# Notes on FDP Open Government Session – May 14, 2012

**Notes on Background Slides:**

* Institutions need more time to adapt to changing reporting requirements
  + Change management process is needed at universities AND government--Adequate lead time must be built into to any implementation for both agencies and institutions (ARRA Reporting system examples provided where system changes were implemented with no lead time for institutions to comply)
  + New systems must be built “safely” to avoid unwanted problems/burden.
* DATA Act will create a much larger transparency system
  + Use FDP knowledge/experience to build system
* DATA Act means more robust system needs, more follow-up, more un-reimbursed F&A
* Use FDP as feedback & input on changes in the front end—could give FDP institutions early notification on upcoming changes

**Notes on Slide 12: Inform FDP Community about Open Government Initiatives**

* Systems should not require both quarterly and cumulative data. Instead institutions should just provide recent data with government providing cumulative calculation (or vice versa).
* Fix process for allowing grantees to correct data incorrectly pre-populated by agencies.
  + There is much confusion on who the best person to contact is.
  + Attendees preferred single POC at the agency level. Not Federal-wide or at individual award level.
* Improve the time frame for reporting
  + Allowing use of business days instead of calendar days for reporting deadlines would be improvement.
    - Especially important as the number of reports may increase from hundreds per institution to thousands
    - Also important when data needs to be gathered from various sources at institution; e.g., PIs vs. data in systems
* Recommend this new FDP group develop “executive summaries” of each agency’s requirements for implementing transparency reporting.
* Recommend FDP group develop a “quarterly report” or newsletter summarizing changes to overall requirements or agency implementations
* Recommend FDP group use web site as a “clearinghouse for data” on reporting requirements
* How can FDP become more proactive rather than reactive?

**Slide 13: Invent Ways to Reduce Burden of Transparency Reporting**

* Propose that institutions providing data for STAR METRICS be exempted from new reporting requirements.
  + Is there a way to use STAR METRICS data to pre-populate reporting system and reduce need for institutional reporting?
* Consolidate all reporting requirements into either the FFR or RPPR. That could then be used to populate USASpending.
* No members of group are dealing with State/local transparency initiatives

**Slide 14: Improve Accountability for Federal Research Spending**

* What is the ROI on grantee reporting burden for all transparency data. Have there been studies identifying fraud, waste, and abuse from it? General feeling much of this has been from a knee-jerk reaction to a few bad cases
* Feds should not confuse information provided through transparency systems as something useful to institutions or PIs. They have other methods and networks for making connections and finding collaborators
* How to make transparency work for us, not against us? (Members shared anecdotes on local newspapers miss-using ARRA data for instance)

**Slide 15: Increase Public Understanding of Federal Research Spending**

* General public does not consider use of reported information as part of their daily routine
* Several states (and institutions?) have trouble with batch reporting. Availability and benefits of this service through FSRS not yet being realized.
* Feds should consolidate all reporting into one portal and provide longer timeframes for reporting; inventory existing systems and their use/purpose
* The current FSRS requirement allowing only one login per organization is a problem. Allowing only one report per award per month is also a problem.
* Community needs to develop stories that tell how research is helping the public
* FFATA reporting is unnecessary given all other reporting (CT.gov, public access, and physician payment act requirements) directly related to research.
* How to coordinate w/State Government reporting requirements?
* How to avoid added agency-specific requirements in addition to Fed-wide requirements and/or asking for same information as already in Fed-wide system
* Government needs to focus less on providing transparency data and more on telling story of how spending helps people. Consider adding an impact story as a separate section of the PRs and Final PRs.
* Need to place transparency data in context.
* Ideas for Institutions:
  + Every hospital should post information on where the funding for cures comes from. Makes research spending personal to the public.
  + Show data on success rate in curing pancreatic cancer. Show how research investment increases years of life.
  + Show broader impacts to society of research funding.
  + Transparency data needs to be translated by PR offices to provide context for research funding
* DATA Act duplicates much of what is required under A-133. Any plans to adjust?
* FAST Commission should accept stakeholder comments like they did for A-21 Review.
* For any new reporting requirement, suggest there always be a corresponding reduction in reporting somewhere.