

Expanding the Expanded Authorities Exploratory Group

Minutes

May 2, 2003

Co-Facilitators: **Gunta Liders, University of Rochester**
 Mary Ellen Sheridan, University of Chicago

Attendees: Joanne Cobble, Bob Meyer, Heather Galloway, Cindy White, Pam Whitlock, Judy Dillon, Debi Galloway, Jim Randolph, Linden Clausen, Kathleen Larmett, Charles Kaars, Harry Haraldsen, Bill Schulze, David Mayo, Peter Dunn, Beth Israel, Rebecca Balentine, Dan Nordquist, Marilyn Wallace, Kathy Doy, Norm Hebert, Tom Marcussen, Marcia Smith, Jane Youngers, Jim Becker and Andy Rudczynski

Gunta Liders handed out a white paper on possible goals and strategies for the Expanding the Expanding Authorities exploratory group (located on the web site at http://thefdp.org/Expanded_Authority/). In summary, the objectives of the group are to attempt to expand the expanded authorities (EA's) to other award mechanisms, assure that EA's are consistently applied within research grants and possibly expand the A-110 authorities to allow grantees additional administrative permissions for non-scope related activities. Certainly, a big consideration is with respect to what federal agencies would be comfortable in doing, and whether there are considerations that may prohibit or limit agencies from offering grantees further flexibility.

Mary Ellen Sheridan noted that the Terms and Conditions Committee will be listing an updated FDP Matrix to the web site at the end of May. Some information posted on Matrix is no longer valid. It was noted that some agencies have retained the FDP terms and conditions, other have not – overall, there are very subtle differences between the agencies. In addition, it was noted that FDP is expanding the FDP terms and conditions to fellowships.

The attendees all wanted more consistency within agencies; this was an obvious goal for everyone. New FDP members expressed that it was very confusing to train grants administrators in these subtle differences.

The federal representatives in attendance expressed that DoD agencies are very sensitive to no-cost extensions (thus the withholding of EA's for this function). They would like to see statistics on residual balances at the time of no-cost extensions, in order to assess whether they would be willing to allow additional flexibility to grantees. There was discussion on the other DoD agencies that were not FDP members, such as programs administered by SPAWAR and DARPA. Attendees expressed that they were pleased with the administration of SPAWAR programs, and perhaps they could be contacted as to why they were willing to grant EA's that other DoD agencies would not. Karen Seward is the ACO for all of the northwest and she could be a potential contact for this group.

Other groups that may be useful to contact for feedback would be the 106-107 Preaward Working Group or the OSTP Subcommittee on Business Models of Research, Common Practices Among Agencies workgroup (Tom Cooley, NSF is the chair of this working group).

Mary Ellen cautioned that at a previous meeting of the Expanding the EA's group, NIH was very cautious about expanding the EA's for training grants. The attendees still felt that it was worth pursuing.

It was agreed that data is key and that we should embark on a data gathering exercise. The attendees looked at a draft survey, and made various suggestions and comments. It was felt that a 3-month period beginning in June might provide ample time to track requests to agencies; the replies from the agencies may go beyond this three-month period. At the completion of the survey period, we will assess whether we have sufficient information with which to approach the funding agencies or whether we need to expand the time period of the survey or the information being collected. It is not anticipated that they survey will impose significant work, as there are not that many administrative requests that are generated each month.

Once sufficient information is collected, agency feedback will be solicited as well as exploration of whether a demonstration is in order, i.e., extending the EA's to FDP organizations for select award mechanisms.

Dan Nordquist, Washington State University volunteered to generate a web form for this purpose. Others felt that it would be more convenient to utilize an excel form for the inter-office posting of information and that the web form could be used for final data entry to ensure correctness.

Attendees were excited about this project and were willing to complete the surveys over the summer.

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