Summary
The goal of the e-Research Administration Program is to fulfill the Coeus Tiger Team recommendations for developing and implementing systems and tools that support improved management by departmental personnel and central offices of the entire sponsored research lifecycle. Solutions will incorporate the following components of sponsored research administration:

- Proposal development
- Proposal review, routing and approval
- System-to-system submittal to certain sponsors
- Research compliance (IRB, IACUC, financial, ESCRO, etc.)
- Negotiation and award support functions
- Fund set-up, post award financials
- Sub-Awards
- Reporting
- Closeout

Background
UCSD is the 6th largest research university in the United States\(^1\) and research activity (contracts & grants) accounts for approximately 1/3\(^{rd}\) of the campus’ total revenue\(^2\). This activity generates a significant amount of administrative data and effort by the departments and the central offices.

In the 1990’s the university created the Sponsored Project Electronic Administration Redesign program (SPEAR) to carry out various projects designed to improve sponsored project administration. Many projects have since completed and SPEAR program was gradually phased out during the mid-2000’s.

In 2008, the Chancellor challenged the campus to identify strategic opportunities for administrative streamlining that could yield significant cost-savings for the university. In response to this request, Vice Chancellor Relyea hosted a series of focus groups with campus leaders and managers to identify and prioritize potential streamlining projects.

Improving and upgrading UCSD’s existing contract and grant system (Coeus\(^3\)) was identified as the #1 priority during these meetings\(^4\). A Coeus “Tiger Team” was charged with the task to upgrade the Coeus platform to the current version to enable new functionality benefiting departments and central offices.

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\(^1\) UCSD’s peer institutions include the University of Wisconsin Madison, University of Michigan, Johns Hopkins, UCSF and UCLA. For a complete list, please see: [http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/nsf10311/pdf/tab27.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/nsf10311/pdf/tab27.pdf)

\(^2\) [http://ocga3.ucsd.edu/OCGA/Annual_Reports/2011/Overview.htm](http://ocga3.ucsd.edu/OCGA/Annual_Reports/2011/Overview.htm)

\(^3\) Coeus is research administration system initially developed by MIT using open source code, and expanded to a population of institutions that formed the Coeus Consortium for shared development. There were approximately 40 institutional members of the Coeus consortium at the time it merged with the Kuali Foundation.

\(^4\) During a four hour brainstorming session, members of the Rapid Process Redesign II (RPR II) team identified 112 ideas for process improvement then prioritized them. Of the top projects, Coeus was ranked as the highest priority (7 ‘red dots’) and received the second highest number of overall votes (376).
In May 2010 UCSD completed the upgrade of Coeus from Coeus version 3.8 to MIT Coeus 4.3 and will continue to migrate to the current versions as they are available. The final (terminal) release of Coeus is scheduled to be version 4.5. After that, institutions are expected to migrate to Kuali Coeus version 5.0 which will be functionally equivalent to Coeus 4.5.

As part of this upgrade, the Tiger Team brought together all central offices involved in sponsored project administration, established consistent policies and processes for creating and updating Coeus records, developed and executed a rigorous quality assurance testing plan, and produced a comprehensive Coeus documentation & training website.

In their final report, the Coeus Tiger Team made a series of recommendations including the establishment of a standing committee dedicated to “identifying UCSD’s electronic research administration needs, evaluating current and proposed modules and functionality in (Kuali Coeus) and other systems, developing project implementation plans in conjunction with various research administration stakeholders and monitoring/managing the execution of project plans.”

In response to these recommendations, UCSD is establishing the Electronic Research Administration Program (eRAP). This document articulates the eRAP mission, vision & scope and creates an organizational framework for the effective management of UCSD’s research administration systems and business processes / procedures.

**Vision**

The vision of the Electronic Research Administration Program is to continually improve UCSD’s research administration systems and procedures to support UCSD’s growing research enterprise. The goal of eRAP is to continually transform research administration at UCSD to streamline business processes to minimize the time researchers and research support staff must spend on administrative activities.

When appropriate, eRAP projects will include an analysis and realignment of business processes across business areas in order to streamline & improve research administration throughout the institution. Research compliance systems and functions are specifically included within the vision of the program.

eRAP is not intended to be a temporary or short term program. The program will continue to support, enhance and evolve UCSD’s research administration infrastructure to meet the complex and evolving needs and requirements of academic departments, university administration, sponsors and regulatory agencies.

**Mission**

To effectively manage the research, public service and educational mission of the university, eRAP will reach out to research administration stakeholders and facilitate the systematic standardization and centralization of research administration systems and business processes in order to:

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• Minimize or eliminate unnecessary business processes
• Improve communication among research administration stakeholders
• Identify, prioritize and implement specific projects that will yield tangible benefits to the UCSD research community across all VC areas involved in research administration activities.

Organization
Borrowing from the organizational success of the Coeus Tiger Team, the eRAP organization will have three levels beginning with the Executive Sponsors at the top. Executive Sponsors will consist of faculty and executive level staff who serve as eRAP sponsors, establish programmatic objectives, provide resources and serve as eRAP champions. The Steering Team will consist of the leadership of various central offices, departments and other areas directly involved in research administration at UCSD. This team will be responsible for carrying out high level objectives of the Executive Sponsors. They will review, prioritize, keep abreast of and align available internal resources to ensure the successful implantation of individual projects. Project Teams will be assigned for carrying out individual projects at the detailed level of development and implementation as defined by the Steering Team.

Executive Sponsors
The Vice Chancellors for Research and External and Business Affairs will jointly appoint eRAP Executive Sponsors. The Executive Sponsors will consist of executive level representatives and key leaders from research and research administration areas across the university:

• Academic Affairs
• Research Affairs
• Health Sciences
• Scripps Institution of Oceanography
• Business & Financial Services
• Administrative Computing & Telecommunications
• Audit & Management Advisory Services
• Faculty representation from each academic area at UCSD (Marine Sciences, Health Sciences and Academic Affairs)

The Executive Sponsors will ensure successful programmatic outcomes by identifying and assigning resources and staff within their areas of influence and they will serve as program champions.

The Executive Sponsors will provide high level strategic support to the Steering Team, review and approve recommendations from the Steering Team, and provide resources to carry out individual eRAP initiatives including the ability to make budgetary decisions such as the immediate funding of projects.

**Steering Team**

The Executive Sponsors will appoint members to the Steering Team and the Steering Team will be directly accountable to the Executive Sponsors for carrying out eRAP objectives. The Steering Team will consist of senior staff directly involved in research support services:

• Research Affairs
• Office of Contract & Grant Administration
• Health Sciences Sponsored Projects Pre-award Office
• Office of Post-award Financial Services
• Administrative Computing & Telecommunications
• SIO Office of Contract & Grant Administration
• Office of Clinical Trials Administration
• Procurement & Contracts
• Department business office representatives from SIO, Health Sciences and general campus

The Steering Team shall meet periodically for updates on specific projects, and to share information about sponsored research administration, process improvements, trouble spots, challenges and potential strategic collaboration opportunities across UCSD. The Steering Team will identify best practices & implement them throughout the organization.

The Steering Team will work with sponsored research stakeholders to identify, prioritize and present eRAP projects and present their recommendations to the Executive Sponsors for review and approval. The Steering Team will be responsible for ensuring Project Teams are defined/charged, members are assigned, and that each project team is achieving the project milestones and objectives.
New Projects
New projects may be introduced for consideration by members of eRAP Steering Team, or requested by individual members of the campus community to the Steering Team. The Steering Team will review project requests, request clarification about proposal details, prioritize, and oversee their implementation. For those projects that will require additional resources, the Steering Team will study the proposed project, develop a budget request and if appropriate, submit a recommendation to the Executive Sponsors for consideration. With the endorsement of the Executive Sponsors, eRAP co-Chairs and Executive Team Chair will seek sources of funding. If funding is not secured, any endorsed project may not be pursued.

Through the life of eRAP, the Executive Sponsors will remain consistent in their assignments. However, for each phase of the project, the Steering Team and subsequent project and operational teams, may change depending on the focus of future phases of eRAP.

Project Teams
The Steering Team will appoint members to individual project teams & charge them with carrying out eRAP projects and operational tasks. Project Teams will be directly accountable to the Steering Committee for implementing their charge.

The Steering Team will be represented on individual Project Teams whenever possible or appropriate. The teams will meet regularly to carry out their charge & project managers will make regular progress reports to the Steering Committee.

The establishment of Project Teams, project timelines and milestones will be the responsibility of the Steering Team & be based on the availability of resources and priorities. There may will be other research administration improvement activities that take place outside the eRAP. eRAP projects will be in addition to day-to-day business operations.

In response to campus needs the following Project Teams have been identified as high priority:

- Material Transfer Agreements: responsible for analyzing and streamlining current Material Transfer Agreement administration process
- Sponsored Projects Reporting: identify sponsored research and financial data elements needed by departments, then design and deliver standardized reports that meet those departmental needs
- Proposal Development: implement a proposal development & submission system that automates and replaces the current paper based process
- Research Web Portal: develop and deliver a comprehensive web portal targeted towards new faculty and staff that delivers relevant content related to research administration procedures and processes at UCSD
- Research Compliance: identify and implement streamlining and business process improvements related to sponsored research. Examples could include the implementation of an upgraded
Kuali Coeus Human Subjects protocol administration module, the deployment of the Kuali Coeus Conflict of Interest and IACUC modules; and consolidation/integration of heterogeneous compliance systems.

- Cost Share System Improvements: [need details]

**Phases of eRAP**

As this Vision has evolved, it has led to what will become a multi-phased initiative, with the first phase focusing on developing and implementing an enterprise proposal development system, and enhancing sponsored research reporting tools utilized by the campus research community.

As such, eRAP’s focus will become much more specific until such time as additional projects and the appropriate resources are prioritized and endorsed by the Executive Sponsors.