

Northwestern University

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What we've been doing: July 2004 to current

- Designing the “next-generation” electronic **Effort Reporting System (ERS)**, in conjunction with the vendor, MAXIMUS, a department-based design team, and colleagues from Johns Hopkins University. Focused on developing a **Committed Effort Module (CEM)** to supplement Maximus’ existing effort certification module. Implementation of ERS is scheduled to begin **summer/fall 2005**.
- Supporting and refining the **interim electronic (Web-based) HRIS effort certification system**, first introduced for the FY04 Q2 certification cycle. Implemented improvements suggested by users and provided training sessions to faculty and administrators to help increase understanding and use of the system.
- Providing **guidance** to faculty, administrators, Human Resources, and others on specific effort reporting-related topics and complex situations.
- Updating **Northwestern’s Veterans Administration Memorandum of Understanding form and instructions**, necessitated by NIH’s August 2004 policy announcement concerning effort reporting and NIH career development (K) awards; distributed information via a listserv announcement and posting on the OSR website.
- Performing a detailed analysis of fiscal 2004 effort certification data to **quantify salary cost sharing** for the F&A rate proposal.
- Meeting weekly with the **Project’s Core Workgroup** to discuss policy and system issues.
- Meeting regularly with the **Project Advisory Committee**. We have asked the members of this Committee to continue their commitment through 2005, and plan to meet once every two to three months to obtain input and review status.
- Presenting **summaries of our project initiatives** at national forums; actively participating in **federal discussion groups**; hosting representatives and fielding numerous telephone and email **inquiries from other research universities**.

Activities to come: spring and summer 2005

- **Finalize the Effort Reporting System (ERS) design, load test data, and perform system testing.** At this time, we anticipate implementing the Maximus ERS beginning in late summer 2005. The Committed Effort Module (CEM) will be introduced first, followed by the certification module for the 1st Quarter FY06 certification cycle. A more formal and specific **training and implementation plan** is currently in development, and will be communicated as soon as it is finalized.
- Continue to provide **functional and technical support** to administrators and faculty on use of the interim electronic certification system and **guidance** regarding effort-related matters.
- Continue to conduct **education sessions** during faculty meetings and other venues, as invited.
- Address the need for further guidance and clarification regarding **graduate student effort reporting** by further reviewing federal requirements and results of audits at other institutions, examining existing Northwestern guidance, reviewing current practices within academic departments, and evaluating other research institutions' practices.
- Continue to work with the Budget Office and Payroll to revise the existing **Salary Distribution Adjustment (SDA) and release funds processes**, and to work with Payroll and the schools and departments to streamline the **salary journal entry process**.
- Present results of the **FY04 cost sharing analysis** to senior administration and Deans' offices, consistent with discussions held during the development of the effort reporting policies related to cost sharing.
- Continue to participate in **national discussions** related to effort reporting.

Questions?

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