

Date: 26 January 2004

To: Lynne Chronister, Assoc. Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Office of Research  
From: AC4/ADC3 Council Members  
Re: **Council Feedback:** Development of an Electronic Research Administration system  
cc: Virginia Hinshaw, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

This memo provides feedback to Lynne Chronister on the development of an Electronic Research Administration (ERA) system.

**Background:** The ERA was discussed by the Council in December 2003, when Chronister outlined ideas for an ERA (see preparatory materials, particularly the questions, attached).

Academic research and grant proposal development, submission, and administration is a complex process. Faculty conceive of an idea for a research proposal, then develop and submit the proposal. This time-consuming task also involves departmental staff and UCD Office of Research. After a proposal is funded, continuing tasks include tracking of budget expenditures, filing of reports, responding to requests for information from the funding agency, UCOP, other units at UCD, etc. The development of an ERA would facilitate these processes, and it would provide a solution to problems with the current system (e.g., unsupported software, difficult to enter information and generate reports).

An Electronic Research Administration is a system enabling the creation of an electronic warehouse to support the development, submission, and administration of proposals by faculty and the administration of funded research grants by faculty, staff and administrators. An ERA system would provide an end-to-end solution for electronic processing and management of all UCD research proposals submitted to diverse funding sources. Important ERA goals are: (1) reduce multiple entry of information, (2) reduce paper documentation, (3) collect proposal information into a searchable, query-able data system, and (4) facilitate reporting requirements (e.g. granting organizations, UCOP, internal UCD reports, etc.). A transition from paper to electronic process would benefit UCD researchers, staff and research administrators as well as grant makers.

System requirements include: security; flexible inputs and outputs; interfaces to other campus information and financial resources; access by UCD staff, faculty and administration; ability for faculty to collaborate; compliance with federal/legal/etc. requirements; greater efficiencies for users; reduction of staff workload; simplification of process for faculty; ability to edit data already entered into the system; and improved ability to generate various reports.

#### **Questions raised by Council members:**

1. Will faculty and staff be required to enter proposal data more than once -- once into a campus ERA system, and then into a specific, mandatory agency grant submission system (e.g., NSF & NIH)?
2. Would the ERA system and the Faculty Merit/Promotion system be able to interact?
3. How would security and confidentiality of data be protected in the ERA?
4. Could information from faculty dossiers be entered and then used for multiple purposes (e.g., ERA, Merit/Promotion, UCD personnel reporting, etc.)?
5. How would PI status be defined and identified?
6. If an ERA system is acquired in modules, what are the modules and which ones will be acquired first? How would the process be phased into the UCD grant submission and tracking system?
7. Would the ERA interact with other major campus systems (e.g., DaFIS, Advancement Information System, Payroll Personnel System, Merit/Promotion system)?
8. What is the status of ERA-type systems at other UC campuses? Have any UC systems developed a list of requirements for an ERA?
9. What is the cost of an ERA? Would the ERA be bid competitively or sole-sourced? Why might sole-source be desirable?
10. What is the timeline for implementation of an ERA at UC Davis?