USC Faculty and Staff:

When the TARA (Total Access for Research Administration) began in the fall of 2011, USC embarked on a mission of offering an integrated suite of web-based tools to facilitate the administration of research, supporting proposal/award management, compliance and reporting. Faculty and staff from throughout the university, including the University Research Committee, contributed to this mission. These priorities are reflected in the project’s system requirements document, which can be found here:


When the TARA project began, the university had fully adopted just one tool to facilitate research administration: iStar for the Institutional Review Board (human subjects). At this time, I am happy to say that we have the following additional systems in production:

- **iStar for Biosafety**: submission and management of biosafety research protocols.
- **iStar for Radiation Safety**: submission and management of radiation safety research protocols.
- **iStar for IACUC**: submission and management of animal research protocols
- **diSClose**: submission and management of disclosures related to conflicts of interest
- **CORES**: single statement billing, financial management and reservations for more than 30 shared core research laboratories
- **Sophia**: intellectual property management, including simplified portal for disclosing and tracking inventions, material transfer agreements and confidential disclosure agreements related to intellectual property.
- **Kuali Coeus Post-Award**: establishment of funded sponsored project awards, including the availability of referenced award documents.
- **FiPS**: financial projection system to analyze alternative scenarios for existing research awards.

These tools are all accessible today to the university community from the TARA portal:

https://kc.usc.edu/kc-prd/portal.do

Between now and the end of summer, the focus of the TARA project will be on enhancements along with completion of the four remaining TARA components:

- **Kuali Coeus (KC) Pre-award**: proposal budgeting, submission and routing. KC pre-award is now in production for four pilot schools: Annenberg, Architecture, Pharmacy and Social Work. Within the next few months, after the current pilots have demonstrated success, KC pre-award will be expanded to Keck and Ostrow, and toward the end of summer to the remainder of UPC schools and then finally ICT and ISI.
- **Contracts and Grants Billing**: though not used directly by faculty and departmental staff, this tool will automate billing to research sponsors by Sponsored Projects Accounting this summer.
• **Negotiation Tracker:** As a tool within KC, the negotiation tracker will facilitate tracking the status of contract negotiations, and making information visible to faculty and school staff.

• **Effort Certification:** a simplified effort certification system will be implemented by this summer.

With respect to enhancements, the emphasis will be on implementing system-to-system interfaces, to minimize the need for data re-entry when moving between different university systems and to improve access to financial information. We will also focus on improving report generation capabilities. These enhancements will complete the TARA project as originally conceived.

I am also pleased that the TARA project will be supplemented over the next year by two new systems.

• **The EH&S Assistant:** will enhance and simplify safety management through a single repository of radiological, chemical and fire safety information. It will include real-time chemical inventory information, management of waste pick-ups, and to access to lab inspection results.

• **Clinical Trials Management:** In cooperation with the Keck Medical Center, USC will acquire and implement software to support the execution of clinical trials, including budgeting, coverage analysis, patient registration and tracking and invoicing.

When the TARA project began, USC suffered from out-dated systems, or absence of systems, to support research administration. Though change to new systems is challenging, and I appreciate your patience in that regard, we are now on track to being one of the most advanced universities in the use of software to support research administration, providing a single portal to all systems that support research administration in the university.

I will conclude by saying that USC’s research administration tools complement tools made available to support the execution of research at USC. The Provost Office has funded the licensing of tools for genomic analysis, which are supported by the Norris Library. The Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) offers REDcap for acquisition and management of research data. The Dornsife College acquired Qualtrics to support on-line surveys, and made that tool available to the USC community. The Office of Research developed the Digital USC portal (digital.usc.edu). Over the next year, the CTSI will add a clinical data warehouse for research, and the Office of Research will support software for inventory of biorepositories.

As the university with the nation’s largest computer science research program, USC has demonstrated innovation in the creation of information technology and digital knowledge. Similarly, USC’s investment in research tools demonstrates our commitment to being a world leader in the use of computational tools to enable research.

Randolph Hall  
Vice President, Research