NIH eRA Items of Interest – October 2013

We Are Back!

Hello! We missed you! I hope you missed us too!

It was Halloween, Friday, October 31, 1980. I was a junior in high school (please, no need to do the math) at a quaint New England boarding school. Leaving the cafeteria after the traditional "Guts and Eyes" meal (spaghetti and meatballs), the dining hall suddenly went dark. In that moment of stunned silence that immediately followed, two words pierced the darkness and broke the spell: "FOOD FIGHT!" As you can imagine, 300 teenage boys in a darkened room resulted in quite a mess. Those who were immediately sealed in the room by the headmaster (who's contorted face of rage is still the scariest thing I have *ever* seen on Halloween), well, they had quite a lot of work to do to set things back to normal.

And here at eRA we busy doing the same: setting things back to normal. We are working hard to get all of our systems back and available to you after the 16 day government shutdown. To that end you will want to make sure the read the Guide Notice NOT-OD-14-003 posted Friday, October 18, 2013.

It outlines new submission dates for October FOAs; how applications are being processed that were submitted during the shutdown; what your options are for applications that were already submitted for October dates that now have November submission dates; how applications in review are being handled; and much more critical information. You may even be presented with a "swapportunity." If the review meeting for your application is rescheduled for May 2014, you will be allowed to withdraw your application and "refresh" it should you so desire. Or you can let the existing application ride. The option is yours. The guide notice has specific information on this procedure.

Additionally, if you have an application or an award in progress, you want to be aware that as we bring systems back online over the weekend, you may start to see automated emails come from Commons. We literally have tens of thousands of messages waiting to go out and it may take a couple days to clear the queue. So, please remember our words of wisdom: Do not rely on email to get information concerning your application or grant!

When eRA Commons becomes available again on the morning of Monday, October 21 don't be surprised if what you are looking for is not there yet. There are also thousands of applications at Grants.gov waiting to be picked up by NIH. If you have questions, be sure to contact the eRA Help Desk.

For xTrain users, there will also be some notifications coming your way. Automatic routing of appointments and terminations will have occurred on the normal schedules during the shutdown. This means that investigators, trainees and sponsor who would normally review these notifications may have missed them. They will have been automatically routed to the Business Official (BO). The BO can process them normally or re-route them back to the appropriate person for review. See the xTrain User Guide for more information.

With the clean up well underway, we are moving forward, ready to get back to business!

~ Joe Schumaker
eRA Communications
Division of Communications and Outreach
NIH Office of Extramural Research

Questions? Please contact the eRA Help Desk. Check out self-help resources on the Help page before submitting an online ticket; or call Toll-free: 1-866-504-9552, Phone: 301-402-7469, TTY: 301-451-5939; or email helpdesk@od.nih.gov. The Help Desk hours are Mon-Fri, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET

Help us improve our communications; send your suggestions and feedback to eRACommunications@mail.nih.gov or call 301-435-8185.

To read other recent articles and messages, please visit our Latest News page at http://era.nih.gov/news_and_events/index.cfm.

Check out the `NEW` eRA Training pages for eRA Commons demos, presentations and FAQs

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