

Star Metrics – Technical Discussion Summary of Discussion

eRA Standing Committee

FDP Meeting Aug 30, 2010

STAR Metrics information on the FDP website:

http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/PGA_057189

Presenters:

- Mark Sweet, Director of Electronic Research Administration, U of Wisconsin-Madison, FDP eRA Standing Committee
- Bob MacDonald – Director, Office of Planning and Accountability at NIFA-USDA

Session is meant to address questions on the technical side of what it takes to be a participant in STAR Metrics

The key here is to utilize existing data that is already in our existing system.

Led by NIH and NSF, other agencies are beginning to become interested in the data.

Bob MacDonald perspective at NIFA –

NIFA different from NIH and NSF – 1.5 bill budget – 40% research – part of USDA pot of \$\$ on hill – in past several years working toward one system for their processes. Overall goal: be more accountable, standardize

Bob sits on committee with Julia Lane. He is skeptical but is intrigued by the system.

For Bob (USDA), outcomes are things that help feed the nation. Is interested in FTE data that Julia talks about. The script used for the STAR is exactly what he needs.

Also interested in publication data. Looking at other items to watch and see in the potential of what data is being collected in STAR.

For his office, he doesn't see that asking questions and pulling data will lead to an endless string of asking for more and more. Only caveat is what congress demands.

He doesn't see reports being eliminated but maybe sections of reports.

Questions for Bob:

If the system could generate an aggregation of the abstracts would that be useful? No, would require him to hire a huge staff. He doesn't see that happening.

Mark S. – any other federal folks here who want to chime in on the potential for that data? No questions.

How many institutions have signed the memorandum of understanding (MOU). About 3 institutions have sent data to the STAR. Probably 20 or so have signed the memorandum of understanding.

To participate:

- Must sign memorandum of understanding
- Assess date requirements
- Create output files
- Send test samples to STAR for them to assess

Can get to the memorandum of understanding from the FDP web site.

Mark S. – university participation benefits:

Reports with university-specific data showing economic impact of research dollars

Longer term goals – possible reduction of other federal reporting with the assistance of FDP

Challenges:

DUNS for vendors is a big challenge

Mark Sweet question: Why DUNS and not CAGE code? Julia – real issue is what OMB uses, but if CAGE gives us industry that is fine too. This may be a place where continuing discussions between FDP eRA Committee and STAR Metrics group will be beneficial.

Susan Sedwick – why would cage code be easier than DUNS number. UT uses it as part of their bid.

Steve Dowdy point – DUNS number is not necessarily where the work is being done. Reason STAR went with DUN's number is that what OMB uses. STAR Metrics team understands this issue and the general economic models take this into account.

Question to general audience? Other challenges?

If use 25K cap as outlined, they fail to report 30 to 40 percent of their total spend to vendors. Is this in line with others and is this okay? STAR doesn't mind if you send more information so you're including everything you've spent. The cap is there because of the OMB guidance.

Concerns over reporting one number via ARRA versus reporting a diff. number in STAR may lead to additional questions to the institution on why are the numbers different. STAR Metrics states this reporting is supposed to be separate and not reconcilable to other reports but doesn't mean that people won't do it.

FTE counts are direct costs to the Feds only but doesn't include cost sharing. STAR Metrics (Julia Lane) says that you can include Cost Sharing, just let them know and they can make a footnote that appears in your institutional profile.

Question of reconciling? Are we going to subject the university to additional audit due to diff. in reporting numbers.

Julia is completely open to suggestions, etc. Example could just apply national averages to 25K and under question above since it can't be reported

Question – how do we deal with large service centers at an institution to report this? Whatever decision was made they put in the institutional profile and make a footnote.

If they treat them as an internal vendor it is placed in the footnotes.

Viewing – can you only view your institution? As of Aug 2010, the only way to get institutional-specific data back is by requesting it from the STAR Metrics team. However, there are plans once the NIH-maintained website is up and running, institutions will be able to retrieve their own reports. This functionality remains to be built.

Dick Selligman - Question on period of time, how long is Phase I going to exist? How long does this go on before the next phase begins. How many times are we going to submit data, how many times are we going to see a report. A: It is not clear how long Phase I will be in place.

How is the data going to be used, who has access, how can the data be used? There are so many variables affecting FTE, what kind of comparisons are they doing using the FTE data?

Julia answer – focus of ARRA and OMB was very much on jobs. The science people (Julia) wanted to reach out to the community and the community saying these are all of the the diff. dimensions where science makes an impact. Her point is that you expect when it's an open process. The MOU is very clear on who has access and that you as a university will only have access to your own data.

It's great if all of your systems are integrated. If not, then it's a problem. The norm is that not everyone has everything talking.

STAR - They're trying to build a skeleton, not solve the problem. Julia pointed out again that is a voluntary system.

Question: people who have done it, how much time and effort goes into reporting the data?

Univ Wisconsin, they have a data warehouse and built upon their ARRA reporting and probably spend 60 to 70 man hours; all off of the hours technical people. Didn't hire anyone else.

UTSA, same accounting system at UT Austin. Problems when pulling data, you need something from the IT people, but since they have a roadblock the IT people don't have time.

As short as 1 ½ hours at U Mass-Dartmouth. (This is guy who apparently from STAR) Problem arises when one or more data fields are not being populated. Look for an article on the future something?

UPENN – things that took the longest were getting access (getting MOU evaluated, getting security cleared so people had access to payroll data) – that was longer than actually pulling the data.