

Project Title:
Conflict of Interest Data Management and COEUS

Project Leader and Team Members:
Leader: Valerie Dixon
Members: Amber O'Banion and Anthony Slay

I. Project Title

Conflict of Interest Data Management and COEUS

II. Submitter's Information

Valerie Dixon
Director
Conflict of Interest Office
University of California, San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive, 0992
La Jolla, CA 92037-0992
Tel: 858.534.7321
Fax: 858.534.6466
Email: vdixon@ucsd.edu

III. Project Summary

The Conflict of Interest (COI) Office developed a new process so that the COI database is able to interface with Coeus, the UCSD Office of Contract and Grant Administration's electronic research administration system, in order to improve the COI disclosure and UCSD proposal submission processes.

IV. Project Description

Overview

Today, universities and medical schools are now economic as well as scientific engines. But even as institutions are compelled to interact with industry and speed new knowledge into the marketplace, it is necessary to reaffirm the primacy of core academic values. Reporting of financial interests as they relate to sponsored research projects is paramount.

Yet, of equal importance is the cooperation between an institution's sponsored projects office and its COI Office. Often, the Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) integrates COI approval into its proposal and award processes. While this ensures that COI disclosure is done and that any conflict of interest is properly managed before any sponsored funds are used, it can often slow down the proposal submission process. Specifically, in the UC system four campuses use the Coeus system as their sponsored project administration software. However, those same campuses' COI Offices use a different system to track and manage COI disclosures. Since the Coeus system and any COI database are written in different programming languages and use different software, it is very difficult to ensure that both the Coeus and COI systems are updated in a timely manner. At UCSD, we developed a process that allows our internal COI database to effectively and efficiently communicate with Coeus.

A flowchart of the new UCSD COI-Coeus process is attached.

Project Title:

Conflict of Interest Data Management and COEUS

Project Leader and Team Members:

Leader: Valerie Dixon

Members: Amber O'Banion and Anthony Slay

Project Timeline

February 2008-November 2008: At UCSD, since 1995, the COI Office was utilizing a MSDOS-based Paradox database to track, manage and report all their COI data. While this database was very effective for manual data entry of COI disclosures and for generating various basic reports, it was unable to download any data from Coeus. The COI Office assessed the continued viability of its existing Paradox database and concluded that implementing a new database was necessary.

The COI office researched, reviewed and evaluated several options. However, due to severe budgetary restraints and lack of technical resources, the COI Office only had access to software that had been pre-installed on their workstations. In addition, the COI Office did not have enough funds to pay for a database developer to create a database in SQL or another appropriate programming language.

Therefore, the COI Director, Valerie Dixon assigned the creation and development of a new database to the COI Senior Analyst, Amber O'Banion. Amber had extensive past experience with the user-end of databases and some limited experience with creating very simple databases. The initial phase involved cleaning up and migrating the data from the legacy Paradox database.

November 2008-January 2009: After the legacy Paradox data had been scrubbed and ready for migration, Amber began to create the structure of the new database. This involved many hours of working with the rest of the COI Office regarding reporting and data entry needs. Because of Access 2007's more advanced features and functionalities, it was possible to transform the existing data entry and reporting methods.

While the architecture of the database was being produced, Amber worked with Anthony Slay, part of IT support for the Office of Contracts and Grants Administration (OCGA), to be able to download new proposal information from Coeus into the COI database. This involved the construction of a SQL query and an "Updater" program. The SQL query would cull the data directly from Coeus and the "Updater" program would then add new records to the COI database as new proposals were entered into Coeus.

February 2009: After the migration of the legacy Paradox data and the creation of the structure of the Access 2007 database, the new database was deployed. The COI staff tested and debugged the new database. In addition, the COI staff evaluated and made some minor corrections to the Coeus data download. However, by the end of February, the new COI-Coeus data management process was fully functional.

Why this Project is Innovative

First, this project required only time from everyone involved. From the COI staff evaluating new processes/databases, to the actual creation and deployment of the new COI-Coeus process, the cost to the COI office was \$0. Therefore, for the other UC campuses that utilize Coeus and want to improve the coordination between their COI process and the proposal administration/submission system, it would be extremely cost-effective for them to implement UCSD's current process.

Project Title:

Conflict of Interest Data Management and COEUS

Project Leader and Team Members:

Leader: Valerie Dixon

Members: Amber O'Banion and Anthony Slay

Second, by migrating to the new Access 2007 database, this enabled the COI office to be able to identify gaps in COI disclosure and compliance. This better enables the COI office to ensure that research conducted at UCSD is unbiased and that proper management of conflict of interests is employed. In addition, because conflict of interest is such a controversial and important issue, the coordination between the COI office and OCGA is paramount. Due to the fact that the internal processes are more efficient, the COI office has found that many more UCSD investigators are disclosing and cooperating with UC, state and federal COI policies.

Third, data entry of COI disclosures is faster and easier. Also, the update of the COI status in Coeus is exponentially more efficient. In the course of two months, the COI office was able to update in Coeus and enter into the COI database over 2000 COI disclosures, which represents 6 months of previous COI disclosures. This would have been impossible using the previous COI database.

V. Technology Utilized

Access 2007 - Microsoft's latest database creation and management software.

Coeus 3.4 - Coeus is an Electronic Research Administration system developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The software makes it possible to prepare proposals, route them to obtain internal approvals, and submit them to sponsors electronically. The robust award module stores detailed information on awards, reporting requirements, terms and conditions, as well as the required approvals for the award.

SQL Query Language - SQL (Structured Query Language) is a database computer language designed for the retrieval and management of data in relational database management systems (RDBMS), database schema creation and modification, and database object access control management

.Net and C# Programming Languages

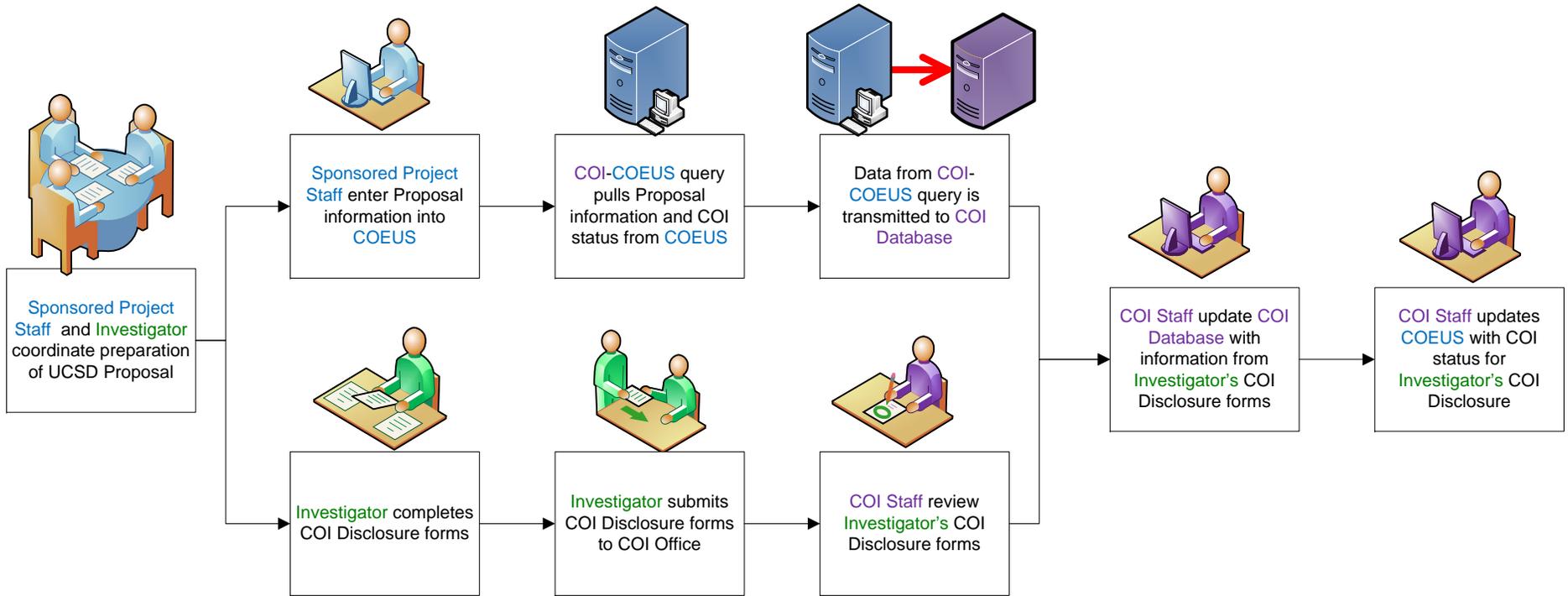
VI. Timeframe of Implementation

February 2008 through February 2009.

VII. Objective Customer Satisfaction Data

Due to the limited nature of the COI-Coeus data management process, there is no customer satisfaction data. However, many of UCSD's sponsored project offices indicated that the update of COI status is much faster and more accurate than ever.

UCSD COI-COEUS DATA MANAGEMENT PROCESS



Project Title:
Conflict of Interest Data Management and COEUS

Project Leader and Team Members:
Leader: Valerie Dixon
Members: Amber O'Banion and Anthony Slay