, mentees)
- Make standard budget tool in Excel available
- Make link to commonly requested information and documents more transparent (annual financial statements, BOT information, annual sponsored projects data, audit reports)

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

- Integrated dashboard that provides transparency to all individuals included on proposals from the moment the proposal is initiated in the system
- Budget Tool that includes: ability to be exported to and imported from Excel, integration with UF data sources such as DSP contacts, DUNS numbers and addresses as well as HR information

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such as salaries, appointment type and fringe benefits, proper escalation, calculation of multiple F&A rates and bases, roll up of multiple budget periods or multiple components within a budget year, and creation of a shell for the budget justification. This tool would facilitate easy identification of items such as cost sharing and F&A less than our negotiated rate.

- Repository for resource descriptions for commonly used centers and facilities (such as CTSI, ICBR, or HiPerGator); information to support Current & Pending Support; and (securely maintained) lay summaries, abstracts, scope of work, and publications.

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### Proposal Routing

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Present information to proposal approvers that helps to better inform them of the risks identified in the proposal and their responsibilities in approving
2. Provide earlier access to knowledge of the proposal and who is expected to be involved to allow for all administrative homes of the faculty to engage in proposal development rather than be strapped with approval too late in the submission process to have a real influence.
3. Eliminate additional layers of review on proposals that are created by trained administrators, include limited financial risk to the institution (such as high likelihood of requesting a revised budget, no cost sharing, and likely to be awarded with flexible rebudgeting conditions)

#### Summary

As the current proposal routing process generally facilitates only administrative review but does not occur early enough to allow time to support Chair and Dean influence on the quality of the proposal, UFIRST recommends a shift from full administrative review of 100% of proposals to targeted reviews in situations that present a higher risk to the institution. These reviews and approvals would take place by those who would ultimately be held accountable for proposal quality and compliance. Should a proposal be selected for funding, the complete institutional review would occur prior to release of funds. Given the currently low federal success ratio, this would reduce the volume of review on proposals that present low financial risk, even if funded.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Develop research administrator certification program
- Document roles and responsibilities of PI, Chair, Dean, other approvers and DSP
- Publish white paper and/or pre-proposal routing requirements documentation
- Revise myUFL attestation, DSR-1 and DSP website to make clear what each party is approving
- Document and communicate to departments the items DSP has identified will likely prevent or hold up submission, including frequent errors.
- Revise UF PI eligibility approval procedures.
- Communicate where current PI eligible faculty list is located
- Determine if capture of first year direct & FA budget, total direct & FA budget, and all faculty key personnel is possible now
- Develop Sponsor profiles including common submission problems, common terms and conditions, accounts receivable problems, or if the company is owned by a UF faculty
- Clarify what goes through UFF and what to DSP
- Benchmark top 20 proposal submission models

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

- Integrated dashboard to facilitate transparency of action items vs. notifications

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- Variable proposal routing paths determined by the proposal's financial risk to the institution, the quality of the department's grant support, and the PI's adherence to institutional management standards:
  - A fast track where trained local administrators will be granted the authority to submit low risk proposals
  - A full review including approval by PI, Chair and Dean
  - Clarity as the proposal is being developed as to which path will be followed

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### Limited Opportunities and Internal Competitions

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. For those managing these competitions and reviews, local flexibility and control while leveraging the consistency of a common interface and the security and infrastructure of central document management and workflow tools.
2. One stop shop for faculty to make clear where to initiate these applications and what information and documentation is required to compete.
3. Transparency to administrators supporting applicants who now struggle to know if their faculty have applied or been selected.
4. Improved reporting capabilities, specifically indicating the nature of the peer review.

#### Summary

Limited opportunities and internal competitions are similar in that UF reviews proposals before submission to an external sponsor or awarding from funds already at UF. Internal competitions such as the Office of Research Opportunity Fund, CTSI pilot programs and USDA Formula Funds are currently facilitated by the unit that determines the awardee or applicant and limited opportunities by the Division of Research Program Development. While the local control is necessary given the variety of the programs, the variability of the forms and approvals and the lack of transparency for administrators create problems. The University would benefit from clarity of process and tracking in a central tool. These programs can be made easier to facilitate (both for the proposer and the unit managing the review) and easier for the selectee to manage the proposal and award lifecycle if captured in the same system used for external proposals and awards.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Document roles and responsibilities of PI, Chair, Dean, unit facilitating review and RPD
- Review Cayuse functionality to determine if it can be leveraged for limited opportunities
- Review FYI to determine the best way for solicitations to be distributed
- Communicate available reporting tools (including identifiers of which records are peer reviewed)
- Identify best practices and PeopleSoft capabilities for managing internally allocated funds. Review such options as establishing projects, using multiple chartfields within each project, and use of flex codes.

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

- Flexibility in the internal competition process for any unit on campus to locally determine routing, approvals, and required elements and to store and distribute document templates
- Tracking to ensure only selected proposals in limited solicitations are submitted to the sponsor
- Reporting to identify PI's who commonly use these funds or apply and are not selected for internal and limited funds
- Appropriate security during the application process so PI's cannot access information about the PI's or proposals (including documents) with whom they are competing

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### Post-proposal submission prior to executed award

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Increased opportunity to review and see changes to proposals likely to be funded (i.e. revised budgets).
2. Transparent negotiations and communications leading to award release.
3. Improved project activation:
  - a. Move from a reactive response to multiple requests for information to a list of tasks that can be proactively initiated and managed by the PI or department.
  - b. Checklist to track items needed before a project can be released (To Do list)

#### Summary

The time between when a Sponsor indicates an award is likely to when the actual award is received is one that can be leveraged more effectively. Since many Sponsors solicit additional information about particular proposals when an award is likely, UF can use this time to accumulate all items necessary for award set up. If an award is likely, the PI or their administrators can go to the award setup checklist at their convenience to see what items are left to be completed before a project can be activated (i.e., subproject budget breakout, compliance protocols, effort commitments, and training). As the proposal routing model now limits the proposal review from 100% full review to only those with financial risk, a review of those previously fast tracked but now selected from funding is necessary. In addition, if a budget revision comes through or any contractual needs, they would be routed for approval during this time to speed up the release of funds when the award does come through.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Document roles and responsibilities of PI, Chair, Dean, and DSP
- Revised budget requests should be routed at minimum through the department for approval
- Create checklist of processes to initiate when determined highly likely to be funded, what setup steps should be initiated
- Review the Intellectual Property Checklist
- Create new subrecipient collection form
- Examine IRB & IACUC Title matching project title requirements

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

- Variable revised budget request review paths based on what changes are being made (may include Chair, Dean, Key Personnel or cost sharing provider)
- Integrated dashboard to facilitate identification of action items vs. information, specifically a checklist of items to be completed prior to award set up, compliance protocol statuses, and information from Sponsor profiles to expedite negotiation based on prior experience. Profile also facilitates managing expectations of the time to negotiate or likely delays in the process.
- Access to the process to other units such as OTL to allow for complete tracking of the process.



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### Award setup

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Higher likelihood of spending on day 1 of the project, leveraging information entered throughout the proposal life, integration with compliance and training systems, and capability of PI and administrators to proactively enter information needed to release the project
2. Improved integration with the financial system means reduced time from notice of award to the budget released for spending and reduced setup workload on C&G.
3. A new depth of information communicated in the award package can improve understanding of award management requirements and bolster financial and non-financial compliance.

#### Summary

Compilation of the package of information required to release project funds begins the moment the proposal is initiated. It simply grows with each additional piece of information entered rather than initiated once an award arrives. Items should be gathered and entered in to the system as they become available by anyone involved in the development, submission, negotiation or set up of the award. DSP will be ultimately responsible for completing entry and validating the information; the PI, department and dean may need to provide additional approval before funds are released.

The current information collected is not an entire picture of useful information needed to manage the award. Expecting PI's and staff to interpret all award management requirements opens the institution to risk of misinterpretation or lack of expertise. Increasing communication to include not only the compliance and budget breakouts but also effort commitments, milestones and deliverables, and terms and conditions could improve award management.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Document roles and responsibilities of PI, Chair, Dean, DSP & C&G
- Create list of Sponsors or programs that allow spending before the award is executed and those that do not.
- Improve documentation requirements for additions to miscellaneous donor and multiple sponsor projects
- When both Engineering and Main DSP have projects under an award, evaluate if the owning unit can do all award actions.
- As most human and animal work does not occur on day 1 of the project, determine appropriate institutional controls to ensure an IRB or IACUC is in place before the human or animal work begins but not necessarily in place before the project is activated.
- Initiate discussions of best method to assign "credit". Is it PI's allocating award amount through credit? Utilize salary recovery? Space? Network analysis?
- Determine if possible (like construction) to include more than one fund or more than one department per project budget. Determine if we can implement better controls on project charging like Travel & Expenses.

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- Review assignment of staff to workload within DSP to leverage expertise (i.e. by constituency, by function or by sponsor)
- Initiate discussions on the value and risks of using temps. Formalize a process to ensure they are utilized effectively.
- Review requirements for fund 211, 212 & 213 construction approvals

### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

- Integrated dashboard list items completed and yet to be completed for an award to be released
- Collection of additional depth of information to facilitate better award management (terms, billing information, effort commitments, milestones)
- Data integration with PeopleSoft financials to reduce the entry steps required for C&G
- Information to manage expectations of set up based on Sponsor or attributes such as export control review, IRB or more than one project.

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### Award Management (Modifications & Prior approvals)

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Easy to use dashboard will make information available to support better award management
2. Consistency and standardization in routing requests can reduce institutional risk

#### Summary

The current award management processes (including those for requesting and activating modifications and prior approval requests) are unclear. There are potential for many different routing paths to multiple core offices and those are not clearly articulated nor applied. Outlining the appropriate process for each approval and set up can result in increased standardization and tracking. An integrated proposal and award management tool can facilitate requests by asking request sensitive questions and then routing the request appropriately. Tighter integration of UFIRST to PeopleSoft Financials and DSP to C&G can facilitate an improved experience for the PIs and departments.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Document roles and responsibilities of PI, Chair, Dean, DSP & C&G
- Document and communicate appropriate routing process for each type of modification or prior approval request
- Create smart form and revised approval process for budget transfers
- Evaluate approvals for CAS exemptions. Create transparency into request and disposition.
- Look for leverage points to facilitate improved compliance with issues such as late final reports or missing effort reports (such as withhold award action or withhold fund 211 returns)
- Improved reporting to identify when cost share is not proposed and therefore not approved but the budgeted effort was not paid from the sponsored project.
- Review cash project deposits to determine if an NOA is necessary
- Implement institutional policy of F&A following the direct costs on subprojects.
- Review F&A allocation process to determine if the F&A manager is necessary or if allocation can be facilitated with budget transfers. Can we with certainty define center OH projects and which projects they should receive return?

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

- Variable revised budget request review paths based on the change and the magnitude of any change being made (may include Chair, Dean, Key Personnel or cost sharing provider)
- Dashboard to facilitate request for change and facilitate collection of items necessary prior to award modification release (i.e. effort, terms and conditions, milestones) as well as improved management through tracking of those elements throughout the award lifecycle
- Data integration with PeopleSoft financials to reduce the entry steps required for C&G
- Create transparency into billing and payment information (including return of unexpended balance and whether or not payment has been received)

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### Closeout

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Improved award management and transparency into the requirements and forms to complete closeout means that closeout should occur more quickly.
2. Repository for final reporting requirements including publications

#### Summary

If the management of awards is improved, closeout activity becomes more efficient and focuses largely on the necessary final reports. A list of all closeout forms should have been loaded in to the system at the time of award set up or as someone became aware they were necessary. Common forms (i.e. patent and invention reports) should have templates created to facilitate completion. These would be available in the project dashboard with indicators as to when they are completed. Anyone with access to the record can load the reports and indicate they have been filed.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Document roles and responsibilities of PI, Chair, Dean, DSP, and C&G
- Transparency with the award's requirement for unexpended balance returns
- Facilitate a conversation with the Associate Deans for Research regarding possible methods for returning residuals (i.e. IFAS when > 25% balance or < 25% F&A recovered)
- Review closeout communications:
  - Addition of information such as direct and indirect balance, outstanding payments, and final milestones required
  - Can recipient be more than just the PI and project contact's directory email?
  - Should a report be available online rather than a one-time email?
- Determine if possible to block account codes such as equipment near the end of the project

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

As a result of UFIRST visibility will be increased for closeout activities. Dashboards will make it easier to know what needs to be completed for an award to be closed. A dashboard for each project might include:

- Milestone & deliverable tracking including repository for reports filed
- Unusual or problematic charges at the time they occur (using algorithms to identify duplicate charges, rotating charges, inappropriate combinations of vendors and account codes)
- Indications of personnel effort being expended but not charged to the project
- Identification of direct & indirect balances misaligned due to spending differently than budget
- Transparency into billing and receivables activity
- Integrate with external systems to know when and if progress reports were submitted
- Closeout forms and other closeout requirements

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### Dashboards and Notifications

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Transparency into sponsored project requirements from proposal to closeout
2. Customized interaction with the information and action items in UFIRST

#### Summary

A new dashboard will serve as a central location where faculty and administrators can manage the many facets of their respective responsibilities. Through the display of proposal and award statuses along with other pertinent information such as training, certifications and compliance elements, users would gain better insight and more awareness into the milestones and action items required to manage sponsored projects.

Through the use of user profiles, users would be granted a level of customization to their dashboards and also the ability to manage notification and alert preferences for email, text, and dashboard alerts.

#### Immediate possibilities

N/A – These business processes all relate to future state functionality

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

##### *Dashboard*

The UFIRST dashboard will facilitate communication of action items to be completed and other informational items. Such a dashboard would include:

1. Action Items (i.e. Approvals, training, certifications)
2. Information (i.e. Status of negotiations, A/R Info)
3. Reports about UFIRST Data (Success Ratios, Metrics)
4. Profile Page (i.e. Update publications, manage alerts)

Other dashboard/portal features may include:

- Text message notifications
- Instant help through chat (e.g. Lync)
- Ability to delegate proxies for profile management
- Tool tips
- View into integrated systems (such as effort certifications, IRB, or Training)
- Graphical displays of success ratios, award amounts, etc.
- Integration with calendar and To Do List applications

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### Document Management

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Secure location to store information about the proposal and award
2. Central access to information throughout the lifecycle providing access to all individuals who have the business need to know, making it easier when support staff changes throughout the project.

#### Summary

There is currently no central place to store proposal submissions, related proposal artifacts, award notices and other sponsored project documentation. UFIRST will integrate with a central document repository for all record documents as well as communications (emails) and negotiations that relate to a given record. This will increase collaboration and visibility which will in turn remove the need to store documents on local drives, email them out and try to keep track of correct versions.

Record access levels will remain in effect for documents tied to a record as outlined in the security model summary. Having a central location will provide “institutional memory” of all activities that occurred through the UFIRST record lifecycle. This will provide the clarity on all activities that to this date has been missing.

#### Immediate possibilities

N/A – This business process relates to future state functionality

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

Through this new tool, there will be one consistent source for key proposal and award information. The following are the types of documents that can be retained for centralized access:

- Proposals and supporting documentation (i.e. scope, budget, budget justification)
- Deliverables
- Budget transfers
- Awards and supporting documentation
- Closeout reports
- PI documents such as progress reports
- Email communications automatically tied to a record as they occur

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### Reporting

#### Significant impacts UFIRST can make

1. Improved process metrics to identify opportunities to improve business processes and reduce administrative burden
2. Improved proposal information to facilitate better resource decisions
3. Improved information on award management to improve institutional compliance
4. Central provision of reporting information and tools to reduce the recreation of these reports

#### Summary

There is need to provide metrics and information (canned and ad hoc) related to sponsored project activity and management. The current lack of information prevents colleges and departments from determining success ratios and other trends that could facilitate better resource decisions. Additionally, visibility and tracking into the turnaround time for different elements of proposal submissions and award releases would create transparency and accountability along with an ability to set expectations between departments, colleges, and DSP. These process metrics can also help to identify opportunities for future process improvement.

#### Immediate possibilities

- Review Purpose code list
- Clean Sponsor data (duplicates, type and rollup)
- Create data governance to manage quality, definitions, and ownership of data
- Move award data to central reporting tools

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

UFIRST solution should include robust reporting functionality that provides accurate and useful information pertinent to sponsored program management and performance. The list of desired reports is robust, and available in the reporting discussion details. At a minimum, reports would include:

- Proposal volume and success ratios by individual, department, and college
- Proposed and awarded amounts versus current expenditures
- Award data by budget period, project period and anticipated award period
- Workload reports and management metrics (How long are different steps taking?)
- Effort commitments proposed and awarded
- Cost sharing proposed and obligated
- F&A waivers requested, granted, and awarded
- Projected F&A return
- Current & Pending Support

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### Integrations and Security

#### Summary

**Integrations:** To facilitate more efficient sponsored programs management, the new UFIRST solution should integrate with several key UF systems to ensure consistent data and information throughout the entire grant lifecycle. HR and financial information along with compliance information like certification titles and dates should all be consistent with the source systems that manage that data.

#### Security:

The preferred security model included:

- Faculty: If included in a UFIRST record, sees all information within that record
- Department staff and chairs: see all records owned by or with faculty from their unit included
- Deans staff and Deans: see all records owned by or with faculty from their unit included
- Core offices: see all records in the system

In addition, the Cayuse model where additional investigators and associated administrators can be added to view or update information was identified as useful.

#### Immediate possibilities

N/A – These changes relate to future state systems and business processes

#### Business changes as a result of UFIRST

The UFIRST solution should integrate with the following systems:

- PeopleSoft HRMS
- PeopleSoft Financials
- IRB Certification System
- IACUC Certification System
- OTL licensing database
- Outside Activities/Conflict of Interest System
- Export Control Tracking
- Effort Commitments & Certification Information
- myinvestiGator
- Asset management (property) and space data
- External sponsor systems (i.e. Cayuse, Fastlane)